

712 West Pierce Street
Kirksville, Mo.
28 September, 1948

QMGMR 095

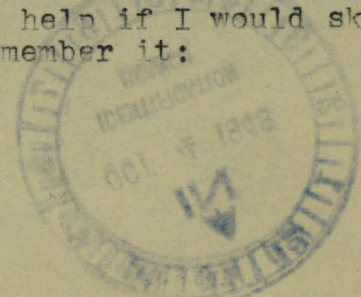
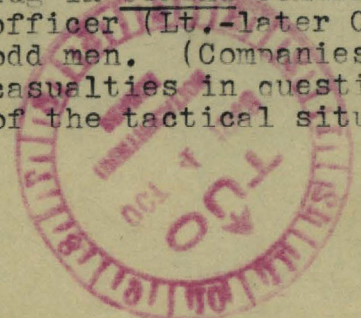
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The Quartermaster General
Washington 25, D.C.

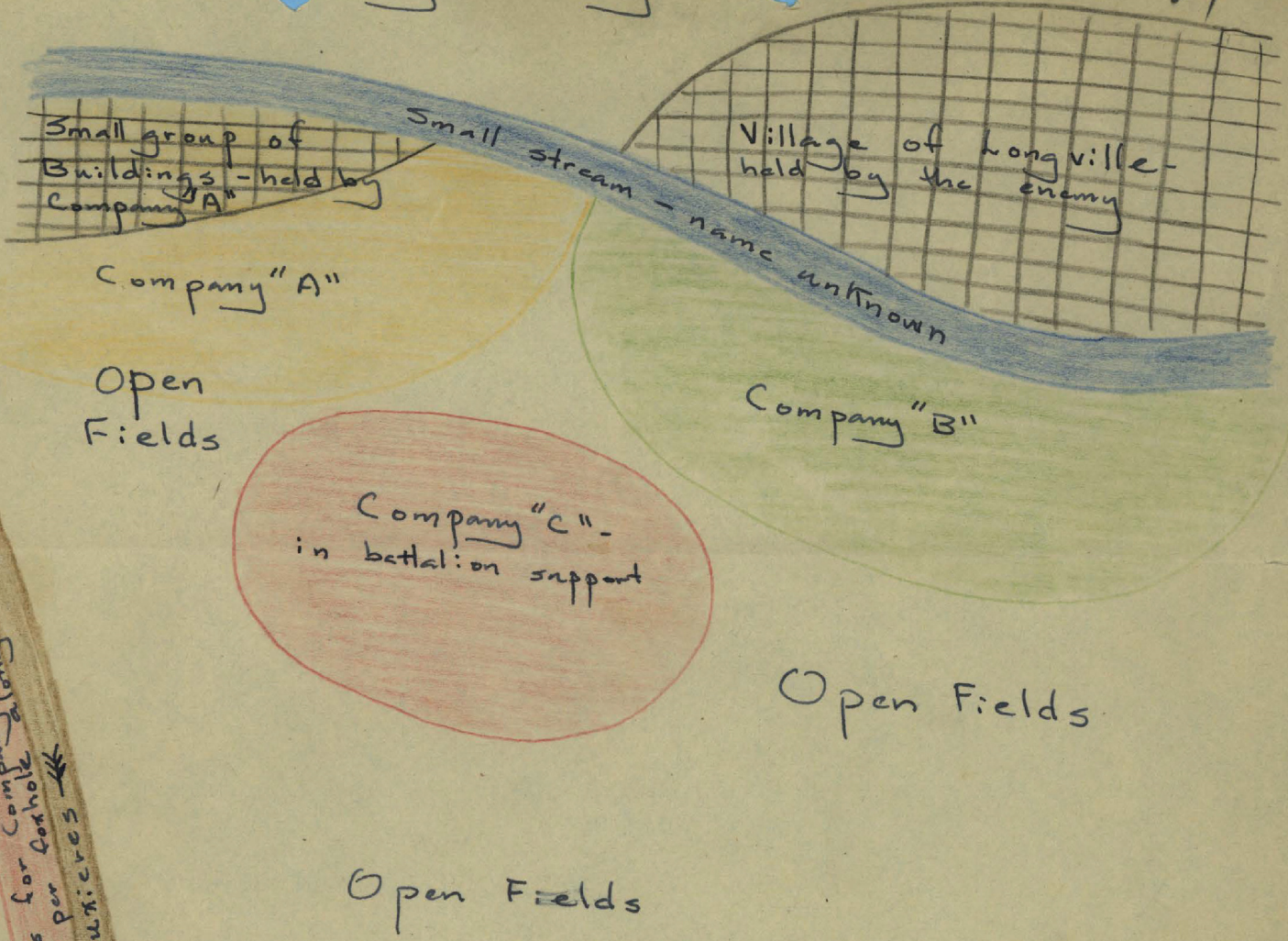
Dear sir:

I received your letter of 14 September a few days ago and would have answered sooner but for the fact that I am at college and needed some papers which were at my home. My first letter seems to have been somewhat confusing to you, but I'm sure that I can clear up some of the issues with this one.

In the first place, you stated that the historical records and Morning Reports of Company "C", 23rd Armored Infantry Battalion, 7th Armored Division, had been checked and no parallels for the two casualties could be found. This is easily understandable if the situation is considered, since only two of us saw the men in question after they had been killed and the C. P. half-track (where the Morning Reports were always made out) was six miles to the rear at the time. Also, let me explain the circumstances which preceded the arrival of our group of replacements: on about 10 September, 1944, elements of the 5th Infantry and 7th Armored Divisions crossed the Moselle River at a town called Dornot and were contained by the enemy within a very small bridge-head. After three days of heavy fighting a withdrawal was effected, but most of the remaining members of the 23rd Armored Inf. Bn. were forced to swim back. Casualties were excessive, and a large number of men were being carried on the records as M.I.A. on 21 September, 1944, when the replacement package to which the late Pvts. Pancey and Perry and myself belonged was assigned to Company "C". Hence, the company records were full of missing men, and evidently the absence of the two men in question wasn't noticed until much later. And, on 29 October the C.P. half-track was hit by a shell and burned. The two men were killed before they could be assigned to a squad: the first time we went "up" we went as a group of replacements and dug in behind Company "C", which at that time consisted of one officer (Lt.-later Captain-William D. Tomnev) and forty some-odd men. (Companies "A" and "B" had nothing to do with the casualties in question) It might help if I would sketch a map of the tactical situation as I remember it:



201
Morgue
John F. Lee



Pats. Pancey and Perry were killed somewhere in this area

Replacements for Company "C" road

2 men per Coxhole

Replacements for Coxholes

← Road to Bouixeres

Situation of 23rd Armored Infantry Battalion, 7th Armored Division, on 24 September, 1944. (In ~~XX~~ Corps Sector of the 3rd Army)

My guess would be that we replacements were not assigned to squads and platoons the first time "up" because of the expectation of a divisional move to another sector and also because of the very accurate mortar and artillery fire which made movement impossible during the hours of daylight.

After receiving your letter I sent home for a company roster I happened to have and received same yesterday. It did not include the ranks and only listed the men in the company in July of 1945, but I believe the name of the topkick was George Lande, and his address at the time was 1 Tennis Court, Brooklyn, N.Y. At the time of my sworn statement he was a staff sergeant acting as First Sergeant. As I said in my previous letter, I do not remember which officier witnessed my statement, but a list of names and addresses of the company's officers in July, 1945, (of course, some of the addresses may have been changed by now) follows:

Tommey, William D. (C.O.)

Murphreesboro, Ark.

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Amos, Charles L., Jr.	1034 Rockford Road,	High Point, N.C.
Bray, Jack J.	401 Forest St.	Marion, Ohio
Finnell, Ishmael E.	925 Idlewild Ct.	Lexington, Ky.
Harding, Richard D.	2402 Chase St.	Falls City, Nebr.
Payne, Gordon H.	2640 E. 5th Ave.	Knoxville, Tenn.
Tennent, Henry D.	513 Lawton St., S.W.	Atlanta, Ga.

The only other man besides myself who saw the two casualties after they were dead was a T/5 medic named Wright. He was awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action at Dornot and was captured at Meijel, Holland, on 29 October, 1944, the day after I was evacuated the first time. Hence, by the time the company headquarters section got around to straightening out the roster we were both gone, and so Pvts. Pancev and Perry were listed as M.I.A. I don't know Wright's first name or his address, but I think that a buddy of mine may know his present whereabouts, and I will write and try to get this information. All the other men ~~present in~~ close to the men in question at the time of their deaths were subsequently killed or evacuated with wounds, and I can't remember their names.

I am wondering if you have substantiated the fact that these men are really dead, since there must be a record concerning them somewhere in Washington. They both had families (Perry told me the day before he was killed that he had one child which he had never seen) and I very much want to get in touch with their wives in order to set their minds at ease as to what happened to them.

You will note that I am writing this from my college address, and I would appreciate it if you would send any future communications to me here. I hope that you will be able to throw more light on this matter with the information enclosed herewith, and I shall be eagerly awaiting the outcome of this affair.

Very sincerely yours,

John L. Margreiter, Jr.