

2LT Philip Amerigo Mazzeo

The following has been compiled from cemetery records, internet searches and information from the U.S. Army Human Resources Command Casualty & Memorial Affairs Operations Division, Fort Knox, Kentucky.

The National Personnel Records Center cannot locate his official military records at this time.

I'm the nephew of 2LT Philip Amerigo Mazzeo, who according to family members no longer living was killed by partisan saboteurs near the French/German border on 26 October 1945. All of his immediate next of kin are deceased.

After his death, he was buried in the US Army Cemetery in Champigneul, France.

Personal Data:

Name: 2LT Philip Amerigo Mazzeo

DOB: 9/17/1920

Active Duty: 8/8/1942 to 10/26/45

Place of Induction: Ft. Jay, Governor's Island, NY

Residence at Enlistment: 47-20 98th Street, Carona, NY 11368

Date of death: 10/26/1945 at 1645hrs. (on N-360, 4 miles outside of Reims, France)

Airborne Sgt. (G-4) at Normandy, 1944 (unit unknown, either the 82nd or the 101st Airborne)

Battlefield promotion to 2LT (01), 1944

Original Service Number: 32-424-443

Service Number at time of death: 0-2019904

Last Duty Station: 8th Labor Supervision Area (8958th Labor Service Company), Eschborn, Germany

Buried in US Army Cemetery, Champigneul, France

Repatriated to CONUS in 1949 to National Cemetery, Farmingdale, NY (missing right humerus)

Background:

I was christened in an outfit made from my Uncle Phil's parachute. So were many other family members over the years. He was a paratrooper who landed in Normandy and fought all the way to Germany. But he never came home...

Philip Amerigo Mazzeo was inducted (drafted) into the US Army on August 8, 1942. He reported to Fort Jay, located on Governor's Island (NY). The base was run by the First Army. The First Army is credited with orchestrating "Operation Overlord," the invasion of Normandy and surrounding areas on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

The First Army was:

FIRST on the beaches of Normandy
FIRST out of the Normandy beachhead
FIRST into Paris
FIRST to break the Siegfried Line in September 1944
FIRST to cross the Rhine River in April 1945
FIRST to link up with our Soviet allies at the Elbe River

My Uncle Phil served as a buck sergeant in one of the Airborne units (specific unit unknown) that jumped into Normandy in 1944. He apparently received a battlefield promotion to 2LT, as a result of the heavy casualties of officers in his unit and his courage under fire and demonstrated leadership. Audie Murphy received a similar commission from staff sergeant to 2LT for his actions at Normandy.

As the war wound down and the soldiers became an occupation force in Germany, he was assigned to the 8th Labor Supervisor Area (8958th Labor Service Company).

Labor Service Company Background:

Shortly after the end of the war the American forces hired Germans and displaced persons for various jobs. The umbrella organization for these jobs was the Labor Service/Civilian Support. These units provided a mobile, noncombatant civilian work force capable of carrying out assigned peacetime missions independently in support of the U.S. Army Europe.

The units were generally aligned by nationality. Most were Germans, but also included units made up from people of Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Albania, Czechoslovakia, and others. At least one group was made up of displaced persons from all of the Baltic States. The displaced persons employed by Labor Service/Civilian Support were people who could not return to their homeland, for various reasons. □

The Incident:

On Friday, October 26, 1945 2LT Philip Amerigo Mazzeo and three other soldiers were riding in an Army Jeep on a weekend pass to France. They left from the 8th Labor Supervision Area (8958th Labor Service Company), in Eschborn, near Frankfurt, Germany headed toward Reims, France.

It was 5 months after Victory in Europe Day (VE Day).

According to family now also deceased, the Jeep was blown up at 4:45PM by partisan saboteurs and my Uncle Phil was killed. He was identified by the jeep driver, Tech Sgt. Bill Jones. It is unknown if other passengers in the jeep survived. 2Lt. Phil Mazzeo was considered a "non-combat" death in the line of duty. Today, we would call it an "IED."

Research has shown there was a partisan saboteur group operating at the time, known as the "Werewolfs."

The body was brought to the US Army 178th General Hospital in Reims, France.

Here's a link that explains the Werewolfs:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Werwolf>

2LT Philip Mazzeo was only 25 years old. He was probably thinking about coming home to the US soon. He had recently married a woman named Betty J. Van Winkle, who was the beneficiary of his GI Life Insurance policy. After his death, she remarried in Los Angeles, California to a Mr. R. Wm. Tell, Jr. and subsequently moved to Lincoln, Nebraska.

2LT Philip Amerigo Amerigo Mazzeo was buried in the US Army Cemetery in Champigneul, France. He remained there for 4 years, until Congress passed the 1949 Repatriation Act, which brought him back to the U.S. to be interred in the National Cemetery in Farmingdale, Long Island, NY. Upon disinterment, it was noted that the body was missing the right humerus (an indication of trauma at the time of the accident?).

Researched By:

Lee S. Covino, USA 1970-71

May 4, 2020