

John -

James
May 30 1991

You have my permission to place
into print or edit as you see fit. ^{The attached} Also,
if you know, advise if someone assigned to
Field Artillery could be eligible for Combat
Inf. Badge - It just seems I did more
infantry than Artillery.

Sorry about the writing but no longer
have a secretary.

Ed Ed - Ginty

AS# 33-901-331

POW # 25839

POW
Ginty

5/30/94

Dear John:

Attached is my application for membership. Please let me know if you have any questions. I have done the work for a couple of years. Please direct the check and application to Shared Values.

I recently attended a reunion of POW's who were in attendance at Staley's 94.95 and 96. The reunion was in Arlington, Va. I had made arrangements to meet my old buddy Bob Patrice at this reunion. Along with Phil Fannon, I met some other survivors of ^{these} POW's.

Among them along with the ~~government~~ was Boston Boston government. John Bleegott and Joe Sisker. John Bleegott is one of these favorite children who were during our meeting. Most of them were senior citizens, I being the youngest in the group at age 68. You recently had the work up of John Bleegott in your magazine and if you ever meet him, you will find him to be truly a piece of work.

My story is not unlike John Bleegott's except that I was with C Battery of the 58th Air Force during Vietnam. Suffice to say, I returned

the reunion to see if my buddy Cliff Bowles and 1st Lt. Thomas Wright were alive and where their current location might be. Both did commendable combat service. Lt. Wright, in my eyes was courageous. Sab Patrick gave me a list showing Bowles first name as William.

As brief as I can be, Bowles and myself on Dec 16, 1944 were placed on outpost guard to the north and west of the Battery. It was cold, dark and we were sniped at during the night. We were ill equipped for the snow and the cold. In the morning, having had no relief and hearing no sound from the Battery, we crept back to the Battery after about 12-14 hours at the outpost. We crept as we knew as privates we were not to leave our posts until relieved.

We were amazed to find that the Battery had pulled out and left Bowles and myself behind along with one dead cannoner. Wouldn't we make a fine rear guard? Two 19 year old green combat veterans on the Schnee Eifel somewhere in front of St. Vith. Good grief! We knew we were in trouble. Do I still not retain where C Battery was located?

I stopped to change shoes and socks.

3.
Bowles was with me under an overhanging
evergreen. Both chilled to the bone. As I
was changing shoes and socks, on the
edge of an open field, we saw not more
than 100 feet away, part of the German
Army walk by - it took 5 minutes to pass
by our position.

We ~~was~~ worked our way back to
a location of 155 howitzers but none of
our troops were there. It was on the
edge of a small village. We headed to
the high point in this village to a large
house which had been made into the
cook shack for the 155's. Everyone had
evacuated the village. I told Bowles I was
going to scout around to see if I could
locate some grenades at the 155 location.

On the way back to Bowles at the house
at the top of the hill, I heard firing from
Bowles carbine. He rounded the corner of
the house and waved at me and I mistakingly
thought he was calling me to keep going
in the direction we were going. I believed he was
firing in the direction we had come from.
Wrong! I headed thru the house into a

4.
shed room attached to the house at the rear of the house. There was a door to my right in the shed that I knew would lead me down the hill with Bowles or so I thought.

I threw open the door and not more than 10 feet away were a dozen enemy soldiers. They were coming from the opposite direction that I believed they would come. They appeared as shocked as I. I slammed the door, braced for the floor and all fell broke loose as the surprised enemy shot the bell out of the shed as I crawled to opposite end of the shed to a doorway. I threw a grenade to my right as I went thru the door and dived to my left thru a door into the main part of the house. One problem, there was no exit from this room other than the door I had come thru. Panic! The room was made of thick straw. I wedged myself into the thick straw wall. Every German who came by that room ~~threw~~ tossed a grenade into that room and in essence blew me out of the wall into my captors arms. Was I about to be shot?

Almost! Bowles was captured at about the same time. We were covered by an officer with a P-38 - a machine gun went off. Bowles and I hit the ground in the mushy snow - the officer with the P-38 fired and missed my head by inches. He did not pull off another shot.

The rest is history - we were marched over the next 3 or more days - Reulstein - Noxans and Finburg and onto Bad Oub Stalag IX B.

I won't burden you with my prison experience - You have heard most of it before but 2 occurrences bear noting. I was caught outside of my barrack 23 when I should not have been out after a German guard had been struck by a meat cleaver and was subsequently placed in solitary confinement but had no idea why.

The next occurrence was on February 6, 1945 when I was struck by a 50 calibre from a strafing plane. From there I was sent to Bad Soden for treatment and operation and then onto Obermassfeld

6.
a Gazette for another operation by
British doctors captured at Norwegian
and Abraham. It is now my understanding
that John Kelly and John Meyer were
also wounded in that strafing. I met Kelly
at the recent POW reunion.

Now John, there is a life experience
that is adequate to ~~to~~ avoid boredom
but I do not need a repeat performance,
thank you.

I retired in 1991 as an Administrative
Law Judge in Maryland.

Best regards;
Edward F. W. Shirley
3937 Old Columbia Pike
Ellicott City, Md. 21043