

Kelly Killed at Anzio

Clemson was reputed to have provided more Army officers in World War II than any other colleges except West Point and Texas A&M. In fact, Clemson men served not only in the Army and the Army Air Force, but also in the Navy, the Marines and the Merchant Marine. And not all of our Scroll of Honor Heroes were officers; nearly 100 Clemson men who gave their lives in World War II were enlisted men or non-commissioned officers. One of these was Foster O. Kelly, Jr. of Anderson.



Kelly, was a graduate of Anderson's Boys High School and a member of Clemson's Class of 1945. Enrolling at Clemson in the fall of 1941, he was unaware that the country and the arc of his life would be drastically altered by dramatic events just a few short months ahead. He attended Clemson for two years as a mechanical engineering major before the war interrupted his studies at the end of his sophomore year. He was inducted into the Army at Fort Jackson in the spring of 1943 and completed his basic training at Camp Croft in Spartanburg.

Kelly was shipped overseas in the fall of 1943 and ended up assigned to General Mark Clark's Fifth Army in Italy. Killed near Anzio, it is likely that Kelly participated in the January 1944 Anzio landings and the subsequent May breakout which led to the liberation of Rome by Fifth Army units on June 4, 1944. Kelly's family was initially informed that he was missing in action since June 2. On July 5, the sad news was received that he had in fact been killed in action on June 1.

He was survived by his wife Mary Alice of Anderson. His daughter, Mary Wynn Kelly, was born on June 30, less than a week before her father's death in action was confirmed. He was also survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. F. O. Kelly, three sisters and his brother Louis, a mathematics professor at Clemson.