

Bracketed by Wars

John Edward Rowland's life was bracketed by the end of world wars. He was born less than 10 days after the Armistice that ended World War I; he died a week after the formal surrender ceremonies that closed World War II. In between, he built a life.

Rowland attended public schools in the Low Country town of Hamer and graduated from Dillon High School. He traveled to Clemson in 1935 as a freshman member of the Class of 1939. He would remain at Clemson only through his sophomore year and then return home.

On April 12, 1942, John Ed married Evelyn Holder of Jonesboro, NC and the very next day enlisted in the army at Fort Jackson. He was sent to Camp Claiborne, Louisiana for training and duty with Company C of the 331st Engineer Battalion. Perhaps his Clemson training paid off, for he was soon ordered to Officer Training School at Fort Belvoir, Virginia and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant on November 25, 1942.



In December he was assigned to the newly activated 369th Engineer Regiment at Camp Claiborne. The 369th's training included night operations and bridge building. In May 1943, the regiment moved west to the Desert Training Center an 80,000 square mile patch of rugged desert stretching from Southern California into Arizona. Here, the 369th built rifle ranges, warehouses, hospitals, roads and bridges as the Training Center geared up for the influx of trainees brought on by the Army's rapid program of mobilization.

In early 1944, Rowland and the rest of the 369th were alerted for movement overseas. On March 6, 1944 he departed San Francisco aboard the USS *Rochambeau* bound for Guadalcanal. Shortly after arrival at Guadalcanal, the regiment was reorganized into separate battalions and assigned to a newly formed Engineer Group. In June 1945, Rowland arrived in the recently-liberated Philippine capital of Manila. On September 2, the Japanese formally surrendered. One week later, Captain Rowland was killed in a jeep accident in Luzon.

John Edward Rowland spent his Army career building roads, bridges, hospitals and other facilities to help bring people together. He was survived by his wife Evelyn and their 5-year-old son John Jr., his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Rowland of Hamer, two brothers, three sisters and one half-sister. Captain Rowland was initially buried in the Philippines. In 1949, his body was returned to Hamer where he was reburied in the Kentyre Cemetery.

