

## On the Turnpike

The Pennsylvania Turnpike was designed and built in the 1930s as one of the country's first long-distance, limited-access highways. It was an early model for what would eventually become the Interstate Highway System. By 1943, the Turnpike was carrying significant military traffic, including an October convoy commanded by Major Jacob Henry Woodward, Jr. from Clemson's Class of 1935.

Henry Woodward had come to Clemson from Columbia during the depths of the Great Depression. A vocational agricultural education major, Woodward's leadership skills were quickly noted. He was elected president of his freshman class. As a sophomore, he served as a cadet corporal and as a junior was appointed a battalion sergeant major. During his senior year, Woodward was a cadet major and executive officer of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. But Woodward's achievements were not limited to the military aspect of cadet life. An honors student, Woodward was respected by his classmates who elected him to serve on the Senior Disciplinary Council, an early forerunner to student government. He also served on the Religious Work Council and was selected for membership in both Blue Key and the Tiger Brotherhood.

Perhaps Woodward's greatest acclaim came from his exploits on the gridiron. As halfback and captain of Coach Jess Neely's 1934 football team, Woodward led the Tigers to a 5-4 record, including a 19-0 Big Thursday victory over South Carolina. For his on-field performance, Woodward earned all-state honors. Woodward also played basketball and was a member of the state champion intercollegiate tennis team. He was a member of the Block "C" Club which he served as secretary.

In the summer of 1934, Woodward journeyed to Fort McClellan, Alabama for ROTC camp. His training there prepared him to accept a second lieutenant's commission upon graduation in the spring of 1935.

Woodward continued his education at the University of South Carolina Law School. He also continued his interest in sports, working as a football and basketball official and serving as president of the South Carolina Football Officials Association. He completed his law degree in 1938 and entered practice in Columbia. Two years later, Woodward hit the campaign trail, running for and winning a seat representing Richland County in the South Carolina House of Representatives.



In addition to his law practice and legislative responsibilities, Woodward found time to serve as president of the South Carolina Citizens Library Association, as a director of the Columbia junior chamber of commerce, and as a member of the state and American bar associations. In October 1941, he married Susan Gibbes of Columbia.

Woodward had maintained his commission in the Army Reserves and in 1942, he resigned his House seat and reported for active duty as a First Lieutenant. He was assigned to the 305<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 77<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division at Fort Jackson.



The 77<sup>th</sup> was organized at Fort Jackson and was soon on the way to Louisiana to participate in large-scale maneuvers. In 1943, the division entrained for the cross-country trip to Camp Hyder, California and desert training. In temperatures climbing as high as 115 degrees, Woodward continued to perform at a high level. In September, his 305<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment returned east to Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. After the sand and heat of the desert, the 305<sup>th</sup>'s soldiers felt they had arrived in "Utopia," according to the regiment's history. After passes, leaves, and a period of rest and recreation, the regiment prepared to move to Elkins, West Virginia for mountain training.

On November 15, 1943, Major Woodward, now the regimental operations officer, was the passenger in an Army jeep headed west from Indiantown Gap along the Pennsylvania Turnpike. He was leading a convoy toward the mountain training site and was passing near rural Everett, Pennsylvania. Even today, nearly 90 years later, the area is a forested state game area, home to abundant wildlife. As Woodward's jeep sped along the highway, something startled a pheasant from the side of the road. It flew up and directly into the windshield of the jeep, causing the sergeant driving to lose control. The jeep flipped, causing minor injuries to the driver and one passenger, but killing Major Woodward. He was the first of the regiment's officers killed in the line of duty.

Jacob Henry Woodward, Jr. was survived by his wife and their ten-month-old daughter, his father, then living in Clemson and serving as the alumni secretary for the college, his mother, and a brother. He was buried in Columbia's Elmwood Cemetery. After its arrival in Hawaii, the 305<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment established a new sports field and named it in memory of Woodward. His comrade, Major Winthrop Rockefeller, who would later serve two terms as governor of Arkansas, described it as "a splendid athletic field" and "a most appropriate memorial to our friend and associate."

