



Claude Dewberry

July 25, 1915 - January 9, 1945

Claude Albert Dewberry was born on July 25, 1915, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the second child of Katie Bell Wilkinson and Albert Sidney Johnston "Sid" Dewberry. Claude served his country in the United States Army for 5 years during World War II. Claude was killed during World War II on January 9, 1945, a prisoner of war (POW) held by the Japanese for more than two torturous years at various locations in the Pacific Theater. He was preceded in death by his father, Albert Sidney Johnston "Sid" Dewberry, and his sister, Phyllis June Dewberry. He was survived by his mother, Katie Bell Wilkinson; his brothers, Willis Elbert Dewberry, Sr. (Annie May Warden), Raymond Allen Dewberry (Florence Watlington), Earl Rudolph Dewberry (Elizabeth "Polly" Garrison), Sidney Oliver Dewberry (Reva Anne Lanier); and his sisters, Dorothy June Dewberry (Arthur W. Berger, Sr.), Betty Louise Dewberry (Maurice Ackerman), and Elna Mae "Pat" Dewberry (Paul Barnard, Jr.). Claude was unmarried and had no children.

After the family moved permanently to the Dewberry homeplace outside of Hurt, Virginia, Claude attended Hill Grove Elementary School. Claude attended Gretna High School but opted not to finish his education. Instead, he went to work at Burlington Mills in nearby Altavista. In 1940, at the age of 25, Claude joined the U.S. Army from Virginia. At the time of Claude's death, his rank in the U.S. Army was Private First Class. Little did the Dewberry clan know when Claude signed up with the U.S. Army that they would never see

him again. Claude was stationed in the Philippines when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. Wounded in battle in January 1942, Claude recuperated in a hospital and was sent back to the action. On April 9, 1942, he was captured by the Japanese on the Bataan Peninsula while serving as a member of the medical detachment of the 194th Tank Battalion. Thus began a two-and-a-half-year odyssey as a POW in WWII. During the first days of his imprisonment, Claude survived the infamous Bataan Death March through the jungle, during which several thousand of his fellow Filipino and American soldiers died of thirst, starvation, dysentery, exhaustion, and cruelty by their Japanese guards. In 1944, the POWs were blindfolded and taken by truck to board a ship. Claude spent the next four months being shuffled to different prisons, finally landing at Bilibid Prison in Manila in October 1944. In late 1944, Japanese authorities began transporting Allied POWs to Japan aboard the Oryoku Maru. Unaware of the POWs aboard, a U.S. carrier-based aircraft attacked the ship, which sank in Subic Bay. Survivors were transferred to the Enoura Maru and the Brazil Maru. While anchored in Takao, Formosa (now Taiwan), the Enoura Maru was attacked by Allied aircraft. The Japanese government reported that Claude Dewberry died aboard the Enoura Maru on January 9, 1945.

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) announced on June 11, 2025, that U.S. Army Pfc. Claude A. Dewberry, 29, killed during World War II, was accounted for.

After the war, Claude's remains were among those recovered from a mass grave at Takao in 1946 but were not identified until 2025. DPAA laboratory analysis and circumstantial evidence confirmed his identity. He is permanently memorialized on the Walls of the Missing at the Manila American Cemetery and Memorial in the Philippines.

Claude was awarded the "Purple Heart," "Bronze Star Medal," "POW Medal,"

and many other medals by the U.S. Army to recognize his service, bravery, valor, and contributions to the war effort. He is remembered as a World War II Gold Star Veteran from Virginia, honored for his service, sacrifice, and patriotism. He is honored at the "Shrine of Memory" at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond, Virginia. His identification in 2025 provides closure to a long-unsolved case and ensures his memory is preserved for future generations. Also, he will be forever remembered for never having done anything for himself; everything was always for his family and country.

Claude is being brought to his final resting place after 81 years.

A funeral service will be held on Saturday, July 25, 2026, beginning at 11:00 a.m. at New Prospect Baptist Church, 509 Prospect Road, in Hurt, Virginia, to honor his memory, with interment to follow in the church cemetery with military honors rendered by the United States Army Honor Guard from Fort Lee.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that any memorial donations or contributions be made to New Prospect Baptist Church, 509 Prospect Road, Hurt, Virginia 24563.

Finch & Finch Funeral and Cremation Service, Altavista, is in charge of arrangements.

Cemetery Details

New Prospect Baptist Church Cemetery

509 Prospect Rd.
Hurt, VA 24563

Upcoming Events

Funeral Service

JUL 25. 11:00 AM (ET)

New Prospect Baptist Church
509 Prospect Rd.
Hurt, VA 24563