

## Into the Cauldron

Calvin Brown Griffin was one of the young men pulled off of college campuses and hurled into the cauldron of war in 1943. Griffin was a textile chemistry major from Belton who arrived on the Clemson campus in the late summer of 1940. He was assigned to Company E, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of the Cadet Brigade and attended the Clemson College Baptist Church. After Pearl Harbor, Griffin signed up for the Enlisted Reserve Corps which enabled him to remain a Clemson cadet—at least for a while.

In early 1943, the War Department announced that to fill the ranks of the divisions the Army planned to deploy to fight in Europe and the Pacific, college men who were enrolled in advanced ROTC—juniors and seniors—and those in the ERC, would be called to active duty at the conclusion of their spring semesters. Collegians in neither category were already being ordered to duty.

Along with most of his Class of 1944 mates, Griffin left Clemson in the spring of 1943. He entered the Army on June 27 at Fort Jackson. Griffin was commissioned a second lieutenant at Fort Benning, Georgia and was later stationed at Shaw Field in Sumter; Santa Ana, California; and Fort Meade, Maryland before shipping overseas as a replacement officer in February 1945.

Arriving in England, Second Lieutenant Griffin crossed the Channel to France and joined up with the 60<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Belgium. The division had been chewed up in the Hurtgen Forest campaign the previous autumn, suffering 80% casualties among its front-line troops. Griffin was most likely assigned as a rifle platoon leader.

On March 8, elements of the 60<sup>th</sup> were among the units shoved quickly across the captured Ludendorff Bridge over the Rhine River at Remagen, Germany. After helping expand the bridgehead, the regiment attacked to the northeast, helping to seal and destroy the Ruhr Pocket and advancing toward the Harz Mountains. For his heroism, Second Lieutenant Griffin was awarded the Silver Star. On April 16, just twenty-two days before the German surrender, Griffin was killed in action in Germany.

In addition to the Silver Star, Second Lieutenant Griffin was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, Good Conduct Medal, American Campaign Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, and World War II Victory Medal. He was survived by his mother. Griffin



was buried in the American Military Cemetery, Margraten, Netherlands, and is memorialized at the Belton Cemetery and Belton's Veterans' Park.

