

2d Lt Charles M. Thirlkeld,  
ASN O-1825509



**103RD INFANTRY DIVISION**

**OFFICE OF THE  
COMMANDING GENERAL**

APO 470, U. S. Army  
2 February 1945

Colonel C. M. Thirlkeld  
Headquarters, Third Service Command  
Baltimore, Md.

Dear Mary and Chick:

I was shocked and grieved beyond measure to hear this morning that Chuck had been killed in action at Bastogne some time in January. I am told that he was killed instantly by a nebelwerfer shell. Please accept my heartfelt sympathy.

I left Bastogne on December 31 and was subsequently assigned to command this Division. Meanwhile, I dropped one of my aides. Yesterday I told my principal aide, Lt. Starrett, to approach Chuck and his commander to see if they would consider the transfer of Chuck here as my aide-de-camp. It was only in reply to my request that I learned the tragic news.

As you must know, I feel particularly badly because of my part in Chuck's transfer to the paratroops. I really tried to dissuade him, but the rougher I painted the picture, the more determined he became. When he finished that rugged jump course, he was more enthusiastic than ever.

From his commander and from his comrades, I received always only the most glowing reports of his high intelligence and his inspiring leadership. The men of his anti-tank platoon adored him.

Our success at Bastogne came at a high price indeed when we had to pay with men like Chuck.

Affectionately,

A. C. McAULIFFE  
Brigadier General, U. S. A.  
Commanding



HEADQUARTERS 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION  
Office of the Commanding General

APO 472, U. S. Army  
12 February 1945

Mrs. Mary C. Thirlkeld,  
Headquarters 3rd. Service Command,  
Baltimore, Maryland.

Dear Mrs. Thirlkeld:

I wish to take this opportunity of expressing my deep personal sympathy to you in the loss of your son, Second Lieutenant Charles M. Thirlkeld Jr., O-1825509.

He was killed in action on 3 January 1945 while fighting gallantly with our forces in the defense of Bastogne, Belgium. This key city was successfully defended and the great German counteroffensive stopped only because there were men like your son willing to die rather than fall back. His courageous example has had a profound influence on all who knew him and his memory will always remain with those who fought with him in this decisive action.

The unit to which your son was assigned will furnish you with such details of his death and burial as are permitted under existing censorship regulations.

The officers and men of this Division join me in extending to you our sincere sympathy in the loss of your son and our Comrade-in-Arms.

Sincerely yours,



MAXWELL D. TAYLOR,  
Major General, USA,  
Commanding.





**103D INFANTRY DIVISION**  
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING GENERAL

APO 470, U. S. Army  
31 July 1945

Col. Charles M. Thirlkeld  
Headquarters Third Service Command  
Baltimore, Md.

Dear Chick:

After long delay, I finally heard from the 506th Parachute Infantry that Chuck is buried in United States Military Cemetery #1, Grand Faily, France, Grave #143, Row #6, Plot "D". The regimental Protestant chaplain officiated at the services. Ted Starrett, my aide-de-camp, has obtained Chuck's watch and ring, and has already forwarded them to you.

I received orders yesterday to take command of the 79th Infantry Division. I leave tomorrow morning. It is probably a good break for me, and will permit me to hold my rank for some time. The 79th is in Category II while the 103d is in Category IV.

My best to Mary, Jean and yourself.

Sincerely,

A. C. McANLIFFE  
Major General, United States Army  
Commanding





WAR DEPARTMENT  
OFFICE OF THE QUARTERMASTER GENERAL  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

27 September 1946

Colonel Charles M. Thirlkeld, Sr.  
1300 Service Unit  
Service Command Headquarters  
Baltimore, Maryland

Dear Colonel Thirlkeld:

The War Department is most desirous that you be furnished information regarding the burial location of your son, the late Second Lieutenant Charles M. Thirlkeld, Jr., A.S.N. O-1 825 509.

The records of this office disclose that his remains are interred in the U. S. Military Cemetery Grand Faily, plot D, row 6, grave 143. You may be assured that the identification and interment have been accomplished with fitting dignity and solemnity.

This cemetery is located ten miles north of Verdun, France, and is under the constant care and supervision of United States military personnel.

The War Department has now been authorized to comply, at Government expense, with the feasible wishes of the next of kin regarding final interment, here or abroad, of the remains of your loved one. At a later date, this office will, without any action on your part, provide the next of kin with full information and solicit his detailed desires.

Please accept my sincere sympathy in your great loss.

Sincerely yours,

*T. B. Larkin*

T. B. LARKIN  
Major General  
The Quartermaster General



HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED STATES ARMY FORCES WESTERN PACIFIC  
OFFICE OF THE HQ. COMMANDANT  
A.P.O. 707

21 October 1946

Major General T. B. Larkin  
Office of the Quartermaster General  
Washington 25, D.C.

My dear General Larkin:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of 27 September with regard to location of the grave of my son, Second Lieutenant Charles M. Thirlkeld, Jr., A.S.N. O-1 825 509. Of course, I am very grateful for this information. However, I do feel that the lapse of time between his death at Bastonge in January 1945, and receipt of this letter, without any previous official information as to his burial place, is to say the least of little comfort to his parents.

While I fully realize the vast amount of work involved in maintaining records and sending of notifications, I feel that there is no justification in any such delay as this. The only information I have received since the official notification of my son being killed in action while a member of the 526th Inf. Parachute Regt., 101st Airborne Division, Infantry, was through General McAuliffe and other personal friends. I did receive from them information that he had been buried near Bastonge; it was his Mother's wish and mine that there be no change in this location.

Understanding that the wishes of the next of kin cannot always be granted, it is still very distressing to learn that change of burial place is an accomplished fact.

C. M. THIRLKELD  
Colonel, FA

GMP:apc