

## Breakout from Anzio

Finally, the long-awaited breakout began. What had started in January as an amphibious end run to outflank the German defenders in Italy had devolved into a stalemate as Allied troops had been unable to press their short-lived advantage following their surprise landings at Anzio on Italy's west coast. It was May 23, 1944 and Second Lieutenant Daniel Cary Morgan was in the thick of the fighting as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division attempted to resume the march on Rome.

"Chick" Morgan had come to Clemson in the Depression-era days of the mid 1930s as a member of the Class of 1939. An agronomy major from Wellford, Morgan was a member of Kappa Alpha Sigma, the agronomy honor society. He participated in ROTC training at Fort McClellan, Alabama in the summer of 1938 and served as a cadet Second Lieutenant his senior year.



D. C. MORGAN

After graduation, Morgan took a position with the Farm Security Association in Lancaster. He married Doris Dickson of Duncan. When war came, Morgan was called to active duty in January 1942 and ordered to report to Fort Jackson where he was assigned to the 77<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. In January of 1943, Morgan shipped overseas to the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. The 30<sup>th</sup> provided security for the Casablanca Conference between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, but its next assignment would be more perilous. On July 10, the division landed on Sicily as part of Operation Husky. It marched ninety miles in three days to reach Palermo and then liberated Messina. Its performance in Sicily earned the 3<sup>rd</sup> a reputation as one of the best divisions in General Patton's Seventh Army.

After a short rest to receive and train replacements, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division landed at Salerno on the Italian mainland as part of General Mark Clark's Fifth Army. The 3<sup>rd</sup> battled northward through some of the fiercest fighting of the war, reaching the Volturno River and Monte Cassino, the high ground controlled by the Germans and dominating the road to Rome. In mid-November, the 3<sup>rd</sup> was pulled from the line to rest and receive replacements.



On January 22, 1944, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division landed at Anzio as part of Operation Shingle, an attempt to turn the Germans' flank and breakthrough to Rome. But the Germans mounted furious counterattacks and the 3<sup>rd</sup>, along with the other Allied units in the beachhead, battled to keep from being driven back into the sea.

For months, the situation in Anzio more closely resembled the trench warfare of World War I, with enemies facing each other from static positions. Finally, on May 23, the Allies commenced their breakout from Anzio. At 0545, fifteen hundred Allied artillery pieces began firing. For forty minutes, they showered enemy positions with searing metal and crushing concussion. When the barrage paused, infantry and armored forces moved forward, supported by close air support from P-40 fighters.

The breakout gradually built momentum as Canadian tanks joined in, punching through German lines and opening up the Liri Valley and Highway 6 leading to Rome. But the cost, as always, was high. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division suffered 955 casualties on May 23, including Second Lieutenant Morgan who was killed in action. The Italian capital was liberated on June 4.

Daniel Cary Morgan was awarded the Purple Heart. He was survived by his mother, his wife, five brothers, and three sisters. After the war, his body was returned to South Carolina and buried in the Florence National Cemetery.

For more information on Second Lieutenant Daniel Cary Morgan see:

<https://soh.alumni.clemson.edu/scroll/daniel-cary-morgan/>

For additional information about Clemson University's Scroll of Honor visit:

<https://soh.alumni.clemson.edu/>