

From Civic Leader to Service Member

John Paterson Hetrick made his way to the Foothills of South Carolina from his hometown of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to study civil engineering. He entered Clemson College in the last years of the Roaring '20s and would graduate in the early years of the Great Depression as a member of the Class of 1932.

Hetrick was active in campus life demonstrating military proficiency and academic prowess. He was a member of the Society of Civil Engineers and the Glee Club, which he served first as business manager and then as president. He marched with the Drum and Bugle Corps and was a member of both the Sabre Club and the First Sergeants' Club. He attended ROTC summer training at Camp McClellan, Alabama between his junior and senior years and was selected to serve as the Regimental Staff intelligence officer as a senior.



After graduation, Hetrick married Marjorie Shealy of Anderson. The couple made their home in Easley where Hetrick worked with the Rogers-Hetrick Lumber Company and served as a deacon in the First Baptist Church. Considered one of the community's business and civic leaders, Hetrick and his wife raised two children, a son and a daughter.

Following the United States' entry into World War II, Hetrick was called to active duty and ordered to Camp Davis, North Carolina. Camp Davis had been constructed in late 1940 as the country began its belated mobilization for the conflict many feared was approaching. Located near Holly Ridge in the coastal southeastern part of the state, it was a 45,000 acre anti-aircraft artillery training facility which eventually grew to include two paved runways. Women Airforce Service Pilots, WASPs, used the runways to tow aerial targets aloft for Army anti-aircraft gunners to perfect their marksmanship.

In mid-autumn of 1943, Hetrick was admitted to the post hospital for treatment of symptoms diagnosed as a cold. On October 2, during his brief hospital stay, Hetrick died from an acute heart attack. He died two days short of his thirty-sixth birthday,

First Lieutenant Hetrick was survived by his wife and children, his parents, and two sisters. He was buried at Springbrook Cemetery in Anderson.

