

2nd Lt. Francis J. Smith

Submitted by –

Tom Smith Jr., nephew

My uncle was born, the eldest of eight children, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February 1921, to Frank and Nora Smith in West Terre Haute, Indiana.

The family was a blue collar, Catholic, Irish/German extraction, busy household.

“Buddy” as he was known to us, went to school in “West T” and graduated from West Terre Haute High School in 1940. By all indications he was popular, played sports, and held part time jobs. Pictures show him to be a strikingly handsome young man.

Buddy enlisted in the Army around 1942 starting out in the Quartermaster Corps. He applied for and was accepted as an aviation cadet eventually earning his rating to fly the B-24 in 1944.

He was assigned to and flew with the 65sq. of the 43<sup>rd</sup> BG – Heavy, of the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force. He would have arrived just before or at the time the 65<sup>th</sup> was moved to Clark Field. He flew as co-pilot with 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. James Franklin in #44-42358.

On a mission to bomb the T’ainan Airfield in Formosa (Taiwan) on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 1945, they were flying center of a three plane formation. As they opened the bomb bay doors, flack exploded in the bomb bay setting off the bombs. The plane disintegrated and the two others were severely damaged by the shrapnel. There were no survivors of my uncle’s crew. The bodies were recovered and my uncle was returned to Terre Haute for burial. He was 23 years old.

This was especially hard on the family with Buddy being the oldest. His portrait was displayed in my grandparent’s living room until their deaths. He was and remains a presence in our family.

He is “Forever Young”.

Both of his brothers, brother-in-law, and many cousins also served in WW II and Korea, his brother Shannon in both. Many nieces, nephews and at least one great-nephew, have also served.









423 PL-8 Nov 44-Combat Crew #331-WWAAF-Walla Walla, Wn.





1944







Dec. 9, 1948



U. S. ARMY AIR FORCES

Dear Mom, Dad & Kids

By the time you get this, I should be pretty well settled over there! That's all I can say on that subject!

I have sent my clothes so look for them. They're coming by railway express & are paid for. There will only be one box. Its address is Terre Haute, West. Do call up the express co & tell them that its for West Terre Haute & not Terre Haute. I am sending the receipt for the box. I insured it for \$300.00. I am also sending the 4 stubs for the money orders I sent, plus a shoe ration coupon that's signed. You may be able to use the shoe coupon, it's only good until the 14<sup>th</sup> of Dec.



Am also sending a few other papers. My will is in the box along with the paper to fill out & sent to the adj. General in Washington & my part book of stamps.

I didn't get "Shirrie" present so fill the stamp book out & give her a \$25 bond from me.

There are also 14 packages of cigarettes in the box for Dad. I heard they're pretty hard to get. Guess we can get plenty.

Take my clothes to the cleaner & have them cleaned & stored, all but my hat.

Be sure & ~~look~~ for my watch & if the jeweller doesn't send it soon, write him about it, also don't forget to let me know the new address, if & when you move.

Well, I'm pretty excited & have probably forgotten something. Will write more before I leave if I have. God bless you all  
Love Dad

SOMEWHERE IN THE  
PHILIPPINES

MARCH 21, 1945

DEAR MOM DAD & KIDS;

I'M AIRDROME OFFICER TONIGHT AND HAVE THE USE OF A TYPEWRITER, SO THOUGHT I'D DROP A FEW LINES. AS YOU ~~SH~~ WILL SEE BY THE ADDRESS ON THIS ENVELOPE, I'VE MOVED AGAIN. THIS TIME FOR KEEPS, I HOPE! ANYWAY WE'RE HERE FOR A WHILE.

HAVEN'T HAD A CHANCE TO TRY AND LOCATE DUTCH AS YET, AS I HAVE BEEN PRETTY BUSY. I NOW HAVE THE GRAND TOTAL OF 109:00 HRS. AND 24 POINTS. JUST 76 MORE POINTS TO GO AND I'LL BE HEADING HOMEWARD. WE MOVED JUST AS MY CREW WAS GETTING SET TO GO TO SIDNEY, SO IT WAS CALLED OFF FOR A WHILE. SHOULD BE GOING SOON THOUGH.

I'VE REALLY HAD SOME FUN AND EXPERIENCES LATELY. THE JAPS ARE ONLY ABOUT 3 OR 4 MILES FROM WHERE I CALL HOME AND THEY HAVE BEEN GIVING US QUITE A BIT OF TROUBLE OF LATE. WE'VE CAUGHT OR KILLED SEVERAL LATELY, THEY SNEAK ALL OVER THE PLACE. I GOT TO KNOW SEVERAL GUYS IN A FIELD ARTILLARY AND INFANTRY OUTFIT, AND HAVE BEEN GOING JAP HUNTING WITH THEM. GOT SNIPED AT ABOUT 50 TIMES BUT WHAT I SAW WAS WORTH IT. OUR BOYS REALLY MEAN BUSINESS AS THE NIPS ARE FINDING OUT. TELL DAD I KIND OF GOT A ROUGH IDEA OF WHAT HE WENT THROUGH IN THE LAST WAR. NOW I KNOW WHY THEY CALL THE INFANTRY "THE BACKBONE OF THE ARMY". THEY REALLY KNOW THEIR JOB AND DO IT. OF COURSE THE AIR CORPS ISN'T A PUSHOVER, HA! WE DO PE-LENTY, MOSTLY SWEATING THOUGH. ~~WISH I COULD TELL YOU OF SOME OF THE~~ RAIDS I'VE BEEN ON. THEY WERE HUMDINGERS.

I GOT A LETTER FROM HELEN DATED MARCH 5TH WHICH ISN'T SO BAD. AM EXPECTING QUITE A FEW IN THE NEAR FUTURE THOUGH. HOW HAVE THE CHECKS BEEN COMING? BE SURE AND LET ME KNOW IF THEY SKIP ANY.

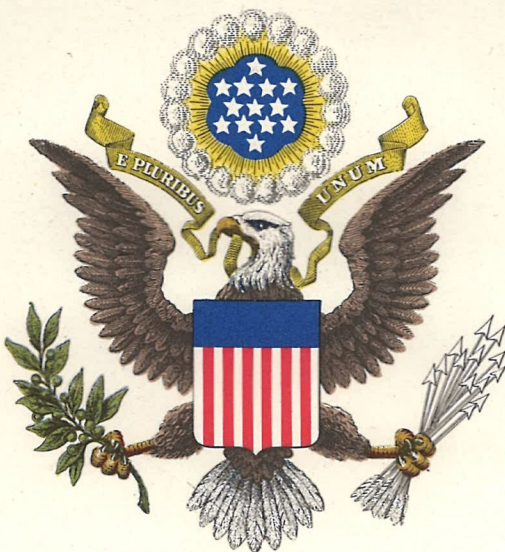
CAN'T THINK OF ENOUGH TO FILL ANOTHER PAGE, SO WILL CLOSE.

LOVE TO ALL,

*Bud*

P.S. IF YOU GET A CHANCE, HAVE SOME PICTURES TAKEN OF THE NEW PLACE AND SEND SOME.





IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF

**Second Lieutenant Francis J. Smith**

WHO DIED IN THE SERVICE OF HIS COUNTRY

**in the Southwest Pacific Area, May 18, 1945.**

HE STANDS IN THE UNBROKEN LINE OF PATRIOTS WHO HAVE DARED TO DIE

THAT FREEDOM MIGHT LIVE, AND GROW, AND INCREASE ITS BLESSINGS.

FREEDOM LIVES, AND THROUGH IT, HE LIVES—

IN A WAY THAT HUMBLER THE UNDERTAKINGS OF MOST MEN

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Harry Truman", is positioned above the printed name of the President.

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, D. C.**

June 22,  
1945

Mrs. Nora L. Smith,  
1718 South 10th Street,  
Terre Haute, Indiana.

Dear Mrs. Smith:-

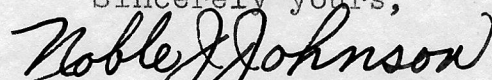
When the official Casualty List issued by the War and Navy Departments came to me I was very sorry to learn that your son Francis, had lost his life in the service of his country.

It is with a feeling of the most profound sorrow that I learn of the great number of our boys who are lost and especially is this true when the list contains the names of those from the Congressional District I have the honor to represent.

It is a source of comfort, I am sure, Mrs. Smith, to know that the cause for which your son gave his life has been advanced so definitely toward victory -- a victory that he will have made possible. His unselfish devotion to duty is an example to his comrades to finish the task and to all of us to re-dedicate our lives to the ideals for which he so nobly fought.

Please accept my sincere sympathy and do not hesitate to call on me if I can be of assistance to you in any way.

Sincerely yours,



Noble J. Johnson, M.C.

**GENERAL HEADQUARTERS  
SOUTHWEST PACIFIC AREA**

A.P.O. 500,  
June 10, 1945.

Mrs. Nora L. Smith,  
1718 South Tenth Street,  
Terre Haute, Indiana.

Dear Mrs. Smith:

My deepest sympathy goes to you in the death  
of your son, Second Lieutenant Francis J. Smith.

Your consolation for his loss may be that he  
died in the service of his country in a just cause and for  
the benefit of all.

Very faithfully,

*Douglas MacArthur*



SIXTY FIFTH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H)

FORTY THIRD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

APO 74 c/o Postmaster  
San Francisco, Calif.  
21 May, 1945

Mrs. Nora Smith  
1718 South 10th Street  
Terre Haute, Indiana.

Dear Mrs. Smith,

I can think of no more unpleasant duty than writing a letter to the loved ones of a soldier lost in combat. Words of sympathy are futile, I realize, but please accept my letter as sincerely as it is written.

Following are the details concerning the loss of the aircraft. The details are fact and the facts are stated frankly: Seven Liberator Bombers of the 65th Squadron, 43rd Bomb Group (H), took off from their Clark Field base early on the morning of 18 May, 1945, and headed for the Japanese-held island of Formosa, 500 miles to the north. Continuing a vigorous campaign of several months, they were to bomb airdrome installations and planes at the strategic West Coast city of Tainan.

The target was ably defended by anti-aircraft defenses, well known to our intelligence officers and combat crews alike. Previous missions had returned with numerous holes sustained from these defenses, but always the damage to our planes had been minor, the injuries to our men either negligible or non-existent. The safest approaches to the target had been painstakingly studied, the crews carefully briefed.

Lt. Smith and his ten-man crew, flying a new B-24, were leading the three-plane V formation of the second element. The flight across the South China Sea was uneventful. The south tip of Formosa lay to the south and the Tainan airdrome was stretched out some three miles to the north, with a few black puffs already beginning to testify to the alertness of the A/A gun crews. The bombers started into the straight and level run that preceded the bomb release. Suddenly in the middle of the formation there was a shattering explosion, and debris pelted the sides of the two planes on the wings. Lt. Smith's plane had apparently sustained a direct hit in the bomb-bay, setting off the entire load of explosives. The big bomber disintegrated immediately, with what remained of the fuselage falling away enveloped in a solid mass of flame. The crew could not have known what hit them--it was too sudden, all over in an instant. No one aboard could have survived those few seconds.

It was one of the blackest days this squadron has known. Thirteen men, conscientious and valuable men, were definitely lost. The fact that they did their job well to the end, and hit the target can be only slight consolation.

If there is anything I can do to alleviate your suffering, please let me know and I shall do my utmost. Arrangements are being made today for chapel services.

Very sincerely yours  
Paul B. Hansen  
Paul B. Hansen,  
Captain, Air Corps,  
Commanding.



COMMERCIAL SOLVENTS CORPORATION

TERRE HAUTE, INDIANA

TELEPHONE CRAWFORD 7071

January 7, 1946

Dear Mrs. Smith:

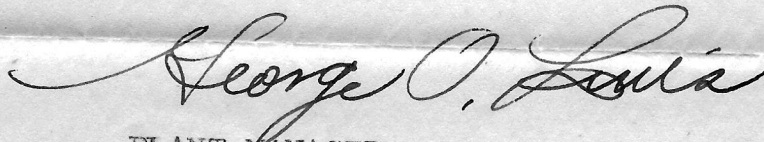
It has been the policy of our Corporation to give each employee entering military service one month's pay - one-half upon induction, the balance upon his return to our employment or to his beneficiary.

Nine of our fine boys will not be coming back.

We ask, therefore, that you accept with our deepest sympathy the attached check which was due Frank.

We trust that you will derive some comfort from the fact that we too share your loss.

Yours very sincerely

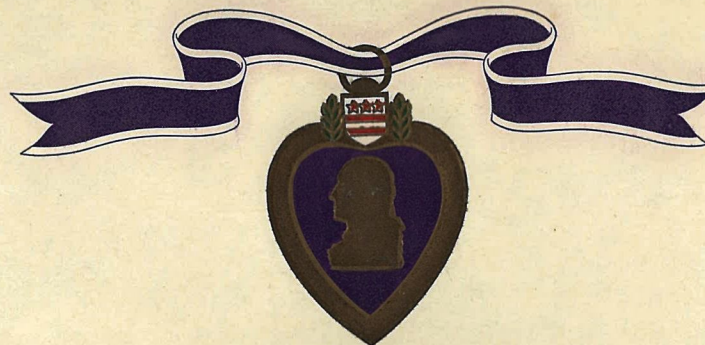


PLANT MANAGER

gol/s

enclosure





# THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL WHO SHALL SEE THESE PRESENTS, GREETING:

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT  
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
PURSUANT TO AUTHORITY VESTED IN HIM BY CONGRESS  
HAS AWARDED THE

## PURPLE HEART

ESTABLISHED BY GENERAL GEORGE WASHINGTON  
AT NEWBURGH, NEW YORK, AUGUST 7, 1782  
TO

Second Lieutenant Francis J. Smith, A.S.No. 0-833831,  
FOR MILITARY MERIT AND FOR WOUNDS RECEIVED  
IN ACTION

resulting in his death May 18, 1945.

OFFICIAL:

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON

THIS 30th DAY OF June 1945

MAJOR GENERAL,  
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL.

Henry L. Stimson  
SECRETARY OF WAR







SMITH, FRANCIS J.



ARMY SERVICE FORCES  
PHILADELPHIA QUARTERMASTER DEPOT  
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

*It is an honor for me to forward this decoration  
which is being sent to you by direction of  
The Adjutant General of the Army*

*Roland Walsh*

ROLAND WALSH  
BRIGADIER GENERAL, U. S. A.  
COMMANDING







5/27

1949

Lt Frank Smith Burialy.  
Acct. Frank Smith

To ROGERSON & WEDEL Dr.  
Funeral Home

24 Hour Ambulance Service

216 National Avenue

Services complete except casket	60.00
Out Lay for lot	70.00
Opening grave.	55.00
co Burial Burial Allowance \$75.00	\$185.00
	75.00
	\$110.00
Gravestone Allowance -	25.00
	\$35.00



ORIGINAL

CHECK TYPE REQUIRED  
(See Instructions attached)

- ☐ UPRIGHT MARBLE HEADSTONE  
☐ FLAT MARBLE MARKER  
☒ FLAT GRANITE MARKER  
☐ BRONZE MARKER

WW II

## APPLICATION FOR HEADSTONE OR MARKER

(Please make out and return in duplicate)

ENLISTMENT DATE

Oct. 21, 1942

DISCHARGE DATE

SERIAL No.

0-833631

PENSION No.

EMBLEM (Check one)

- ☐ CHRISTIAN  
☐ HEBREW  
☐ NONE

Catholic

NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)

Smith, Francis J.

DATE OF BIRTH (Month, Day, Year)

Feb. 5, 1922

DATE OF DEATH (Month, Day, Year)

May 18, 1945

NAME OF CEMETERY

Calvary Cemetery

SHIP TO (I CERTIFY THE APPLICANT FOR THIS STONE HAS MADE ARRANGEMENTS WITH ME TO TRANSPORT THE STONE FROM THE FREIGHT STATION TO THE CEMETERY)

(SIGNATURE OF CONSIGNEE)

DO NOT WRITE HERE

FOR VERIFICATION

ORDERED

W. Chelmsford, Mass. 17 JUN 1949

B/L

6292527

SHIPPED

STATE

0833831

RANK

2 Lt.

U. S. REGIMENT, STATE ORGANIZATION, AND DIVISION

AAF

LOCATION (City and State)

Terre Haute, Indiana

NEAREST FREIGHT STATION (City and State)

216 National Ave.

POST OFFICE ADDRESS OF CONSIGNEE

216 National Ave.

West Terre Haute, Indiana.

I certify this application is submitted for a stone for the unmarked grave of a veteran.

I hereby agree to assume all responsibility for the removal of the stone promptly upon arrival at destination, and properly place it at the decedent's grave at my expense.

Frank Smith

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE

5/23/1949

DATE OF APPLICATION

ADDRESS (Street, City, State)

1718 South 10th Street, Terre Haute, Indiana