



Cited twice for valor under fire, Clemson Hero Alfred Parker McPeters fell on this date during the liberation of France.

The bright orange cloth adds a splash of incongruous color among the row upon row of white crosses and the green, manicured lawn of the Normandy American Cemetery at Colleville-Sur-Mer, France. The Tiger Rag marks the grave of Alfred Parker McPeters, Class of '37, killed on August 28, 1944 during the liberation of France.

McPeters, born in Selma, AL, grew up in Savannah, where his father and namesake served as the passenger agent for the Central of Georgia railroad. Entering Clemson College during the depths of the Great Depression, McPeters studied textile engineering while finding time to serve in the Palmetto Literary Society, the S.G. Club and the Athletic Office. He was an officer in the Corps of Cadets, serving as a cadet first lieutenant.

Like many young men of his generation, McPeters answered his country's call-to-arms, joining the Army in February 1942, during the dark winter months of defeat which followed the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. Based on the ROTC training he'd received at Clemson, McPeters was commissioned a second lieutenant and was assigned to the 315th Infantry Regiment of the 79th Infantry Division training at Camp Pickett, Virginia.



The 79th Infantry Division sailed for the United Kingdom in April 1944 and landed in France over Utah Beach just a week after D-Day. The division entered combat on June 19 and was tasked with cutting off the Cherbourg Peninsula and capturing the crucial French port of Cherbourg. On June 25, near Hardinvast, south of Cherbourg, McPeters, was awarded the Silver Star—and the Purple Heart. While leading his platoon against a heavily defended enemy position, the 30-year-old was struck by a grenade fragment. Although bleeding profusely, McPeters administered first aid to himself and continued to direct his men until the enemy strongpoint was neutralized. Only then, and only when ordered by a more senior officer, did McPeters seek medical treatment.

Assigned to Lieutenant General Courtney Hodges' First Army, the 79th Infantry Division remained on the offensive throughout July, crossing the Ay, Sarthe and Seine Rivers as First Army chased the retreating Germans across France. In late August, with Allied supply lines stretched, the Germans counterattacked. In fierce fighting that lasted for a week, the 79th

held its lines, but First Lieutenant McPeters was killed. In this battle, McPeters' 'intrepid actions, personal bravery and zealous devotion to duty at the cost of his life' earned him the nation's second highest decoration for valor, the Distinguished Service Cross.

Alfred Parker McPeters was survived by his wife and young son, Alfred Parker McPeters III. In many ways, McPeters was typical of the young Americans who fought World War II. Although just starting his family and working at good job, McPeters relegated his aspirations to the needs of his country. Like so many of his fellow Clemson alumni, Alfred Parker McPeters sacrificed his own future to ensure a better one for his country and for the world.