

*293 Perri Ferdinand*

The Quartermaster General  
Memorial Division  
Washington 25, D.C.

710 West Main Street  
Flat River, Mo.  
21 May, 1948

*F. (33774742) 21*  
*m*

Dear sir:

A few weeks ago I read an article, "The Search for Soldier X", in Foreign Service, the V.F.W. monthly. The article was a report on the search for the bodies of those still missing and caused me to think of a matter which I had almost forgotten-- a matter pertaining to two men whom I believe to be buried in the foxhole in which they died.

I wrote to the editor of Foreign Service and asked which government agency I should contact, and they forwarded my letter to the American Graves Registration Division at the Kansas City Quartermaster Depot. This morning I received a letter from the latter telling me to send my information to you, hence this letter.

In September, 1944, the 23rd Armored Infantry Battalion of the 7th Armored Division was held up in its advance before the town of Longville, France, which is in the vicinity of Metz. I was in a large replacement package which joined that unit on 21 September, a large <sup>group</sup> of us going to "C" Company which lay in battalion support behind "B" and "A" Companies. Our group was taken up to the line on the night of 22 September and we were not assigned to any particular platoons, but instead were shown where to dig in as a separate group behind the company. I believe that the idea of this scheme was to give us some experience with artillery and mortar fire, but the noncom who placed us picked a very bad position, an area that was close to a road and hence "zeroed in" by the enemy.

On 24 September (I know these exact dates because I kept a small diary while overseas) a mortar round fell into a foxhole about 25 feet from mine and killed both occupants instantly. I crawled over to their hole and saw that one had been completely blown to bits and that the other was completely buried. Since it had been a direct hit I didn't bother to uncover the latter. Later that afternoon an aid man named Wright came by and looked at the remains, but we were the only men in the company who saw them. That night the 7th Armored pulled out to go to Holland, leaving the two dead men in the hole. I might mention that the weather and the terrain in the sector were very bad, so that the chances of the bodies being found even if the line had moved on were very slim. I happen to know that the town of Longville was not taken for at least five weeks, although the 5th and 95th Infantry Divisions both fought in this sector, and I feel that the mud and rain completely obliterated these bodies which were already almost totally covered. I don't believe that any of the men of the 5th and 95th used our holes because (as I said before) they were in a dangerous position and were of no tactical use whatsoever.

On 28 October, 1944, I was wounded and the other man who had seen the bodies was captured. In June, 1945, I returned to my company (after being evacuated a second time) and was called

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the orderly room a few days later. There I was asked if I knew what had happened to the two men in question and I swore under oath that they were dead. The first sergeant told me that they had been carried as "missing in action" since September, so I believe that the bodies were never picked up.

I think that both men were from California; and I know that their names were Pancey (I'm not sure about the spelling of this but I do know that the man was of Mexican extraction) and Perry. The former had at least one child and the latter had three, one of which he had never seen. If their bodies have been picked up I would like to have the names and addresses of their next of kin (if this is permissible) in order to write and put their minds at ease. If they were not recovered by Graves Registration then they are still in that foxhole between Bucsières (I'm not sure about the spelling of that name) and Longville. I doubt that I could find the spot on a map now, since it has been three years and eight months since I saw the area, but I do feel that I could find the place if I were <sup>there</sup> and if the edge of the forest wasn't mangled too badly by the artillery fire. It might be of help to you to know that these two men were in the replacement package which I believe (I have no record of this however) was designated "X-82-F" and had a temporary APO of 15422.

I would like to hear from you in regard to this matter, as I have been wondering about it for a long time and probably should have written sooner. Hoping that I may be of some help, I remain,

Yours in comradeship,

095 John L. Margreiter, Jr.

P. 11240

