

Holding the Flank

Second Lieutenant Paul Kennedy Bowman, Jr. and the rest of the 75th Infantry Division arrived in England in late November 1944. After a short training program, the division proceeded to France, landing at the ports of Le Havre and Rouen on December 13. Two days later, when the Germans attacked through the Ardennes Forest to begin the Battle of the Bulge, the 75th was rushed to the front where it was deployed in defensive positions to hold the north flank of the German salient.



Paul Bowman of Dalzell entered Clemson College in the autumn of 1940 and majored in chemistry. He was a good student and earned an invitation to join Alpha Chi Sigma, the national chemistry honor fraternity. He also demonstrated military aptitude and was appointed the supply sergeant of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Regiment for his junior year. At the end of that academic year, Bowman and most of the rest of the young men in the Class of 1944 were ordered to military service.

Although he changed uniforms, Bowman remained at Clemson as the college hosted student-soldiers in the Army's Specialized Training Program. After completing the ASTP course, Bowman attended officer training at Fort Benning, Georgia where he earned his commission as a second lieutenant.



Bowman was then assigned to Company F, 291st Infantry Regiment, 75th Infantry Division at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, arriving on the same day as his Clemson classmate Jimmy Winebrenner. George Thomas, one of Company F's platoon sergeants, described Lieutenant Bowman as "a real soldier." Real soldiers would be needed as the division shipped out for England in November 1944.

Faced with the Germans' surprise winter offensive, Allied commanders ordered all available reserves—including the inexperienced 75th Infantry Division—to the front to establish blocking positions and halt the German advance. By Christmas Eve, the 75th was holding defensive positions west of the Ourthe River to the north of Marche, Belgium. Fighting in the bitter weather of the coldest winter in forty years, the 75th held and the Germans were unable to achieve their objective of a breakthrough.

On January 8, the 75th relieved the 82nd Airborne Division along the Salm River and prepared to attack the now retreating Germans. The division's plan called for sending Bowman's 291st Infantry Regiment to the north to seize the high ground above Vielsalm. The 291st's sister

regiment, the 289th, would swing to the south of the town in a double envelopment designed to trap the retreating Germans. On January 15, while fighting elements of the German 62nd Infantry Division, Second Lieutenant Bowman was killed by enemy mortar fire.

Paul Kennedy Bowman, Jr. was buried in the American Cemetery in Henri-Chappelle, Belgium. An only child, he was survived by his parents. In 1947, Bowman's remains were reinterred in St. Lawrence Cemetery in Sumter.

In memory of their son, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Bowman established the Paul K. Bowman, Jr. scholarships and fellowships at Clemson University in 1976.

