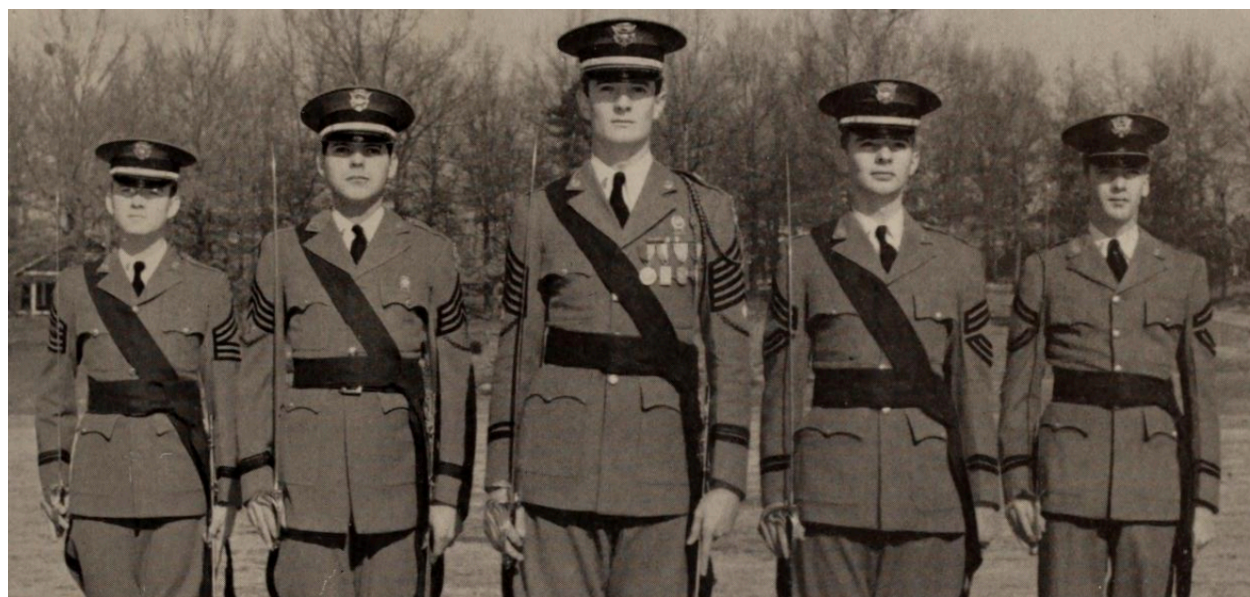
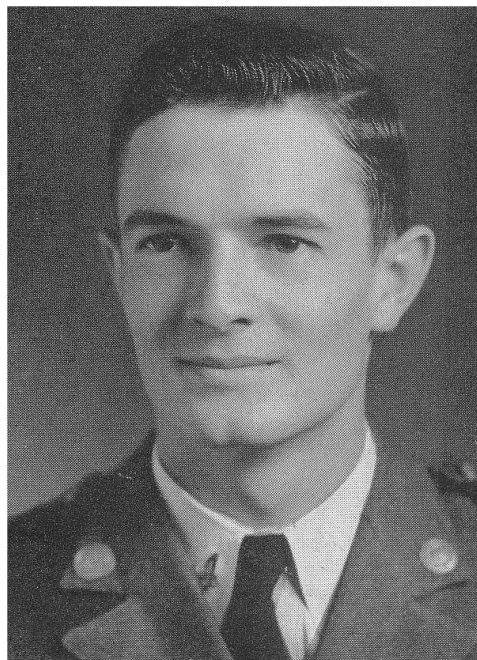


Student Becomes Instructor

By all accounts, Miles Rapley Hunter, Jr. was an outstanding student. Hunter was a pre-medicine major from Gray Court and a member of Clemson's Class of 1942. He competed as a member and later captain of the Rifle Team and served as vice president of the Minor "C" Club. He was secretary-treasurer of Sigma Epsilon social fraternity and served as president of Kappa Gamma. He served on the YMCA Council and was a commencement marshal.

Hunter also excelled as a cadet. He marched as one of Clemson's best drilled cadets on the Sophomore, Junior, and Senior Platoons. He was a member of Pershing Rifles, serving as a major on the regimental staff his senior year. As a junior, he was appointed a company first sergeant. At ROTC summer camp, Hunter qualified as an expert on the rifle range and was named a Master Cadet. Promoted to lieutenant colonel for his senior year, Hunter was given command of 2nd Battalion in the Cadet Brigade's 1st Regiment.



Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Hunter, center, and his 2nd Battalion staff.

Hunter's class was the first to graduate after American entry into World War II. He, like most of his classmates reported for active duty soon after commencement. Hunter started as an infantry second lieutenant but quickly transferred into the Army Air Force.

The Army's flight training program progressed through stages. There was preflight, in which aviation cadets were taught basic military skills, followed by primary, basic, and advanced flight training. Once the aviator had mastered his craft, he typically moved on to transition training in which he learned to fly the type of aircraft he would pilot in combat.

Hunter traveled to Maxwell Field at Montgomery, Alabama for his pre-flight training. He reported to Lakeland, Florida for primary, Shaw Field in Sumter for basic, and Spence Field at Moultrie, Georgia for advanced. In advanced training, Hunter graded “expert” in aerial gunnery, finishing second in his class. Upon completion of the advanced phase, Second Lieutenant Hunter was awarded his pilot’s wings. Based on his stellar performance as a student, Hunter was picked not for transition training, but for training as a flight instructor. He was ordered to Randolph Field, Texas where he attended Central Instructor’s school and then returned to Spence to take up his new duties.



Spence Field was used by the Army Air Force Flying Training Command for advanced single-engine flight training with the AT-6. The AT-6 was a dual seat trainer with a 600-horsepower engine, a more complex and capable aircraft than those used in the basic phase of flight training.

On Tuesday, July 13, 1943, Lieutenant Hunter took off on a training mission accompanied by Second Lieutenant Hubert Loosen. Aviation Cadet William Wilson was also assigned to the mission and was flying in formation with Hunter

in a separate aircraft. At some point during the flight, Wilson lost his position behind his flight leader. Wilson mistakenly joined another aircraft and pulled in close behind it. Hunter followed behind Wilson, trying to attract his attention and get him back in the correct formation. When Wilson discovered he was following the wrong airplane, he turned up and away, bringing him directly into the path of Hunter’s ship. Hunter pulled his airplane up, but it was too late and the two aircraft collided. Loosen bailed out and Hunter also jumped, but evidently was struck by the tail of the aircraft and killed. Wilson went down with his airplane. The accident report blamed the accident on Wilson for losing his awareness of the other airplanes and his relationship to them.

Second Lieutenant Miles Rapley Hunter, Jr. was an outstanding student and pilot. His is another example of a promising life prematurely ended. He was survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Miles R. Hunter, Sr., and by his sister, Mrs. Givens Young, the wife of one of Hunter’s Clemson classmates then stationed in Texas. Hunter’s body was returned to Gray Court and buried in the Owings Presbyterian Church Cemetery. The Lieutenant Miles Rapley Hunter Scholarship Award was established at Clemson in his memory.

