

The Florist from Cherbourg in 1944 & 45.

After the Germans had left France an enterprising Florist from Cherbourg had a novel idea. Remember the French had been under the German Boot since 1940 in the Normandy area. Everything was scarce including money.

This business person from Cherbourg went to the 6 Temporary Cemeteries in Normandy and wrote down the address of the family member listed on the Dog Tags that was attached to the Grave Markers. He then wrote letters to the families asking if they wanted a photo of their relatives Plot in Normandy. When he started to get orders he would go down to the Cemeteries and bring one Bouquet of Flowers and place it on the grave, take the photo then move it to the next one. In this case in the back on this Plot you will see a Star of David marker. That with the Weekly Burial Report shows that it is the Plot of 2nd Lt Howard T. Hirschel Co B of the 264th Inf.



At some point the Army realized what he was going and two things happened. One was that he was told to stop writing down the address of family members and the Army had the Dog Tags removed and replaced with the name and Serial Number painted on instead.



They were not happy with what he had been doing but I think once again the Army was shortsighted as was the Florist. Many family members had written to the Army for a photo of their loved ones. The Army always wrote back and said; no we don't have the time or the money for that. Instead of blackballing the Florist they should have struck a deal with him to take photos of all 26,000 men and women buried in Normandy at that time.



The families would gladly have paid for the photo of their loved one. Some people even now say that someone like the Florist is making money off of the dead. I hate to tell these people that everyone is always paid when a soldier or a non-soldier dies. From the burial to the coffins, the paperwork and maintaining of a cemetery. The Government itself charged \$75.00 to the families who wanted their soldiers brought home from around the world after WWII.



The Florist had the best idea in a time when work was hard to find. He had to pay for his car, insurance, gas and taking photos which weren't cheap in those days. He also had to write letters to the families in the States and that cost money as well. Not to mention the work of creating lists of all of the soldiers and their families.

My Grandmother would have paid anything to have a photo of her youngest sons Grave in Normandy but it was not to be. It was rare for that to happen. I have attached photos of a few that was lucky enough to have this done. One was a Pilot whose cousin was killed in Normandy and he flew back in February of 1945 to visit his grave and take a picture to send back to his families. Another was printed in the newspaper back home as the soldier came through Normandy after the war before going home.

To this day I don't know who the Florist from Cherbourg was or how many photos he took to send home or how much he charged. Not just the one soldier would be in the image, as usually you can see other Plots in the photo. Now with the complete list of the 6 Temporary Cemeteries in Normandy even if unreadable at a distance it can be figured out.

It is a shame that no one figured out that so many more family members could have had a photo of where they relative was put to rest in Normandy so many years ago.

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