

Jack D. Smith
Company B, 423rd Regiment
106th Infantry Division
Stalag 9-B

My father, Jack D. Smith, who is 83 now was in the 423rd Regiment, Company B of the 106th. He was a 20 year old Staff Sergeant in charge of a mortar squad. On the morning of 16 December 1944, he and a small group of soldiers were situated in a pill box at the forward-most point of the Siegfried Line on the Schnee Eifel. Their position was quickly overrun and they were surrounded. My father and the men with him were not part of the mass surrender of the 422nd and 423rd. He and his handful of men fought on even after they ran out of food, water, and ammunition.

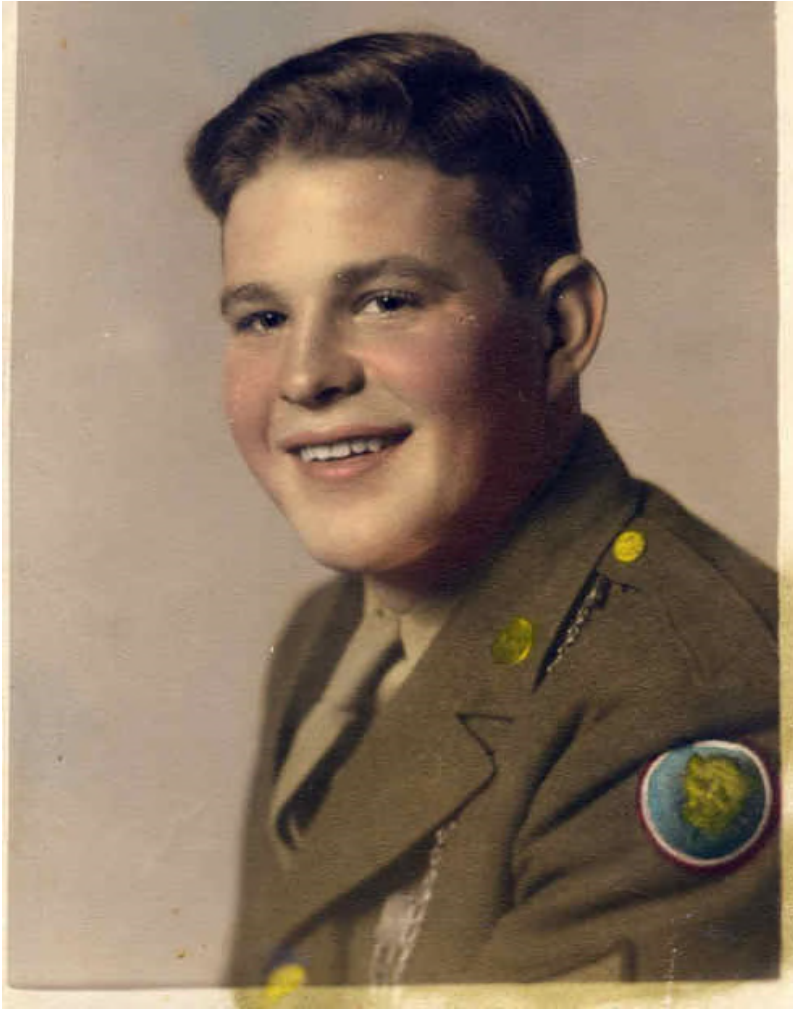
On Dec. 19, he had 3-4 men with him, all out of ammo. In a desperate attempt to break out of the forest, he ordered his men to fix bayonets. The men charged with bayonets towards a German position, but the Germans started shelling the men and they were quickly separated in the chaos. My dad jumped into a track left by a tank just as a shell ripped apart a tree just above him. When he looked up, there was hot, smoking shrapnel all around him. He couldn't move his arms in any direction without touching shrapnel. But somehow it had all missed his body.

Separated from any other soldiers and out of ammo, he crawled through the woods looking for a way out until he found Pfc. John "Jack" O'Shaughnessy hiding in some brush at the bottom of a hill. They tried to devise a plan, but just up the hill there appeared a German officer and soldiers. They could see my dad and O'Shaughnessy and called for them to surrender. My dad knew he had two choices: either surrender or be shelled or shot to death. There was no way out. He had a white handkerchief with him, as he always does to this day, and O'Shaughnessy found a stick. They waved the white flag and thus ended my dad's combat experience and began his POW experience.

My father was first taken to Stalag 9B and then a few weeks later to Stalag 9A. He was liberated on Good Friday 1945 at Stalag 9A.

His name in the unit roster under 423/B - SSgt Jack D. Smith, ASN# 34546762. He was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

Best regards,
David B. Smith
Baton Rouge, Louisiana



Jack at about 18 or 19

THE FLORIDA TIMES-U



PRISONER OF WAR—Jack D. Smith, 20, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Smith of 1524 Robinson Street, Avondale, is a prisoner of war in Germany, according to word received yesterday by his parents from the War Department through the International Red Cross.

Sergeant Smith, an infantryman, entered military service in March, 1943, a month following his graduation from Robert E. Lee High School. He received his training at Fort Jackson, S. C., and Camp Atterbury, Ind., and went overseas last October.

U.S.H. **Kriegsgefangenenpost**
Correspondance des prisonniers de guerre

Postkarte Carte postale

An
A

Mrs. Mrs. James G. Smith

Gebührenfrei! Franc de port!

Abreuzer Expedition

Vor- und Zuname:
Sgt. Jack D. Smith

Postnummer:
25618

12262
U.S. CENSOR

Empfangsort: *1524 Robinson St.*
Lieu de destination

Straße: *Jacksonville, 5*
Rue

Land: *Florida USA*
Royaume (France, etc.)
Département

Deutschland (Allgemein)

251-5 811

Kriegsgefangenenlage M. Stammlager IX-B
Camp des prisonniers *Bad Orb*

Datum: *Jan. 1945*

*Dearest Mother, Daddy, & our Sammie are filling your hearts
in good health. Please don't worry about us, for it is
not as bad as you hear, & I will be home before you
know it. Sammie has Candy's picture & it you will be sure
& take good care of yourself now, because we have a lot
of good times ahead of us. Just pray & trust in God. It
will be over soon, you know it. How you will love to get home.*

Letter home from Stalag IX-B



Jack and his Grandson, 2007

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Page last revised

James D. West

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