

HEADQUARTERS 502D PARACHUTE INFANTRY  
Office of the Regimental Commander  
A. P. O. # 472, U. S. Army

30 September 1944

SUBJECT: Battlefield appointment as Second Lieutenant, AUS.

TO : Commanding General, 101st Airborne Division, APO 472, U. S. Army.

NARRATIVE OF PERFORMANCE IN ACTUAL COMBAT

First Sergeant Daniel J. Zapalski, 13 053 209, has clearly demonstrated his fitness for appointment by outstanding performance in actual combat as follows:

During the period 6 June 1944 to 10 June 1944, acting in his capacity as First Sergeant of this organization, Company "I", 502nd Parachute Infantry, First Sergeant Zapalski distinguished himself in the action of his unit at Auderville la Hubert, France on D-Day, and in the actions at Bouteville and Blosville-Houseville. Wounded in the bombing-strafting attack on troops on the causeway from Pont de Douve and Carentan, France, 10 June 1944, First Sergeant Zapalski worked for more than three hours without rest or medical attention to get his company re-organized and ready for battle, taking more than three hours to clear wounded off the field and check the company. Before he left, First Sergeant Zapalski turned over an accurate strength report to the highest ranking sergeant in the company, and he was then evacuated.

In the action 0130, 19 September 1944, at a vital road-block position about one mile south of Best, Holland, Sergeant Zapalski distinguished himself by his clear cut organizational ability under fire. In this hotly-contested action some half-squad of troops wavered, and for a moment it looked like they would drop the fight and bolt, but First Sergeant Zapalski half-led and half-drove them back into position and continued the fire fight with such vigor as to see the enemy repulsed with heavy losses.

In the early morning hours he organized a thorough defense of the left flank of the platoon's road-block position, utilizing personnel of his company headquarters, and remained in position with them until dawn. These troops covered the exposed flank of the platoon until almost noon. Sergeant Zapalski however, left before nine o'clock to organize on his own initiative better position for a squad of men. The position lay exposed to enemy fire, but Sergeant Zapalski reconnoitered it, heedless of the fire, and moved the squad into position. This action strengthened his company's position immeasurably.

Still later in the day, First Sergeant Zapalski had withdrawn his company headquarters personnel and put them into company reserve. As he did so he heard a fierce fire-fight on the right flank of his company's position and moved there to investigate. Finding a group of about thirty enemy had penetrated one position First Sergeant Zapalski rounded up his company headquarters section and assaulted the enemy who had taken cover in a number of shallow ditches inside our lines, driving them out with a loss of nineteen killed or captured. So skillful and decisive were Sergeant Zapalski's actions there that the enemy was completely routed.

Battlefield Appointment as Second Lieutenant, US (Zapalski, Daniel J. ) Cont.

Acting as a rifleman with front line troops in the attacks beginning about 1430, 19 September 1944, Sergeant Zapalski again demonstrated his outstanding offensive abilities. Leading elements of the right flank of his company during the advance on the enemy, Sergeant Zapalski demonstrated a profound knowledge of practical worth involving tank-infantry attacks. Seeing one of the platoon leaders severely wounded and placed out of action, First Sergeant Zapalski took over the platoon and led it until the end of the action, working with the platoon sergeant, and doing a first-class job of it.

During his company's tenure of positions near 11st, Holland, Sergeant Zapalski was tireless in his activities in seeing his company supplied with water, food, and ammunition. Seeing that the company communications sergeant was nearly exhausted from the trying press of his duties, Sergeant Zapalski took over the routine duties of line checks, and even made some minor line repairs. Upon occasion he served as radio operator or telephonist for the company command post. Yet at no time did routine administrative functions of a first sergeant suffer through neglect.

In combat First Sergeant Zapalski demonstrates a clear offensive attitude in all operations against the enemy. His manner of performance in actual combat has been superior.

*Steve A. Chappuis*  
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Commanding.