



ARMY SERVICE FORCES
KANSAS CITY QUARTERMASTER DEPOT
601 HARDESTY AVENUE
KANSAS CITY 1, MISSOURI

JRM:mp
December 8, 1944

IN REPLY REFER TO 168351

Miss Nellie Seder
159 Woodmere Avenue
Detroit 9, Michigan

Dear Miss Seder:

We have your letter of the 29th. It was one of almost two thousand inquiries received in a single day. So that you might understand our sympathy for you, I wish it were possible to tell you of the people in our Effects Bureau - of the almost impossible task our employees, soldiers' wives, mothers, and sweethearts, assisted by a very few elderly men or returned veterans, are trying to accomplish.

Each day they check the personal belongings of hundreds of soldiers. Many feel that any day the property of their own sons, husbands, fathers, or brothers might be coming over their sorting tables. Many have already lost their loved ones. Just now one of our WAC officers received word that her husband had been killed in action. Most of our employees might prefer, under ordinary circumstances, other duties, or perhaps work like your own. Their loyalty to men like your brother keeps them on their more sad tasks.

To many thousands of next of kin, with whom we have contact, every possession is highly cherished. There are others who desire only money, jewelry, trinkets and items of monetary value. Therefore, it is difficult to know just what to send or what to discard. What will be done with a billfold containing a lock of hair, pictures of a wife and child, and of a father and mother, pierced by a bullet or piece of shrapnel? What will be done with the bloodstained pieces of paper on which a last letter of a dying son and brother is written? These are representative of problems which confront us daily. Unfortunately, a type of action, which brings letters of commendation from some, results in censure from others.

Some money was recovered which belonged to your brother. It consisted of French francs and English shillings and pence; our troops were not permitted to take American money into France. Such funds are handled separately by the Finance Department and are not always sent with the effects. It is reasonable to assume that the money will be ultimately sent you.

168351, Miss Nellie Seder, 159 Woodmere Avenue, Detroit 9, Michigan,
December 8, 1944, (contd)

Everything of value, which we receive, is always forwarded. Where inquiries such as yours indicate something is missing we try to trace it through overseas units. I know you realize how difficult it is to recover anything from fighting areas, where efforts taken to recover valuables may result in additional casualties.

I wish I were able to answer all the questions you ask, in a way that would satisfy you. You will always be proud of Vittolh as a good brother and a good soldier. His memory will no doubt lead you to find the answers to your questions through your daily reading, your church and other contacts. Meantime, I hope that our overseas inquiries will result in locating the additional items. If they are obtained, they will be forwarded promptly.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN R. MURPHY
Colonel Q.M.C.
Effects Quartermaster