

Jacob Lett
English III
5th Hour
01/27/04

Interview with Dean Smith about World War II
01/22/05 *Private*
by Jacob Lett

Jacob: What is your full name?

Dean: Dexter Dean Smith

Jacob: How old are you?

Dean: 81

Jacob: Where do you currently live?

Dean: Burdett, Kansas

Jacob: What job do you do today?

Dean: Farmer

Jacob: Where were you born and raised?

Dean: Burdett, Kansas

Jacob: How old were you during World War II?

Dean: I was in high school and was around 17. I don't have a birth certificate because I was born on farm and there was no doctor. I lied about my age, so I could go to war.

Jacob: At the time of the World War II were you in a relationship?

Dean: Yes, I had a girlfriend. I missed her a lot when I left, but she married while I was away.

Jacob: How did you become a soldier and what was your reaction when you learned you had to go to war?

Dean: I enlisted. It was expected of me to go and fight because my brother was in the air force, my sister was an army nurse, my dad fought in World War I, and my Grandpa fought in the Civil War. I was in the First Division, Sixteenth Infantry, and started as a private.

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Jacob: What kind of training did you have before you became a soldier?

Dean: Just basic training camp.

Jacob: What was your rank in the armed services?

Dean: I was a private to begin with and by the time I left I had moved up to sergeant.

Jacob: What was your specialty during the war?

Dean: I just fought and that was it.

Jacob: How did you feel about the war?

Dean: I wanted to get it over with and so did everyone else that was there. I felt like it was my duty to fight for my country and so did everyone else there. It makes me mad that my kids didn't fight for their country.

Jacob: What were some of the places you were stationed at?

Austria

Jacob: In what ways did the war change the way you live?

Dean: When I got home, I sold all my guns and never went hunting again.

Jacob: What are some types of food did you had to eat?

Dean: We ate small rations and the left-over food went to orphanages.

Jacob: What new responsibilities did you have to take on?

Dean: Since I was the sergeant I had to become a leader.

Jacob: What did you do for fun during the war?

Dean: I went ^{sight} seeing and dated German women. I have many pictures of with them.

Jacob: Were any of your friends killed during the war and how did you react?

Dean: I stepped on a land mine and it killed all of my friends in front of me, including my best friend. It was really hard for me to get over it, so they gave me shock treatments to make me forget everything. 14 years ago everything started coming back and I started remembering what

happened to them.

Jacob: Did you get any letters or could you talk to people from home?

Dean: I received letters every once in a while.

Jacob: Were you ever injured?

Dean: When I stepped on the landmine it messed my leg up real bad.

Jacob: Did you have any worthwhile experiences during this time?

Dean: Being at war then coming home made me realize what I had and helped me appreciate it more.

Jacob: Were you ever frightened and how did you overcome this?

Dean: Yes, they taught us if our heart rate went up to press on a vein in your neck and it will help calm you down.

Jacob: How did you get news during the war?

Dean: Mostly by radio.

Jacob: How did you feel about the enemy?

Dean: The Nazis were bad, bad people, but the Germans were as nice as people you could meet.

Jacob: Did you like being in the war or did you hate being there?

Dean: I can't say I liked it, but it was something I had to do.

Jacob: Did you miss home?

Dean: Yes!

Jacob: Is your name currently on any memorials?

Dean: One in Kinsley.

Jacob: How did you react when you found out the war was over?

Dean: I was excited and just wanted to come home.

Jacob: What do you think about the war now?

Dean: It was just something I had to do because Hitler was so bad and we wouldn't have the freedom now if I didn't go.

Jacob: Is there something else you would like to tell me that I forgot to talk about?

Dean: I got shock treatments partly because my friends dying, but also because it was really hard for me to kill people. I was an innocent, naive little boy from a little town in Kansas and my family was really religious. So it was hard for me to take all this and it really bothered me, so they gave me shock treatments.

Release Form

To be completed by the person interviewed:

I, (print name here) Dean Smith, give permission for the video/audio tape of my interview to be donated to the Cimarron City Library, to be kept on file, and used for purposes of research at a later date.

I agree that persons doing research may use my name and my statements without further approval on my part.

By giving my permission for this, I also understand that I am not giving up any copyright or performance rights that I may hold.

Accepted and agreed:

Signature: Dean Smith Date: 03/27/05
month/day/year

Address: Box 256
City: Burdett State KS Zip ~~67523~~ 67523