

## **Robert Smith Interview**

Company K, 317th Inf Reg

*(Aug 2001, interviewed by COL(ret) Grant Porter)*

(MS Word Audio Transcript [NOT edited, just transcribed])

00:00:17 Speaker 1

My name is Robert W Smith.

00:00:19 Speaker 1

Was part of the K Company, 317th Infantry.

00:00:23 Speaker 1

And that was.

00:00:25 Speaker 1

Part of the original cadre of Camp Forest, Tennessee, in June of 1942, the division was actually formed July 15th and we had.

00:00:40 Speaker 1

Thousands of draftees pouring into the camp we spent roughly two years in the states we were at.

00:00:49 Speaker 1

Kansas, Yuma, AZ and finally ended up in Fort Dix, NJ, before it went overseas.

00:00:59 Speaker 1

My most dramatic.

00:01:01 Speaker 1

Thoughts of the 80th were at when we closed the fillet gap at Argentan and we walked through.

00:01:11 Speaker 1

Part of the.

00:01:13 Speaker 1

First Battalion, 318th. And I saw 80th men laying dead. It was very dramatic to me. At that time. We fought our way across France and ended up in.

00:01:33 Speaker 1

Scene aboard in late.

00:01:37 Speaker 1

About the middle of December.

00:01:39 Speaker 1

And we were getting ready to cross over into Germany when Patton committed us to the battle of the Bulge. And of course.

00:01:51 Speaker 1

We loaded up, so I think was probably around December 19th and.

00:01:57 Speaker 1

We drove all night.

00:01:59 Speaker 1

Up to to the.

00:02:01 Speaker 1

Luxembourg area and their square the real fighting started.

00:02:11 Speaker 1

I was hit on December 26th.

00:02:16 Speaker 1

And that pretty much ended my tour of combat. And from there I was returned back to the England and the hospitals and back to the states eventually pretty well.

00:02:32 Speaker 1

Covers my part of the story. Where were you wounded, Sir? Where? Yes, specifically, keeman, Luxembourg.

00:02:38

Sir. And what? What location?

00:02:46

That's it, you go.

00:02:49 Speaker 1

The second most valuable metal or that action.

00:02:52

You won't talk that fast. I was waiting.

00:02:55

If you could tell.

00:02:56 Speaker 1

Us about your metal, Sir. What? Your award.

00:02:59 Speaker 1

Had.

00:03:00 Speaker 1

I was wounded four times in the service, once in October and once in December, November and the morning of December 26. I lost these fingers in the morning and.

00:03:18 Speaker 1

In the afternoon, I was.

00:03:20 Speaker 1

Kept by a sniper through my Epson, I had a fractured pelvis and punctured bladder and etcetera. So that finished me off during.

00:03:33 Speaker 1

The Battle of the Bulge they felt.

00:03:39 Speaker 1

Fit to give me a DSC, which I consider it a great.

00:03:44 Speaker 1

Honor.

00:03:48

Thanks.

00:03:49 Speaker 1

So that pretty well.

00:03:50 Speaker 1

Covers that part.

00:04:00 Speaker 1

Awarded the DSC primarily for my actions.

00:04:06 Speaker 1

In and around Cayman from about December 24th through the 26th, when we got up there. Why?

00:04:14 Speaker 1

We were pretty well involved with the enemy and.

00:04:18 Speaker 1

One night, one of our platoons got separated.

00:04:23 Speaker 1

From our company. And so I went out and hunted up this tune and got them back into our company area and in the two days of fighting why we had some real rough times and that was pretty much the basis of of my.

00:04:43 Speaker 1

Being awarded the DSC and of course.

00:04:48 Speaker 1

There's a lot of other people that have felt should have gotten the same awards, but unless you have people around that knows what goes on, why they're not recognized, which is unfortunate. So that pretty well covers covers the.

00:05:07

Can't get that time.

00:05:08 Speaker 1

Captain, see you there. You are the company commanders.

00:05:10 Speaker 1

Company company, come here.

00:05:17 Speaker 1

Well, when you have the responsibility of a company making sure everybody has food and ammunition and so on, when I get a little taxing at times.

00:05:31 Speaker 1

Keep track of everybody.

00:05:34 Speaker 1

It's quite a responsibility.

00:05:46 Speaker 1

Were you by yourself when you went out?

00:05:48

After that patrol.

00:05:50 Speaker 1

I had my runner with me.

00:05:53

And.

00:05:53 Speaker 1

Just he and I.

00:05:55 Speaker 1

And we were looking for this loss platoon.

00:05:58 Speaker 1

In what kind of terrain were you at?

00:06:01 Speaker 1

Well, rolling countryside typical of Luxembourg at that time. But of course we were in deep snow and and it was cold and.

00:06:12 Speaker 1

And very little communication so.

00:06:16 Speaker 1

It was. It was a difficult area.

00:06:18 Speaker 1

How did you stumble on?

00:06:20

Them.

00:06:21 Speaker 1

Well, we just, I kept circling around till I actually found the platoon and they had bedded down for the night. But the point was I didn't know where they were at. And of course, there's four platoons to accompany. So when?

00:06:35 Speaker 1

You got a fourth?

00:06:36 Speaker 1

Of your.

00:06:37 Speaker 1

Company lost way.

00:06:40 Speaker 1

It's not a very nice situation to be in.

00:06:44

There's a lot of.

00:06:44 Speaker 1

Guts. Well, it's your company and it's your responsibility. So you have to.

00:06:50 Speaker 1

Go.

00:06:50 Speaker 1

Out and do the best you can do.