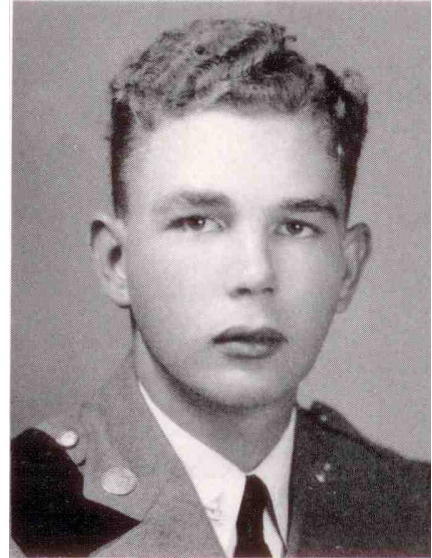


Before and After

John Louis Gaskins graduated from Clemson in 1939 before war broke out in Europe, before American ships began to be harassed in the Atlantic, before it became apparent that the United States would eventually be drawn into another world conflict. Gaskins attended public schools in Timmonsville and enrolled at Clemson in 1935. He was a vocational agricultural education major and a member of the Dairy Club. Known as “Curley,” Gaskins played intramural basketball and served as vice president of the Baptist Student Union Council. In the summer of 1938, he attended ROTC training camp at Fort McClellan, Alabama where he qualified as marksman on the rifle range. As a senior, he served as a cadet first lieutenant and platoon leader in Company F, 2nd Battalion of the Cadet Brigade’s 1st Regiment.



J. L. GASKINS

Following graduation, Gaskins returned to the Pee Dee region to accept a teaching position in Latta. By the time Gaskins was called to military service in February 1942, all the “befores” had turned to “afters,” and the United States was faced with war on two fronts. In December, Gaskins was once again assigned to Company F of 2nd Battalion, only this time the unit in question was clad in Army green, not cadet gray. The 393rd Infantry Regiment of the 99th Infantry Division was activated at Camp Dorn, Mississippi. Gaskins trained with the regiment and then attended the Infantry Officer’s Advanced Course at Fort Benning, Georgia. After completing the infantry course, Gaskins was reassigned to the 359th Infantry Regiment of the 90th Infantry Division. He wed Margaret Galloway of Timmonsville in a military ceremony at Camp Forrest, Tennessee, but their time together as newlyweds was brief. In March 1944, Captain Gaskins and the 90th departed the United States for overseas duty.

The 90th landed in England on April 5 and trained there until June 4. Some elements of the division landed on Utah Beach on D-Day, while the rest of the 90th entered combat on June 10. The division battled across France, taking Périers on July 27. It helped close off the Falaise Gap on August 19 and then continued its rapid advance through Verdun and Metz before crossing the Moselle River on November 9.

On December 6, the division pushed across the Saar River and established a bridgehead north of Saarlautern. During this action, Captain Gaskins, now serving as the battalion executive officer, was killed. He had distinguished himself in combat, being awarded both the Bronze and Silver Star medals for gallantry. He was also awarded the Purple Heart.



John Louis Gaskins was survived by his wife, his parents, and his brother, then serving with the Fifth Army in Italy. He was buried in the Lorraine American Cemetery, Saint-Avold, France.

