

Kenneth D. Smith (19.. – 1945)

Kenneth Smith listed his home state as California

(Note: There are three Kenneth D. Smith's buried in American Battlefield Cemeteries overseas. This Kenneth D. Smith was chosen because he died in the Pacific Theater of World War Two and is the only one from California.

Kenneth Smith was a Private First Class (PFC) in the United States Army (E3) His military service number was 39285112. He was assigned to the Second Infantry Regiment, 5th Infantry Division.

A brief history of the 5th Division during the end of March to the end of April, 1945 follows:

On the night of March 22, 1945 K Company 11th Regiment crossed the Rhine without a shot being fired. By the next day, the entire 5th Division had crossed the Rhine and established a bridgehead 5 miles deep and 7 miles wide. Next the 5th Division moved towards Frankfurt.

Advancing under the heavy bombardment, the 5th Division crossed the bridge and entered Frankfurt. Over the next four days, the Red Devils fought house to house against tanks and snipers. On March 28, Frankfurt had been cleared of enemy forces and the 5th Division enjoyed a short break.

On April 7, the 5th Division was ordered to link up with the III Corps of the 1st Army to clean out the "Ruhr Pocket." Three German Divisions had been on their way back to Germany to join the defense of their homeland only to be trapped at Ruhr. The 5th Division assaulted the center of the pocket. For several days the Germans resisted but could not stop the advancing Red Devils. All three German Divisions were wiped out. On April 23, the 5th Division began a long advance to their next objective; the town of Regan, 300 miles away on the German/Czech/Austrian border. The division arrived on April 30 and attacked east into southern Czechoslovakia and Northern Austria to mop up the remaining German resistance in the area.

He died on April 12, 1945 He is buried at the Netherlands American Cemetery located at Margraten, Netherlands. The location of his headstone is Plot L, Row 16, Grave #1

He was awarded the Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster.

