

Pacific Loss

The war in Europe had ended nine days earlier, but Thursday May 17, 1945 was just another day of war in the ironically named Pacific Theater. The battle for Okinawa continued to rage, B-29 bombers continued their devastating fire bombings of Japanese cities, and soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines continued to lose their lives.

Boyce Manley James, Jr., from Greenville, was a civil engineering major and member of Clemson's Class of 1942. As a freshman, James was selected for the Freshman Platoon, composed of the class's best drilled cadets. As a junior, he was a member of the First Sergeant's Club. As a senior he was selected for membership in the campus chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers. In the summer of 1941, ROTC training was held on the Clemson campus and James qualified as a rifle marksman.

James graduated from Clemson with a degree in civil engineering on May 25, 1942. Shortly thereafter, he reported for military service. By 1944, James was a first lieutenant serving in the US Fifth Air Force.

On May 17, 1945, just eight days shy of the second anniversary of his graduation, James and his crew departed their base on the Philippine island of Luzon for an air raid on Japanese-held Formosa. The aircraft, perhaps an A-20 Havoc light bomber, and its crew were lost in the Pacific. The bodies of James and his comrades—First Lieutenant Wayne Drake, Second Lieutenant Roger Anderson, and Sergeant Miles Powell—were not recovered. They are memorialized together, just as they died, at Arlington National Cemetery.

