

STORY OF HONOR

LEO SMITH,

BORN 6 AUGUST 1919, WIGGINS, MS

HONOR FLIGHT—JOURNEY OF HEROES

INAUGURAL TRIP ON APRIL 30, 2008

HERE ARE A FEW OF THE EVENTS I EXPERIENCED IN WWII

1941-1944

I WAS DEFERRED FROM THE DRAFT BECAUSE I WAS CONSIDERED ESSENTIAL AS I WAS WORKING FOR THE GULF OIL COMPANY LOOKING FOR OIL. I QUIT GULF OIL AND VOLUNTEERED FOR THE ARMY AT CAMP SHELBY, MS IN JULY OF 1944.

1944-1945

I WENT TO BASIC TRAINING AT FT. HOOD, TX. THEN WENT ON A TROOP SHIP TO LE HARVE, FRANCE. DURING THE BATTLE OF ARDENNES (BATTLE OF THE BULGE) WE WALKED, RODE TRUCKS AND TANKS TO NANCY, FRANCE, WHERE I JOINED UP WITH THE 87TH INFANTRY DIVISION. IT WAS CALLED THE GOLDEN ACORN WHICH CONSISTED OF THE LOWER SOUTHERN STATES. THIS DIVISION WAS UNDER THE 3RD ARMY UNDER GENERAL GEORGE S. PATTON, COMMANDER.

THE WEATHER WAS MISERABLE, FOOD WAS SCARCE, AND THE FIGHTING WAS FIERCE. THE 3RD ARMY WALKED, RODE ON TRUCKS AND TANKS FROM STRASBOURG, FRANCE THROUGH LUXEMBURG TO SANKT VITH, BELGIUM TO HELP RELIEVE THE PRESSURE FOR THE TROOPS IN BASTOGNE, BELGIUM. IT WAS DONE IN ABOUT 36 HOURS, APPROXIMATELY 225 MILES. WE DID NOT STOP UNTIL WE GOT TO ST VITH, BELGIUM. WE HAD TO FIGHT ALL THE WAY.

1945

AFTER THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE WE WENT ACROSS THE PRUM RIVER CLOSE TO KAISERSLAUTERN, GERMANY IN FEBRUARY/MARCH AND MY FEET SUFFERED FROST BITE. I WAS EVACUTATED TO A HOSPITAL AT ORLEAN, FRANCE.

I WENT BACK TO THE FRONT LINE NEAR MUNICH. LATER, WE WENT INTO AND LIBERATED THE DACHAU CONCENTRATION CAMP. THEN THE WAR ENDED "VED DAY".

I THEN WENT TO MANNHEIM, GERMANY FOR OCCUPATION AND LATER WENT TO MARSEILLE, FRANCE AND STAGED FOR THE INVASION OF JAPAN. WHEN THE WAR WITH JAPAN ENDED IN AUGUST, I RETURNED TO MANNHEIM, GERMANY. I RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES IN 1946.

I WAS IN THE ARMY INFRANTRY, ARMY AIR CORP AND RETIRED FROM THE US AIR FORCE AS A MASTER SARGENT IN 1967.

WORDS CANNOT EXPRESS MY SINCERE GRATIFULNESS FOR THIS FABULOUS TRIP. I WILL TREASURE THE MEMORY ALWAYS. MY GUARDIAN, BRENDA WALKER TOOK WONDERFUL CARE OF ME.

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU,



Leo and daughter Pat in 1944
the day he left for Europe

Leo and daughter pat after Honor Flight in 2008

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