

A Sad Shock

Shelbourne Lawton Grantham of Dillon enrolled in 1940 as an agricultural education major but he was only at Clemson College for his freshman year. After he left Clemson, he continued his education and was attending the Anderson Aeronautic School in Nashville, Tennessee when he was called to military service in June 1942.



That same month, the War Department reactivated the 79th Infantry Division. The division had earned the nickname “Cross of Lorraine” for its spirited fighting in France during the First World War. It would soon have another opportunity to fight—against the same invader in the same country.

Grantham entered service at Fort Jackson. He was assigned for duty with the 79th Infantry Division and trained at Camp Pickett, Virginia; Camp Blanding, Florida; Fort Ord, California; and Camp Phillips, Kansas before shipping overseas to England in April 1944.

Two months later, just a week after D-Day, the 79th landed across Utah Beach. The division was committed to combat on June 19, taking part in the American effort to capture the French port of Cherbourg, vitally needed to increase the flow of supplies to the rapidly growing Allied armies in Normandy.

The 79th captured Fort du Roule and entered Cherbourg on June 25. It then moved into defensive positions along the Ollonde River. In early July, the division resumed the offensive, taking La Haye du Puits in house-to-house fighting. On July 13, as the division attacked German positions near LaSurieville, Grantham was struck down by enemy machine gun fire.

When the news of Grantham’s death reached his home town, the Dillon *Herald* wrote that “His cheerful disposition, keen sense of humor and pleasing personality won for him a host of friends by whom he will be sadly missed. Because of his wide popularity and large family connection, news of his death was a shock to many homes in North and South Carolina.”

PFC Grantham was originally interred in the American Military Cemetery in Blosville, France. He was survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. William P. Grantham of the Gaddys Mill community of Dillon; two sisters and two brothers.

Grantham was awarded the Purple Heart, Presidential Unit Citation, Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with 2 Bronze Service Stars, and World War II Victory Medal.

In April 1948, Grantham's remains were returned to Dillon where he was reinterred in the Grantham Cemetery. He is memorialized on the Clemson campus on the Class of 1944 statue in front of Mell Hall as well as on the Clemson Scroll of Honor Memorial.

