

**The National Museum of the Pacific War
(Admiral Nimitz Museum)**

**Center for Pacific War Studies
Fredericksburg, Texas**

Interview with

Everett Smith, Jr.
35907660
S/Sgt
63rd "Blood and Fire" Infantry Division
USA

January 19, 2007

By John Tombaugh and Peg Van Meter

Everett Smith, Jr.
35907660
S/Sgt
63rd "Blood and Fire" Infantry Division
USA

Medals Earned:
Good Conduct
Expert Sharpshooter
Combat Infantry Badge
European Theater with 2 stars

My name is John B. Tombaugh and Peg Van Meter and I are interviewing this gentlemen on January 19. 2007.

Mr. Tombaugh

Would you please give your name and address?

Mr. Smith

Everett Smith at 3377 West State Road 110, Rochester, Indiana.

Mr. Tombaugh

What were your parents names and where were they born?

Mr. Smith

My parents are Everett Smith, Sr. and Cassie Kerr Smith, they were both born in Bloomington, Indiana.

Mr. Tombaugh

Where were you born?

Mr. Smith

Bloomington, Indiana.

Mr. Tombaugh

When is your birthday?

Mr. Smith

June 23, 1926

Mr. Tombaugh

Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Mr. Smith

Yes four brothers and four sisters: Ross, James, Richard, John and my sisters Mary Francis, Sarah and two deceased sisters; Rose Marie and Ruth.

Mr. Tombaugh

Where did you go school?

Mr. Smith

I attended Phillips Grade School. I graduated from University High School in 1944. After service I attended Purdue University on the GI Bill and graduated in 1950.

Mr. Tombaugh

Where were you on December 7, 1941?

Mr. Smith

I was playing basketball in the neighbors' hayloft in Bloomington, Indiana.

Mr. Tombaugh

Did you enlist or where you drafted?

Mr. Smith

I was drafted on September 1, 1944.

Mr. Tombaugh

Where were you sworn in at?

Mr. Smith

In Indianapolis, Indiana. They picked us up in Bloomington then we went to Indianapolis where we were sworn in then to Camp Atterbury. We were there for five or six days; then went to Camp Wolters near Mineral Wells, Texas.

Mr. Tombaugh

How long were you there?

Mr. Smith

It was to be for seventeen weeks but it was cut short two weeks because of the Battle of the Bulge. We went across the pond.

Mr. Tombaugh

Do you remember the name of the ship?

Mr. Smith

Naturally, I rode the Queen Mary along with seventeen thousand other men.

Mr. Tombaugh

Was this the time they cut a destroyer in half?

Mr. Smith

Not that I know of. It took us five and half days to cross. We left New York and arrived at Glasgow, Scotland.

We zig-zagged all the way across without an escort.

We were supposed to out run the torpedoes and we must have because we made it. We took the southern route in January.

We had "hot bunking" you had the bunk for eight hours and spent the other time on deck.

Mr. Tombaugh

Was this a smooth crossing?

Mr. Smith

It rocked and rolled quite a bit.

Mr. Tombaugh

Did you get seasick?

Mr. Smith

Not to bad I guess. It rocked for sure and I couldn't believe how

much it rocked as I recall. This was my first time on a ship and I have traveled on ships since then and have not found any to be that rough.

Mr. Tombaugh

You embarked and how did you travel from there?

Mr. Smith

We got off the Queen Mary on January 21, the day after President Roosevelt was inaugurated for his fourth term.

I remember meeting this old Scotsman and he said "Heil Roosevelt, Roosevelt forever." I still remember that and he did say heil not hail.

We then went by train down through London and down to South Hampton. Then from South Hampton we crossed and landed at Normandy.

Then we got on a train from there into boxcars-the forty and eight's (capacity-forty men or eight horses). It took us five days to get to where we were going. Who knew where? I didn't. We joined the 63rd Infantry Division which was in the 7th Army which was south of Patton's 3rd. This was the last part of January.

Taken from John B. Tombaugh files:

June Intro 1943

"In June the 63rd "Blood and Fire" Infantry Division, consisting of the 253rd, the 254th, and the 255th Infantry Regiments, is activated in Florida."

28 Dec., 1944

"The Task Force Harris which consists of the 254th Infantry Regiment, 63rd "Blood and Fire" Infantry Division is attached to the 3rd Division; 253rd Infantry Regiment, 63rd "Blood and Fire" Infantry Division is attached to the 44th "Broken Heart" Infantry Division; and 255th Infantry Regiment, 63rd "Blood and Fire" Infantry Division is attached to the 100th "Century" Infantry Division."

The Following was taken Mr. Smith's booklet:

SARREGUEMINES February 17, 1945 Across the SARRE into Germany.

15-21 March 1945 Two Belts of the Siegfried Line cracked wide open for the Armor. First break in the line. Seventh Army Front.

24-27 March 1945 63rd Division Artillery Supports Rhine Crossing.

30 March 1945 63rd Division Expands bridgehead attacking

south through Heidelberg and Mannheim then turning East.

8 April 1945 17th SS Division ripped to ribbons here by 253rd Infantry Regiment.

8 April 1945 254th Infantry Regiment on outside of the wheel, fight for 15 miles a day... Division on 30 mile front.

10 April 1945 25th "Lightning" Infantry Division drive across the KOCHER puts 10th "Tiger" Armored Division across... Heilbrann Line Falls.

18-22 April 1945 Road Blocks and delaying actions.

23-25 April SCHWABGMUND rat race to the Danube.

GUNZBURG

25 April 253rd and 254th fight across the Danube.

LANDSBERG

30 April 1945 253rd and 255th farthest south against Alps... cross WERTACK and LECH Rivers... capture LANDSBERG.

Mr. Tombaugh

When you first landed in England what did you do?

Mr. Smith

We did not have any time at South Hampton, as they needed replacements for the Battle of the Bulge. So they just shipped you wherever they needed you. You carried everything you had and that was it. Our packs were ninety pounds and you were used to it because you had it from basic to present time.

Mr. Tombaugh

What did you have to eat on the train?

Mr. Smith

C-rations, also there were no restrooms on this train and they would stop once in a while and you could get out and walk around and then get back on and there were no seats on the train, so you either stood up or squatted or layed down.

Mr. Tombaugh

Have you kept in contact with any of the guys you were in basic training with before you all got separated?

Mr. Smith

I did for a while.

Mr. Tombaugh

When you got overseas and got with your outfit do you still keep in contact with any of those men?

Mr. Smith

Just one, Jean Landis, he lives south of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Mr. Tombaugh

Have you ever gone to any of their reunions?

Mr. Smith

No. I thought I would like to go once, my brother goes to all of his every year. I never joined the outfit reunion group.

Mr. Tombaugh

When you were inducted at Indianapolis, Indiana did you stay with any of those men?

Mr. Smith

No. They were all ages; some were in their forties to the youngest ones.

Mr. Tombaugh

Your service number?

Mr. Smith

35907660.

Mr. Tombaugh

Your rank when you were discharged?

Mr. Smith

Staff Sergeant.

Mr. Tombaugh

We need your company and division ?

Mr. Smith

When I got out it was different then when I went in. It was the 63rd Infantry Division during the war. Then when the war was over in Europe we were training to go to Japan. When that stopped they hadn't put us on the boat they were still talking and when that stopped I was sent to the Signal Corp. I was in the Signal Corp for one year until I was discharged.

We maintained telephone lines down the Autobahn highway. We sometimes went hunting for deer and wild boar and had a good time.

The Signal Corps went across the Rhine River and they were going to put a cable across the Rhine River, now these poles were sixty-five feet high. We were crossing the river and the boat sank and three guys drowned. It was a landing craft boat and they let loose the handle and the front dropped down and scooped up the water. I was very lucky; but some were not so lucky.

Mr. Tombaugh

Can you remember your sergeant at the time you were south of the Bulge?

Mr. Smith

I believe his name was McNulty.

Mr. Tombaugh

How was the weather?

Mr. Smith

It was like we have here. We had a good covering of snow and they had railroad ties over the top of the foxholes, this was for protection.

They had those eighty-eight mm Howitzers zeroed in on the Siegfried Line. I just happened to be at the wall and you could feel those things coming and hitting the wall.

The Germans had a Siegfried Line and the French had the Maginot Line. The 63rd came up the Siegfried Line. They had a concrete wall and also dragon's teeth. There were pillboxes staggered and they had trenches from one to the other. The dragon's teeth would keep tanks from coming across the wall.

I went to the follies after the war in Paris, France.

Mr. Tombaugh

Did you go to the top of the Eiffel Tower?

Mr. Smith

I was at the Eiffel Tower but not at the top. On D-Day a fighter plane flew through and I just had to go and see how much room he really had. He didn't have a lot of room.

Mr. Tombaugh

How long were you in the foxholes?

Mr. Smith

Mostly overnight but when we were first there it was for about three week, I believe. We marched through Heidelberg right pas the University.

Mr. Tombaugh

What was your job?

Mr. Smith

I was first scout.

Mr. Tombaugh

Was there anything that happened you would like to tell about?

Mr. Smith

I don't believe so.

Mr. Tombaugh

What ribbons did you receive?

Mr. Smith

Good Conduct; Expert Sharpshooter; Combat Infantry Badge' European Theater with 2 stars.

Mr. Tombaugh

What was food like when you were served in the field?

Mr. Smith

When we were on the move most of the time we had c-rations.

Mr. Tombaugh

What ship were you on when you came home?

Mr. Smith

I don't remember the name of the ship just a troop ship and we came in past the Statue of Liberty and were glad to see it.

Mr. Tombaugh

When you landed in New York where did you go next?

Mr. Smith

I went to Fort Sheridan by train.

Mr. Tombaugh

How long were you there and do you remember your discharge date?

Mr. Smith

I was discharged on July 24, 1946 and wasn't there very long.

Mr. Tombaugh

When you came back where did you go after service?

Mr. Smith

I went to my home at Bloomington, Indiana.

Mr. Tombaugh

When was it you applied for college?

Mr. Smith

I didn't have a job but was working on the farm with my father. So I got a job at Indiana University, because it was too late to get into college that fall. After school started I went to Purdue University and applied to get in and they told me it was not possible to get in the spring semester. You had to have a place to live and I let them talk as long as they wanted then I pulled out a letter and handed it to them it was from the Housing Director at Indiana University, who was our neighbor and they read the letter and said: "We will have you a place."

So I had a place to stay and I started school in February of 1947, and I graduated three and half years later.

Mr. Tombaugh

What was your major in college at that time?

Mr. Smith

Animal Science is what they would call it today.

Mr. Tombaugh

Did you go back after college for more schooling?

Mr. Smith

No.

Mr. Tombaugh

What is your wife's name and the date you were married?

Mr. Smith

I married Joanna Brashaber on September 2, 1949.

Mr. Tombaugh

What are your children's names?

Mr. Smith

I have three boys and one girl. Thomas; Lael; Richard and Marcus.

Mr. Tombaugh

What would you advise the young people today to do?

Mr. Smith

To get a good education. A year in the service would be good for them because they would learn respect and how to work.

-END-

8 hrs.