

LAW OFFICES  
WILLIS AND WILLIS

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

MOUNTAIN TRUST BUILDING

HOLMAN WILLIS  
HOLMAN WILLIS, JR.

April 1, 1943

Mr. Amon Carter  
Fort Worth, Texas

Copy mailed c/o The Mayflower Hotel  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Carter:

While I was in Washington Sunday I heard some facts that led me to believe that my son, First Lieutenant Keith Willis, was with your boy on February 14th, when they were reported missing in action in North Africa. Keith was an observation officer, First Field Observation Battalion.

I intended to call you up, but some other engagements interfered until late, and I was afraid I would disturb you. Of course, we are doing everything we can to get information. I have some friends who are close to the department and the Red Cross, and I know that you have. It occurred to me, however, that one or the other of us might get some definite information, or at least some crumb that would help. I shall be delighted to advise you immediately if I learn anything further, and am wondering if you would be willing to do the same for me? I assure you that I would appreciate it.

I met Mrs. Van Zandt in Washington, and from what she told me of information that she heard you have, there is at present little that I could add to it. I will say, however, that I have a friend, Mr. W. O. Trenor, of Roanoke, who, by the way, tells me that he met you some years ago when he was in Texas. Mr. Trenor tells me that he is familiar with this area where the German and Italian push came through on February 14th, and that the mountains are wooded, rough, and afford excellent cover. I have met a number of the officers who were in this observation work, and all of them were unusually able-bodied, resourceful young men, well able to shift for themselves; though, of course, they were lightly armed. This has led us to the hope that they may have hidden out in the mountains and gotten with some other allied outfit, or even have remained there until the Americans retook the territory. Communication being slow and confused, as we and friends of mine who have sons in this area have found it to be, this might well have happened without our having heard of it yet.

I might say further, that a friend of mine, who is a life insurance company official, tells me that in adjusting and confirming claims of losses, they have kept in touch with the Personnel Department of the Army; that this department has a service in the field that thoroughly combs the ground after a fight, or after the ground is retaken, for any evi-

Mr. Amon Carter

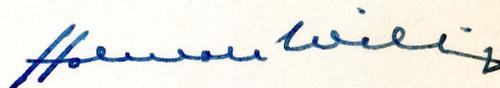
-2-

April 1, 1943

dence of men who have been lost. He further tells me that the life insurance people have found this department to be so highly efficient that, with rare exceptions, men reported missing show up alive afterward.

Needless to say, you have my very deepest sympathy in this trying time, but I know words don't help much.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Holman Willis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

W-S

Holman Willis