

Interviewer: Tell me your name and what year you were born.

Smith: My name is Otie Benjamin Smith let me change that just a little bit.

Interviewer: Okay

Smith: I was dubbed Benjamin Otie Smith but who want to be BO Smith. I changed it when I went into service because I knew I didn't want to be a B so I changed it had it legally changed to Otie B Smith. And I was born March 30, 1925.

Interviewer: What branch of service did you serve in?

Smith: Served in Army I served in we were a battalion of anti-aircraft artillery. The 579th was a battalion of its own it wasn't attached to anything else it was just a battalion. We had 5 headquarters A, B, C, and D Batteries.

Interviewer: Prior to the war do you have any recollections of the great depression?

Smith: Yes I was born in 25 and got hungry in 1930.

Interviewer: Do you remember any specific ways it affected your family and how they coped with the hardships?

Smith: Well actually I guess we were in better shape than most people. We owned quite a sizable farm we raised all of our food we had a mill close to us that ground all of our grain even to the feed for the cattle. What they ate the horses the corn for the horses. So we didn't really go hungry we had all we needed. Our grandmother was a seamstress and she made suits for us and we had we always killed about three hogs and a good sized beef but we didn't have any way of drying the beef a lot of it. But we canned most of the beef we canned in fruit jars.

Interviewer: Were you old enough to have a job before you went into the service?

Smith: Yes I worked for Duff Cleavers grocery store three years I guess. And then when I guess that was the job I had before I went into the service. I delivered groceries on a bicycle on Brown School Road. And you can imagine driving a gravel road on a bicycle with a big front basket and it full of groceries and you trying to peddle it up that hill in front of Brown School to east Maribel.

Interviewer: What type of wages were you paid for your grocery delivery do you remember?

Smith: I was making pretty close to a dollar an hour. Duff Cleaver owned the place and I did more than just deliver groceries. I made out his deposit slips and took it to the bank for him and all of that. We helped him buy a truck.

Interviewer: Easier on the next employees. Before Pearl Harbor how serious do you think most Americans felt the threat of the Japanese and the Nazis were?

Smith: I was in the front yard we were playing pass tag football on Ameren Road and something went through me just like I had been shot when they come out and said the Japanese had bombed Pearl

Harbor. But we went on and we didn't linger with it and we didn't think about it and the draft started coming along. I could have not gone to service but I didn't farm I worked at a grocery store and I didn't feel that was fair. I didn't have to go but I went. But I didn't go until I was drafted.

Interviewer: After you were drafted did you go to an induction center and get tested for skills?

Smith: Chattanooga that's where we went to. WE went down there and then the 16th of July I was sworn in 1943.

Interviewer: Was that your first time away from home a great distance?

Smith: Outside of visiting with I have an uncle named Otis Smith in Knox County who had he was my great uncle and I was named for him. I used to go over there and they would leave me and let me stay a week and I'd stay until they come back and got me. That's the furthest I stayed away from home and also at my grandfathers they were farmers down on Russell Road.

Interviewer: Did you participate in any maneuvers stateside I guess for training?

Smith: We this gets involved. We the 579th anti-aircraft artillery battalion, there were five artillery battalions. We were all combat ready but we didn't have anything to shoot at there were no planes.

Interviewer: So I guess you're I mean you're training didn't really prepare you for what you had to deal with as much I don't guess.

Smith: Yes it did we moved out of Fort Bliss Texas and we came to Fort Campbell Kentucky as a battalion. And we were the only battalion that did this and we became or I became a part of the 22nd special troops. And what we did we moved in to Rucker Alabama and Fort Benning Georgia. And we taught army infantry from Colonels down and we taught them the application of anti-aircraft artillery as infantry support. And this was the beginning of the armored infantry and I was in that part phase of it. I stayed in it until we went on maneuver in Savannah with the 69th and then we went back to Fort Bliss Texas. We were spread out in different batteries we were in different areas and we went through all these maneuvers and everything. Our headquarters was in Fort Campbell and when we left there we went back to Fort Bliss and we did shooting airplanes to keep it up we didn't know what might transport. The planes were radio controlled and as far as we were concerned it wasn't too far but as far as by looking at the plane we were looking at it was quite a ways and we shot and my gunner was Wayne Bradley from Nashville. And he knocked down three or four of those planes that only cost 52 million dollars to build. Anyway we went to Fort Bliss and when we got to Fort Bliss we made ready for overseas service. And we went to California and we were the first ship to come out and go under the bridge.

Interviewer: The Golden Gate.

Smith: The Golden Gate bridge we sailed out of there on a liberty ship and went unescorted all the way to the Philippine Islands by way of Hawaii and Austria.

Interviewer: How would you compare the living conditions of all these different camps you stayed at? Was there a great difference in all these camps?

Smith: Not a whole lot it was pretty much the same old same old at times it wasn't good. On maneuvers it was terrible you're got your meals before daylight and some of them were like a pancake but no syrup or no butter and it wouldn't have mattered it was cold anyway. It was bad.

Interviewer: When you went to Hawaii did you see Pearl Harbor was it still ravaged?

Smith: No we didn't go into that particular part of the area we were just there overnight in Hawaii that was about all we was there. A day and two nights and we sailed out late on the yeah late the next night maybe 4:30 am.

Interviewer: What was your impression with your fellow recruits that you were serving with?

Smith: That's the unique thing. We were bonded I mean we were tight. Now to know what we were working with we were working with squads. Squads consisted of a gunner two cannoniers to load the belts that went into the thing. We worked with M16 halftrack that had four 50 calibers and it could fill the bed with brass quicker than you could shake it. And the reason I don't have any hearing in this ear I was the well at that time I was probably I know I was a Sergeant by then. I started out as a First Stripe which was as low as you could be without being a private never served a day in the kitchen never served guard I was sergeant of the guard. And I was a one stripper but I grew up and I became the section leader the squad leader. And my squad consisted of the two gunners and one gunner two cannoniers a driver and myself and that was and one halftrack. A section was two of those units and there was a sergeant and he was over each one of those and from there on up you went in rank.

Interviewer: Did the equipment you trained with did you feel like it operated pretty well in combat like you trained with?

Smith: Well you know we went through basics and we trained on an M16 riffle. But most of the things we had was old WWI riffles. Frankly they shot better than the M16s did but they would knock your shoulder off. We were shooting 30 calibers and I qualified with that and I qualified with a machine gun and I qualified with a car beam so I could shoot anything and carry a hand gun.

Interviewer: Where was your first experience of combat?

Smith: Our first we were in the states so long in training because we went through basic we went through air maneuvers we went through about 18 months with the army so it was later when we went in. We landed in Luzon and the fighting was going on we could hear the cannons and the big guns firing outside of Luzon in the Philippines. Well outside of the Manilales where we landed and we they had just they had declared Manila clear but they had the outskirts. And we joined an armored division they broke up an air battalion and they put two halftracks with each company. And we started that zig zag pass and we went a hill a day. And we would go in at night and dig in and get our placements ready then the next morning just at daylight the air force came through and strafed down the hill up the next one to the next hill. And we staffed together when they pulled off we pulled out halftracks up in where they had already raided the place. We strafed down and up all the way across and then after that we pulled back and the army went through down and up as faulting troops. And they had some a few tanks small tanks and that's the only combat we saw. If we shot anybody we wasn't close enough to see it. If you see that I mean that's why the Japanese said the army didn't know how to fight a jungle war. They tore the jungle down before they started fighting. So I guess that was the reason.

Interviewer: What would you do for entertainment in your free time while you were overseas?

Smith: We had we always had a band. In fact McNick Benny you've seen him many times he could play any instrument there was. We had a band that you that could play any kind of music you wanted to hear except maybe piano. But we could play classical they could play anything and that was fantastic once again our battalion was never really close together. A, B, C, and D was spread out everywhere just about all of the time. And we didn't have a lot of communication outside of our own batteries. We knew some of the officers but we didn't know I knew some of the people because about 40 percent of the 579th came from Tennessee and about 40 percent came from New York and the rest of them was from all the way around.

Interviewer: Kind of a strange combination Tennessee and New York.

Smith: But I'll tell you the kindest friends I've got came out of New York. Dick Eisenhart and I are bosom buddies that always will be I guess. He was in the 2nd squad no company I don't know I'm getting it mixed up but anyhow he was we were A he was in B others were in C. But we all knew each other we knew because we just had about 13 people in our company.

Interviewer: Did you write a lot of letter or receive mail?

Smith: We I wrote home quite often and I received letters regularly from home and of course it might be six months before you got it sometime. We didn't ask them to send us any food stuff over there because we moved around so much over there it wasn't any telling when we'd get it or it would catch up with us. My mother came to visit us and we had to send Betty out but she came and stayed a week me. She lived not on the base my girlfriends mother said she is going to live with us while she is here. I forgot to tell her to leave but they were fine people he was a Senator from Texas and they had a shrimp vessel and his wife always knew when we were coming home from church and what time we would get there. And she always had blackberry jelly and hot biscuits.

Interviewer: When you were overseas where did you sleep on the ground in tents did you have barracks what was the?

Smith: Sometimes on the ground.

Interviewer: Just a little bit of all?

Smith: But we were we usually in a lot of places we took a building and was in a building. But if we were moving out we slept on the ground we slept in hammocks a lot in the Philippine Islands because, how long do I need to talk on that?

Interviewer: Whatever you want to tell us.

Smith: That was the roughest when we were there even though we were not in combat like that. But we got into enough combat that the Japanese were kindly on their last leg a little bit. But they were very good the reason we were in hammocks was because they would get you in the ground and stick a knife through you and you be lying on the ground. And we had foxholes dug out around the area and we stayed in those holes. And we would get they would crawl in the area where we were and they would just lay and listen and if you didn't have to go you didn't go. But some of them did and when they went

to the place a lot of times they couldn't get oriented to know their way back. And they would talk to each other so what had happened a lot of these times they would crawl up and get in the foxhole two men in a foxhole and he would kill the two men. And then he would answer just like he did to get somebody coming back the other way if he was out when he went in there. He would never go in with both men in the hole they would go in with one out and others crawled. And I come very near I learned to twist that hammock and come down with my knife and I stopped that close to him. And I said talk to me man don't crawl like that talk to me that did it. But that's the closest I ever come to hitting somebody I carried a knife in my belt all the time. And I could twist that things and come down and I was facing him didn't hit him. That's not that's a memory you don't talk about much.

Interviewer: How would you rate the food while you were overseas? You had a little bit of control on that didn't you?

Smith: Yeah after the war was over we did.

Interviewer: But prior?

Smith: Prior to no I didn't have any say so and you we did such things on maneuvers we lost the mess truck lost all of our food. We were out on maneuvers and we went to a farmer over there and bought a pig. We couldn't have anything at night so we tunneled under in a ditch we tunneled under it and put a pipe over here and we roasted that pig and we had meat to eat. And we had everybody when we started cooking we had everybody coming out to eat and then there wasn't enough to go around but we finally did get two pigs from him. That helped out a lot that's why I don't like chocolate bitter chocolate. All we had left was bitter chocolate bars and that's all we had to eat for four days.

Interviewer: Were you, you said you were promoted during your service time correct?

Smith: I went from Private to PFC to Corporal to Sergeant and I ended up being discharged at Staff Sergeant.

Interviewer: For the most part did you feel that the people who received promotions were deserved it?

Smith: They were in our case I know they were. Now I didn't know other it wasn't a matter of rank coming because they needed the rank because we could have stayed at the rank we were in. But we were decorated not so much for what did in the war but how we managed all the maneuvers we went on and how we managed to get the army air force I mean army soldiers adapted to the air force we were army. But we were army but we had anti-aircraft and we really went to bat on that thing and it really worked out and it really was a lot of help for the infantry to have that support. And we could drive down the road at 65 miles an hour in those tire tracks whereas most of the equipment that you used you couldn't move 10 to 12 miles an hour.

Interviewer: Switching gears just a little bit what qualities about the enemy was there anything that really impressed you with them?

Smith: They were totally misled but they were heartless they were suicidal even then they were very suicidal. They would crash planes into ships they would crash planes into anything when they would get a chance to and after they began to have planes to fly, they didn't have planes when we got over there, they didn't have anything to fight. In Austria we heard these two planes coming alright we said that's

these two little ole guys that they fly over here ever night at 8:30 they haven't ever fired a shot they haven't ever dropped a bomb but they are Japanese planes and they sound like Maytag washing machine motors. We heard that the two or three nights that we were in Austria. We didn't take cover.

Interviewer: So would you say you came to respect the average enemy soldier or otherwise?

Smith: We didn't see our enemy very often we didn't see our enemy. We were cut off we were building on top of Lyngate and Duff we were building a place for the soldiers to set up a little camp up there. And were using bamboo to get it up off of the ground and big bamboos made the thing and we cast tarpaulins over it. And we did that well after we had taken we had gone all the way to the top of that mountain and we had run the enemy into a hole and captured quite a few. A lot of them never lived through it but when we were building that we never knew where they were. And we were out cutting bamboo and I had got a Japanese gun and mounted it a 30 caliber gun and mounted it on the front of that halftrack and I could spray in front. And it would really shoot it shot good and I got the ammunition from the airplanes that were on the ground. So when we were out there I was driving down through there I mean we were going down through there there was two halftracks we were going down there together. We could only fire behind us beside us it cut off at 60 degree but we couldn't come down if they were in front of it. So that's when I we got cut off and they radioed us and told us we were cut off. And I thought for a minute I talked to Runnycrew was the other Corporal I said Corporal Runnycrew what are you going to do he said I'm hungry let's go home. I said have you got that gun on the turret that you can put on front and he said yeah got ammunition yeah he said okay I'll take the right side and you take the left side. We headed out we never fired a shot but we went back to camp back to where we were working.

Interviewer: Did you have any contact with the civilians or refugees over there?

Smith: I had a lot of contact with them in fact I worked with a crew after we got into Japan. I had we built quanza huts I had a crew all of the time that I was in charge of. I can tell you something about it he didn't speak English and I didn't speak Japanese but we were trying to figure out how many inches and how many of this. And I kept saying well this 12 inches and I finally said that isn't getting me anywhere. And I said one two three four five six seven eight nine ten and he smiled you know and began counting in Japanese. So we came along.

Interviewer: How did they react to you as an American soldier the civilians?

Smith: They were about the Japanese people were a class people in fact I'm sorry that they are not the type of humble people we saw in 1943 42 and 43. They did not know what was going on they were totally in the dark. Their armies and all of them didn't even know where the fact is there was another one of our group captured about 20 soldiers Japanese soldiers and they had someone who could tell them you know who could translate the language. And so they told them said hey we know you're not going to win said we would have been over here in Florida if we knew we were going to win. And they had told them they were in the everglades in Florida and they were in the Philippine Islands. I mean you know they lied to their people they lied to their they didn't know what was going on. They really had a good king but they had him buckled they had him under. And they did all of this out of the military.

Interviewer: You said you were part of an occupation force once the war was over. What did was your duties in that in tell?

Smith: well that first of all we moved out of the well my duties did that through the quanza huts and I can tell you something about that. I had this crew and I've got a picture of the old man making me a footlocker I didn't have one and he made me a footlocker. And he always came to the we built the first hut and I set up my barracks in there and he was always there early in the morning had a pot belly stove he built the fire he made my coffee and then woke me up. So we went through he didn't show one day and I really got tough with him and big tears rolled out of his eyes I said what's the matter he said, the word for baby I can't remember now what it was but anyway I knew at that time, no more no more. I said what happened (he began rubbing his stomach) starved to death. And I said he had two boys that were with him I said you stay night at night he lightened up again I said and I took him down there and showed him what we made the vegetables in where we peeled the potatoes and this little stuff. And I showed him how they were built and we wanted to build those for other people. And so we started building we didn't have any then we showed him how we wanted them built and this tickled him to death. He had already made me a footlocker the door slide from side to side and you could get in the little bottom. Anyway I told themes sergeant anything that is left don't throw out anything that's left give it because they were in a they lived in a what would you call it a compost or something they lived together. They farmed they farmed out here but they all lived together in a group.

Interviewer: A village.

Smith: A little village so I told him he would stay and build these for us after work. And I said when you work until after our mess until we eat and go you take all that's left and you take it to your place and you feed your people. And oh man I'm telling you there was never anybody any more grateful or more thankful than they were. And they took those and they fed them and that spread out over the area wherever there was food left over at night an army thing wherever they were camping. Wherever there was a meal and anything was left over it went to one of those compost that they lived in to feed them and they were grateful. Now one other thing that I was going to tell you they had lost all of their they were wealthy people at one time and they had lost everything. And this girl he owed he had owed money and this little girl was about 14 years old and he was going to sell her to be a geisha. And one of the guys got word of it and he come and said he is going to lose his 14 year old daughter he is going to sell her to the geisha. And what's febrezie he said febrezie said he's not going to sell her so we started taking up money and we got more than more money in Japanese than he was going to get when he sold her and we bought her. And the hardest thing we had to do was to make her go back home she was ours and she wanted to stay with us. We said no you go home your home and he just couldn't believe that we took up that money. And I've got a picture of that girl somewhere I don't know where it is but I took a picture of her she was a beautiful young girl. She was like 14 years old and so we bought her and we owned her but she stayed at home. And that was one of the great things in our period of time over there. But I as I said I made friends with them I went to church with them I ate with them they were just fine people fine people.

Interviewer: You said how the leadership of the Japanese didn't do a very good job of reporting to them. Did you feel like the American leadership did a good job of telling you what the big picture was and telling you why you were doing certain things?

Smith: I can tell you what they this to me they didn't say anything about it we were on our way from to build a beach head just south of Yokohama. There was a beach there it was probably a mile long it was probably 75 inches deep and there was thing right off at sea. We got on we were shipped and then convoyed and were ready to go to Japan to build a beachhead there and we got up to I forgot the name the one where they had the soldiers putting the fall guy I'll tell you in a minute. But anyhow, Okinawa,

so we got up to Okinawa and that typhoon came through and we had to turn that whole convoy around and anchor in the South China Sea. While we were anchored in the South China Sea they dropped the atomic bomb. And when we went into Japan on the same ship we was going in to start this beach head we were going in as captures we went in as winners. But took over their thing the hardest thing to do after we got there was bring out the prisoners of war they were in such horrible shape. It just tore you into just to watch it bamboo splints drove up under their nails starved to death. Well that's enough of that anyway we didn't like the military we didn't like the people there. The fact is they just bypassed some of those people there in the jungles the Philippine Islands and starved them to death. When we were building that place up there we was bumping the line to eat lunch and all at once there was a bing went right through one of those dip things where you dip your mess kit and went right through it. And it came out of a tall coconut pond and we could tell from the direction where he was. We had a guy up there that was running a bulldozer he said I'll take care of him and he pulled the blade up high and here he went right up through there right over that coconut pond and right down on top of him and right on out the road. We found another one that was dead in a tree he didn't have anything to eat he didn't have any ammunition he had one hand grenade. Does that tell you something about the Japanese?

Interviewer: Yes sir it does. I think you mentioned earlier that the Japanese signed the papers surrendering on your ship didn't they?

Smith: No not on my ship it was 40 some yards I guess we pulled in to that Yokahama Harbor and that was the whole all the ships had pulled in and they were ready to bring the soldiers in. The first calvary division had already come in by air and dropped it at the airport where we were supposed to take if we ever got off that. But I guarantee you anybody that went on that beach head on that island place that I'm talking about I went down there they had railroad tracks they had guns they had mortar they had food they had ammunition they had clothes and they had an opening every so often and they would run those tanks. You couldn't have got them out there is no way in the world that you could have gotten them out of there they would have killed every man that hit that beach as fast as he got off the ship. And that's why I say God was with us in that situation all of those things worked out. Here all of this time that we went we didn't really know that we shot anybody but we had all of the compassion in the world for the Japanese people.

Interviewer: I want to flash back to one more thing when you said you were out playing fast tag football then you heard about Pearl Harbor. Do you think that kind of compared to the September 11th the modern day the same feeling?

Smith: I don't know no no I think September 11th was more drastic to me because here I am three years younger than draft age. And then I spent three years in the army but we were on the back end of the army. The Germans were just about out of it in fact some of the German some of the soldiers that were fighting in Germany and France and Hungaria and all of those areas some of those came out and came to the South Pacific. And went into Japan most of our replacements came out of Europe. But we you was talking about what I did after I built the huts Nick Eisenhower the New Yorker that he and I were first buddies and I got 12 hour shifts and we alternated. And we were the Yokahama commissar. In there we had a number of Japanese war prisoners we had Tokyo Rose we had Albert Gildie we had the nurse or the doctor in Europe. That's another thing a lot of the people from Europe fled Europe and came to Japan. And they came war criminals in Japan but we had them in custody there we had about 87 in that group. And then when we started to come back home they moved them all into Sugamo Prison which was up in Tokyo and they moved all of those and some of them they released some of them they got rid of prisoners. And Tokyo Rose didn't mean American people any harm. Fact is she told them when they

were coming and from what direction and how many there would be. Then she would tell them all about what his girlfriend was doing or what his wife was doing and all this stuff. It didn't break down moral of the people the army it didn't break down the moral. But they listened to that broadcast and they learned from it. They learned that she's telling them the truth she's not trying to break the moral she's telling them the truth. And we got to the point where we knew to make ready because they were coming but they didn't have much to come with. But she would tell us they were coming you know and they'd come. But midway took care of that they took care of the navy. I don't know if I left anything out or not.

Interviewer: That's what I'm trying to think. One other thing I wanted to talk about the medical treatment. Did you feel that the American took care of their wounded soldiers in a satisfactory manner?

Smith: We didn't have but three wounded soldiers and that was in the United States. Now there was some in the others that had some but A Battery did not have any others that were killed by foreign we didn't have them we just didn't have them. I'll tell you what happened a situation that happened to me. They had the flu shots had started they was really they were still testing it it hadn't been proved. And they gave it to me and I had double pneumonia in less than a day and a half. I got the live stuff and I got a good doss of it. And he gave us the doctor gave us the injection and left for a three day pass and I couldn't get in the hospital. Finally I asked the captain if I could have his jeep and jeep driver. He said what are you going to do? I said I'm going to go to a hospital and he said we'll take your temperature. I said well what can you do when you take my temperature, my temperature was 104. And so I went to Yokahama place and they said we can't take any more people at this place we cannot take you. So we drove back and as we was driving back I looked and I saw the hospital ship Marigold and I knew that was hospital ship I knew it was. And I went up there and got out and started to the gate and a sailor said where are you going soldier. And I said I'm coming aboard he said I can't let you do that I said I don't care I'm coming aboard you do what you have to do. I said I'm going to die anyway. About that time this guy walked up and he was a captain and he said now sailor let him go aboard. He said what's your problem I said I took the flu shot I've got pneumonia and I'm just not going to last long. He said well you come with me we got down there a little piece and he said you're from Tennessee aren't you? I said yes he said me too he said I'll take care of you. So he put me on penicillin and I took two shots one in each hip for five days and slept under sheets with kettles going around and building steam. And he brought me out of it and then they had to sail and he said I'm not going to let you go back to your company or your battalion. He said I'm going to send you to another place where they have a good thing and they've got room for you and I'm going to send your records ahead of you and I'm going to send you up there in an ambulance. So I went up there and guess who unloaded me UJ Campbell from Maryville Tennessee. He was working there and they had lost my records so I went through another penicillin deal if I cut myself shaving it healed before it bled. But anyway UJ seen that I was well cared for and he was my instructions said he is not to be dismissed from this hospital until there is no sign of a spot on either lung. And I stayed there for a period of time. I also sent some time in St. Luke's hospital I had a wisdom tooth extracted and the guy kept me there five days because they were going to have an inspection. And he said this is going to be a snap this is going to be easy to get out it's no problem. I said but I've got to collect this into a ball this infection you've got then after that we can just lift it out. But we're having an inspection this is going to be so good that we're going to hold you until the time the inspecting group comes. And when the nurse tells me he's here I'll be over you and when they walk through the door I'll take it out. And they were so happy about how well he did that you know. Everybody else goes and solutes and everything else he was busy he wasn't he didn't do anything turned around after it was out still had it in the pan and saluted. So we laughed about that. Do you know of anything else?

Interviewer: I'm trying to think of anything we've missed. I guess we can talk about coming back to the states and your discharge.

Smith: Well we left I was left over there in February. The ship had been had come from Japan over there and made a return trip and brought food stuff and things like that and unloaded it and was going back to us and had not taken on any fuel. And so when we got we went up by Alaska up that way and in and we got up in the site of land in Seattle. Everybody ran to the side and the captain said don't go to the side go to the middle go to the other side spread out spread out spread out we're going to capsize we're light we're real light we're going to capsize stay where you're at don't move until we get to dock. Said it will be there when you get there. And sure enough that thing was up about like this and he was really trying whenever they got spread back out and they had sense enough to move fast when it's up right. We sailed in and then we spent the night in Seattle had a real good meal was treated like royalty. Got on a train and got down to Colorado and guess what. Snow storm we was there five days in a little town and we ate everything that they had. And people were trying to bring us stuff and we just cleaned out there was two little grocery stores there and a gas station and we cleaned out everything that was there. Then we went to Fort Smith Arkansas and we were discharged at Fort Smith 15 days later. And I went we a bunch of us got together and we bought a car we had enough money to buy a car. It wasn't much but it would run. Well it run to Memphis and we just left it there and got on a bus came on to various places you know. I came in to Knoxville and Tom Cummings I've got a picture of him here somewhere I need to see that do you have a picture of Tom and me? Tom and I went in together Tom and I slept in the same six hut thing. He was my cannoniers in my squad we came home when we were at Fort Campbell Kentucky I got through usually about noon on Friday and we'd head out we'd hitchhike. And that's another group of stories. And we'd come to there and we'd come to about the city limits somewhere of Nashville and they'd pick you up. Two things I'll tell you about we got a ride with Mr. Right who owned Rose's Drug Store not drug store but ten cent five and ten cent store in Maryville come through and picked us up. Didn't know who we were we didn't know who he was I knew Mr. Right was manager of that store. That's the fastest I've ever come from Nashville but I don't think he was off of 90 much. And we got home real early we had dates that night. Tom and I I'd take him to every joint when we got in then we always went back on Sunday evening. And we found out if we could go there was a lot of people in Smyrna flying planes you know and so we'd go down. And they had been up there for a weekend and they wanted sleep their way into Nashville if we'd drive them so we drove them. So we drove them and we got into Nashville sometimes at 12 sometimes at 1. I have got there and stood revelry before I went to the barracks. But we got there and back we went just about every weekend. And there was things about it that I can remember and enjoy and all of these guys that are still living. And it hurts you to see the deceased going down and I did this year and the others going up. And I found 8 that died after we started setting up our program. But lost one that we hadn't been able to find he had had a stroke. Found out that I mailed a letter and it got to him through a woman who was taking care of him. He had had a stroke he couldn't speak he was deaf he was dumb and everything. So she got the letter and she wrote me back and told me for I believe it was some 20 odd years that he had been in this shape. She was taking care of all of his arrangements and all of his things and he was pretty well to do. She said I didn't know where he went what company he was with I didn't know what part of the army he was in. And you've made it easy for me to know the battalion he was in and I would like to know more about it. So I sent her a book just like this and wrote her about some other things and sent them to her. He died before he got them. She wrote me back and I've got here letter that he passed away. But you know you just find them and then their gone. And we're at the age now where we're losing them right and left. I'm one of the older ones I was one of the younger ones when we went now I'm one of the older ones.

Interviewer: That's why we're trying to get your stories so other people can learn about it.

Smith: Well when I came out with the discharge turned all of the stuff in we went through a line and they said okay soldier what do you want to sign up for. I said you know what you want from me, what I want from you, and he said no what? I said a slight remembrance of the last three years that's it. I've got a big light (they are looking at pictures on a table). My brother Earl and this is my brother Ed and that is my brother Fred (looking at a picture of a man in uniform and three small boys).