

PFC Bob Rutledge Lawson Class of 1945



During the fall of 1940, Clemson College must have seemed a long way from Bob Lawson's hometown of Birmingham, AL. He probably spent the entire trip wondering about the rigorous life of a cadet and trying to imagine the intense study required of an engineering student. He entered Clemson that fall but his studies were cut short by his response to his country during its hour of need. Bob joined the US Army and was assigned to Company C, 260th Infantry Regiment, 65th Infantry Division.

The Division went into the line in early March when the great "spring offensive" was already well underway on the northern end of the Western Front. Four Allied armies had closed the enemy into a series of narrow pockets along the western bank of the Rhine. This offensive steadily spread southward to reach the Third Army at a time when Gen. Patton's troops were already advancing slowly on a broad 50 mile front from Prum (on the north) to Saarburg (on the south).

After training in the US, crossing the Atlantic in a troop ship, and a few days in France, the 260th got its orders to head out. According to a personal account: *"Moving orders came down on the 26th of February and we departed rather reluctantly on the 27th, at 1330. From Lucky Strike we marched over the familiar road to St Valcry where we were to become members of the '40 and 8' club in a matter of minutes. Our destination was again unknown and again the rumors flew. Those in the know claimed Rheims and a 'good deal' while the pessimistic claimed that we'd go straight to the front. Lady Luck struck a happy medium and after three days we detrained at Thionville, France, and boarded trucks for our new destination. We arrived at Hamboorg in the province of Lorraine, battleground of World War I. While at Hamboorg we were told that the Division had been transferred to the Third Army and that it was a matter of a few days before we would be in*

combat.

Our advance party consisting of all the officers except Lt Higgins and all the platoon sergeants and squad leaders left Hamboorg on the 4th of March to make a reconnaissance of the area then occupied by "G" Company, 101st Infantry, 26th Division. On the 5th the rest of the company left Hamboorg and arrived in Fraulautern at 0230, 6 March 1945. Before actually committed, we had our first casualty when Sergeant Rasar was hit and wounded by sniper fire. The squad leaders took their respective squads and put them in position and by 0600 the 26th Division was completely relieved in our sector. The CP's and OP's were manned -- -- -- Charlie Company had hit combat despite all words to the contrary that had been uttered since the days at Camp Shelby.

The First Platoon was holding down the hot spot of the Battalion front with enemy machine gun and sniper fire constantly staring them in the face. Mortar and Artillery fire was intense in the entire area. Certain streets were covered by sniper fire and we all learned just where they were as a matter of self-preservation. Nightly ration 'runs' were a necessity and for the first few nights the pot and pan factory was a real obstacle. We had our first man killed in action on our first day of combat when a mortar shell dropped in front of Bob Lawson, while he was on guard at the First Platoon's hottest spot -- -- -- Red OP 5. "

Private First Class Bob Lawson left Birmingham, AL thinking that he was on his way to completing a degree in Engineering at Clemson College. The events of WWII called him to serve his country and protect our freedom. He sacrificed his life on March 6, 1945. PFC Lawson was awarded a Purple Heart and is interred at the Luxembourg American Cemetery.

<http://www.lonesentry.com/ccompany/>

<http://ufdc.ufl.edu/UF00047650/00001/11j>

<http://www.lonesentry.com/65thbook/index.html>



BOB R. LAWSON
PFC 260 INF 65 DIV
ALABAMA MAR 6 1945

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