

Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Edward (Pat) Stapleton

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Veterans Remember Oral History project

Interview # VR2-V-L-2008-011

Edward (Pat) Stapleton, an infantryman in Europe during the Second World War, was interviewed on the date listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: February 29, 2008 Location: IL Information Service Studio, Springfield, IL

Interview Format: Digital video

Interviewer: Mark DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Technical Support (cameraman, etc): Mark Suszko & IIS staff

Transcription by: Tape Transcription Center

Edited by: Rozanne Flatt, ALPL Volunteer

Total Pages: 34 pgs. Total Time: 1:22 / 1.37 hrs.

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 3/19/2008.

The interview is archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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Abstract

Edward (Pat) Stapleton, *Veterans Remember*, VR2-V-L-2008-011

Biographical Information Overview of Interview: Edward (Pat) Stapleton was born on August 16, 1921 in New Berlin, Illinois. At the age of eight the family house burned down, and the family moved to a farm in rural New Berlin. Pat discusses the many jobs his father took up during the great depression, including running the farm, work as a bar owner and running a dance hall, as well as running a small rodeo. Pat was attending a Bears game when he heard about Pearl Harbor and immediately tried to enlist, but was rejected for health reasons. He was finally able to enlist in September 1943, and received his basic infantry training at Camp McClellan, Alabama. He married Arlene Mae Thompson, his Illinois sweetheart, on December 3rd, 1943, just days before sailing to Italy.

Once there, he was assigned to Company I of the 143rd Infantry Regiment, 36th Infantry Division, a Texas National Guard unit that had already seen heavy combat in Italy. Pat first saw action at Anzio, participated in the liberation of Rome, then was shipped with the 36th Division to southern France, where he fought in the Vosges Mountain campaign before advancing into Germany proper. Pat recalled several brutal combat experiences, and the high casualty rates suffered by the unit during a long stretch of continuous combat. He also shared his vivid memories of liberating a German concentration camp in southern Germany. He served on occupation duty in Germany for several months, and arrived back home in December of 1945, just in time for Christmas. He passed away on January 31, 2012.

Topics Covered: Childhood memories of growing up in central Illinois during depression; Pearl Harbor; U.S. Army infantryman during WW II – Italian and southern Europe theaters; Company I of the 143rd Infantry Regiment, 36th Infantry Division; Rome – Arno campaign; Southern France campaign; Vosges Mountain campaign; Rhineland campaign; Dachau concentration camp liberation; reflection on German soldiers

Note to the Reader: Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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