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World War II Casualties

12-1-1944

Neil Eugen Jenkins

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Mr. Herbert L. Cushing.
Kearney, Nebr.

May 2 1945.

Dear Sir.

We are enclosing a picture of our son Neil and considerable information etc., as requested in your recent letter.

Perhaps we are sending more than you will care to use, but you can use what you wish.

We held a memorial service for Neil on March 18th, in the Methodist church at Smithfield, of which he was a member. We are enclosing the "obituary" which was read at this service, this will give considerable information. We are also enclosing a copy of one of the last letters received from him. It seems to us that this is such an unusual letter and shows him as he really was. You may use this letter if you wish. A friend of ours has written a poem in memory of Neil, we are enclosing a copy of this.

I might mention a rather unusual coincidence that happened during his training. After several examinations he was finally sent to Lafayette College at Easton, Penn. After arriving at the college he found that this college was founded by George Junkin who was also the first president of the college. This man was a great great uncle of Neil. Neil was taking an engineering course and was getting along fine, when, all at once, the army decided that they needed more infantry. All of these college boys were transferred to the infantry as privates, they were given a short training and sent across. They were immediately pushed up to the front and put into action. Neil was in combat the first time about Nov. 20th and was killed Dec. 1st.

Just recently the "Company clerk" of Neil's company wrote us a letter giving us the details of his death. Here is the way he wrote it to us. Neil was a platoon runner, and on this particular day they were advancing against the enemy, when the enemy fire became so intense that they were "pinned down" and were compelled to seek shelter where ever possible. Neil and three other boys got into an enemy fox hole for shelter. The shelling continued for several hours, as soon as it ceased the company advanced to better positions, they got together and called roll. Four boys were missing. As soon as it was humanly possible a search was made, they located the foxhole where the boys had taken shelter. From appearances it looked as if a very large German artillery shell had landed very close to the hole. When it exploded it buried all four of the boys with dirt. It is almost certain that all four were killed instantly by the concussion, if not killed instantly they were knocked unconscious and then suffocated before regaining consciousness. There was not a mark or scratch on any of them, only a slight bleeding at the nose.

Neil was awarded the "expert infantrymans medal" also the "good conduct medal" also the purple heart, and of course the "European theatre of war badge".

We would like very much to have several copies of the bulletin dedicated to Neil.

Respt yours.

[Signature]
Obituary read at memorial service

Neil Eugene Junkin was born in Smithfield, Neb., Sept. 28, 1922. Was killed in action, Dec. 1, 1944, at the age of 22 years, 2 months and 3 days.

Neil received all of his grade and high school education in the Smithfield school and graduated in 1939. He attended Kearney State College in 1940 & 1941. In Sept. 1942 he again entered Kearney College and in this same month enlisted in the U. S. Army Reserves. He was allowed to remain in college until March 5th, 1943 at which time he was called into service.

He was placed in the Medical Corps and sent to Camp Barkeley, Texas, where he was sent to a "clerks school" for nine weeks. After finishing this school and passing an examination satisfactorily he was given his choice of, entering an Officers Training School or taking an engineering course in college. He decided on the College course and was sent to Lafayette College at Easton Penn. on July 1st 1943. While attending college there he met Miss Mary Mock, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. J. F. Mock of Phillipsburg, New Jersey. These two were united in marriage in the chapel at Lafayette College on Feb. 12, 1944.

On April 1, 1944 all of these college boys were transferred to the infantry and sent to Camp Claibourne, Louisiana, to receive his basic training. He was placed in the 334th Infantry regiment with the 84th division. On Sept. 17, 1944 he left New York for overseas, He landed in England on Oct. 2nd, and remained there for about one month, at which time he was sent to France, after a week there he was sent to Holland, where he joined the U. S. 9th Army. From Holland he went into Germany, where he went into combat for the first time about Nov. 20th. The message received from the War Department stated that he was "killed in action, on Dec. 1st, somewhere in Germany". A letter from his commanding officer stated that "A U. S. Army Chaplain officiated at the burial services, that he was given a military funeral and was laied to rest in an American Military Cemetery somewhere in Holland".

He united with the Methodist Church in Smithfield, April 4, 1932. He was unusually faithful to his Christian belief to the very last. A letter received from his Company Clerk, who had been Neil's Buddy, stated that Neil had a small bible in his pocket when killed, this bible had been sent to him by his mother.

Besides his loving wife, he leaves to mourn his loss, his Father, Mother and two brothers, Dean and Vaun. Dean is a member of the U. S. Coast Guard stationed at Vancouver, Washington. He also leaves many loving relatives and a host of friends.

He went one day with a cheery wave,
A gay farewell, and a smile he gave,
And when he was gone—with purpose true,
We hung in our window a star of BLUE.

He did the task that was given him,
To help rid the world of greed and sin,
He fought a good fight—so the message told,
But our star of BLUE has turned to GOLD.

Dear Father, be near those homes we pray,
Where the message has come, or will some day,
Comfort each heart with your love so true,
Where a GOLD star hangs in the place of a BLUE.
November 11, 1944.

Somewhere in Holland.

Dear Folks,

Have some time this morning so I'll have a little talk with you by U. S. Postal system.

I'm O. K. and doing fine, so nothing for you to worry about.

Well, 26 years ago today the war came to an end. How I wish history would repeat itself today. Nine months ago to-morrow, Molly and I became man and wife, I still think that is the wisest thing I ever did in my life. No matter what happens, there are some wonderful memories I can always look back on. Anyone who has had a home like I have and all that went with it, then a wife like Molly, surely has something to thank God for.

Mother, there is nothing for you to worry about, I keep daily contact with God and we have our little private talks several times a day. If anything should happen, I'm thoroughly prepared. Knowing this you should not worry much. Nothing will happen, have faith in this.

Love, Neil.