



PFC Robert T. Bruce
World War II - U. S. Army
Battle of the Bulge – POW at Stalag 4B

PFC Robert T. Bruce entered the US Army in June of 1941 and served in the Asiatic Pacific, Aleutian Islands and Rhineland, Ardennes and was captured on December 22, 1944 by the Germans during the Battle of the Bulge. PFC suffered several injuries during his efforts during the Battle of the Bulge and then suffered through the mistreatment of the Germans during his time in the Prisoner Of War camp at Stalag 4B. Over 1100 military personnel were captured at the same time PFC Bruce was taken by the Germans.

David Bathory, nephew of PFC Bruce is a resident of Sharpsville, PA and remembers well his uncle's stories of the life the captives led while under imprisonment by the Germans. "Uncle Bob's weight went down to a mere 100 pounds and he underwent psychological torture. His medical records obtained after his death revealed that he had no news from home and feared frequently for his life and had prolonged periods of cold causing frostbite. He endured frequent attacks while on 'forced marches' and periods of captivity in railroad cars that were under shellings".

In May of 1945 PFC was rescued with many of his comrades by the British. It was documented that during his captivity he suffered pneumonia, dysentery, partial blindness, hearing disorders, sores from neglect, swollen joints, difficulty walking and nightmares from psychological torture. When asked by the US Army doctors who interviewed him after return to the United States what he felt was the most important lesson he had learned during his captivity he replied "I learned the freedom really meant".

PFC Bruce also served in many battles that were significant to the US military actions during World War II in the Asiatic Pacific, Aleutian Islands, and Rhineland. He earned a Bronze Star and the Purple Heart Medal for his valorous service.

Robert Bruce is survived by his widow, Esther Bruce, who resides in Hubbard, Ohio; his daughter, Maryanne Wilcox, of Pekin, Illinois and several nephews and nieces.