

John,

This is a "stripped-down-version" of 3 1/2 years of active duty, H.H.V., Infantry. I am sure some of the words are misspelled and punctuation a wreck, so, please forgive the errors. Thanks to you!!

Stafford C. Patton

LT. STAFFORD ALLEN PATTERSON

I served 3 1/2 years active duty in US  
Infantry WW# + 5 years Reserve  
discharged after Korean War was over!  
Miss my Captaincy by 1 mo. Service  
+ I was ready to return from  
Europe + didn't want to serve  
another day that wasn't necessary.  
during ~~active~~ service I ~~do~~ received  
1 Purple Heart - one Bronze Star -  
the Expert Infantry Badge - the Combat  
Infantry badge - Western Europ. ribbon  
with 3 ~~stars~~ Good conduct Ribbon -  
Army Occupation Ribbon - Victory Medal!



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Birthday  
2/26/21

#1

Serial # 34465921 --enlisted  
Commission # 0 2 005 973

Feb. 26, 1942 I reached my 20th birthday and volunteered for Air Force Pilot Training ~~xxxxxxxxxxx~~ I failed the physical in Charlotte due to high blood pressure and nervous heart. I was drafted and failed three callups with no classification. I asked for another physical for classification and was drafted Nov. 17, 1942. (Head of Draft board had sent me to a Doctor for exam) -- I passed, and on returning to Draft Board office; I was accepted, but couldn't leave on Nov 18th without volunteering---I didn't: I left Wilson, drafted, Dec. 2, 1942, for Fort Bragg, N. C., and wound up in the U. S. Infantry .

I was sent to Camp Claiborne, La., to a newly formed 10 3 Inf., Div, assigned to Co. D, 409th Infantry Regiment, being staffed by a cadre ~~xxx~~ of officers and ~~xxx~~ non/coms. The Company Commander was a 12-year veteran of the Marines, and thought WW2 would be won by a The 03 rifle and 21 "Bayonette". We had about five rifles in our Heavy Weapons Co., 30 cal. machine guns, two platoons, and one 81 MM Mortar platoon. One ~~day~~ day in training ~~xxxx~~ the C.O. (Capt.) had an 03 rifle in his hand and threw it to me. I took the rifle and showed him I knew how to handle it. I had it made after that. He made me his Communication Sgt. (acting) after that! We had no radios and only a few ~~telephones~~ -- being his Communication Sgt. (acting) meant that when we had a message for someone, I had to "hot foot it" ~~in~~ from here to there on "foot" no matter how far. I was made Corporal, sent to Radio School, and could receive and send 15 words per min and passed the course for Radio Operator. I was later made a Buck Sergeant.

I had trained with machine guns and mortars, but loved the 81 MM Mortar. I turned in for O.C.S but tore my papers up when we got some new Second Johns. An opening came up for a new Squad Leader of 81MM Mortar Squad, which carried a Staff Sgt. rating, and I asked the Capt. ~~xxxxxx~~ for the job; he gave it to me , ~~and~~ and I took ~~a~~ Squad ~~overseas~~. On ~~our~~ way to France, we ran into a really bad storm in the ~~Mediter~~ ~~SEA~~ waves breaking over the bow of the ship, but we landed safely in Marsaille, France. We disembarked and walked several meters to our camp ..After getting all our equipment off the ship, we were sent ~~in~~ into the line in ~~the~~ the Volge ~~Mountains~~ Mountains. We releived a Jap-American Battalion Under fire, we dug in. We dug quite a few ~~out~~ ~~of~~ ~~their~~ ~~holes~~ ~~and~~ ~~put~~ ~~them~~ ~~on~~ ~~a~~ ~~road~~ ~~for~~ ~~pick~~ ~~up~~ ~~and~~ ~~burial~~. After a couple of days in these holes (it was cold and snowing), we were to attack (our first) the Germans . I was on the O.P. for our 81MM, one Platoon of six guns armed with 120 rounds of ~~ammo~~. per gun for the first hour. My target was a cone-shaped hill in the middle of our sector. I fired all six guns and walked the fire from botton to top and back. Our Infantry later told me they did not find a live ~~one~~



a live German on that ~~xxx~~ hill. 500 rounds of 81MM <sup>Fire</sup> covers a small <sup>#2</sup> hill pretty good.

<sup>Well</sup> AD One small battle after another until we entered into the Seventh Army Siegfried Line. I was Mortar <sup>FORWARD</sup> Observer with a Rifle Company, in the lead on the Main Line. The Rifle Co. Commander didn't have a man to point his attack with a compass. I had a compass and offered to lead the rifle Co. through the wooded area. We finally got pinned down by a large German force and dug in. We took off again <sup>BUT</sup> I didn't point the new attack.

<sup>Direct</sup> We were pinned down on the forward slope of a mountain and were under fire before digging in. I was ~~kneeling~~ kneedeep in my fox hole and felt something hitting my back. I ~~looked~~ looked around and discovered machine gun fire was eating the ground behind ~~my~~ butt. It didn't take me long to get ~~my~~ hole deep enough for cover.

The next morning we jumped <sup>OFF</sup> again and took a pill box and trenches on a ~~the~~ hill to our front. We started with two Rifle Companies, one Heavy Weapons ~~Platoon~~ Machine Gun Platoon, two Mortar Men, and two Artillery Observers.

There was another Pill Box on the Hill which we took every day and the Germans took back every night. The Supply ~~Platoon~~ Soldiers fought our ammo and ~~supplies~~ rations into our positions, but being an "outsider" <sup>one</sup> I got ~~3~~ 5 cheese dinners every day ~~instead~~ instead of 1 cheese, 1 meat and 1 breakfast ration..... I was drawing mine at night from the Riflemen. We got our water from a spring and ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> were under fire every time we filled our canteen.

There was an article in the WILSON DAILY TIMES about a soldier ~~that~~ <sup>THAT</sup> getting a bullet hole through his helmet and didn't kill him. One of my friends in our Machine Gun Platoon had the same thing happen to him. The bullet went through his helmet and took the ~~button~~ <sup>WOOL</sup> button off his scull cap inside his helmet --- both were lucky!! We were relieved 24th Dec. 1944 <sup>INFANTRY</sup> off this Hill by the 45th Div.... The best XMAS ~~Present~~ Present I ever had.

<sup>IN BATTLE</sup> We arrived with 2 Rifle Companies, One Platoon Heavy <sup>OF</sup> Weapons <sup>AND</sup> Four Artillery Observers. <sup>AND</sup> We left ~~with~~ with only 40 Officers and Men, While we were on the Hill, all our Browning Automatic Rifles were out of commission and wouldn't fire. All the B.A.R. men were killed or wounded, <sup>SO</sup> I spent about every night getting these important weapons firing again --- <sup>THIS WAS</sup> something else I learned at The Citadel.

When ~~We~~ left the Hill on ~~the~~ the 24 Dec. <sup>we</sup> <sup>1944</sup> were, ~~under~~ under fire leaving, and when we arrived at where we were to ~~spend~~ spend the night, we heard the Germans counterattacked the 45th Division on our Hill and ~~drove~~ drove them off for a while. <sup>our Supply Train By Air</sup> We got word that our kitchens were lost, but <sup>FOR CHRISTMAS</sup> would drop our frozen chickens <sup>then</sup> on our location, or keep them for a <sup>LATER</sup> meeting. We took the chickens. A Sgt. from Durham, N. C., sent us out <sup>TO</sup> this little town for oil of any kind. He cooked the chicken in a steel helmet on 25 Dec., 44. The best Xmas Dinner I ever had!!!, especially after 10 days of cheese K-rations ~~per day~~. We were sent several places <sup>and</sup> and finally wound up in an ex-German fort



with snow on the ground, no roof on the barracks. By this time I had inherited two <sup>MORTAR</sup> squads as Section Sgt, no raise in rank, just more responsibility. I finally <sup>WAS</sup> made Platoon Sgt. and had six <sup>MORTAR</sup> squads under me. Our Battalion was pulling Bridge Guard on important roads in the neighborhood. Everything was covered with snow. German paratroopers in the area were trying to destroy ~~the~~ the bridges and we furnished guards to stop this. Every time one or two of my men were assigned <sup>AS</sup> bridge guards, I went with the trip putting them on the bridge, taking them hot food, and then went back to pick them up. I just wanted to be sure they were taken care of o.k. *While on that duty.*

One morning, on wake up, I backed into a candle while making up ~~my~~ sleeping bag ~~and~~ and set my pants on fire. A friend patted the fire out, <sup>But</sup> I had a big hole burned through ....!!

Soon an order came down for me to report to Battalion HQ, with all equipment. It was reported we were leaving for a new home. I reported, was put on a truck and sent to Division HQ, during which the doctor said, "lie down" on the cot. He checked my blood pressure again and said it wasn't good, but I had been through combat with it --- ~~so~~ so he passed me. <sup>Got A Battle Field Commission</sup> I became a Second Lt. <sup>RND</sup> was sent to a school for new officers in France for several days and was assigned to the 79th Infantry Div., 315th Infantry, Company M, another Heavy Weapons Co.

I got one section of two guns in the ~~the~~ Mortar Platoon, and ~~was~~ told <sup>Receivd</sup> I had a BRONZE STAR, ~~which I didn't know,~~ <sup>my new command</sup> ~~also knew I had a~~ Field Commission. *HAD NOT KNOWN ABOUT THIS PREVIOUSLY.*

We had several assignments after I joined ~~the~~ Division. <sup>THAT</sup> We went into Belgium getting ready to make a river attack, but got closed out of our area. We then moved into Holland for the Rhine River crossing and trained for two weeks. We moved to the Rhine River, across from Dinslaken, Germany, and waited at the dyke for a motor boat to take us across the river. Finally, the boat arrived. I was assigned (as <sup>AN</sup> observer <sup>FOR</sup> 81st Mortars) ~~to~~ to a Rifle Company Headquarters, just to ~~cross~~

<sup>THE RIVER</sup> ~~over~~. I was the first on the boat and the last off -- <sup>WE NOW</sup> ~~all~~ had the ground on the other side. Through the smoke and dark, my radio man was <sup>THE ONLY ONE</sup> I saw behind me. I went to the <sup>BACK</sup> bank, and ~~all~~ were <sup>RIVER THERE</sup> on the ground. I told them when I led I wanted to be followed, and they followed. We moved forward to a dyke <sup>WHERE WE</sup> and were pinned down by fire. I put my ~~radio~~ radio man in a <sup>FOX</sup> hole and ~~xx~~ told him to stay until I came back for him. Looking forward, I couldn't see any object I recognized; so I picked up ~~my~~ my ~~radio~~ radio man, and we headed forward looking for <sup>THE</sup> Rifle Co. to join. Finally, I found ~~the~~ Rifle Co., <sup>WHERE THEY</sup> and we were held ~~up~~ up at a railway embankment, covered by a string of houses, <sup>THAT WERE</sup> full of snipers. We backed up in another strip of houses and sacked in for the night. The next morning, I fired a mortar <sup>VOLLEY</sup> ~~on~~ on and behind the Railroad embankment, and <sup>THE</sup> the Rifle Co., took the area.

Moving forward, ~~we~~ we came to another wide area, cleared, with a ~~house~~ house, beside a road. Infantry was pinned down in the field, and I couldn't find any target to <sup>ATTACK WITH</sup> mortars from this building, even <sup>AFTER</sup> knocking out some tiles in the roof. A small hill was just ahead, <sup>GERMAN</sup> and we were getting air bursts from ~~88's~~ 88's all around ~~us~~ us. I went out the door of the house to find a route to the next hill, and received



a schrapnel jolt to my left arm, (which, by the way, got me a PURPLE HEART later!!!!) I went <sup>BACK</sup> inside the building, took off my combat jacket, and a medic cut away my sleeve to get to the wounded area <sup>ON my Arm.</sup> There was a hole large enough to stick my index finger in, with room to spare, down my arm, <sup>ON AS</sup> there was no blood (lucky), <sup>THE</sup> medic bandaged <sup>my Arm,</sup> <sup>Cause me Pain</sup> <sup>5</sup> <sup>COLT</sup> <sup>Area</sup> and sent me to the rear, walking. I gave my radio man my 45 pistol to keep for me. I started ~~walking~~ walking back to the rear and met my Co. Commander and Battalion Commander and gave them my carbine. I got on a Medic Jeep to the Battalion Aid Station, and they prepared me to board a swimming truck. <sup>DUKW</sup> <sup>As I was climbing aboard, THE</sup> with one arm, we were strafed by four rockets -- never saw the plane, but it was noisy! Later, it turned out to be <sup>one of the</sup> new German Jet fighters. We crossed the river to the air field, and I was ~~flown~~ flown to Reims, France. I saw all the holes across France <sup>we</sup> had dug. I spent a week in Reims, France, and was sent by train to Verdun General Hospital, ~~where~~ <sup>WINTER</sup> and spent the rest of the war ~~there~~. Word came <sup>DOWN</sup> that all casual officers would be sent to Japan from the hospital <sup>when</sup> discharged. I got the hospital C.O. to send me out early to my outfit. If I had to go to Japan, I wanted to go with my <sup>own</sup> outfit. The war in Europe was over the next day. On the way back to my outfit, by truck, I passed through Bastogne, and it was <sup>Resky</sup> shot up. <sup>What</sup> I got back to the 79th, <sup>and</sup> they were being sent <sup>BACK</sup> Stateside. <sup>As</sup> I didn't have enough points, as an Officer, to go home <sup>With them</sup> I was transferred to the 102nd ~~Infantry~~ Infantry Division. <sup>W/ it was ASSIGNED TO OCCUPATION DUTY.</sup> At my new home, they made me Entertainment Officer, <sup>there WAS</sup> non-fraternizing <sup>WITH THE CIVILIANS</sup> <sup>THIS WAS MY</sup> <sup>AS</sup> I was sent to another new home in Germany, ~~and~~ <sup>the</sup> old company we relieved. <sup>they</sup> had a German band on Sat. night, and an American band on Wed. night, <sup>we</sup> <sup>we CONTINUED TO DO THE SAME AND</sup> they had dancing, wine, beer and champagne. The American band ~~was~~ was paid with American money, and the German band was paid with old German money. We danced two times, weekly, there was no charge to the men. They were served 700 liters of beer, 100 bottles of champagne, and were allowed to buy whiskey at the bar, at each ~~xxx~~ dance with American money. The Company non-coms were responsible for their men, and we had no trouble at any dance. Everybody had a good time. These dances were financed by a gift of \$5,000.00, <sup>marks</sup> old German money. <sup>was</sup> <sup>an</sup> American soldier, who told me to give him a Jeep and 10 gals. of gas and <sup>he</sup> would get me the \$5,000.00, <sup>marks</sup> old German money. I immediately asked, "when are you leaving?". The American money was <sup>PAID</sup> made by the men buying drinks at the bar from the whiskey ration they had received. The wine and beer were paid for from the "gift" of the German money. I was ~~transferred~~ transferred to Labor Supervision Co. <sup>OF</sup> Polish Guards. <sup>and my</sup> <sup>my</sup> worst job was keeping them from killing the Germans. I was sent home from Europe, <sup>in</sup> <sup>OF</sup> June 1946, and landed <sup>in</sup> New York harbour. They didn't know the 'Troop Ship was coming, so we stayed aboard until that night. We were fed supper, that night, at 10:00 P.M. at Fort Dix, <sup>N.J.</sup> From there I was sent to Ft. Bragg, for discharge. <sup>Bq TRAIN N.C.</sup>

Cause me Pain

DUKW

INF DIV

there WAS the

Neenan Bond  
25% COTTON FIBER