



**Pfc James Elbert Rowsey, 34473643,
M Co., 359th Infantry Regiment**

I would like to relay a story of my uncle Pfc James Elbert Rowsey, 34473643, who served with M Co., 359th Reg., 90th Inf. Div. from Initial training in Nov 1942 until he returned home in Nov 1945. He was wounded twice, once on July 6, 1944 and a second time in Feb 1945.

I am a retired Army officer and was very young at the time of his death from drowning in 1950. I come from a Southern family that didn't allow conversation about the War because it was too painful to them. As one who suffers from PTSD, I can only imagine the pain he suffered from the isolation. However, the following story was passed on to me and I still have the New Testament that bears the bullet hole from the German rifle.

According to my Uncle, his entire unit, probably a squad or platoon was captured by the Germans and started on a march back to the German lines. After a short march, the captors were ordered to kill the prisoners and proceed with other duties. They lined the unit up along the roadside and proceeded to shoot each individually. As they shot the man next to my Uncle, he also fell into the ditch with his fellow captive. The Germans proceeded down the road with tanks following and after a while they returned to make sure they had killed everyone. My Uncle said he had fallen into the ditch on his back and they say him breathing. They shot directly at his heart and the bullet struck the pocket New Testament that my Grandmother had given him prior to his departure. The Testament turned the bullet that had been fired from the left side just under the arm until it exited and passed across his chest cutting like a knife. At this time he said he soiled himself and thought he was dead. After what seemed like a very long time, he felt like the Germans had left and rose to ask if anyone else was alive. He said his best buddy from the States said "Slick (his childhood nickname) I'm alive but a tank has run over my feet and I can't walk." He said he carried the wounded man about a mile towards the US lines (until he couldn't carry him anymore). He put him in a foxhole and went to get help. Upon his return, the Germans had found his buddy and killed him. After that, he suffered from shell shock and had to be evacuated to a Hospital in France for an unknown period. He then returned to his unit and continued across Europe with the 90th.

When he returned, he suffered from severe nightmares and alcohol abuse for the remainder of his short life.

I would appreciate any information you could give me concerning this incident. I have had no luck with military records, they say all his records were destroyed in the St Louis fire.



90th Division Association Personal Submissions

I would just like to know as much about this wonderful, gentle man that I can barely remember. He was a simple farm boy from Mississippi who only had a 3rd grade education and could barely read and write. He spoke with a bad lisp and thus was pulled out of school because the kids made fun of him.

Grady Wilson
LTC USA (ret)