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Lawrence Piercefield Is Casualty

12/8/44

Telegram to His Mother, Mrs. John Meeks of Newton, Discloses His Recent Injury in Italy

A telegram from the War Department, Thursday morning, to Mrs. John Meeks of Newton, disclosed that her son, Private Lawrence M. "Buck" Piercefield, was a recent casualty in the fighting in Italy. The message didn't state whether he was killed, wounded or missing but merely that he "was a casualty."

By a coincidence, the Press received the following article direct from the Press headquarters in Italy, Wednesday afternoon:

With Famous Regiment

With the Fifth Army, Italy.—Private Lawrence M. Piercefield of Newton and Private First Class Donald R. Shire of Willow Hill are fighting in Italy with the 361st Infantry regiment, which spearheaded the advance of Lieutenant General Mark W. Clark's Fifth army from Velletri to the Arno river without having once given ground. The 361st is part of the Ninety-first "Powder River" division, currently in the Florence-Bologna drive.

The regiment landed in Italy last May 31; in two days moved into the line and fought its first battle just north of Velletri while attached to the Thirty-sixth "Texas" division. The 361st was one of the units that took the Albano hills and Lake Albano, making possible the fall of Rome.

Bypassing Rome, the regiment continued to advance north on highway one and participated in the capture of Tarquinia, which fell June 8, and Montalto, ten miles further north, which fell on the following day. The 361st then went on to defeat the Germans at Magliana and capture the key terrain feature of Poggio di Moscano on June 17.

Won Signal Victory

The outfit next won a signal victory at Ponte d'Istria, where the unit captured more than 200 Germans. One company of the 361st had crossed the Ombrone river and entered the town; two other companies had flanked the village. A German force counter-attacked in the town and was taken by surprise by the flank companies.

The regiment advanced further to take Paganico, Roccastrada, Radicondoli and Casole D'Elsa. It was pulled out of the line for a rest, July 4. Re-joining the Ninety-first division, the 361st attacked again July 14 east of Cecina. It then moved through Orceto, Ponsacco and Pontedera and was the first in Italy to reach the Arno river, July 17.

Colonel R. W. Broedlow of Medford, Oregon, a veteran of twenty-eight years' service, commands the 361st. He has seen action on the Mexican border and in the first World war and served also in the Philippines and elsewhere in the orient.