

Manuscripts & Folklife Archives
Department of Library Special Collections
Kentucky Library & Museum
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, KY 42101-1092

Descriptive Inventory

MSS 82 ATON, Paul Douglas, 1948-1968

½ box. 8 folders. 109 items, 1948-2004. Originals.

1991.109.1

BIOGRAPHY

Paul Douglas Aton, only child of Loyd Simpson Aton and Roberta Patricia Townsend Aton (1916-1955), was born in El Paso, Texas, on October 9, 1948. After attending Franklin-Simpson High School in Franklin, Kentucky, Paul enlisted in the United States Army at Nashville, Tennessee, on October 25, 1967. Completing basic training at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in January 1968, Paul received training also at Fort Gordon, Georgia, and Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Arriving in Vietnam in April 1968, Paul studied Viet Cong tactics and maneuvers at the 199th Light Infantry Brigade's Training Center REDCATCHER. Serving as radiophone operator for the Forward Artillery Observation Officer with the Headquarters and Service Battalion, 40th Artillery, Paul drowned under combat conditions on July 29, 1968. After a full military funeral at the gravesite on August 10, 1968, interment occurred at the Hebron Cemetery, Graves County, Kentucky.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

The Collection.
The Courier-Journal.

COLLECTION NOTE

The collection consists of fifteen letters received by Paul's father, Loyd Simpson Aton, after his arrival at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, in November 1967, until nine days prior to his death on July 29, 1968. The telegrams and letters, 1968 (21 items), detail the information the family received following Paul's death. Related materials include certificates for the Bronze Star and Purple Heart, photographs, military papers and published army regulations.

See collection finding aid for further details

[Lloyd S. Aton
Rt 6
Franklin KY 42134]

Dear Dad,

Thursday Night
after taps 9 Nov. 67

Well I am a soldier now,
and have been for a little while.
I will start and tell you all.
The first night we got to the
reception station at Fort Campbell
it started. We had it easy
until Tuesday night (30 Oct 67)
Halloween Night. You think
that there are little monsters
around that time running
but the only monsters I
saw were D.I.'s and
boy did they growl
but I have it pretty easy
now because I am an
acting corporal and squad
leader there are 4 of us
and one acting Sgt. who
is Platoon guide. I am
in his Pvt room now.
Because he is in the
commanders office tapping.
So I am acting Platoon Sgt.

We got our weapons ~~yes~~
Tuesday (M-14) 7.62 M.M.
Semi Automatic and it is
heavy as hell packing it
around all day its weight
is 11.34 LBS loaded with
sting. They are good rifles
and easy to clean, disassemble,
and reassemble. its max range
is 3725 meters and MAX effective
range 460 meters. It fires
with a muzzle Velocity of
840 meters per second
with a rate of fire cycling
700 to 750 Rounds per minute

Well enough you talk.
Dad did you get the clothes
and thing I sent Jane. I have
a permanent address for a
while now so you can write
me, Oh Have you seen
Margie Hunter. since I left.
I wrote her a letter but it
came back because she had
~~move~~ moved. I did n't know
How much I cared about about

her ~~until~~ until I was gone
and boy was I home sick for
a while. I have to go now so
here is my address.

Pvt Paul D Atan

RA 129 66616

1ST PLT. C company 6 BN 2 Bde.
USATC Fort Campbell Kentucky
42223

I have to get sack time
now so Bye until I
can write again.

Lots of Love

Paul

P.S. IT is FUN Being
A Soldier (IThink)

Hi There
It's Me Again.

CPL.
The PHANTOM

KY BLDG.
MSS. 82
BOX 1
FOLDER 2 #1

Dear Dad.

I didn't write last night, didn't have time. I have been in the barracks all day. I was the orderly. I had to buff the floor and empty the trash. mostly just guard the gear so nobody would steal anything. I just found my pen. this time I am sending the W-2 and some money \$40 dollars. will send \$50 next payday. I am also sending a certificate of training from basic. and some other stuff I don't need.

Well, how are things at home? I hope they are better than here. I only have one gripe, and that is that you have to do the hundred yard dash in 9 seconds to use the latrine because it is so far from the barracks that if you are slower than 9 seconds the cold hits and it is too late then you have already pissed all over your self.

I have 38 more days to go at
fort Sill. we Graduate the 22ND
of March. but it seems like 38 years
from now. The days go so darned
slow and the nights so fast that
it is hard to get anything done.

There are 14 AWOL's in our battery
now all since the 27TH of Jan.

most of them went just this weekend
and of course didn't come back. I

didn't even leave the post. I sure

am sleepy I almost fell asleep between
the period, and the I sure am sleepy.

just this. well I am going to
write Margie tonight and Aunt

Booker too. I will write to you
tomorrow night if I have time we

are going to the field don't know
what time we will get back.

The Battery went today and haven't
gathered back yet. it is after 8 here

10 years time. Better go and write
some more letters. Take it easy

and don't freeze up there.

Love Paul.

Hi Dad,

12 April 68 3

10:39 PM

What is happenin out here, I know
nothin unless it is work. Well I'm
still here an writing this about the
same time I called last night. Sure
miss home. will probably ship out
tomorrow sure hate to go.

I might go by ship. I am
going to have my ears examined
to morrow and they might not
let me fly. so I might go by
ship. Hat to go now get some sleep
Lots of Love Son Paul

4-1

13 april 68

10:45 Home Time

Dear Dad,

Well I guess I am ready to move on to greener grass or underbrush whatever they have in Viet Nam. I am sitting here in Travis A.F.B. waiting for our flight out. There are two Seargents with us both are pretty good guys. they are keeping an their toes when the Airline Stewardesses walk by us here in the hall and there are some real sharp chicks around here.

our plane leave here at 21:30 about 45 minuits from now we will board about 15 before take off. I guess I will finish this letter on the plane am going to buy me a sandy bar and a Hot Rod mag. and munch and read for a while sure am going to enjoy my last sandy bar for a while. will finish later. 11:00 P.M. your time. —

Well here is a real start I am about 1 hrs flying time away from Viet Nam. We stopped in Hawaii and I wrote a card then we flew to the philipines.

From Hawaii to the Phillipines
a young buck Seargent and I stayed
in back with the 2 aft stewardesses
they were real sweet and we talked
and Iaked around for about 5 hrs
the Seargent and I helped them make
up coffee and things for the rest
of the men. There were so many that
they really needed us and appreciated
our help. We helped till we landed
and the girls gave us their addresses
in the states and made us promises
to write. Well we have just sighted
land. Guess what land it is. HAH!

Well Dad it is manday morning
here sunday night there be home
in about 363 more. We are
drapping altitude a little not
much tho. Wish I was dreamin
at home in Bed but no such
luck. Will write as much as
possible. I sure an gonna miss
you but I still ~~love~~ love you.

Well I better go. will mail
at air port.

in about 30 I guess I will
finally git to see charlie cong
looks like Time to Buckle up
for safety. Bye for now.

All My Love

Paul

The Jungle Fighter

SURFING IN HAWAII

Photo by Bob Jones

Hi Dad.

Well I am

Hawaii and it sure

is nice what I can see
any way. wish my
duty was here instead
of Viet Nam. But to
late now. Sure miss
Home but am glad to
see this real sharp
place. Must go. See

U later. Love

MSS 82, B1, F2

Paul



..... Hawaiian Views, Dist. by Max Barker & Sons, Honolulu.....

Paul D. Aton

RT#6



FIGHT
GIVE
CANCER SO

POST CARD



Lloyd S. Aton

RT#6

Franklin, Kentucky

42134

Plastichrome
by COLOURPICTURE
BOSTON, MASS. 02130

Saturday April 20, 68
10:00 P.M.

6-1

Dear Dad,

Well I guess this is a change from my old handwriting, but it looks like to me it is a good one. I am at the 199TH Light Infantry Brigade, s Training Center REDCATCHER I will be here for aproximatly one week for training in V.C. tactics and manuers, then-Iw- I will go to my unit which is the 2 the 2ND Batalion of the 40TH Artilary. I was real lucky and got put in Headquarters and service Battery the B.C, said they needed a mechanic and that I could be used in the motor pool so I guess I am a mechanic now. Dad Viet nam is the hottest dirtiest, smelliest, and undoubtedly the noisiest place in the whole world. ~~***~~ I QUOTE. Have no fear I Paul D.

Aton jungle fighter supreme, super comando, and all around good soldier, shall, with no sweat (well that is hard to believe with this heat, so would you believe no strain) survive this great and dutious task for which I (the afore mentioned) am about to embark upon with great Viggah. HOW was that for a speach. Well back to the serious side of life. I just wanted to drop a short line to fill in up to date, so here I go off to the great war, wit lots o viggah.

TDY
MOS
AGS
PDA that's me.

ALL MY LOVE, Signed by the Comanding
General of the Chicken
Man Fan Club.

SGND. Paul D. Aton the exhausted one.

MANUSCRIPTS
KENTUCKY BUILDING
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
BOWLING GREEN, KY 42101

How is That For Typing
Lots o Love Paul

ORIGINAL
37-334
100-100000
100-100000

17 May 68 7-1
17-1

329 days to go

Hi Dad,

PFC Paul D. Aton
RA 12966616
Hqts BATY 2ND BN 40th Arty.
199 LT INF Bde.
APO SF 96279

Here it is the one you
have been waiting for all
this time. Yes it is the great one.
How are things at home dad I guess
they are about the same. I miss the
U.S. a lot, but I guess I will be home
soon enough. I find myself doing
things that I wouldn't have thought of
as a civilian. Headquarters Battery
and Charlie battery are out in the
field, I am with them. I am Major Hayes's
driver and I have my own jeep
which is pretty nice. We have been
here since Sunday the 5th. I am send-
ing you some Viet Namese money.
the 20 are 20 cent notes and 100 are
1 dollar approximately there are 118
piasters in a dollar. I am sending
1-2000P. Note 1-1000P. Note and
3 200P. notes. The army uses funny money
here which is also paper I will
send a dime in paper currency
home also

It is hot here about 90 to 100 every day and it gets hotter in January and February than any other months. I have a tan better than any beach boy ever thought about getting I am almost black well maybe not that dark but I ~~am~~ sure am brown my allotment to the bank should be entered around the end of May or first part of June I am sending 140 dollars home a month plus money orders from my spending money will send a letter in about 2 days with 100 dollars in money order in it. there isnt any place to spend money here. Everything is free Beer Cokes food cigarettes candy soap toothpaste shaving cream and all that stuff the ~~the~~ only thing that costs anything is the laundry and you can get 5 sets of fatigues washed starched pressed folded and packaged for \$1.20 which aint bad at all.

EX-110
1951

We have an American Radio Station which plays all the latest rock and roll plus a grand old Apray show on Saturday nights.

We can buy Magazines just like at home. That had to be Playboy all of them, Time Look and all. It is kind of fun, but it is rough when the lead flies around and you get on your belly and dig a hole with your teeth and finger nails just to keep from getting hit by all the wild round flying around like bees ready to bust your ass if you are in the way and they have hit a few guys running around here. But not me. I dig deep. H.A.H.A.

I just got your letter and I was shocked all to hell. I was helping a damage control crew check out the radar and radio ~~the~~ huts. and my NCOIC gave me this letter where the ink stops I went to chaw after that we had a monsoon hit.

Next Page

That is why damage control was working. Well am glad to hear you got rid of the Dart but that was awful cheap. 250 would just buy the Trans and exhaust system which means he got the rest free

It is bad about a divorce but it is up to you. You are right about being married like that no good. I am sorry about not writing but most of the time I was in a ditch or hole dodgin bullets. didnt have any paper not even enough to wipe my ass after I had the shit scared ~~about~~ ^{out of} me. That is no joke I actually shit when the lead started kicking sand around my feet. But I was only wounded once when one of our grenades fell short of the berm and came back on us, a few scratches is all.

DATE 7-4
PAGE 234
BOX 206
FOR FILE

Well I will finish and
put this in the mail.

I am taking a Chopper
back to Main Base tomorrow
so will send that money
order in the mail Tuesday.

This is Sunday night 19 May
68 I am using a flashlight
to write by so it is kind of
messy and sick a little possible
Touch of disintory cant spell it
but it means shits. everyone
has it. I will ~~be~~ live through
it all. Neither rain nor snow
nor sleet nor hail will keep
me from my freedom bird
in April 69. Well Bye
for now Take care of all
and if shelters call say Hi
for me. The Kid still
loves his old Dad even
more when he is getting
shot at. Bye for now

Lone Paul
(over)

PSS Do Not Stamp Envelopes
Mail Goes out of
Vietnam free from
Service men

Bye again

Lawrence Paul

The

Ape Fighter

can't speak

Gorilla

KY BLDG.

MSS. 82

BOX 1

FOLDER 2 #7

MANUSCRIPTS

KENTUCKY BUILDING

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

BOWLING GREEN, KY 42101

Dear Lonnie,

Well I guess it is about time I was writing you a line to let you know, How the war is treating me. All I can say is sure will be glad to see Franklin again. I really think living in hell would be better than here.

I had been here about 2 weeks and was wounded by a hand grenade.

The bad thing was ~~was~~ one of our men threw it. 3 of us were hit and one was hurt real bad. I felt like I had been whipped with a piece of barbed wire.

I am in the field now and am making it all-right I will send you a souvenir of the war this bullet is what Charlie is putting on us, it is an AK-47 round, this one was about 8 to 10 inches from my head when it hit a sand bag. I was pinned in a fox hole for 30 minutes by a sniper putting these out as fast as he could.

I was so scared when it started all I did was shake but when I stopped shaking I guess I went crazy for a minute because I crawled all over the place and finally found a machine gun with one man to feed ammo so I swung around on Charlie and shot until the barrel started getting red I had used about 6 or 7 hundred rounds, and sure enough on an infantry sweep they found his body scattered all over the place with his A K-47 still laying there by his side. This all happened on our base camp perimeter. Every thing is safe now I have not heard a rifle fire in over a week.

Conditions here are real lousy I am smoking on the same pack of cigarettes I had a week ago they sure look pitiful so wrinkled and all. I am a jeep driver for a Major who is in our Battalion. This is a pretty good job back on post.

Next page

I have all the luxuries bucket
seats 4 speed on the floor convertible
radio wide tires and 4 wheel drive
real sharp vehicle but I hate the
color, Green everything is green
I think I will turn green in a few
more months if I don't get out of
here. All kidding aside old buddies
things could be worse, I think.

I will make it back and then
the Mr. Belvedere will ride again.
Sure do miss the ~~the~~ Powers family.
Say Hi for me and write me a
line when you have time, and let me
know what is happening at home.

Tell ~~for~~ Pam Hi, sure hope she
makes it with the baby and all.

Now here is my address

P.F.C Paul D. Aton RA 12 966616

Hq. & S. Baty. 2nd Bn. 40th Art.

199th Lt. INF. Bde. (A.P.O. S.F. 96279)

It is kind of long but it gets here.

Well best ~~sign~~ sign off for
now. Say Hi to Old Don Evans
too when you have time. Take care
of ~~things~~ things ~~at~~ at home
and don't get drafted. Just pray
to your dear god you don't have
to go to the army. You can do more
good at home than you could here.
Besides who would win all the
trophies if you got drafted. Haha.

Well so long for now.
See you in 329 days.

Sincerely Yours
Your friend Paul

P.S. Stop by and say Hi to
dad for me and see how he
is making out.

Bye again

Paul

9-1
May 23-68 [postmark]
9-1

Dear Dad

Well here is another letter from the Old Veteran. Am sending a couple of photos of the Kid. One is in our covered patio. with cord table and all made from 105 ammo boxes. It is cool under here about 85° outside about 100°. it rained last night and it was cool so we slept under the patio. The other picture is of me sitting in my Jeep. it is messed up, but the ~~name~~ name of the Jeep is on the front between the head lights. the top was blown off by a 155 so there is only half of it left. When we go back to main base I get a new top and some nangaohyde seats probably Black and Red. Jeeps are fixed up pretty sharp here. I will also have it painted real dark O.D. and gloss clear over it so it shines it is mainly for

Next Page

high ranking officers so I must be sharp at all times we are going in tomorrow. for a couple of weeks, we killed all the V.C. around here no use of staying around for nothing we have a body count for 17 days of 378 killed by just one gun battery of artillery with us. The infantry has passed 700^{V.C.} by small arms fire so we wiped up in 17 days. We have lost about 25 or 30 of our Infantry men out of 1 battalion that was with us some of them just wounded. Well that is all the war news for today time is again for more info on 2/40 arty and 4/12 inf. in action. ~~They~~

Now How are things up front ~~for~~ with my C.O. Hope you are O.K. I am fine a little sore from the sun burn but other than that all is well Fast dirty, no water in a couple of days.

Plenty to drink but no showers.
well I think this is going to be
a short year. Time flies over here
every one hates this place but the
moral is higher than any place
in the States. Everyone here is
nice to everyone and we all joke
and sing along with the radio
and nobody thinks it is stupid ~~now~~
because everybody is doing it.

We had drag races believe it or
not. Yes right here in ^{the} Sunny Vietnam
rice paddy town of Hanoi
city was held the Overseas
spring nationals. I even raced
my jeep I could beat the trucks
but I got beat by a tracked

A.P.C. because we were in mud
up to the AXels and he could plow
right an through other jeeps
are faster but I have fabulous
traction ~~too~~ because of new tires
and extra low gears. Well that
is all the racing news.

I guess that is all I have to say,
except tell every body hi, The Downeys
and Tubby and Mrs Butts and all the
People at the shop like David Shortridge
and Roy if he is back working. It is
pretty bad about him. I always thought
he was an O.K. guy but I guess
you never can tell about people.

Well write soon and as often
as you can. Have only gotten one letter
the first one and also it is

Hq + ~~5~~ Not Hq T.S Btry that
was a miss print when I sent
the address to ~~Shelia~~ Shelia.

I sure do need a lot of practice
on writing. sure looks sloppy. Better
go for now. So take care will
write soon.

Lots of love

Paul

10-1
June 3-68 [postmark] 10-1

Dear Dad

Well to start off I have not mailed the money order but my first allotment for \$140.00 is on the way. I am having \$140 taken out every month I don't even see it. so it should get to the bank. with 140 taken out I still get 79 dollars for me so I can send 50 or 25 dollar money orders once a month also. I made \$233.50 this month and FICA Tax was \$6.09 my bond was \$6.25 and my bank money was \$140.00 which makes \$154.34 and I still got \$79.16 to spend here but there is nothing to spend it on. except good things. I bought a SEIKO watch today for \$26.50 it is all stainless and water proof 21 Jewel selfwinding with a Day and Date stat which looks like SUN 12 it tells the day and date both it is really sharp. Has a chain type band which is real rugged.

I still have the other one that you gave me but I didn't want to ruin it here so I will ~~the~~ mail it home sometime, insured and all that so when I send it I will mail a letter on the same day saying it is on the way. Well got to hunt Major Hayes he back in a minute.

Hi I am back. well for some war news. I guess where I was a couple of days ago. Well sorry it wasn't there. I was in the Paddies stompin around hunting a load of ammo that fell from a cargo chopper the water was any where from ankle deep to waist deep then we climbed a hill and found the goods unfortunately it blew up in our faces nobody hurt but there were dents in the ground from us hitting so hard when we dropped there were only six of us

The captain said we did a good job of considering we were doing a job that a platoon should have been doing there we were a 6 man platoon!

I was out there for about 9 hours and when we came back I was carrying my rifle my ammo and a 105 projec on my shoulders, carried them for about 1500 meters about a mile. They sure got heavy. I was wet until the next morning and it got kind of cool out there and I felt pretty good stumbling around in the dark, playing comando.

Well how is Uncle Hut. Wish I could see him but they won't let me go home. guess I will have to wait till next year. Send me a picture of Sheila please I want one with her by herself. and try to get one of the house from the back with the garage and all, in one picture.

Well it is getting dark and my watch tells me it is 7:30 P.M. I am moving into a barracks tonight so I will have a real nice place to live from now on. The officers really like me now and when they need something important done they send me to do it I have been in every secure place in the Lang Bien area so that at least shows they trust me. I think pretty fast and stay on the ball, so sometimes they don't have to tell me to go, because I have done what I want. Time is passing fast as it can go so this is really going to be a short time away from home. 2 months all ready gone. $\frac{1}{6}$ of my time will $\frac{5}{6}$ to go and leave 13 April 69. I figured I could save around 2000 to 2200 dollars if I send some home in money orders. I see I will be rich. Well dad I guess I better close will write soon take care of home. Bye.

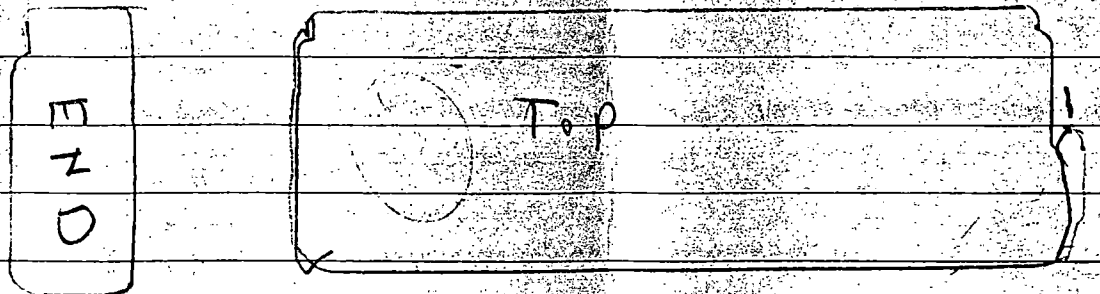
All My Love
Son Paul

Finished June 15-68
300 To gooooo

Dear Dad

I got your letter today with the pictures in it. Sure did like them made me home sick as I could get. I walked around all day looking at them thinking how nice it would be to be sitting in that yard instead of in this mud. That sure is a sharp shirt you have on. It looks like a hippie shirt. Did you get the pictures I sent in the second letter you got on the 25th you didn't mention them. The scrubs look good but kind of thin will they get thicker by the time I get home. The roses are real pretty didn't think flowers were out yet. Guess I am behind a little haven't seen any flowers here just weeds and burnt up grass some palm trees and Rubber plantation is about all the rest is just tangled vines all over the place. Wish I had a picture of you all dressed up sharp in a suit and all.

I have just about decided not to go on R & R, can send some cash home and still get something nice every once in a while I bought a Yashica ATORON camera about 3 days ago for \$25. It cost \$1 here so I got a good deal it is a 16 mm camera with cartridge load it is really small. I got all the attachments flash and all plus 4 rolls of film 2 color & 2 B+W with 36 exposures on each film is 90¢ a roll and is easy to find. Here is a Full size drawing of it.



The camera has a built in light meter exposure counter light filter and setting for time exposures plus 2 other light filters which are tinted Blue and make (gray-green) also

Next Page

11-3

a socket for the shutter trigger.
It is really a sharp little camera.
It has a chain like your light meter
and is about 2 times as big. Well
see what kind of pictures it turns
out. As you can see it has been a
while since I marked on this letter.

I guess you have really been working
by the looks of the house and trees
and things. I have gotten all pictures
to date up to the Mustang & Terry & dog.
I have a fast locker and am taping
the pics to the inside of the lid. I have
a collection of Hotrod mags and others
started have about 25 Books now.

Well I have a new Major now his name
is Stevenson. A real nice guy.

Went to west point. real sharp. I

guess you can tell I am writing with
a fountain pen. It feels good kind of
goes drag on the paper. Well will
finish for a while. One thing. If
there is any way to keep the envelopes
you send from sealing then selves

Try it every one I have received has sealed itself and tears up when I open them. The weather is so hot and humid that the glue just gets licked and pressed while still in the mail.

So try and put a thin piece of wax paper between the glued flap and the area that it seals on.

Must finish for now. I have 300 days to go as of Mid nite to nite. Will close for now. Take care of the shack and grounds will be home to see them in 10 months.

Your trip sounds like a wisner wish I could total all those states this time make some day I will.

Well Bye for Now. I love my dear old traveling pop. Take a gun or 3 with you

Lot of love

P.S. I wear #45

San Paul

when I drive after 7-PM

off posted. Kind of dangerous over

They have just reported 1000 VC
 10,000 meters from our eastern perimeter
 will have to sleep under the ^{covers} ~~covers~~ tonight
 I am afraid of flying ~~and~~ ~~the~~ lead insects

Bye Again

Lane Paul

Picture WAS
 Made 2400^{hrs} 16-JUNE

KY BLDG.

MS. 82

BOX 1

FOLDER 2, 411

MANUSCRIPTS
 KENTUCKY BUILDING
 WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
 BOWLING GREEN KY 40301

Thanks for the Friday 5-July 68
card wish I could be on the trip

Dear Dad.

Well, a big change has taken place in my life in this war. I was transferred to the field about 6 days ago, now I am with the forward observers in the infantry. He is a 1st lieutenant and about 6'6" knows his stuff. He is in the artillery and I am his Radio telephone ~~operator~~ operator. there is a recon Sgt. in our team also all of us are over 6'2" and all weigh over 200 lbs, bad team aint it. We are attached to A company 5th ~~Battalion~~ Bn 12th inf. we stay in the field and get pretty dirty and tired but at least I feel like I am helping fight this war instead of looking sharp most of the time. Yesterday A company made 4 combat Air Assaults in the Jungle and swamps of Saigon. There is a shipping Jan sending. Fello about 65 Heros

Yesterday was the 4th. And we saw fire works that nobody State side saw. we hit 4 hot LZ's (Landing Zones) in about 9 hours walked about 2000 meters in the mud & jungle mixed and at the same time. We crossed 9 streams with water over our heads and were in mud up to our waists and the ones carrying radios and heavy loads like that were pulled out by ropes I was carrying a radio and I was pulled out by the company commander once and he and 4 others had to pull me out of the soup when I got hung in the stuff and sank to my waist before they could get the rope to me, I thought I was never going to get out but I made it after about 10 minutes of fighting as hard as I could I was so tired when the fighting and walking ~~was~~ was over that I

had to be dragged in to the chopper
because it had started to lift off
~~for~~ before I was in and the draft
was pushing me away from the
door. I threw hand grenades and
yelled over the radio and watched
an air strike 200 yards from where
I was laying in the mud and just plain
fought the situation all day but we
blew hell out of a bunker complex
and killed us some charlies and all
went well, we had no wounded and
no casualties at all. Haven't had any
all ~~day~~ this week. All is well
will still be here. 1/4 of my
time is up 9 months to go will
be a man when I get home. Got
your letter ^{and card} for June 30
did you send any before if so
tell me so I can try to track
them down. ~~At~~ the last one I got
was ~~on~~ written June 23 9-PM
over

well I had better go I ~~still~~ still ~~love~~
 love you and I am getting married
 when I get home to many with out
 little Anchors around to go of like
 that. My address is ~~same~~ and I
 am with good people and I am
 a combat trooper. I am proud of
 that. Have some ~~pics~~ pics will send
 the other guy is my reason Sgt
 and the telephone is on the radio
 which is barely visible over
 my shoulders. I have to go and get
 some sleep. will write soon.

All My Love

E2

PFC

Paul

The Cong Killer

Mosquitos ~~TH~~ ~~TH~~ ~~TH~~ ~~TH~~ ~~TH~~ ~~TH~~ ~~TH~~ ~~TH~~
 Charlies 1

KY BLDG.

MSS. 82

BOX 1

FOLDER 2 #12

[1968] July, 19, Friday
2300 hrs.

13-1

13-1

Dear Dad

Well here is a line or 2 to
tell of my run through in position
since you last heard from me I
have changed jobs. I am now the
Radio Telephone Operator for the
Arty Forward Observer with A company
5TH Bn 12TH Inf. It is a pretty good
Job and I am learning a whole lot
about the war from the infantry
side of it. We have been moving out
about 5 days a week in operations
and stomping through the mud and
water which gets up to waist deep
for mud and over our heads for
~~the~~ water. I am right out there
pushing just like you see on TV
only we get dirtier because we
aren't putting on a show. We swept
an area today which was suspected
to be V.C. occupied we didn't find
any V.C. but we did find 5 unoccupied
bunkers and we destroyed them

I ~~also~~ also crossed 7 canals 3 open fields broke 2 wood lines and smashed through mud up to my arse in some places. We flew in in an air assault by Helicopter and moved south about 1 mile then moved north east about 1 mile then moved west about 500 meters and then north about 3 hundred meters then we crossed a river which took about 1 hour because of the lack of bridges we had to swim and push our gear on air mattresses. My radio which I carry on my back, weighs about 30 to 35 lbs and I carry 1 gallon of water 2 smoke grenades 2 frag grenades 20 magazines of ammo plus rifle and chow for the day it all adds up to a load which gets ~~heavy~~ heavy as hell in the mud after about 3 or 4 hours of Hunper

KY BLDG.

MSS. 82

BOX 1

FOLDER 2 #13

MANUSCRIPTS

KENTUCKY BUILDING

WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

BOWLING GREEN, KY 42101

I have heard of a movie which has come out in the states, called the green desert. If you can see it. some parts of it are true and others are phoney as hell. like the true is how when you get hit there is a lot of blood and the men fight hard on both sides, harder in real life though. Phonies are when you bump you sweat in the movie you don't see any sweat. or here people don't just die like flies, they have to fight to fall and they don't give up. War is Hell. I am tired but I at least have guts and I can hump as hard and as long as the greens (infantry & soldier) I am at long last a man who can walk tall when I come home.

we have to get up at 0200 in the morning so I better go for a while.

over

I have decided on one thing
when I get home ~~no~~ no wife
or anchors. I will buy a car
to a motor cycle and be a soldier
for 18 more months. I think I
will try to be a drill Sgt. when
I get back. Well I must go.

Take care of the place
I will be home in about 8 months
to 3 weeks. Bye for now

Love Paul

"Rat Patrol"

I are de rat

Sat. July 20, 1968

14-1

22:30 hrs 8 month 3 week
to go.

Dear Dad.

Here is another letter I sent one yesterday will send this to nite. Have had an easy day today was up at 0430 this morning to ride shot gun on an air Boat. the driver and I left and went to the fire Base got the boat and cruised down river to the village that my unit (A/5/12) was searching our job was to patrol the river and stop all boats trying to leave the area. We stayed until about 0900 then took the boat back and then came back to our C.P. and I slept till about 1200 got up and played 2 games of 500 rummy then went back to sleep. we are in the field but it is real nice out here. To morrow we are going on a river boat operation which means about a 2 hour boat ride to and from the paddies. I can hear small arms fire about 500 meters from my Command Radio Bunker doesn't sound to good. There are red flares which mean Enemy in the vicinity most of the company is asleep I am the only one in the command bunker except for the C.O. running in and out to use the radio.

I was issued new magazine (20)
 and ammo today plus 2 more Hand
 grenades I carry about 10 now, 4 ~~for~~
 fragmentation and 6 smoke. The
 gun ships are working in the
 west and some units are in contact
 to the south we may fight tomorrow
 I hope so. Charlie is sure causing
 trouble and we can stop him if they
 will let us tear into him whole hog.
 we haven't had a casualty in 3 months
 well I had better go and get some
 sleep, take care of it. Bye for
 now

Love

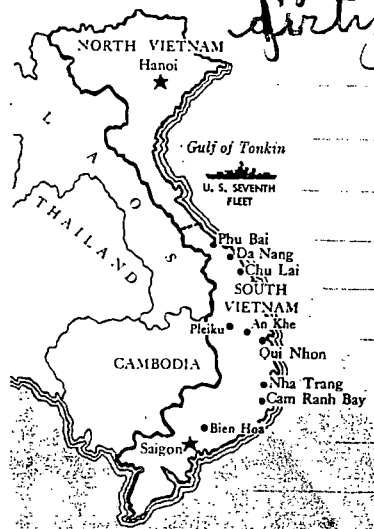
~~Paul~~ I am Sam the
 Baldie

Paul

[n.d.]

Dear Dad.

Well it has been a while since I wrote you a line, so I will put some things on paper and send it. Since I wrote to you last I have changed jobs and am working in the field for good as until the F.O. team changes. I am a R.T.O. (Radio telephone apperatur) for the forward Observer with the infantry we are a 3 man team with the infantry but we are in the artillery. There is a 1st Lieutenant (Lieutenant) Detered a recon Sgt (Bob Perrigo) and an R.T.O. (Paul O. Aton) & Me. We get out and stomp through the Rice Paddies and jungles with the infantry (grunts) and get muddy and dirty and bug bit



000000
-000000
-000000
-000000

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a fast message unless its deferred character is indicated by the proper symbol.

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

1220
R-4-60

SYMBOLS

DL=Day Letter
NL=Night Letter
LT=International
Letter Telegram

The filing time shown in the date line on domestic telegrams is LOCAL TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is LOCAL TIME at point of destination

BW1 (CT WA409) XV GOVT PD=WASHINGTON DC 30 833P EDT=

LOYD S ATON

ROUTE 6 FRANKLIN KY=

THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY HAS ASKED ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP
REGRET THAT YOUR SON PRIVATE FIRST CLASS PAUL D ATON HAS
BEEN MISSING IN VIETNAM SINCE 29 JULY 1968. HE WAS LAST
SEEN ON COMBAT OPERATION WHEN HE SLIPPED AND FELL INTO RIVER
WHILE CROSSING SEARCH IS IN PROGRESS YOU WILL BE ADVISED
PROMPTLY WHEN FURTHER INFORMATION IS RECEIVED IN ORDER TO
PROTECT ANY INFORMATION THAT MIGHT BE USED TO YOUR SONS
DETRIMENT YOUR COOPERATION IS REQUESTED IN MAKING PUBLIC
ONLY INFORMATION CONCERNING HIS NAME RANK SERVICE NUMBER
AND DATE OF BIRTH. THIS CONFIRMS PERSONAL NOTIFICATION MADE
BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY=

K G WICKHAM MAJ GENL USA F48 THE ADJT GENL.

8 15A CDT.

No.	To	
By	At	To Be

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

MANUSCRIPTS
KENTUCKY BUILDING
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
BOWLING GREEN, KY 42101

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a fast message unless its deferred character is indicated by the proper symbol.

WESTERN UNION

TELEGRAM

W. P. MARSHALL, PRESIDENT

1230
R-4-60

SYMBOLS

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1 NFT =

=WU 005 (P WA365) XV GOVT PDB 4 EXTRA FAX WASHINGTON DC

LOYD S ATON = DONT FONE DONT DLY BTWN 10PM AND 6 AM =

RT 6 FRANKLIN KY =

= THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY HAS ASKED ME TO EXPRESS HIS

= DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR SON, PRIVATE FIRST CLASS

PAUL D ATON = DIED IN VIETNAM ON 29 JULY 1968 AS THE

RESULT OF = DROWNING IN THE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED TO YOU.

= HE WAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED AS MISSING. HIS = REMAINS

HAVE BEEN RECOVERED AND POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED. =PLEASE

ACCEPT MY DEEPEST SYMPATHY. =THIS CONFIRMS PERSONAL

NOTIFICATION = MADE BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY OF

= THE ARMY =

KENNETH G WICKHAM MAJOR GENERAL USA F11 THE =

:ADJUTANT GENERAL

= (840AM)

No.			To
By	At	To Be	

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

MANUSCRIPTS
KENTUCKY BUILDING
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
BOWLING GREEN, KY 42101

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 12, 1968

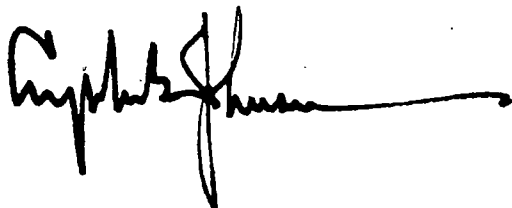
Dear Mr. Aton:

Mrs. Johnson and I extend our deepest sympathy to you in the loss of your beloved son, Private First Class Paul D. Aton.

I would like you to know that our hearts are made heavy by such tragedies and your grief is shared by us. All America is grateful for courageous men such as your son who give their lives so freedom may live. I earnestly hope that the memory of his valiant sacrifice will be a source of comfort and pride to you in the years ahead.

Please know that our hearts are with you. We trust that God will sustain you during this trying period.

Sincerely,



Mr. Loyd S. Aton
Route Six
Franklin, Kentucky



20
19-1

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D. C., 20315

AGPB-AC Aton, Paul D.
RA 12 966 616 (29 Jul 68)

25 SEP 1968

Mr. Loyd S. Aton
Route 6
Franklin, Kentucky 42134

Dear Mr. Aton:

I have the honor to inform you that your son has been awarded posthumously the Bronze Star Medal, Purple Heart and the Good Conduct Medal.

Prior to death, Paul had been awarded the National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal and the Vietnam Campaign Ribbon.

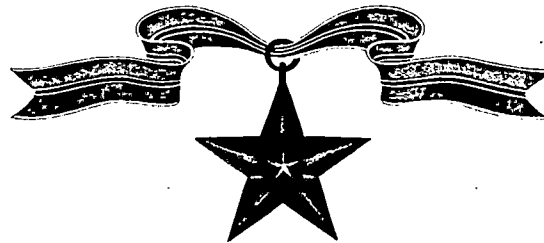
Arrangements are being made to have these awards presented to you in the near future by a representative of the Commanding General, Third United States Army.

The representative selected will communicate with you in the next few weeks to arrange for presentation. Any inquiry or correspondence concerning presentation should be addressed to the Commanding General, Third United States Army, Fort McPherson, Georgia 30330.

My continued sympathy is with you.

Sincerely,

C. A. STANFIELD
Colonel, AGC
Acting The Adjutant General



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
AUTHORIZED BY EXECUTIVE ORDER, 24 AUGUST 1962
HAS AWARDED

THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL

TO

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS PAUL D. ATON, RA 12 966 616, UNITED STATES ARMY

FOR
MERITORIOUS ACHIEVEMENT
IN GROUND OPERATIONS AGAINST HOSTILE FORCES
IN VIETNAM FROM 15 APRIL 1968 TO 27 JULY 1968

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON

THIS 19TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 1968

Kenneth G. Nickham

MAJOR GENERAL, USA
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL



Stanley R. Resor
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY



WILLIAM H. NATCHER
SECOND DISTRICT, KENTUCKY

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2333 HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

22
COMMITTEE:
APPROPRIATIONS

TELEPHONE:
225-3501

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

November 14, 1968

Mr. Loyd S. Aton
Franklin,
Kentucky 42134

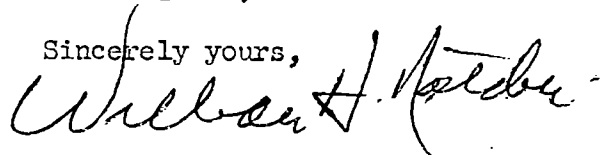
Dear Mr. Aton:

I have noted that your son, Pfc. Paul D. Aton, was awarded posthumously the Purple Heart and the Bronze Star Medal.

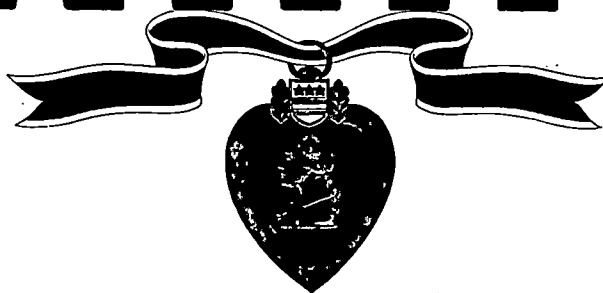
The courage and bravery which led to this award reflects honor upon your son. He has rendered outstanding service, along with the ultimate sacrifice to his country. Surely you, his father have reason to be proud as has every citizen of the State of Kentucky and throughout the United States.

With kind personal regards, I am

Sincerely yours,



William H. Natcher, M.C.



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
HAS AWARDED THE

PURPLE HEART

ESTABLISHED BY GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON
AT NEWBURGH, NEW YORK, AUGUST 7, 1782
TO

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS PAUL D. ATON, RA 12 966 616, UNITED STATES ARMY

FOR WOUNDS RECEIVED
IN ACTION

IN VIETNAM RESULTING IN HIS DEATH ON 29 JULY 1968

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON
THIS 9TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER 1968

Kenneth G. Nickham

MAJOR GENERAL, USA
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL



Stanley R. Resor
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY



MANUSCRIPTS
KENTUCKY BUILDING
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY
BOWLING GREEN, KY 42101