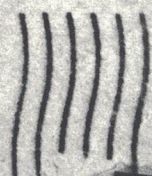


R. F. Giddas
216 No. "A" St
Blackwell, Okla.

Mrs. W. H. Mullings
P.O. 205
Bixby, Okla.



Blackwell, Okla.
14 Feb. 1945

Dear Mrs. Mullings:

I received your letter yesterday but was unable to get around to answering it. I can assure you that writing the things I told you over the phone Sunday will not be an imposition to me. I feel that anything I am able to do is much less than I would like to do.

As you are aware, it happened on Jan. 19, 1945 during the Battle of the Bulge. The weather at that time was extremely cold. At approximately 8 ^{9:30} P.M. a combat patrol was sent to determine the strength of German positions on a hill west of and overlooking the town of Houfalze Belgium. This patrol to the best of my memory consisted of 28 men. The line of march was from a point about 3 mi east of the town. They passed through the town without meeting any opposition and were approximately 300 yds. from the enemy when they first encountered fire. Vernon was a mortar sqd. leader. His position should have been several hundred yards to the rear of his own men. When

the Germans opened fire, our men were emerging from a wooded area. Due to the snow covered ground their dark clothing made them perfect targets. Several of the men were wounded in the very first minutes of the encounter. In the meantime, your brother and his squad had completed their mission with the mortar and had come forward to aid the main body of men.

A German machine-gun was zeroed in on several of our men, had them pinned down so that they could not move in any direction. Vernon had noted this and had exposed himself to the fire in an attempt to draw it away from them. He succeeded, but was mortally wounded in doing so. If it may be of any consolation to you, you may rest assured that he did not suffer, he was killed instantly.

There was talk afterwards of awards for the men on that patrol. However to my knowledge nothing ever came of it. I will check on it and let you know what I find out.

3
He was buried, along with most of
the men who were killed in the
Ardennes, somewhere northeast of Viveraines,
or about 10 miles southwest of Leige, Belg.
I had attempted to get the Plot number
and exact name of the Military Cemetery
while in Europe but was unsuccessful. I
am sure that if you so desire, you may
get this information by writing to the
Adjutant General's Office in Wash. D.C. This
information is given to next of kin only.

There may be other things that I may
remember later that I have not covered in
either the phone call or this letter. If and
when I do, I shall write and tell you of
them.

Hoping, that in doing what little I
have been able to do, I have been of
some service to you. Again I assure you
Mrs. Mullings, it was not an imposition.
I was only too happy to do it.

Very truly yours
R. F. Gudas