

# A Great Soldier's Story

*Sunday, December 13, 2009*

*The Associated Press*

**Head east from Carthage on Mississippi highway 16 toward Philadelphia. After a few miles a sign says you're in Edinburg. It's a good thing the sign's there, because there's no other way to tell.**

**On June 15, 1919, Van T. Barfoot was born in Edinburg; probably didn't make much news back then.**

# 2LT VAN T. BARFOOT



**Twenty-five years later, on May 23, 1944, near Carano , Italy , Van T. Barfoot, who had enlisted in the Army in 1940, set out to flank German machine gun positions from which fire was coming down on his fellow soldiers. He advanced through a minefield, took out three enemy machine gun positions and returned with 17 prisoners of war.**

# 2LT VAN T. BARFOOT



**If that wasn't enough for a day's work, he later took on and destroyed three German tanks sent to retake the machine gun positions.**

# 2LT VAN T. BARFOOT



**That probably didn't make much news either, given the scope of the war, but it did earn Van T. Barfoot, who retired as a colonel after also serving in Korea and Vietnam , a Congressional Medal of Honor.**

# 2LT VAN T. BARFOOT



*Sergeant Van Barfoot, later promoted to second lieutenant, earned the Medal of Honor while serving with L Company, 157th Infantry Regiment. (Courtesy of 45th Infantry Division Archives)*

*(from "The Rock of Anzio" with permission of Flint Whitlock)*

# 2LT VAN T. BARFOOT



What did make news last week was a neighborhood association's quibble with how the 90-year-old veteran chose to fly the American flag outside his suburban Virginia home. Seems the rules said a flag could be flown on a house-mounted bracket, but, for decorum, items such as Barfoot's 21-foot flagpole were unsuitable.



# 2LT VAN T. BARFOOT



**He had been denied a permit for the pole, erected it anyway and was facing court action if he didn't take it down. Since the story made national TV, the neighborhood association has rethought its position and agreed to indulge this old hero who dwells among them.**

# 2LT VAN T. BARFOOT



***"In the time I have left I plan to continue to fly the American flag without interference," Barfoot told The Associated Press.***



# 2LT VAN T. BARFOOT



**And if any of his neighbors still takes a notion to contest him, they might want to read his Medal of Honor citation. It indicates he's not real good at backing down.**

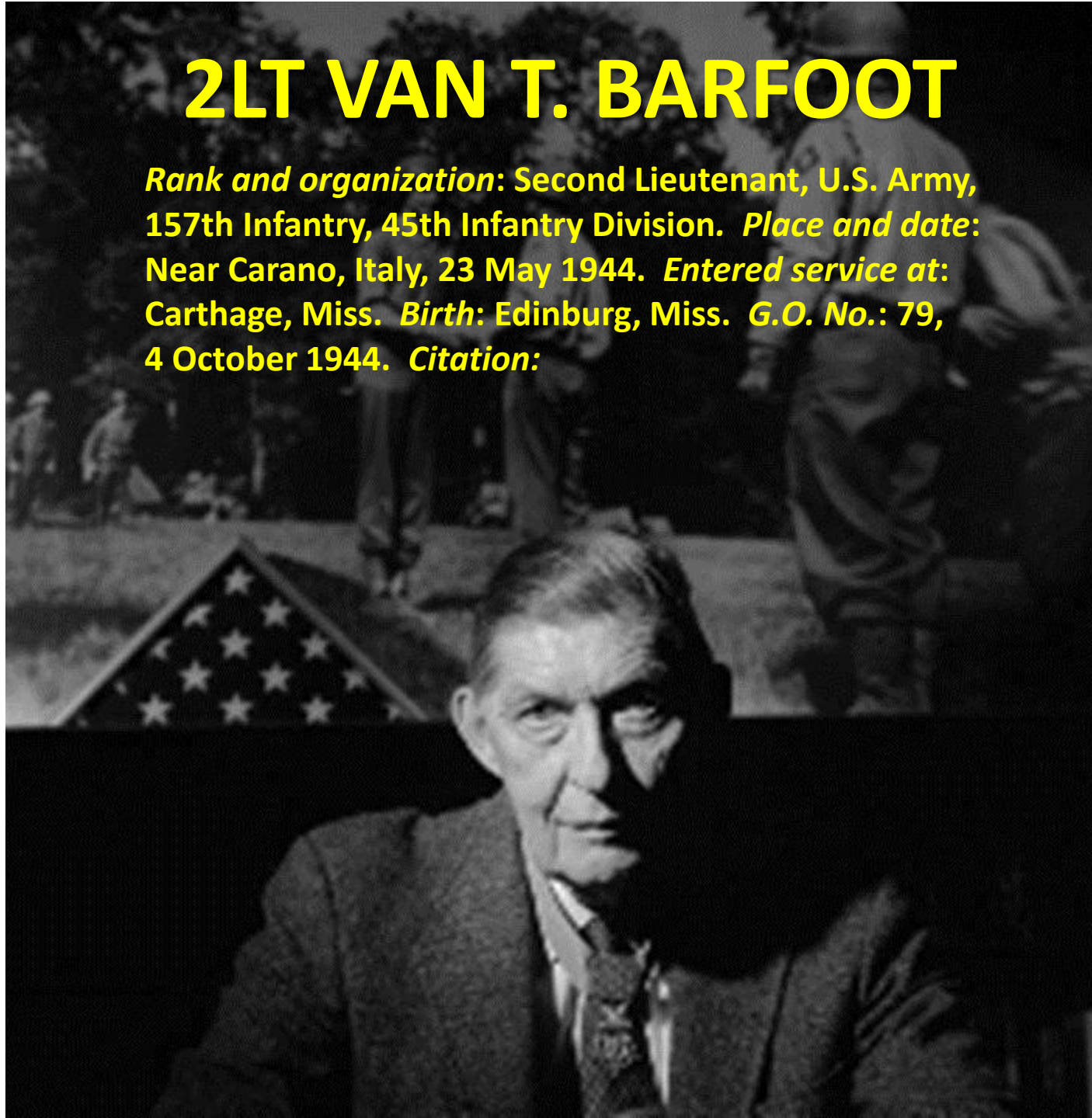
# 2LT VAN T. BARFOOT



Medal of Honor citation: from *The Congressional Medal of Honor: The Names, the Deeds* (Forest Ranch, CA: Sharp & Dunnigan Publications, nd), 255.

# 2LT VAN T. BARFOOT

*Rank and organization:* Second Lieutenant, U.S. Army, 157th Infantry, 45th Infantry Division. *Place and date:* Near Carano, Italy, 23 May 1944. *Entered service at:* Carthage, Miss. *Birth:* Edinburg, Miss. *G.O. No.:* 79, 4 October 1944. *Citation:*



# MEDAL OF HONOR CITATIONS



THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JR.

WALTER D. EHLERS

ROBERT G. COLE

MATT URBAN

VAN T. BARFOOT

*The Congressional Medal of Honor: The Names, the Deeds*  
(Forest Ranch, CA: Sharp & Dunnigan Publications, nd).