ALL GAVE SOME; SOME GAVE ALL

This week's veteran is Robert Smith.

Bob was born in Decatur, IL, on April 23, 1923. When Bob was three, he, along with his older brother and sister, were put into a children's home. He was in many foster homes during his childhood. At age seventeen, he was living in a foster home in Illiopolis, IL, when he enlisted in the Army at Peoria, IL, in July of 1940. After basic training at Fort Lewis, WA, he trained to become a motor vehicle mechanic.

Bob arrived in North Africa January 25, 1943, and became part of the II Corps as a tank driver in one of its armored units in Tunisia. Due to the lack of leadership under General Lloyd Fredendall, the II Corps suffered defeats at the Battle of Sidi Bou Zid, February 14, 1943, and the Battle of the Kasserine Pass, February 19-25, 1943. By this time the soldiers had lost faith in their leaders and morale was low. On March 6,1943, General George Patton was given command of the II Corps. One of the most remembered scenes from the movie *Patton* is his assuming command of the II Corps and installing the discipline and the esprit de corps needed to make it a fighting unit. March 17, 1943, eleven days after Patton assumed command, the II Corps defeated the Germans at the Battle of EL Guetter. All of these battles included fierce tank battles. Bob, being a tank driver, could have been involved in all of them. Tessa (Smith) Giles remembers her Dad recalling meeting General Patton.

In fighting on March 30, 1943, Bob was wounded for which he received the Purple Heart. On April 17, 1944, he returned to the United States and was stationed at Camp(Fort) Hood, TX, where he was discharged on September 22, 1945, after serving for over five years.

Bob and Laura June Hudson were married in May of 1944 and moved to Assumption in 1948. They have five children: Tessa Giles, Susie Jones, Leonard Smith, Laura Black, and Mary Beth Barker. Bob worked thirty years for Caterpillar in Decatur. He died September 11, 2000.

Thank you, Staff Sergeant Robert Leonard Smith, for what you did for us.