

## LOUIS J. (MICHALSKI) MILES



ENTERED SERVICE FROM MICHIGAN ON 11/27/42.  
BASIC TRAINING AT CAMP CLAIBORNE, LOUISIANA.  
ASSIGNED TO 103D INFANTRY DIVISION, 409TH REGIMENT,  
D COMPANY - HEAVY MACHINE GUNNERS. TRANSFERRED TO  
CAMP HOWZE, TEXAS AS CADRE IN NOVEMBER 1943.  
PROMOTED TO STAFF SGT. AND ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR 1<sup>ST</sup> SECTION OF 1<sup>ST</sup> PLATOON. ARRIVED IN MARSEILLE,  
FRANCE ON  
OCTOBER 20, 1944. FOUGHT THROUGH THE VOSGES  
MOUNTAINS AS PART OF  
THE 7<sup>TH</sup> ARMY. WOUNDED AND CAPTURED IN BATTLE FOR  
SELESTAT ON  
DECMEBER 2<sup>ND</sup>, 1944. SERVED REMAINDER OF WAR AS POW.  
LIBERATED IN MAY 1945.



**Louie with \$25 Bond for shooting Regimental Best (Rifle) at  
Camp Claiborne. (Promoted to Cpl)**

### Selestat

S/Sgt Louie Michalski (later changed to Miles) was Section Sgt. for the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, 1<sup>st</sup> Section of the 1917a1 water-cooled machine gunners. He was well respected and trusted by his men. He is said to have been a good leader. He had been told that his orders were to hold a bridge, located only a stone's throw outside of Selestat in preparation for the next morning's assault on the city by the 103d, 36<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Armored Divisions. They arrived at the bridge, late afternoon on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1944. After digging in, they heard some fighting in front of them in the outskirts of the city. They later learned that B Company had taken the first few houses (some say 6, some say 4) entering Selestat and captured some 80 prisoners. Around 9:30PM, in Louie's absence, his men were ordered (by Lt. Daloisio) to leave the bridge and support B Company, in the houses. As they were crossing the bridge, Louie saw them and told them to get back in their foxholes. (He was not aware of the order by the Lt.) Louie confronted the Lt. and in so many words, told him that those were not the orders he was given and this was not a good idea. However, as all good soldiers do, he bowed to the rank of Lt. Daloisio and followed his men into the houses. It was later discovered that the entire 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon had been ordered in to support B-Company. Shortly after 3:00AM on the morning of December 2<sup>nd</sup>, they were awakened by the sounds of tanks (some say 3, some say 6) coming from the inner city. The panzers drove past the houses,

blew the bridge and turned to the houses. The 88s first took aim at the D Company machine gun emplacements. The first shot took out their gun. B Company had used all bazooka ammo in taking the houses. They had no defense and their escape route (bridge) had been destroyed. They were trapped. The panzers continued to pommel the houses and were soon surrounded by several hundred German Troops. It was a one sided affair.

One of the tank blasts blew apart the roof of the house Louie was in and drove a timber through his shoulder. Only four of his men managed to escape. (Jennings, Peterson, Klie and Kokensparger) The rest were captured and/or wounded. The German troops rounded up the B Company & D Company prisoners (that could walk) and escorted them into the city as POWs. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Section of 1<sup>st</sup> platoon fared much worse. Platoon T/Sgt Zack Sigler and squad leader Sgt. Vernon Swanson were killed. Only two were known to have escaped. (Merrill and Price, but Price was seriously wounded and later lost a leg as a result of his wound)

In all, 107 GIs (18 D Company and 89 B Company) are known to have been taken prisoner that early morning. Louie endured several agonizing days with the timber still lodged in his shoulder. Once he was delivered to a POW holding station, a POW British Dr. performed surgery and removed the object.

Louie's POW experience was predominantly spent at Luft 3.

### D-Company POWs at Selestat

|                       |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| PFC John L Bare       | SGT Arlie A. Gray     | PFC Donald T. McGregor   |
| S/Sgt Elvin H. Beemer | PFC Gerald E. Ingle   | S/Sgt Louis J. Michalski |
| PFC Adrian H. Brinks  | PFC Daniel R. Jarosek | PFC Robert C. Morris     |
| 1LT Louis L. Daloisio | PFC Theodore Jenkins  | CPL Charles G. Rahn      |
| CPL Hugh P. Draughon  | PFC Frank L. Kirk     | CPL Dale M. Shafer       |
| PFC Harold C. Elwing  | PFC Kenneth E. Mack   | PVT Samuel W. Ware       |