

Cassino

The slaughter got so bad that a German soldier carrying a white flag carefully picked his way down the slope among the snow sprinkled rocks. Surrender wasn't his intent. It was to propose a temporary truce to allow both sides to collect their dead from the bloody battlefield just north of Monte Cassino.

By that Valentine's Day in 1944, the Allies had been struggling for weeks to break through the Gustav Line, the German defensive belt that stretched across the Italian peninsula from the Adriatic Sea in the east to the Tyrrhenian Sea in the west. The Gustav Line blocked the Allied advance through the Liri River Valley toward Rome. The key terrain anchoring the line in the west was fifteen hundred foot high Monte Cassino which dominated the entrance into the valley.



Captain Robert Adams Guy, Clemson Class of 1939, was assigned to the 3rd Chemical Battalion which was involved in the battle to capture this critical ground. Bob Guy, from Chester, majored in textile chemistry. He served as vice president of Phi Psi Honorary Textile Fraternity and as president of the Catawba County Club.

Following graduation, Guy joined CIBA, the chemical company, in New York. He resigned from CIBA and joined the Army in November 1940. With his academic training and work experience, Guy was assigned as a chemical warfare officer. He was initially stationed at Fort Benning, Georgia, then in April 1942 was sent to Fort Bliss, Texas. Subsequent postings took him to North Africa, then Sicily, and finally to Italy, where he was assigned to A Company of the 3rd Chemical Battalion. Guy was assigned to the same battalion as his Clemson classmate and fellow chemical warfare officer Harry Raysor.

By mid-February 1944, Allied forces had suffered heavy casualties in repeated attempts to capture the dominant high ground around Monte Cassino. American, British, French, Algerian, and New Zealand troops had all taken their turn on the front lines. With varying degrees of success, each force had spent itself against the well-fortified and determined German defenders.

The 3rd Chemical Battalion's role was to provide indirect fire support to the infantry troops. The battalion was equipped with 4.2 inch mortars for firing chemicals, smoke, and high explosive rounds in support of infantry operations. While most of its rounds were high explosive munitions, the battalion also fired white phosphorous rounds which set fire to everything on which they landed—including bodies.



On February 17, Bob Guy was killed in battle. He was awarded the Purple Heart and the French Croix de Guerre.

Captain Guy was survived by his wife and daughter. Following the war, his remains were returned to the United States and were buried in the family plot at Zion Presbyterian Cemetery near Lowrys.