

May he Rest In Peace.

Van T. Barfoot died at the age of 92 on 2 March 2013.

Remember the guy who wouldn't take the flag pole down on his Virginia property a while back?

You might remember the news story several months ago about a crotchety old man in Virginia who defied his local Homeowners Association, and refused to take down the flag pole on his property along with the large American flag he flew on it.

Now we learn who that old man was.

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

But twenty-five years later, on May 23, 1944, near Carano , Italy , that same Van T. Barfoot, who had in 1940 enlisted in the U.S. Army, set out alone to flank German machine gun positions from which gunfire was raining down on his fellow soldiers.

His advance took him through a minefield but having done so, he proceeded to single-handedly take out three enemy machine gun positions, returning with 17 prisoners of war.



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



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 well deserved Congressional Medal of Honor.



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)

What did make news...

was his Neighborhood Association's quibble with how the 90-year-old veteran chose to fly the American flag outside his suburban Virginia home.

Seems the HOA rules said it was OK to fly a flag on a house-mounted bracket, but, for decorum, items such as Barfoot's 21-foot flagpole were "unsuitable".



Van Barfoot had been denied a permit for the pole, but erected it anyway and was facing court action unless he agreed to take it down.



Then the HOA story made national TV, and the Neighborhood Association rethought its position and agreed to indulge this aging hero who dwelt among them.



"In the time I have left", he said to the Associated Press, "I plan to continue to fly the American flag without interference."

As well he should.

And if any of his neighbors had taken a notion to contest him further, they might have done well to read his Medal of Honor citation first. Seems it indicates Mr. Van Barfoot wasn't particularly good at backing down.



Van T. Barfoot's Medal of Honor citation:



This 1944 Medal of Honor citation, listed with the National Medal of Honor Society, is for Second Lieutenant Van T. Barfoot, 157th Infantry, 45th Infantry:



If you got this email and didn't pass it on that is up to you, but really wish that you would!!!!

I sent this to you, because I wanted you to send it on to others!!!!

WE ONLY LIVE IN THE LAND OF THE FREE BECAUSE OF THE BRAVE! AND, BECAUSE OF OLD MEN LIKE VAN BARFOOT!