

# 'Big Red' Dyess Dies Leading Men Against Japanese

Lt. Col. A. J. Dyess, architect '32 of Augusta, Ga., former Clemson football star and one of the Marine Corps' most popular officers, died standing up at the head of his battalion during the final extermination of the Japanese garrison on Namur island on Kwajalein atoll, a United Press dispatch revealed last week.

Known to his men as "Big Red" because he was big and red-haired and because his men liked him, the former Clemson football player led a reserve battalion ashore on Namur. With Dyess leading the way, he and his group of men advanced up a slight rise to take over a position.

A Japanese machine gun opened up as his helmet showed above the rise. A bullet hit him in the head and he was killed instantly.

Col. Franklin A. Hart of LaJoila, Calif., his regimental commander, paid Dyess the highest compliment in his power:

"He was a true Marine. He died showing his men how to do it."

# Dyess Led "Fighting First" That Broke Jap Resistance On Namur

(The following story was written by Staff Sergeant Dick Tenelly, of Washington, D. C., a Marine Corps Combat Correspondent).

**NAMUR ISLAND, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands, February 2—(Delayed) —** Shortly after 10 o'clock this morning, Marine Lieutenant Colonel A. J. Dyess, commanding Landing Team No. 1, called our Command Post on the beach. He said:

"The 'fighting First' is on its way."

Less than an hour later, he was killed by a Japanese machine gun bullet through the right side of his forehead. But his leadership had launched the final attack that broke the last of Japanese resistance on Namur Island.

Lieutenant Colonel Dyess was not an "old line" Marine. A graduate of Clemson College, South Carolina, he ran the Augusta Lumber Company in Augusta, Georgia, until he was called from the Marine Corps Reserve into active duty in 1940. But he had all the boldness and aggressiveness that are ordinarily associated with veteran campaigners.

I saw Lieutenant Colonel Dyess come ashore right beside the pier on Namur Island. With a few other Marines, I was engaged in neutralizing an enemy pillbox almost at the water's edge. He refused to let his men be diverted by this side show. His booming, parade-ground voice sent them on inland where they were more badly needed. And he went with them.

Nightfall found Lieutenant Colonel Dyess in the thick of the heaviest resistance, that encountered

between two points along the eastern coast of Namur Island. He stayed through the night with his men, almost surrounded by the enemy. Next morning he made his way to the Command Post for orders.

Returning to the front, he made his dispositions for an attack. With him was his operations officer, Marine First Lieutenant Gene G. Mundy, of 1306 Mulberry Street, Mount Carmel, Illinois. Instructions were given to his unit commanders, Marine Captain G. D. Webster, of 531 Parkway, High Point, North Carolina, Marine Captain Irving Schechter, of Smithtown Branch, North Carolina, Marine Captain Horace C. Parks, of 277 South Buffalo Street, Orchard Park, New York.

A group of Marine tanks came up to spearhead the attack. Lieutenant Colonel Dyess telephoned Lieutenant Colonel Charles D. Roberts at the Command Post and gave the message that his outfit was "was on its way." Then he set out with his men, directing the fire of a vehicle as it moved along the beach.

The Japanese defense system along this section included a deep ditch, behind which lay a dense series of heavily fortified dugouts. Lieutenant Colonel Dyess led his men, plus some elements from another landing team which first landed in this sector, northward along the ditch, neutralizing the dugouts in transit.

They were almost to their objective when Lieutenant Colonel Dyess bounded up to the top of the ditch for a look to his right flank. An enemy bullet entered his head and he died within 10 minutes, without regaining consciousness.

His officers loved his leadership, and his men cherished him for the constant consideration he gave to their welfare. Speaking of Lieutenant Colonel Dyess' death, Lieutenant Colonel Francis H. Brink, who commanded one of the assault teams on Namur, said:

"We lost a very good officer."

Lieutenant Colonel Dyess is survived by his wife, Mrs. Connor Dyess, and their young daughter, Connor.

