

Würzburg

Randolph Boling McDavid of Pelzer graduated from Clemson on May 24, 1943 with a degree in Dairy. Rather than heading to a dairy farm to put his education to work, McDavid entered the Army to fight the Germans.

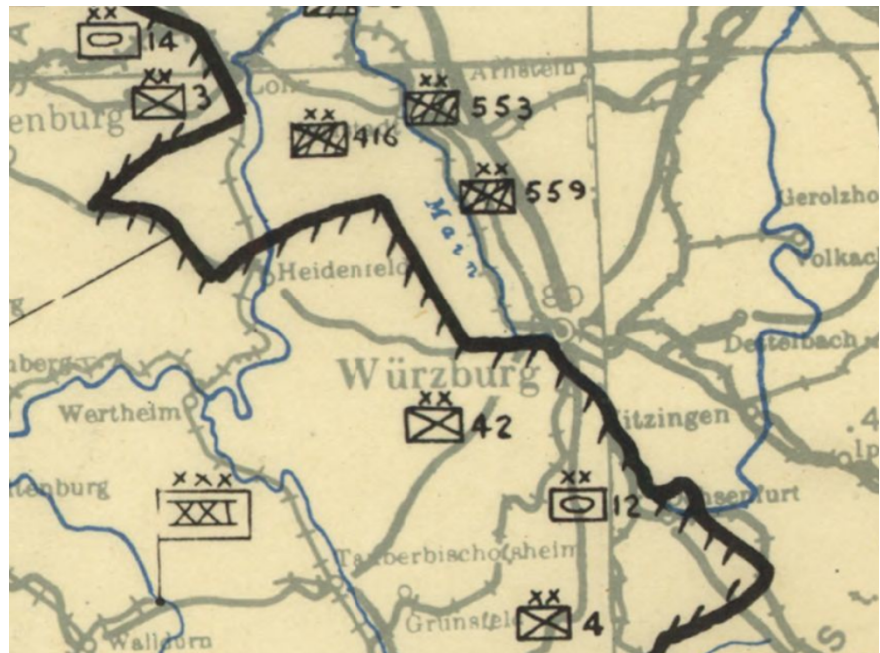
McDavid, an honors student, was a member of Alpha Zeta, the national honorary fraternity for agriculture, and Phi Kappa Phi, the national honor society for the promotion of scholarship. He was also a member of the Dairy Club.

With graduation behind them, the young men of the Class of 1943 were ordered to active duty to fill the ranks of the expanding military services. After completing basic and advanced training, McDavid was assigned to the 232nd Infantry Regiment of the famed Rainbow Division, the 42nd Infantry.



Composed of personnel from each of the forty-eight states, the 42nd completed divisional training at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma. It arrived at Marseille, France on December 8-9, 1944 and entered combat in the vicinity of Strasbourg on Christmas Eve. The division repulsed several local German counterattacks before being withdrawn from the line and moving into the 7th Army's reserve.

The division moved forward again in mid-February, taking up defensive positions near Haguenau, west of the Rhine River. Following a period of extensive patrolling, the 42nd went on the offensive. The division attacked through the Hardt Forest and broke through the Siegfried Line of German defensive positions in mid-March. On the final day of the month, the 42nd crossed the Rhine and captured Wertheim on the Main River the following day. The division continued to advance eastward along the Main until it reached Würzburg on April 2.



12th Army Group situation map for April 4, 1945 shows the 42nd Infantry Division poised west of the Main River at Würzburg.

At 0500 hours on April 4, McDavid's 232nd Infantry Regiment began crossing from the west bank of the Main River on a portable Bailey bridge. As they reached the far side, the regiment's three battalions spread out to capture their assigned sectors of the city. The Germans mounted a stiff defense organized around roadblocks covered by sniper, small arms, and machine gun fire. Sergeant McDavid, leading a light machine gun squad, positioned his weapons to provide covering fire for a rifle platoon. McDavid was seriously wounded while directing the fire from his machine gun, but his placement of the weapon was so effective that the platoon was able to advance under its fire and root out a nest of enemy snipers. McDavid died on April 5; Würzburg was secured on April 6. The war in Europe would last just thirty-two more days.

Randolph Boling McDavid was awarded the Bronze Star. He was survived by his mother and after the war was reinterred in Arlington National Cemetery.



Situation map courtesy the [Library of Congress](#).