

George E. Koskinen
13914 Edmore Drive
Detroit, Michigan 48205

February 17, 1966

Mr. Donald R. Castana
6833 Fountaine Avenue
Newark, California

Dear Mr. Castana:

I sent a questionnaire to you on January 19 concerning the actions of George Company of the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment. I have had many correspondences from your former comrades-in-arms since that time and I do want your help badly.

I have been informed that you were involved in company communications. If that is the case you have much to offer. My very best and most accurate reports have come from the communications soldiers and medics of the various units I have contacted during the past year and a half. Because I feel you can help me, I am sending you a roster which has been compiled from a picture of the original company at Camp Toccoa, as well as the lists of names which have been provided by such people as Virgil Danforth, Bill Kopp, John Urbank, Harold Holley, Walter Turk, Wilbur Ingalls, Irving Ireland, Kenneth Oliver (medic), and Luther Knowlton. Only three have failed to reply to the original request (yourself, Fred Grlowsky, and Lionel Cole).

These are the bits of information you might help me with which is of most urgent need right now: Who was the medic who lost his life when he came to the aid of Major Legere of Division headquarters near Poupeville at first light on D-day morning? The boys have given me three names but are not in agreement with each other. These names are Eddie Cole, Harold Hubbard, and T/S William Price. Secondly, who was the French speaking soldier who did escape as one of three from a plane which crashed as they were approaching the D-day DZ. Was it Tetreau or Fernie Gaudreau--I believe Art Moran was another of them. Ken Oliver, a medic states that he was a survivor of one of those crashes.

Was Roccoe Stephens the machine gunner who "opened fire" on the American tanks at the eastern edge of Poupeville on D-day shortly before noon? Luther Knowlton states that our soldiers did not fire upon the tank as alleged in Night Drop by General S. L. A. Marshall.

It is a shame that the young medic has never been identified in all these years. Larry Legere (now an assistant military advisor to Pres. Johnson) wrote to me in 1947 asking if I could help him concerning the identity of the medic so he could contact the parents. He never found out. I felt strongly after Harold Holley called me long distance that it was Eddie Cole but John Urbank says no--and yesterday Ireland sent the information that it was Harold Hubbard. Give me some class please. Will send reminders to Grlowsky and Cole also. Thank you for your help.

Mr. Donald Castona

SGT.

G/501st Parachute Infantry Regiment

HALFTRACK

GOOD CHOW - MORE REST-
SESSIONS IN THE WAR ROOM - BOXING - PORK CHOPS
ON THE MENU BEFORE D-DAY TURNED DOWN BY COL. EWELL

THE TREMENDOUS NUMBER OF PLAMES AS WE
WENT OVER THE ENGLISH COAST. HOW CLOSE WE WERE
TO THE WATER OVER THE CHANNEL.

SEE NOTE AT-
ACHED.

WE WERE GOING TOO FAST.
HARD OPENING SHOCK, WE WERE UNDER M.G. FIRE ALL
THE WAY DOWN - A BULLET HIT THE HEEL OF MY BOOT. NEAR ST. MART.
YES

SEE NOTES

ASSEMBLED MY
RIFLE AND STARTED TO CRAWL TOWARD THE HEDGEROWS

YES

JOHN T. URBANK, SGT. - HE CHALLENGED ME BY ASKING
IF I WERE CASTONA - NO CODE WORDS
URBANK - I CAN'T RECALL FOR
SURE ABOUT ANY OF THE OTHERS.

TO ~~SEE~~ TAKE & SECURE
THE AREA AROUND NIESVILLE FOR DIV. HEAD QUARTERS

NO - I WAS SEVERAL MILES AWAY.

LT. BARKER

DON'T KNOW

SR.
DON'T KNOW

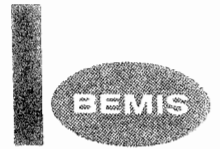
LOST CONTACT WITH URBANK RIGHT AWAY - FOUND A ROAD
SIGN AND FIGURED OUT WHERE I WAS. ~~HE~~ HEADED BACK TOWARDS
NIESVILLE - BUT WAS FIRED ON THREE TIMES IN THE FIRST
HOUR OR SO. TOOK TO THE FIELDS AND FINALLY RAN IN-
TO SOME 32ND MEN. WE SET UP IN A FARM HOUSE AND WERE
ATTACKED BY A COUPLE TRUCK LOADS OF GERMANS. LEFT
THE FARM HOUSE & HEADED OUT TOWARD THE COAST, WE
WERE CARRYING ONE WOUNDED IN A STRETCHER.

I'VE BEEN RACKING MY BRAINS BUT HAVEN'T
BEEN ABLE TO REMEMBER - WISH I COULD HELP,

14. Did you know any of the survivors of the company planes that were shot down on D-day? How many of the three planes from our aerial were carrying any personnel? ONE SURVIVOR I'M SURE OF WAS MORIN - PIT. I DON'T RECALL HIS FIRST NAME. THE TWO "G" COMPANY PLANES THAT WERE SHOT DOWN CARRIED A SQUAD FROM FIRST PLATOON - THE OTHER ONE HAD THIRD PLATOON PEOPLE.
15. Can you recall the names of any of the company guys from Silver Lake from California recalls me by the name of Willey. - NOLLEY SOUNDS FAMILIAR TO ME - I WISH I COULD HELP YOU MORE - IT HAS BEEN A LONG TIME.

16. For over a year now I have been trying to find the identity of the young medic who was killed near Longville while he was trying to give aid to a young man, the assistant - 3rd division. Can you assist in any way? Can you give me any clues about this soldier or any possible leads? Detective work after 21 years is real tough. - SEEMS TO ME THAT IT WAS A PRIVATE NAMED BOHN - HE WASN'T A MEDIC BUT COULD HAVE BEEN GIVING FIRST AID. A POSSIBLE CONTACT MIGHT BE RAYMOND F. GEDDES. HE WAS FROM BALTIMORE BEFORE THE WAR. HE WAS THE RADIO OPERATOR WHOSE EYE WAS SHOT OUT - MENTIONED IN NIGHT DROP. I DID NOT GET BACK TO "G" CO. TILL D PLUS 2 SO THIS IS WHAT I REMEMBER FROM WHAT I HEARD. I WAS THE "G" COMP. COMMUNICATIONS SGT.

NEWARK PLANT
and
SAN FRANCISCO SALES DIVISION



2-24-66

George,

I hope you have already received my answer to your earlier inquiry.

I am looking now at a picture taken at Camp Mackall in the summer of 1943. This is probably the same picture you are referring to. I joined 'G' Comp. in Jan. of 1943 at Tooeva - right from jump school.

I feel very quietly as I look at this picture and realize that I can't identify everyone.

I wish I could help you more on this medic - I remember hearing about it when I finally rejoined the company. ~~Capt. Waldemann~~ Capt. WALDEMANN who I last heard lived in Monterey, California was the Battalion Surgeon and would probably know. I have asked Ken Moore but he couldn't fill me in on anyone.

I am sending you a list of corrected

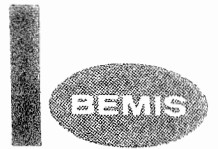
spellings on the names on your list.
Believe many of those on the second list
were among the originals from Teococ.
These are Buford Burns - David Mythalen
Bernie Handman - Gene Morrison - Irving
Ireland - Willem Bebach - Harry Brown -
Art Merin - Paul Hellingger - Sgt. John
Schadt - Pete Ruoto - Sgt. Matt Yaguinta
1/5 Bill Price - Wilbur Ingalls.

I hope that what I have been
able to add will help a little.

Donald R. Castora

I would appreciate getting the addresses
of any of these people as I have lost
contact with just about everyone I
knew in those days.

NEWARK PLANT
and
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Here are the correct spellings and
first names

LT. HOWARD BIELOW
ROBERT BALDWIN
EDWARD V. BRADLEY
KENNETH R. BELLES
JOSEPH C. BURGHOLZER
RAYMOND STANLEY COOPER
STEVEN J. CYGAN
SGT. TOM D. CRISWELL
KENNETH DUDA
RICHARD EVANS
MELVIN EDWARDS
GERALD FICOCILLO
RAYMOND GEDDES
DONALD F. KANE
JAMES L. McVAY
ARNOLD MISZARIS
ERNEST ROBINSON
RONALD RAWLEIGH
JAMES D. SATTERFIELD
DEAN C. SWEM
JAMES WHITESIDE
ART MORIN
ALOYSIUS F. REILLY

JULIUS J. RAFFAELI
LEONARD ~~PIGNATELLO~~
~~PIGNATELLO~~

SOME OTHERS WHO
^{IN NORMANDY}
JUMPED BUT ARE
NOT LISTED ARE,

GEORGE SCIORTINO
KILLED AT BASTOINE

HAROLD VICKERY
KILLED AT NORMANDY

SGT. EDWARD HANNON
KILLED AT BASTOINE

WARREN C. PURCELL

ROBERT L. BURAS

~~JAMES~~

WILLIAM D. BURNS
KILLED IN NORMANDY

George - several of
these people were from
the Detroit area - maybe
some of these spellings
will help you contact some

4. THE SKY WAS REAL BRIGHT FROM FLARES - THE OTHER TWO PLANES IN OUR V OF THREE WERE SHOT DOWN, SOME OF THE OTHERS IN MY STICK SAID OUR PLANE WAS HIT THOUGH I DIDN'T NOTICE IT. OUR PILOT ELECTED TO GET DOWN TO TREE TOP LEVEL - WE FLEW OVER THE DROP ZONE VERY LOW AND WENT OUT OVER THE EAST COAST AND OUT OVER THE CHANNEL AGAIN. THE CO-PILOT CAME BACK AND ASKED IF WE STILL WANTED TO GO BACK & JUMP. LT. BARKER TOLD HIM TO TAKE US BACK AND DROP US ANY PLACE AS LONG AS IT WAS IN FRANCE. WE TURNED AROUND AND WERE DROPPED UP NEAR ST. MARTIN DE-VARREVILLE.

6. I COULDN'T GET THE LEG SNAPS OPEN AND DIDN'T DARE MOVE AROUND TOO MUCH AS A MACH. GUN KEPT FIRING RIGHT OVER ME. I TRIED TO CUT THE LEG STRAPS BUT ONLY SUCCEEDED IN CUTTING MYSELF. FINALLY WORKED THE LEG SNAPS LOOSE AND GOT OUT OF MY HARNESS.

George E. Koskinaki
13914 Edmore Drive
Detroit, Michigan 48205

March 2, 1966

Mr. Donald R. Castona
6633 Fountaine Avenue
Newark, California

Dear Mr. Castona:

Many thanks for your replies, the first arrived last week and now the second come in yesterday's mail along with a reply from Warren Ruedy. He also had the address for McIntyre Aitken and one for Darwin S. Moore. The replies to my questionnaire have been wonderful.

I will send you a list of addresses in the next week or so (I make a carbon copy of each letter so this is no idle promise and review the material from time to time). Right now I am real busy. Daughter is coming home from the University of Michigan where she is a freshman this evening and Mother wants me to pick up some baked goods and groceries because she'll be bringing in company. Secondly I have a basketball game to take care of. My team is in the state Class A District Tournament at our school in the second round play and game time is 7:00. I didn't want to wait longer to reply to your letter though and wanted to jot down some of these things while they are fresh in my mind.

As a former communications man I place great reliance on your memory. The report on Harold Hibbard will be verified in the next few weeks I am sure and if he was seen by you several days after D-day we know that theory is out of the window.

Luther Knowlton is the one who mentioned that Rescoe Stephens was a machine gunner -- unless Ben Stephens was a C Company member. He lives in Montana and did not reply about six months ago when I tried to contact him. If I only knew which of these people were from the Detroit area I would be able to contact them. Someone supplied the name of August Pappas and our whole directory is full of them--didn't know Detroit was "Greek Town". I need a middle initial for him as well as one for Richard Evans.

I'm sending you a copy of a Company roster which was published with the Christmas menu at Camp Toccoa in 1943. Have added some other names to it and you'll see much work has been done to get the roster completed since I sent you the first list. I've tried to contact former Captain Waldmann but he doesn't reside at the address which was provided--however as I look at your letter it wasn't Monterey--I'll get a phone directory for that city and give that a try. Ken Moore has supplied much valuable information but cannot help me much with 3rd Battalion.

Again thank you most sincerely for your help.

George E. Koskinaki