

Interviewer: Alright what is your full name and where and when were you born?

Smith: James B Smith born in Stewart County Dover Tennessee October 29, 1916.

Interviewer: What branch of the service did you serve in and what was the primary unit that you served in?

Smith: Well it was I don't know it was I don't remember now it was the 70th something see I never did when I signed up to be the cook I stayed primarily in the kitchen. And from that cooking they sent me to school to be a cook.

Interviewer: Well we're going back to the very beginning when you first came in the service.

Smith: Oh when I first came in the service we went to Fort Oberthroe Georgia.

Interviewer: Do you remember the year?

Smith: 1942 and we went to Fort Oberthroe Georgia and at Fort Oberthroe Georgia they picked the men out to send some where's else. And so they asked me what was my occupation the civilian life and I said I was a farmer. Said well did you do anything besides farming? I said my daddy was a blacksmith and I stayed in the blacksmith shop on rainy days piddling around and I learned how to temper pal points rubbing hoes and stuff like that and I learned how to shoe mules. Said that's where we've got you right there. Said we're sending you to Fort Oberthroe Georgia said we're sending you to school to be a blacksmith horseshoer. So we left Fort Oberthroe on a train and I guess we road that train a day and a half before we got there.

Interviewer: To Fort Seal Oklahoma?

Smith: Yeah we stopped at Memphis Tennessee and stayed all night and then got back on the train the next day and went to Fort Oberthroe Georgia.

Woman in the background: No Fort Seal Oklahoma.

Smith: Fort Seal Oklahoma and so we all went and there was carpenters in the barracks there was anything that pertaining to the army we were going to school. And so I went to the blacksmith shop the next day and there was nobody in my outfit went with me I went by myself. But we was horse one every morning one every afternoon and then we'd have a class about one o'clock about an hour class. Then they would put us back to shoeing one horse was all we had to do we'd take our time and so the other boy I don't think had ever shot any horses. But I had and been around them all my life and so we was shoeing one afternoon on a horse that little ole horse wouldn't weigh over 900 pounds he grabbed the horse by the foot and the horse kicked I guess 15 foot back in there. And the ole sergeant was the instructor a big ole rough heavy looking fellow he said Smith grab tat horse and put a shoe on him. So I knew I grabbed that horse by the hind leg and I was expecting him to kick and whenever he started to kick I just raised him up that a way and his ankle popped and he stood there and quivered. And while he was doing that I put a shoe on him. So we went form we could do anything after we had that hour class and then one horse morning one horse that evening shot. And so I'd make stuff my daddy had taught me how to temper metal and there was an old hawser recoil spring laying there. I got it and made him a

punch and a coal chisel and it was really good because that had the right steel to make a coal chisel out of.

Interviewer: How did you come about getting into the army were you drafted or did you enlist? You were drafted?

Smith: I was already drafted before Pearl Harbor was bombed. I knew what date I was going and all and I was with her the evening that Pearl Harbor was bombed.

Interviewer: Do both of you remember that evening really well? Did you hear about it on the radio?

Smith: Yeah yeah

Interviewer: What did you think when you heard that?

Smith: Well it didn't sound too good. I knew I was going but I didn't know I was going to ride off

Interviewer: In a war

Smith: To war. So Pearl Harbor was bombed December the 7th 1941. And I was inducted in the army January the 12th 1942 just a little over a month.

Interviewer: And so now they've got you in school and you've got an advantage over other people because you've done this before you've worked with horses.

Smith: Yeah

Interviewer: So how long was the school?

Smith: From January the 12th to the last of April how much three months.

Interviewer: Yeah about three and a half months.

Smith: Four months it taken four months.

Interviewer: Now did you also have to go through basic training?

Smith: No

Interviewer: No you didn't?

Smith: No it come a big snow on the ground six inches deep and I looked out that window just as cozy as we are today and them boys a marching up and down through that six or eight inches of snow.

Interviewer: But because you had a skill you didn't have to do that?

Smith: Right

Interviewer: That's pretty good any soldier will tell you that's pretty good. So you went to school and when did you find out you were going to the field artillery?

Smith: Well it was the last of April or first of April one that we was going to be shipped out somewhere we didn't know where they wouldn't tell us where. And so they had a camp an artillery in California and one in Kansas For Riley Kansas. And so we got on the train and they didn't let nobody know we were leaving because everything was hush hush you know no lights or nothing. And so we wound up in Denver at Fort Riley Kansas but let's see.

Interviewer: Now this picture right here can you explain a little about that? That's you in the middle correct?

Smith: Yeah

Interviewer: This is they are drawing an artillery piece?

Smith: I don't know what he was drawing I didn't know who made the picture or nothing because there wasn't any camera in the camp where we was at as I know of. But there was a fellow come up to me one time said I've got a picture here you might want and he handed me the picture. I didn't know who he was or nothing. These horses was a trotting at the time you know and had different gates. Says walk and them horses would walk just as but this man that give the command back here on the wheel horse the first man on the wheel horse would give the command. And they wouldn't let them trot long till he'd have them walking or going another gate. And we was going back that day and that wasn't the time that I rode old Duce.

Interviewer: Now the horses in the front what they called. The one in the backs the wheel horse.

Smith: That's the wheel horses was in back and the middle was called the swing and the first was the lead horse.

Interviewer: What were the jobs of each horse?

Smith: And the horses went to his command what so ever all we done was sit up there and hold the other horses rein and this man would give the command. He would say trot they was a trotting here he'd say charge and you've got to grab your horse.

Interviewer: So you didn't have to kick them or anything he'd say charge.

Smith: They'd just go right on out from under you.

Interviewer: Wow so you didn't have to do anything you didn't have to kick the horse or anything. When the man when the wheel man gave the command the horses just knew what that was?

Smith: Yes sir

Interviewer: Must have had them well trained.

Smith: We was being trained and they was already trained. We was on the single mount the time that I rode Old Duce and he was a retired wheel horse. And we was going down a real steep hill had a big bluff on it and he got out of the side of that canon and he didn't know what to do he went crazy.

Interviewer: Because he wasn't used to being in that position.

Smith: Oh he come in slinging his head and he looked down that bluff and it was straight down. He put on his breaks right quick and wheeled around and when he did I kicked him in his ribs and we left there. And an officer was standing there watching me and said now that's a retired wheel horse said go on up there to that canon and let him walk right behind that canon. That's what I did until we come on back but come on back to Fort Riley Kansas on the hillside certain depth there was a layer of limestone. And where we was on top nothing but limestone and they give the charge and when they did the horses jerked the aiming stake off the of the canon and they told me to get down and get that aiming stake. When I did that wheel horse got away from the canon and he went crazy again and I couldn't get on him and the company commander come by and said hand he the aiming stake so I handed him the aiming stake. Put my foot in the strip and I was out ten or fifteen foot before I got on the horse was done gone. Reminded me of the army you know. He run just as hard as he could run and he got back up to that canon he was satisfied. I told the company commander I said the next time we go out on something and I've got to ride Duce I said you can give me KP or stable duty anything you want to I'm not riding Duce no more, he laughed. He didn't but a few days later they said we're going to teach you this morning how to cross a river. He said get your horses and I drew a good little mare weighted about 900 pounds and she would do anything you tell her to. And we was sitting up ready to go across and he said now when I give you the command said the leader of these horses will go across that river and says you will be on the ground turn the horse a loose and he will follow the rest and grab the tail of the horse and hold on said let him pull you across. And while they was telling on that a big thunderstorm come up he said we better not go now. So it got close and we went back and we all carried our horses to the stall and went to the barracks and that wound that up. I never did get to train how to cross the river.

Interviewer: I just find it amazing that here we are at the beginning of World War II and this is going to be the most technological event in human history up to that point and they still have horse drawn artillery at that point. And I mean did you like it did you like being in horse drawn artillery was that?

Smith: Yeah

Interviewer: Was that the most fun you had in the army?

Smith: But one thing that bothered me we didn't have no ways to command these horse up here if that man got sick or got shot off of there them horses was loose. But they was good as old man this man he could have told them to stop and nine times out of ten they'd stop. But if they really got into a battle them horses wouldn't stop, they'd hunt higher ground. But that worried me a whole lot about that.

Interviewer: Now what type of a saddle is that that you guys have on there if I can just show camera just for a moment. It's a very very small saddle looks just like a small piece of leather on top of a blanket. What did they call that sir?

Smith: I don't know but it was an easy riding saddle. I guess the army got the best I guess that was just about as good a saddle as you could get.

Interviewer: So it was pretty comfortable?

Smith: Yeah that's what Duce and Goldstein did they was back home working in leather would make anything out of leather. And they sent them to repair the saddles and they neither one had ever saw a horse.

Interviewer: So you had leather workers you had blacksmiths what other type of you know workshops did you have you had the stables I'm sure. So it was all self-contained the army didn't have to send off for anything they had everything done right there.

Smith: Yeah well I went there at Kansas to my outfit the 3rd field artillery about the last of April. And this picture was taken somewhere the first to the middle of June. And I though all the time that they done away with all of them horses then but I probably me and another fellow was probably the only two that even went out of that outfit. I don't know but there was a boy that went with me named well

Interviewer: Now when did you get the word that the horses were going away and that the trucks were coming in?

Smith: I don't remember.

Interviewer: I think you told me last week it was about the middle of June.

Smith: Yeah

Interviewer: Now what did they do with the horses I mean did they actually do paperwork for the horses retire them from the service?

Smith: They retired them they said I was told that they retired them and sent them to Nevada and turned them loose on the prairie out there.

Interviewer: Just to fend for themselves?

Smith: Yeah

Interviewer: they must have done pretty good because there's a lot of horses out there.

Smith: Yeah

Interviewer: So once your job there ended then that's when you signed up to be a cook?

Smith: Yeah the next day I went to the mess hall and they had a piece of paper if you want to be a cook sign here. And there down at the bottom I thought now there ain't no use in signing it but I'm gonna sign it anyway. And the place they are going to the top going down it was just like the army. The army starts at the bottom went up and called me in the next day.

Smith: So they started from the bottom of the list basically and then they asked you now did they ask you are you able to cook?

Smith: No I couldn't cook nothing.

Woman in the background: He had to go to school.

Smith: I went they put me in the mess hall with others to help them cook and learn until I went to school. And they taught me to make some cinnamon rolls and I didn't know cinnamon was hot and I didn't have nothing to go by. And I just dumped what I thought was good in them cinnamon rolls and they'd burn you up I mean to tell you. That cinnamon was I knew that after I didn't ask the cook how to do it I just thought I'd try a batch myself.

Interviewer: So but they finally got around to sending you to school to learn how to be a cook?

Smith: Yeah but I wanted to tell you about what was that boy's name that was in the barracks?

Woman in the background: Nellie B Jones? The one that switched the horses?

Smith: Yeah Nellie B Jones he went with me from this company just two of us but I knew him back in there. But he was full of life whenever we would go at night for a project they had a three quarter inch rope about 50 foot long they'd tie to a tree here and go to a tree and they would put them horses close together one right after the other to the end. You'd count the horses and go down and get your horse out. But Nellie B Jones after everybody went to sleep or something he went he got this first horse went around the other end and tied him. That was the lead horse the other was the off horse. But the off horse was the lead horse and he didn't know what to do. And they was like never in the world got them straightened out what he did. It tickled him to death.

Interviewer: So all those horses were so well trained they actually knew their positions?

Smith: Right

Interviewer: And were so well trained in that position that if you put them anywhere else they were just lost?

Smith: Lost yeah they didn't know nothing about it.

Interviewer: That's amazing.

Smith: They will go with the command see and he knew every command they had been trained and the horses were old enough to retire they don't retire I told you they went crazy. All of them was about ready to retire anyway.

Interviewer: Were you sad to see the horses go?

Smith: What?

Interviewer: Were you sad to see the horses go?

Smith: No I really got was getting the hang of it I didn't stay there I was lost. They had all of theirs and they sent me there as a blacksmith. And I kept my blacksmith to myself and they didn't look on my

records they just carried them up them in the company commanders office. They didn't know I was a blacksmith and I kept it shut. And that other one that was with me Aust he was from Mississippi I told him I said now Aust don't you let them know that you're a blacksmith I said you, he said oh I'd like to be that. I said well let them know then first thing he done blacksmith said we've been looking for one. And so we went out and lunch time come they put Aust to checking the hooves of every horse that was there about 50 horses. If he had a loose shoe he'd put a shoe on him if it was loose he'd tighten it up. And the hour was gone and the company commander said well it's time we was going ole Aust had to jump on the horse and go without any dinner.

Interviewer: So he got a little bit more than what he bargained for it was a little more work than what he thought.

Smith: Me I was supposed to help him see I was supposed to help him. But I kept it and he didn't squeal on me so I never did. I was loose there I didn't have a job that time I was telling you about the horse getting crazy I was the right leg guard see and they had a left leg guard. And that's why they picked me to go in this new company they was forming me and Nellie B Jones could have been the only two left there from that company. I don't know because we never saw no more horses what so ever. That place was hot just right after Pearl Harbor every man that was in there got a rank to train the men that was coming in.

Interviewer: So did you end up training people?

Smith: How's that?

Interviewer: Did you end up training people?

Smith: No I got about a year and a half Nellie B Jones went on another he'd run off and go home he lived in Kansas. And come back singing a song of some kind and we was out in the field and Nellie B Jones was gone two days and I had to cook by myself and look and here come Nellie B Jones leading a little ole dog. I said what do you got there? Said ah I picked up a pet company commander called him down to the office he went said you going to dig a hole for me six foot deep four foot square. Nellie B Jones started digging he'd rest awhile and he'd take that shovel he was a singing all the time pitch it out pitch it out. Night come company commander was watching him all day he called him up to the office says if I let you quite on that hole will you promise me you won't go AWL no more? He said no sir he said awful homesick for my wife said she lives right down the road here. Said I might before another month said I might so ahead. He laughed said go on get your pick and get out of there and go on said but don't leave. I never did know him to leave anymore I don't know.

Interviewer: They said that Audie Murphy didn't get his good conduct medal because he had a habit of just leaving whenever he wanted to. But he'd always come back and.

Smith: Yeah he'd come back he'd stay two or three days but the fellow that was taking his job had it rough.

Interviewer: Because he had to do the job of two people yeah.

Smith: We was one day cooking out in the field we had to go out in the field and camp out. They was a building our barracks the ones that we was supposed to be in. And so we stayed out I guess two months

all the way from the last of June to middle of August camping out. So August they had a wet spell and it got raining for a week and it was just like a hog pen where everybody was walking around and mud all over everything and the general come around inspecting. And he told the one that was under him said y'all go on I'm gonna stay here with this fellow I was a cooking chicken for dinner. And he stayed there with me and we had a fryer that we was cooking in. I said well my chicken is done I said would you like to have a piece of chicken? Oh he said I'll eat a piece. I give him a piece of chicken and he set there he said I'm gonna bring you fellows in next week. So when he left and they come around I asked the company commander I was real close to him, we had called pancakes hoecakes that's what they called them down around Dover gonna have hoecakes for supper. And so he got a big kick out of me calling them hoecakes.

Interviewer: Now did you end up going overseas?

Smith: No

Interviewer: No you ended up staying stateside?

Smith: I got down in my back lifting them I was still we come back in and we had three big stoves that was fueled with coal coal stoves to cook with. Nellie B Jones was still with us and so I'd have to get up at four o'clock on my duty and Nellie B Jones wouldn't get up until five. And we'd on Thanksgiving we had goose cooked goose and we had a lard stand of goose grease that you cooked out of them. And so every so often there was a grease truck come around pick our grease up. But he'd take a quart dipper and pour all over that coal send a message with that goose grease and that pipe would get as red as you ever saw. All of that coal would catch a fire and then he would cook breakfast.

Interviewer: He doesn't sound exactly like the kind of guy that obeyed all the rules.

Smith: If he would have got caught from that they would have put him in the jail.

Interviewer: So this was Thanksgiving of 1942? When you guys ate goose that year huh?

Smith: Well every Thanksgiving we had turkey one holiday and goose the next holiday I don't remember which one. And so they told me if I would do the cooking of the turkey the night before I'd have the next day off. I told them I'd be glad to every hour I'd take them turkeys out and baste them pour grease over them put them back in the stove put a little more coal in the stove. And I cooked turkey all night but I had them good and brown by the next morning. And I left that Thanksgiving and I went to the barracks and I slept.

Interviewer: So you missed Thanksgiving dinner huh?

Smith: Yeah

Interviewer: Now how did you hurt your back?

Smith: Lifting they had 20 gallon containers that we made tea in and coffee and they was a calling on somebody I would pick up fill it full of water to about that far pick it up and put it on the stove. And that's the only way that I figure that I ever hurt my back. The mess officer said Smith what's the matter you're limping that a way? I said I don't know I said something run down this leg. He said I want you to

go see in the morning in the morning come and I didn't go I went ahead and kept cooking. And he come around said what did they tell you? I said I didn't go I just kept cooking. He looked at me he said I'm giving you a command now said I want you to go up to the infirmary on sick call in the morning. I said yes sir he was a lieutenant I said I will go. I went and come back and he said did you go? I said I certainly did. They never did find out what was the matter but I've got to take seven heat treatments and so that went ahead. They put me in the hospital and there were three majors examine each man. So Major Bennett was my doctor and he told me to get up and touch my toes with my fingers. When I got down to my knees as far as I could go my knees got just to bucking this away and so he said that's enough said what's the matter with you? I said I don't know that's what I'm in here for said okay. He put it down then the barracks I was put in was in with another major and he'd make his inspection every morning get my by the toe raise it up, I'd holler and he'd turn that toe a loose and it would hit the ground it would almost kill me. So he'd do that two or three times and he saw that I didn't like it and he'd quit. And he called me in one day I stayed in there about a month and he said well we can't find out what's the matter with you. They taped a 50 pound weight on my leg in a cot had a contraption set over here and it was tied to 50 pound weight for this leg was getting shorter all the time. And so I stayed on that weight for a week or two and they'd take me off and he called me in the office and he said well we can't find out what's the matter with you. Said we're going to put you up here in this casual battalion and I saw what they was doing they was washing windows and washing doors all day just light duty you know. And he said I'm gonna put you in the casual battalion. I looked at him I said I didn't come in here to be put in the casual battalion. I come in here to get something done for my hip whatever is wrong with it. And that put him to studying and they didn't put me in there. They sent me to _____ General Hospital and I stayed there about a month and they couldn't find what was wrong and they was going to give me 40 cc's of something in my back you know to deaden the pain. But they couldn't tell what was the matter and they discharged me sent me home. And discharged me with ten percent and you know anybody with back trouble you have good days and bad days and so they called me told me to go to Murfreesboro have an examination. We'd been married about from October that was August I went and her daddy told me said now you get you walking stick. Said anybody that's you need a walking stick I said I'm feeling pretty good now. I went up there and they examined me said how are you feeling today I said pretty good I said I may be back in the bed by the last of the week. They said what we go by is what we know when we examine you so they examined me and told me there was nothing wrong with me. And so I was getting \$10 a month pension so they wrote and told me they was going to cut my pension out because they said there wasn't nothing wrong with me. So I didn't fool with them no more until I got a job at Fort Campbell and I hurt my back again and it was just like it was when I got out of the army. I told my boss I said well I'm gonna have to go to Nashville and let them see if they can find out what's the matter with my back. I said I stayed in the hospital from about March first of March until the last of September they never did find. Well when I walked in that hospital the doctor I had his name was Culley Dr. Culley he looked at me and walked said I can tell you exactly what's the matter with you. He reached the door swung it up and it had a skeleton hanging up there he said these three from going up six fifth, sixth, and seventh in your back is ruptured. Said we're gonna have to operate on you I said when? He said well he said I'll make the appointment for Saturday. So the next Saturday they had an emergency and they didn't get to me I told them they said we'll get you Monday and between Saturday and Monday my leg paralyzed. And so they got me and operated on and Dr. Culley said I've operated on several backs but said I've never seen nothing messed up like your back is messed up. They put a steal plate in it.

Interviewer: Did you get your pension back then?

Smith: Well they really done a good job on me.

Woman in the background: He said did you get your pension back then.

Smith: Yeah they

Interviewer: Reinstated it?

Woman in the background: Forty percent

Smith: Forty percent going to give you 40 percent disability. I come home worked about a week and got a letter from them saying we want you come up here in Nashville said we're thinking about taking that 40 percent away from you. So me and her went and I went up there and saw the man said well says we've got a board here that's going to meet here at one o'clock said would you like to see that board? I said I certainly would. And in the meanwhile somebody told me about them had a lawyer downstairs that was paid by the government for people just like you. I went down there and knocked on his door and he invited me in. I said I'm here to see about my back I'd like for you to represent me would you? He said that's what I'm paid for said I'll meet you at one o'clock up there. So he kind of looked me over and one o'clock come they called me in he went in with me I asked did they want to see my leg? The officer just hold on a minute said I'm not through with my part yet. So went ahead there he discussed a whole lot that I was 40 percent and that I need more. And said when he got through said let's see your legs. And this leg is an inch or inch and a half smaller than this leg. I pulled my leg up and let them look they said a blind man could see that. So I never had no more trouble out of them then. Until this fall and I put in for another raise and they were just like they was at first they started around with this that and the other. And so I told them the truth about it I said I'm not going to lie about it I said but I need a raise and so I didn't get no raise.

Interviewer: Okay now what year did you end up getting out was that 43?

Smith: September 43.

Interviewer: Okay and so when did you have all of this with the VA in 1944?

Smith: No 1958.

Interviewer: Nineteen fifty eight.

Smith: Had it in 50 I had a spell before but not like that see. I knew what I was going to have to go with but I went too long let it go too long before I went.

Interviewer: What job did you have at Fort Campbell?

Smith: Cold storage.

Interviewer: Cold storage?

Smith: Yeah

Interviewer: That's when they still had all coal fired stoves in barracks and stuff?

Smith: Yeah I was issued.

Woman in the background: It was cold I think.

Interviewer: Oh cold storage cold.

Smith: Cold storage yeah. They issued the rations out every morning.

Interviewer: Okay

Smith: So I went before I went to Nashville to be examined on I went to Fort Campbell and they examined me out there. And whenever I come back from Nashville after the operation I went back got the same doctor to examine me again and they saw that I had a back operation and he sent word to them the next morning to not let me do nothing. All my jobs was canceled because he said don't let that man lift over 50 pounds and so I was doing trucks hauling them in the warehouse and storing them and worked load beef and that was too much for me. So I was taking training to be a supervisor and I knew exactly what to do with come to a point that they lay me off. And so they called me up after they told me not let me do no job I told them I said there are plenty of jobs I can do. I can drive a car all day and it don't hurt me. Said we've got more car and truck drivers than we can handle now. We're going to have to discharge you.

Woman in the background: Retire you.

Smith: Huh

Woman in the background: Retire you

Smith: Yeah retire ya. I said how much am I going to make? They figured it up about something like \$42 a month. I said I ain't signing nothing for \$42 a month. And so I asked my supervisor I said can I borrow that book of yours. I said they are fixing to retire me and I want to carry it with me. So at night I'd take that book and get through my head added up what I'd get and I was supposed to get \$142 a month and so I went back up there and said well are you ready to sign the papers? I said not hardly I handed them that book I said what are you going to do about this part? I said they looked at that said we never have retired anybody through Civil Service and said we overlooked that. I said you're going to have to let me go see Mr. Hancock up stairs said no no no no said that's the last place we want you to go. I said he told me if I had any trouble said come to him. So they figured it up again said we figure you'll get \$140 I said I went over just through my head I added up \$142 I said for \$140 I said I'll sign it.

Interviewer: How much did you get paid when you first went in the army January of 42 how much were they paying you then?

Smith: Twenty-five dollars a month. And insurance was \$3 for \$10,000 insurance was \$3 a month I'd taken it. And I had to pay for my laundry it was about \$3 a month for my laundry. And I got my eating and my sleeping's over there and I made a little. Them boys from New York didn't like KP at all and after five o'clock come I was loose and they'd come to me and say would you finish our KP up for \$5 I said certainly I will.

Interviewer: Five dollars that was pretty good then.

Smith: Yes

Interviewer: So was it fun being a guy from Stewart County getting to meet people from the other part of the country and listening to how they talk and how what they were like?

Smith: My buddy from I had on Long Creek they had done sent him to Fort Riley and he has got from his parents that I was in Fort Campbell I mean Fort Riley. And so he got set out to find me and about nine o'clock one Sunday morning I was in the latrine shaving he come in the door I had my back to him and he didn't recognize me. And he says I'm looking for a fellow by the name of James Smith I turned around and it was James Davey. I said man how in the world did you find me? He said it was a hard job but I found you. So he was in the engineers.

Interviewer: Overall would you say the experience did you some good I mean did you enjoy your time there while you were there?

Smith: All through the

Woman in the background: Did you enjoy being in the army?

Smith: Yeah I enjoyed it. I'd write her a letter every night and she'd write me one. But my letters went free they had passed a law that we could get free postage and I got mine free and she had to pay three cents to stamp her letter.

Interviewer: So he wrote you every night?

Woman in the background: Would you believe I married him when I had to put his shoes on every time he put them on? I had to wash his feet but we had been engaged nearly three years.

Interviewer: So you've all been together since 1941?

Woman in the background: We married in 43. We'll be married is it 67 or 68 years in October?

Interviewer: Forty three will be 68.

Smith: It will be 68 this fall.

Interviewer: I'm sitting on 33 right now that doesn't seem that long in comparison about 35 years. Well sir I'm glad we got a chance to talk a little bit about the last of the horse era in the army. You know for a lot of historians that's an era they look fondly back on before gasoline and the engines and trucks and everything else took over. It's just seems so strange that you know right at the beginning of World War II you've got planes bombing cities you've got all these giant ships and rest of that and they still had horses right at the beginning of it.

Woman in the background: Now that New York paper there my son brought in on the front page I believe it's got a piece in there about the horses he bought two of them. That's not it that's his daughter. Right there well.

Interviewer: Yeah okay the Wall Street Journal. They still had a few cavalry horses.

Woman in the background: That's one of the horses right there that he paid \$900 and he had to adopt it. And he said one of them horses he could slap it on the side like that and that horse would go to the ground lay down so you could put your rifle on to shoot they had been there in the war.

Interviewer: Wow

Woman in the background: He bought them for his daddy he thought he'd be tickled to have him.

Smith: Nellie B Jones was in with me and he stayed with me until I went to the hospital I never did come out of the hospital I went back over there and got my clothes and everything. But Nellie B Jones was in the side show he beat up razor blades double edge razor blades with a hammer take them and take a glass of water and swaller them.

Interviewer: That's what he ended up doing huh?

Smith: Yeah I saw him I wouldn't I said I don't believe that he said I'll show you and went and got him got some water and swaller it. I said boy that's going to cut your intestines all to pieces. He said my intestines has done took to it said that's what I made a living at doing.

Interviewer: That's got to be one of the strangest stories of someone making a living after the military I've ever heard in my life. What a world we live in. Sir thank you for your service to our county and thank you for allowing me to come in your home and record this interview.

Woman in the background: Now he's kindly got it out of his system a lot of times at night he'll wake up and he's reminiscing. I go to sleep and he's talking about his time in the service of course I already know it by heart.

Smith: There was one time right after we got in this new.

Woman in the background: He ain't finished yet.

Smith: This new company we went out at night on a truck on a maneuvers couldn't have no lights on or nothing. And we was going up a ridge and it was light enough you could see the gulley's on both sides of this ridge and I started to get scared but the Lord told me before I went in service I said Lord I don't want to go I can't stand to kill nobody. The Lord said go and I'll go every step of your way and I'll do your fighting for you. He never lied about it.

Interviewer: No and you didn't have to do that.

Smith: Right I didn't have to do it that's how come me to have back trouble. I never was I was as stout as a most people my size.

Interviewer: That's amazing.

Woman in the background: That's exactly why he never did push to get a pension. My daddy told him go up there hopping like you can't walk. He was afraid he would cheat the government he didn't want to cheat the government. And I family doctor told him if you'll just let me sign the papers I'll get you 100 percent. He said I can't do that I can live without it.

Interviewer: And that is right there what you just told me that's the most amazing story of all. I think that's a good one to close on. Thank you sir