

## POW / MIA PROFILES

The purpose of the State POW/MIA Committee is to “provide increased awareness of POW / MIAs, to organize the Department and Posts’ POW / MIA activities and to provide education to the public”. To realize this duty a profile of a WI resident who is or has been classified as POW / MIA will be presented each month for your reflection. It is with great respect that we present this month’s Profile.

On June 8 1944 Sgt William Hamblin and I Company 357<sup>th</sup> Infantry, landed on Utah Beach. For the next 29 days, he and I Company endured nearly constant combat. On July 7, I Company was moving forward on point with supporting Companies on the left and right flanks. The order to fall back was given but it never reached I Company and they continued onward. They engaged the enemy alone but were cut-off and surrounded. I Company fought until running out of ammunition and then had no choice but to surrender. During the action, dirt from exploding shells slammed into Sgt Hamblin’s right eye. This was to become infected and cause loss of sight.

A telegram arrived at the home of his sister on August 3, 1944 informing her that her brother had been listed as missing in action. On August 27, another telegram arrived which reported that William Hamblin was a prisoner of the German Government. Sgt Hamblin was detained at Stalag VII B near Memmingen, Germany and then moved to Stalag III C at Altdrewitz, Germany close to the Polish boarder.

In early spring, 1945 the Russian Army liberated Stalag III C. Sgt Hamblin and his fellow prisoners were sent to Odessa, then Naples, Italy and finally home. Discharge from the Army came on November 21, 1945. Today, Bill Hamblin lives in Burlington, WI and has Former Prisoner of War on his VA card.