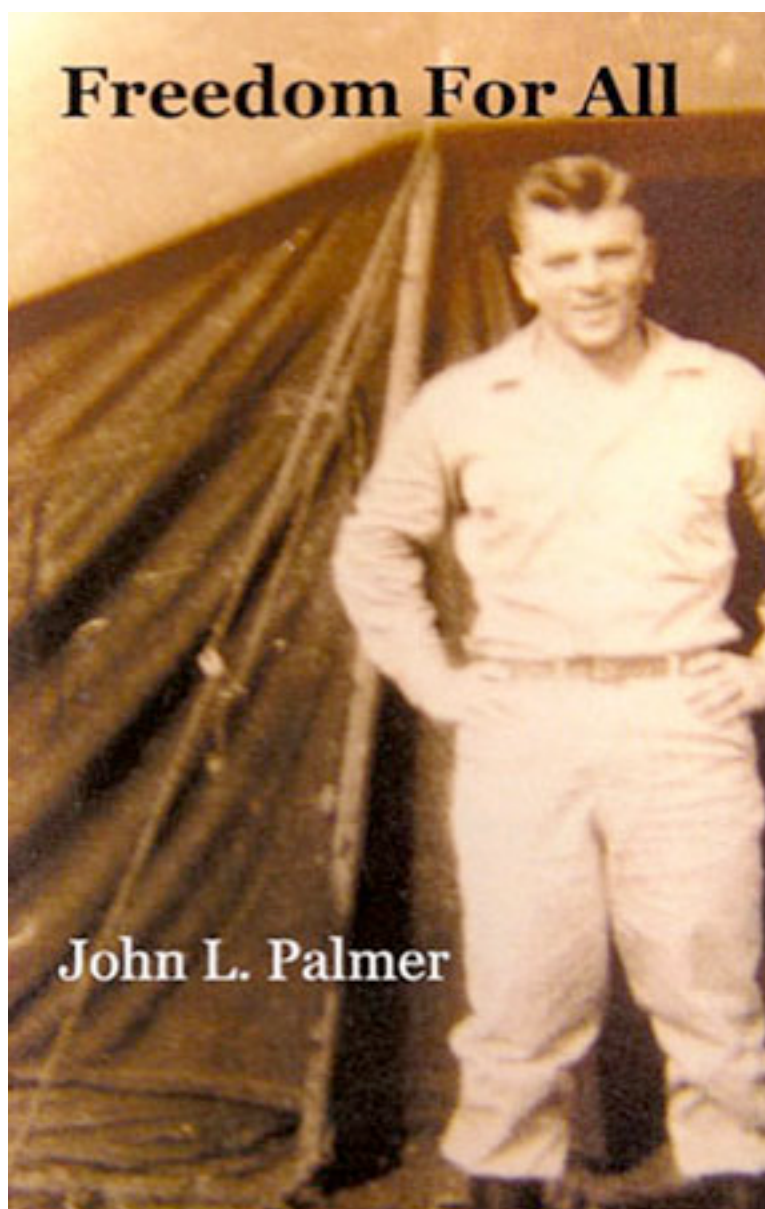


Excerps from



John Palmer
Medic, E Co: 382nd Regiment

John Palmer was raised on a farm in Showell, Maryland, was drafted into the Army at age eighteen. He took his basic at Ft McLennan, Alabama, and from there he went to Ft Ord, and joined the men of the 96th in Hawaii. He was one of a group of Deadeyes sent to Saipan and saw limited action there as the battle came to close. He rejoined the division and made the landing on Okinawa and was assigned as the Medic of E Company, with no more training than anyone else had in basic.

He recalls killing Japanese soldiers on occasion, as needed, and had been on night patrols with the infantry. He often had to address the wounded in dangerous situations, and during those times he was protected by others. He was in on a lot of situations to numerous to recall in detail.

Throughout his book of 147 pages he provides much history of E company and his 2nd Battalion for his reader. The narrative he wrote is the result of careful research.



Excerpts of his story may be found on pages from his book that follows, and his specific actions are noted on each page.

fighting around Conical, was showing great impetus in its drive up 167, and was left in the front line under 382nd's control.

Col. Sterner's first job when he took over from major Bucklin was to clean out three small hills east of Yuza which were still causing trouble. It proved a man sized task. On one of the hills, Company G drew machine gun fire from three directions and a considerable amount of mortar fire, but was able to seize and hold the crest. Company F also ran into machine gun trouble and sniper fire, plus grief from a hitherto united Knob which proved to be a nest of tunnels and pillboxes. At night fall a lot of work remained to be done and the company was in the embarrassing position of being on the forward most of the two hills, with the one to their rear still held by the Japs. Company E was ordered to assault the main portion of Yuza Ridge in the vicinity of the pillbox which had given the 383rd trouble. Two platoons reached the crest on either side of the pillbox without too much difficulty, but once they were on top they found themselves on the apex of Jap mortar, grenade and deadly sniper fire. One of the snipers was firing an American M rifle he had picked up from one of our dead. Ernest B. Snyder, a rifleman and medic, was shot twice in the back of his neck. I went to assist him; he was my best buddy. One shot had cut the leader on the right side of his neck in other he still had the bullet in rear center. I patched him up and sent him with

some of our other men to rear aid station where he was operated on. He lived and was returned to us two or 3 days later. When it started to heal, he and I removed the stitches. It left large scars and holes.

Capt. C. Porter was the company commander; he wasn't sure the ridge could be held since no foxholes could be dug in the hard rock. He called together his platoon leaders and asked them if they wanted to stay. Well, answered T. Sgt. Gerald Sisk of the 2nd Platoon (the one I was in) "Colonel Sterner has a habit of holding the ground he takes". We all stayed, and it was rough. Almost immediately the Japs began throwing explosives over the crest and caused almost a dozen casualties. Later in the afternoon, under heavy Jap fire, a caring party attempted to get supplies up to us. They got as far as the base. No sooner had a group from the top started down to pick up our new supplies than the Japs would open up with both mortar and machine gun fire. Ten more men were wounded. I was really busy trying to patch up and attend to as many of the wounded as I could. A lot of our men helped me when they could. All but one of the water cans were punctured, but I remember PFC Schwartz finally went down after dark and got one more water can to the top. We all got awful jittery. All communications went out. Nine inexperienced replacements were huddled together and all were wounded. That night Peacock (the radio and runner) and myself piled

up rocks around us. Lt. Anthony Zambo was with us. None of us slept, we just watched out. Sgt. Sisk was with his men in another hole in the front line.

The next day while directing our tanks Sgt. Sisk was wounded by our tank fire. He wasn't seriously wounded, but I never got to see him any more. I always thought he was a great leader. The 3rd Platoon was also having a lively time with roving Jap machine gunners and also Jap infiltrations but after 10:30 that morning things quieted down.

The next morning a platoon of five tanks accounted for a good number of Japs and late in the afternoon Capt. Porter sent his 3rd Platoon around the right end and his 1st over the crest in a coordinated attempt to seize the reverse slopes. Lt. Anthony Zombo, an officer I was with a lot of times, and PFC James Bickett led the charge over the top. Lt. Zombo was standing on a rock and a Jap gunner shattered the rock. When he fell he wrenched his knee so badly, he had to be evacuated. The 2nd & 3rd Platoons made their objective.

The same day, F company cleaned out the unsecured hill to the rear and moved with surprising ease onto Hill 167 to the west of Stare's Battalion. Company G, with a squad of men under S. Sgt. John Van Dover in the lead, worked their way onto the left end of Yuza Ridge. They too attempted to gain Hill 167, but were halted by Jap fire from both front and rear. Sorry to say

Now we move to another page on another incident a few pages later.

the occupants with rifle fire and grenades. Company I met fierce resistance and all attempts to get on the ridge between K Company and Sterner's 2nd Battalion failed. PFC Ralph Van Wig killed six Japanese pouring from a cave after one of them had shot off his helmet and knocked him on conscious.

On the 18th of June the American forces on Okinawa lost their commander Lt. General Simon Buckner, Jr.

On June 18th we were on the last escarpment. 382nd's Company E 2nd Platoon Sgt. Tyson Shelton had taken over from Sgt. Gerald Sisk when he was wounded. It was not serious, but he was sent back to the rear aid station. This morning we had four men killed by a Jap machine gunner. I went to these men – all were my closest buddies - but I couldn't help them. Sgt. Shelton told us to dig in and stay put until he could order our mortars and artillery to do some firing in a volley or lower cliff. We could see that was where firing was coming from by a Jap machine gunner. That same morning General Easley along with his aide Lt. John H. Tuberville came right up front to us. He was going to use our positions for their observation post on his daily tour of the front. He wanted to know from Sgt. Tyson Shelton why we were not out of our holes and advancing on so Shelton told him I had gone to four of our men who had been killed that morning before he came up front and that Sgt. Shelton was trying to get the sniper. The General

was an excellent shooter so he and Lt. Tuberville with glasses would shoot where the Jap gunners were hiding so they got behind a boulder and each shot. Nearly as soon as they started, I heard a shot. They called for me as an infantryman and a medic to see Lt. Tuberville, who had been hit. It was in the hand and wrist, but not serious. He wouldn't even let me bandage him up, so he ran back down the escarpment to go to a rear aid station. The General then decided he would still try to get the sniper himself, so Sgt. Talmadge D. Lively of our machine gun section went over to the General to see if he could help trading off shots and looking with the glasses. It was just a short time before I heard two more shots they were not any of ours. Sgt. Shelton called me to go to St. Lively and General Easley. When I got there the General had been hit twice in the head, killed instantly. Sgt. Talmadge Lively had some bullet fragments where the shots had hit the big rock they were hiding behind and had a lot of blood on him from the General. I did not have a stretcher so we placed him on our poncho raincoat to take him back down the hill the way we came up. Several of our men went to take him back. Sgt. Talmadge Lively and our BA Ramon Emory Budo were two of our men who took him back. I kept in touch with both men over the years with my letters. Emory Budo has since passed away. He was my hero. St. Talmadge Lively is still living and has had the bullet fragments removed from his arm. He can't write

letters so I call him on the phone and write him letters.

The General's death was a great loss to the 96th Division. That same day, when we advanced from our position, we knew we did get the Jap sniper. He couldn't shoot anyone else. I just wish we could have got the sniper first before the General came up to us.

Under the combined attack of the three Battalions, Aragachi fell on June 20th. While Col. Stermere was cleaning out caves and pillboxes on the ridge, heavy mortar fire was placed on the town and caught a group of 25 to 30 Japs attempting to escape. But our own troops also suffered from mortar fire, a barrage which led to the G Company command's first wounded Capt. Franklin Nicholson, who had commanded the company through both campaigns; the attack also killed two other men and wounded seven more.

At 2 o'clock the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 382nd made a coordinated sweep through the town giving their commanders a few grey hairs by moving in skirmish line standing erect and firing as they went. Eight Japs trapped in a tomb threw out a half-dozen Jap sabers, apparently in the hope the men of ours would take the souvenirs and let them alone, but the only thanks they received was a satchel charge. A squad of F Company under John Whitaker had 6 men wounded in a skirmish with eight Japs who were attempting to blow up two of our tanks, but they

One of John's friends's helped to carry Gen Easley back and he reported that Easley's pearl handled pistols were missing. It was learned later that a man named Roy Hufstutler of Ridgeway, Illinois had one. But that was twenty years ago and he is deceased, so we will never know the truth. They had been inlaid with the Blue and White Deadeye logo.

John printed a few copies of his book for friends and family and reported that he was glad to be a part of this history, and wishes that his children and their children would remember him and Deadeyes for years to

come. He has kept in contact with his friends, and still resides in Berlin, Maryland.

“We all fought for freedom for all and peace on earth. I just did my duty like all military men do.”

John L Palmer, Deadeye