

The East Texas Patriot

The Newsletter of

The East Texas Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution

September, 1995

Volume 1, No. 2

Local Compatriot is a Survivor!

Compatriot Allen Gordon Smith is a survivor! He has survived 73 years. He has survived being a member of the Longview Lobos 1937 State Championship football team. But most important for this article, he has survived the Bataan Death March and a number of years as a prisoner of the Japanese in World War II.

His career in the service began in October of 1937, when he enlisted in the Army Air Corps at Barksdale Air Base in Bossier City. He went through basic training there and additional training as a welder and sheet metal mechanic at numerous other places following that.

He was transferred to an air base near Manila, and arrived on November 20, 1941. He was an airplane mechanic, but had no airplanes to maintain..

December 7, 1941, was a day of apprehension and uncertainty. He and his fellow airmen did not know exactly what to expect in the future.

As the Japanese invaded the Philippines, they were moved to Bataan peninsula. There they were to build three airfields. The few B-17s they had were almost all destroyed on the ground. What few were used against the Japanese brought fame. One of these pilots was Colin Kelly, who gave his life when he crashed his disabled plane into a Japanese battle wagon.

The other planes flown from these fields were P-40 pursuit planes. As evacuation to Bataan continued and defense positions were set up, these planes were as effective as possible against the Japanese. On one occasion, they were able to do a great deal of damage to an airfield by turning on their landing lights when they approached. The ruse worked, but only once.

Compatriot Smith made three trips into Manila to obtain food for the defenders. On the last of these trips, he had to fight his way out. Engineers waited for them to cross and then blew up the last bridges. Together they returned to Bataan, lead by Compatriot Smith.

As the Americans were driven back, they retreated down Bataan peninsula. Compatriot Smith was captured on the last air field that they had constructed on the tip of the peninsula. Because he had been trained in demolition, he was given the job of blowing up their ammunition. Everyone stripped their weapons and threw the pieces in various places to prevent their falling in to the hands of the enemy.

When the Japanese arrived, they took everything from their prisoners. They even went so far as to take gold teeth. Compatriot Smith was able to hide some sulfa drugs and quinine. He made pockets inside his uniform and was able to smuggle these into their prison camp after the Death March.

The Death March was to San Fernando, the rail head. Those who fell out were shot. The prisoners were allowed no food or water. Compatriot Smith was able to sneak out from time to time to fill canteens from streams they passed. Because he had been in the hospital for six days just prior to his capture, he was weak. He was only able to make the march because he and a buddy helped each other along.

At San Fernando, the prisoners were put into box cars. about 150 were put into each car. There was only room to stand up. Compatriot Smith passed out and was unable to fall down. He recovered just as they arrived at Camp O'Donnell, near Manila. Compatriot Smith was sick with malaria and dysentery by this time. Within 30 days of captivity, he weighted 70 pounds. As many as 500 prisoners a day died. They were buried in mass graves.

Compatriot Smith was soon moved to Dabanadune, another camp near Manila. Here he remained. He was hospitalized there from July of 1941 to May of 1944. The Japanese stayed away from the hospital because they were afraid of getting dysentery. They had no medication for this disease.

In July, 1944, he went to work on a nearby farm. During that time he was beaten severely with the handle of a pick ax by the Japanese.

He was soon sent to Japan. About 1500 prisoners were placed in the hold of ship that had been used to transport horses. As the ship backed away from the pier it struck something. The Captain was fearful that they had damaged their screw. He asked for an inspection by a diver. This took four days. During that time, they were not allowed out of the hold and were given no food or water. Many of the prisoners died during that time. They stopped in Formosa to load sugar. They arrived in Moji, Japan. Compatriot Smith had spent 31 days aboard the Misou Maru.

Here they were divided into groups of about 200 and sent to various places. He was sent to Camp 10 near Fatusi in northern Kyushu. They were in the mountains at about 10,000 feet. They were working in coal mines. The mines were 1,300 down and there were about 500 miles of tunnels. Compatriot Smith worked on a maintenance crew because of his mechanical training and because he had taught himself to speak Japanese.

At the war's end, the Japanese called them out of the mines at mid-day, which was unusual, and returned them to camp. They were held in the camp for three days and then set free. The camp commander called the leaders of the prisoners to take over the camp. Compatriot Smith was the leader of the camp and ran the camp through the former camp commander. They were liberated the last of August, 1946, by Second Lieutenant Byrd and 2 Japanese-American soldiers. Byrd now lives in Nacogdoches.

It was a month before they could obtain transportation to leave. During that time, Compatriot Smith converted the camp commander's coal burning Packard to gasoline and used it to get around. The prisoners finally walked to the railroad and left for Nagasaki. Here they boarded an amphibious ship and headed for Okinawa. They arrived in a typhoon and had to delay their entry. From Okinawa they were flown by B-24's to Manila. After a stay in the 29th Replacement Center, they were sent to Seattle. After a period of time in the Fort Hood hospital, Compatriot Smith was discharged.

Today he is retired and lives on 38 acres in Diana. He enjoys good health.

Compatriot Smith will be installed as a member of the Sons of the American Revolution at our next meeting. Plan to be there to honor this hero of the Bataan Death March. The meeting will be Thursday, September 7th, in the Summit Club in the Bank One Building at 7:00 p.m.

New Charter Members

Compatriot Joe Hill, State Registrar, says that we are the fastest growing Chapter in Texas! This is certainly shown by the number of new Charter Members of the East Texas Chapter. Our Chapter, at this time, has a potential for 70 members.

Forty-eight members have been cleared or transferred from other Chapters. This growth is a sign of our vitality and the interest of our members, as well as the leadership of our officers. We are the fastest growing!

At our meeting on Thursday, September 7th, which will meet in the Summit Club in Bank One Building, at 6:30 p.m., 200 N. Fredonia, certificates will be presented to the following:

Landon Armstrong Colquitt, III
William Kirk Shields
William Douglas Daniels
James Douglas Daniels
Guy Newell Harrison
John Womack Harrison
Sam Houston Johnson, Jr.
Barry Henderson, Jr.
Terry Price Mackenzie
Allen Gordon Smith
Michael Franklin Northcutt, Sr.
John Quin Tillery
William Marcus Welch
James Searcy Birdsong
Arliss Ray Mallory
James Michael Garrett
Cranford Calvin Coke, Jr., and
Casey Calvin Coke.
James C. Reader

Pictures will be taken at 7:00 p.m. so all of those who will receive certificates are asked to be early.

Schedule of Meetings

Our next meeting will be at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, September 7, 1995, in the Summit Club, located in the Bank One Building, 200 N. Fredonia, Longview. There will be a social hour welcome from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. with cash bar available. Remember that unless it is indicated, we are not intending to have meals. David Stroud, of Kilgore College, will be our guest speaker. His subject will be The Constitution.

Our October meeting will be at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, October 5, 1995, in the Summit Club, located in the Bank One Building, 200 N. Fredonia, Longview. David Stroud will again be our guest speaker. His subject will be Victory at Yorktown.

Our December meeting will be a Christmas dinner party with our wives. Put the date, Thursday, December 7, 1995, on your calendar. Compatriot Del Fowler, TSSAR Past President, will be our guest speaker. His subject will be The Battle of Guilford Courthouse. Plan now to attend this gala Christmas event!

Our February meeting will be at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, February 1, 1996, in the Summit Club located in the Bank One Building, 200 N. Fredonia. Our program will include the nomination and election of officers for the coming year.

Our final meeting for this year will be on March 7th, 1996. This will be an Installation Dinner with our wives. Compatriot Clovis H. Breakbill, Past President General of the NSSAR, will be our speaker. He will speak on "George Washington and His Ladies."

President presents awards at DAR meeting

Compatriot Talmadge Booth, our Chapter President, attended the District VI meeting of the Daughters of the American Revolution on May 13, 1995. He presented remarks about our Chapter and its remarkable growth. He thanked the members of the DAR for their help in establishing this Chapter.

He also presented the Medal of Appreciation to:

Dorothy Cannon, Regent, Aaron
Burlson Chapter
Clydelle Madison, Regent, Captain
William Young Chapter
Lottie McWhorter, Registrar, Captain
William Young Chapter, and
Frances Booth, Aaron Burlson
Chapter

Compatriot Booth presented the Martha Washington Medal to Dorothy Cannon and Frances Booth.

DAR members may qualify for the Medal of Appreciation by helping to obtain at least three SAR members. The Martha Washington Medal is awarded for helping to obtain an additional five new members for the SAR. A woman who is not a DAR member may also earn the Martha Washington Medal by helping to obtain five new members for the SAR.

Longview City Commissioner receives Membership Certificate

Compatriot Malcolm Phillips, a Longview City Commissioner, was presented his Certificate of Membership at our Chapter meeting in May. Compatriot Talmadge Booth, our Chapter President, made the presentation.

Compatriot Booth also appointed Michael Burks as Sargeant at Arms and official Chapter Photographer.

Our Constitution and By-Laws were officially adopted by the members of the chapter.

Compatriot John Whitsell, Chapter Chaplain and Newsletter Editor, made a presentation about churches during the American Revolution. His presentation centered on the transition from the Church of England to the American Episcopal Church. He also discussed the problems of Established Churches and the resolutions of the various states to this problem. Compatriot Whitsell ended the presentation by answering questions. Everyone found the presentation interesting.

David Stroud will be the speaker at our meeting in September. His subject will be The Constitution. Plan to attend.

Next Meeting
Thursday, September 7th
6:30 p.m.
Summit Club

REMEMBER!!

SAR Meeting

Thursday, September 7, 1995

6:30 pm. Social and Welcome

7:00 pm. Meeting

Summit Club, Bank One Building

200 N. Fredonia



Guest Speaker - David Stroud

Subject - "The Constitution"

Presentation of new Membership Certificates

The East Texas Patriot

Newsletter of

The East Texas Chapter, SAR

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Address Correction Requested