

Subj: Re: Black POW

Date: 1/29/04 10:20:31 PM Central Standard Time

From: jsuds@comcast.net

To: ZAWADA11@msn.com, joe@761st.com, bwarthen@cybersouth.com, TH07448@aol.com, PDomes@aol.com, ewarthen@mindspring.com

Sent from the Internet (Details)

Hello Bob,

Nice work on decoding the serial numbers. This can be very helpful in future searches, but I have to say that the Corps area code seems to break down when it comes to officers. For example, Bill Nutto from Texas has the serial number O&532725 and Bob Thompson from Oklahoma is either O1323875 (if his middle initial is H.) or O1179720 (if his middle initial is T.). The second digit should have been 8 for the AR, LA, TX, OK, and NM Corps area of Nutto and Thompson.

I just wanted to point this out, Bob, so we didn't spend too much time focusing our search on those southwestern states.

The code does seem to work beautifully, however, for enlisted men. It told me, for example, that my uncle from Wisconsin was drafted into the 2nd Armored in Jan, 1941, not a volunteer, which I never knew for certain (ser no. 36 200 442).

I got some very helpful suggestions from Joe Wilson, Jr (Viet Nam paratrooper and author of the definitive unit history on his father's black 761st Tank Battalion.)

"The VA Medical records are another outstanding source. They will refer you to the proper branch of the NARA in Suitland, MD I believe. Mention the FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT in your correspondence. There will be a copy of his discharge papers with a list of his medals. The POW medal will confirm this. This is how I got in touch with the family of the late SSG Edward A. Carter, Jr, MOH."

Joe has another angle where a visit to the Archives can spring loose information they have on each officer in a particular unit, eg. 614th or 630th Tank Destroyer Battalion. Joe has even offered to meet me there at the Archives in College Park, MD, where he lives nearby. Thanks Joe, for the generous offer. I will try hard to find the time, being a little pre-occupied writing the screenplay every weekend from now until March. Perhaps there are others of the OFLAG64 veterans group who would also be interested in teaming up there.

Robert Zawada wrote:

Jim: Just got back from my day at the D-Day, have the following info that may help a little. For an enlisted man the 1st digit is 1 for volunteer & 3 for a draftee. The second digit indicates the "Corps area" he is from. There are 9 areas + 4 for U.S. possessions. For officers it is less clear about the 1st No. But it appears these 3 individuals are all from the same district. 8 is AR, LA, TX, OK, NM. This was obtained from: http://www.hardscrabblefarm.com/ww2serial_numbers.htm A second site that had six pages, mostly info for re-enactors did not have an address, but asked to give credit to Brian Mead/Hardscrabble Farm so maybe you can find something there. For the next step, one suggested the National Personnel Records Center 9700 Page Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63132. Form 180 "Request Pertaining to Military Records" Another said U.S. Army Center for Military History, Carlisle, PA. Both must have web & e-mail sites you could look up. These places may have restrictions on what info they are willing to give out, if you are not a relative, my suggestion would be to tell them you represent a group of POW's that knew him and would like to honor him (or his survivors) for actions he took in liberating the camp they were in. Also you might mention there is a possibility he may have been the victim of a war crime, plus that he was black, might loosen the info strings. If they are still reluctant to give out useful info, my boss said he could write a letter on the D-Day letterhead, saying they were researching something or other & obtain needed info. I am interested in what you find out, but will leave the grunt work up to you as your comp. skills vastly outweigh mine. But if I can be of help, let me know.

Bob Z.

✓ Thomas J. ... 0 2 9 1 2 1 9
 Oscar ... 0 1 3 2 2 9 7 7
 4 ✓ Leon ... 0 1 3 1 4 1 4 6
 5 ✓ ... 0 1 1 4 7 3 1 4
 6 ✓ Francis ... 0 1 2 8 7 2 4 7
 7 ✓ ... 0 1 5 4 8 3 1 0
 8 ✓ ... 0 5 4 2 8 1 0
 9 ✓ ... 0 1 3 1 1 1 1 3
 10 ✓ ... 0 2 9 9 6 9 1
 11 ✓ ... 0 1 5 5 7 6 3 0

~~12 ✓ ...~~
 12 ✓ Carl K. Luck 0 1 3 1 3 6 2 3
 13 ✓ ... Leo 0 1 2 9 6 7 4 2
 14 ✓ ... 0 1 1 0 5 1 0
 15 ✓ ... Ronald H 0 1 0 4 9 7 2 5
 16 ✓ ... Richard A 0 5 1 7 3 1 9
 17 ✓ ... 2 batches 0 2 2 7 6 3 7
 18 ✓ Buttrick Francis L 0 1 3 0 6 2 3 8
 19 ✓ ... Nick 0 2 0 3 0 4 4 1 3
 20 ✓ ... 0 1 0 1 5 2 5 2
 21 ✓ Norman A Engle 0 1 3 2 4 8 3 1 |

Subj: Breakthrough on Black Amputee Officer
Date: 1/28/04 10:34:36 AM Central Standard Time
From: jsuds@comcast.net
To: PDomes@aol.com, ZAWADA11@msn.com, bwarthen@cybersouth.com, joe@761st.com, THO7448@aol.com
File: BlackFAs.doc (81920 bytes) DL Time (TCP/IP): < 1 minute
Sent from the Internet (Details)

Dear Peter, Bob, Bill, Joe, and Bob,

(Note to other readers, the name AGLER ELDEN H was a false alarm. See Peter's explanation attached below.)

You are a genius! I looked up this name in the National Archives, and there he was (see attached .doc file). The prison camp was not specified by the Archives, so I wondered how you knew he was in Hammelburg, OFLAG XIIIb. Did you check every name against the Archives?! I looked in the alphabetical hand-written list I got recently from Bob Thompson, and there he was. U.S. serial number O1822712 and German serial number 099105. His race is listed in the National Archives as Negro. So this was a black 1st Lt. from the Field Artillery. First reported prisoner Jan. 27, 1945. The last report on him was July 24, 1945, so he obviously survived his wounds. What state he came from was not indicated in the NARA records. However, I found the Parent Unit Number 0614 an important clue. This was the all-black 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion received the Presidential Unit Citation and had a recipient of the Medal of Honor, **Sgt. Charles L. Thomas** for action in France, Dec. 14, 1944.

Now here's where it gets even more bizarre and interesting.

Listed just below **Mitchell, George W.** in the handwritten roster from OFLAG XIIIb is a **Mitchell, Charles E., a 2nd Lt.** with almost the same US serial number. U.S. serial number O1825036 and German serial number 097792. Thus, I wondered if they might have come from the same home town. When I looked Charles up in the National Archives, his race was not listed. But he was also in the Field Artillery, and his unit was 0630. This had to be the all-black 630th Tank Destroyer Battalion, which fought with distinction in the Battle of the Bulge. Charles was first reported prisoner on Dec. 24, 1944. The Archives listed his Camp as Hammelburg, OFLAG XIIIb. So now I'm thinking there were two brothers, or perhaps cousins incarcerated in Hammelburg at the same time. The last report on Charles E. was May 19, 1945, so if this is the guy who lost his leg, he survived at least until May.

Now it gets even weirder. When searching for all Mitchells in the Field Artillery, I found another **Charles E. Mitchell, a Sgt.** incarcerated in Stalag 13C on Dec. 17, 1944. See attached .doc file. Serial No. 35692044. His unit, the 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion fought in the Bulge, attached to the 11th Armored Division. This is what their unit history said: "The 602nd and 811th Tank Destroyer Battalions were used by the Division with great admiration, due to the bravery displayed while with the 11th. They had been in action before the Bulge and were indeed battle wise. These small units saved the day in many cases. They had M-10 Tank Destroyers with 76MM guns. Both Battalions had about 40 men killed in action." Later in the war, this TD unit was attached to the 80th Infantry Division. The race of **Sgt. Mitchell** was not listed, white or black. Was this a black TD unit? Evidently not. This appears to be a pure coincidence to have had one **Sgt. Charles E. Mitchell** in Stalag XIIIc, probably white, in Hammelburg at the same time as **2nd Lt. Charles E. Mitchell** in OFLAG XIIIb.

There was another Mitchell, a **Pvt. McNeil E. Mitchell**, Ser. No. 38589910, in the Field Artillery, evidently a black man, although no race was listed. Why? Because he was in the all-black 630th Tank Destroyer Battalion as **Charles E. Mitchell** discussed above and was reported captured on exactly the same day, Dec. 24, 1944. He was sent to Stalag 4B in Muhlberg Sachsen. There are 41 **Charles W. Mitchells** listed in US phone directories. Several are listed as Jr. or III descendants. I called a few at random, but so far no luck. Most of them are whites. There are about 100 **Charles E. Mitchells** listed. I didn't call any of them so far. The amputee would have had a lot of care from the VA hospital system. Can't we obtain public information about records of VA patients? Here's where we could use some help on additional legwork.

Best regards,

Jim Sudmeier

PDomes@aol.com wrote:

Hello Jim,

don't ask me, how the hell I found this name. I think you are right, he belonged to another POW-camp and he is actually in no file concerning Hammelburg. But how about:

O1822712 MITCHELL GEORGE W 1 LT FA he was at Hammelburg and is colored (Racial Group 2)

Best regards

Peter