

Fields of Honor Memorial

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Fields of Honor
Foundation



Personal info

Full name

SMITH, Jay Bert

Date of birth

18 March 1918

Age

26

Place of birth

**Valley Center, Sedgwick County,
Kansas**

Hometown

Valley Center, Sedgwick County, Kansas

Military service

Service number

O-424144

Rank

Lieutenant Colonel

Unit

**450th Bombardment Squadron,
322nd Bombardment Group, Medium**

Awards

**Silver Star,
Distinguished Flying Cross,
Air Medal with 11 Oak Leaf Clusters**

Death & Grave

Status

Killed in Action

Date of death

22 February 1945

Cemetery

American War Cemetery Ardennes

Plot	Row	Grave
B	40	32

Immediate family

Members

Aren Smith (father)

Alpha J. Smith (mother)

Virginia J. Smith (sister)

Carol V. Smith (wife)

Plane data

Serial number

42-107745

Data

Type: B-26C

Destination: Butzbach, Germany

MACR: 12680

More information

Lt Col Jay B. Smith attended William Jewell College and Wichita University.

He joined the Air Corps of the Regular Army Wichita, Kansas on 27 December 1940.

He served as the flight commander and engineering officer for nine months during the Aleutian campaign. In August 1943 he was made squadron commander at McDill, Florida. In October 1943 he was made group operations officer.

Statement from John V. Griswold who was the pilot of another airplane in the group: "Just as we were turning on our strafing run Col Smith's plane (A/C 42107745) was under me and just a hit to my left. As we lined up for our run he was about a 100 feet to the left and about 200 feet ahead of me. Colonel Smith went through the center of Pohl Gons and I flew on the right edge of the town. Col Smith seemed to be drawing intense, accurate enemy light anti-aircraft fire. About half way through the town I see his left engine catch fire and the right engine also seemed to be on fire. After about a quarter mile out of town he seemed to make a turn to the left as though he wanted to line up a field ahead of his for a crash-landing. The plane was still burning. Just before he was ready to straighten out for the landing his left wing dug into the ground. The entire plane hit and exploded immediately. There were no further observations on my part nor did I see any object leave the plane."

The entire crew of eight men was killed. They were initially buried at the cemetery of Ober Mörlen

Lt Col Jay B. Smith is remembered at Hillside Cemetery in Sedgwick, Harvey County, Kansas, with a memorial marker.

Photos



Source of information: Raf Dyckmans, Terry Hirsch, www.wwiimemorial.com, www.fold3.com - MACR, www.ancestry.com - 1930 Census, WWII Draft Card

Photo source: Jac Engels