

Gunner Wins Coveted Congressional Medal

S-Sgt. Smith, B-17 Shooter, Quells Fire, Downs Nazis!

One of the biggest reasons why AAF heavy bombardment gunners wear the wings of their profession with such intense pride is the fact that as a group they have produced probably more heroes than any other single category of combat specialists.

Gunnery's number one hero to date is a five foot, four inch, Eighth Air Force Staff Sergeant named Maynard Smith, a graduate of the AAF Training Command's Earlington Flexible Gunnery school. Smith is the only man in the European theater to be awarded America's highest decoration, the Congressional Medal of Honor, while alive. He's one of the two men in this theater who have received it all.

Smith, trained originally for the post of a waist gunner, entered his own's hall of heroes on his first combat mission, May 1, 1943. He pinched for a ball turret gunner in a Flying Fortress raid on the Nazi sub base at St. Nazaire on the coast of France. AAF's incredible performance during his ship's home-ward flight is certainly the No. 1 example of the traditional versatility of flexible gunners who have repeatedly produced "jacks of all combat trades."

His citation is a masterpiece of understatement equalled only by his own description of the highest award for heroism which he calls "The Congressional Medal Deal"—or usually, more simply—"The Deal."

To earn "The Deal" Smith performed as a gunner, a fire fighter, doctor and nurse, and a one-man crew evacuator.

Alert in his ball turret on the way back across the English channel Smith heard a terrific explosion. His interphone and electrical turret controls went dead. He crawled up into the radio room to find it filled with flames. An explosion had smashed a drum of oxygen and ignited its contents. He grabbed a fire extinguisher and started squirting everything in sight. He moved into the fuselage and found fire raging in the waist section. Without ceasing his fire fighting he watched the radio operator, a veteran of 21 combat missions, stagger down the fuselage and dive through a gun hatch. Bill Smith watched the RO hit the horizontal stabilizer and bounce off into "the blue" as his parachute billowed open.

Mentally checking this crew member off the list he turned to see the right waist gunner ball out through a window, and the left waist gunner get caught trying to climb the waist gun and fall out of his side of the ship. Smith dropped the extinguisher long enough to pull the gunner back and shout, "What's wrong — has that not you?" "I'm getting the hell out of here." Whereupon Smith helped him out through the rear escape door.

He then strapped his role of fire fighter on his head so he could breathe in the thickening smoke and flames. Returning to the radio room then he started crawling gunner badly wounded, crawling down the fuselage. Again he left the fire — this time long enough to make a quick diagnosis. He discovered that the man had a hole in his left lung. He turned him over on his left side so the wound wouldn't drain into his right lung, gave him a shot of morphine and made him as comfortable as possible.

Meanwhile, the rest of the crew stayed forward in the ship and hoped for the best. Hurrying back to the fires Smith saw a Focke Wulf attacking from the left. He grabbed the waist gun and fired a burst. As the attacker passed under the ship to the right, he reached across and gave him another burst with the gun on the opposite side.

Back again, then, to fire fighting. Smith, he threw overboard everything he could lay his hands on that might add fuel to the flames, including his own parachute. Because the radio compartment had had been burned on the side of the ship, all this time he was engulfed in smoke and flames and pelted with hot molten metal and fragments from exploding ammunition.

Another Focke Wulf attacked the waist gun and drove off the enemy. A few seconds later the fire extinguisher went dry. He

grabbed the ship's water bottles, emptied their contents on the flames, then in a final desperate act, beat at the fire with his feet and arms until his clothes began to smoulder.

Almost exhausted, but still fighting the fires, Smith glanced through the hole in the fuselage, which was now big enough for a man to walk through, and saw that the ship was over England. A few moments later the pilot set her down on the nearest British emergency landing field and by this time Smith had the fires out.

For an hour and a half Smith had successfully battled fires which the pilot of the ship, a 24 member crew, thought fatal. In between times he had administered first aid to one crew member, helped one other escape, and fought off two enemy attacks. He did it all alone and on his first mission.

When Secretary of War Stimson hung "The Deal" around his neck while seven generals and twenty-five high ranking AAF officers looked on, and eighteen Flying Fortress flew not more than one hundred feet over his head, Smith said simply, "Thank you."

I'd be cooking with gas, On the very front burner.

Like Lana Turner

264 Questions

Liquor kills a lot of people, staying late kills a lot of people. Tobacco kills a lot of people — what kills all those people that live right

OF ALL THE NERVE

Local draft boards in Indianapolis, Indiana, report that men are quitting war jobs to join the Army. They think the war's going to be over soon and they want to get in before it's too late to become veterans. Let's not tell 'em, fellas. Let's let 'em find out the hard way. (ONS)

SAFETY FIRST? WE SAY

A new type of safety chute was being demonstrated by firemen in Westtown, Pa. the other afternoon. "It replaces the old-fashioned safety net," boasted the chief himself. During the demonstration, a rope broke and a fireman fell 15 feet to break his elbow. (ONS)

"Why don't you laugh when the sergeant tells a joke?" "I don't have. I'm being transferred tomorrow."

Shudder You Bs

New Planes Will Boost Sedative Sales In Land Of The Swastika

Hitler and Tojo have plenty to tremble about these days, and not the least of their worries are the new changes in America's airplane design. Reports from OWI reveal that "the design cycle has reached the point where some designs are being eliminated in order to concentrate on more successful types." Improvements in the Allison inline engine and the Packard-built Rolls-Royce "Merlin" power-plant are matched by new drafting board changes which will place AAF ships even farther above their competitors.

The Curtiss P-40 Warhawk has reached the limit of development, it is felt, and hereafter it will be produced in limited quantities for training or operation in centers where it has proved highly successful.

The Bell P-39 Aircobra is being replaced by a sensational new light model now under production. A two-stage supercharged Allison engine and a low-drag wing, the new model will be most effective at altitudes up to 28,000 or 40,000 feet. It will be equipped with cannon and machine-guns as is the present Aircobra type.

The North American P-51 Mustang is coming out in new dress, too. With a hefty Merlin engine similar to new Spitfire powerplants and the best features of the A-36 (re-designed P-51 attack ship) incorporated, the new model will replace both attack and pursuit

Even the famed Lockheed P-38 Lightning has been souped up with new Allison engines. It affords better vision for the pilot, a new type of landing gear, and a new type of canopy at which it excels, and it is expected to out-perform Zero and late Jap models at all altitudes. (From Army Times.)

Sad Sack Gives At 794th Party

At the squadron party given last Friday of entertainment was supplied by no less than Sad Sack himself. Sad Sack, in this squadron is Private Eugene Ballitt who by his demonstration as entertainer turned out to be a combination of Bob Hope, Marlene the Magician and Charles Atlas. To explain it more fully his constant jokes and chatter were of the Bob Hope variety. His trick with the burning cigarette was a challenge to Man Drake the Magician. Last but not least was his lecture on Physical Fitness complete with demonstrations. The squadron was happy to meet you Sad Sack your performance was worth \$4.00 a seat. It was with deep regret that we lost some of the best men of the outfit the past week. When such real trust blue fellows like Staff Sgt. Bill Donahue, Sgt. Stanley Pesotski (Reports himself,) Sgt. Dave Rowland, Sgt. Fernand Robert (The Flying Frenchman,) Cpl. Adolphus, the great Stasak the Ippewich Clamdigger) Cpl. Jim Kerr (Anti-Dim Junior and Pic. Bonner E. Hudson.

S-Sgt. Bill Stayan sure has a problem on his hands. After telling all the staff of Squadron Headquarters what a great team Pottsville high school had along came another soldier with a newspaper, report of some other team handling old Pottsville the beating of its career. Such humiliation. It has got to the point now that we are hoping when the Commanding Officer Major Malone reads this now that we are hoping when the Commanding Officer Major Malone reads this that an Emergency Purloin will be granted so that S-Sgt. Stayan can go home and get his team on the beam.

The man with the voice that sings out the chant "Fall out at the Boxing ring" is nobody else but Cpl. Anthony R. Campor otherwise known as the New Orleans Deacon. He is now known as the Deacon of Wing Headquarters.

The basketball team is rapidly coming around into shape. From all reports it was a pretty winded bunch of boys that first night. With uniforms and equipment all purchased the boys are really getting anxious for the whistle of the opening night.

FROM THE WINDY CITY

These weekly bits get to be a habit, especially from Chicago. Seems one of that cities citizens is being sued for divorce. He's a mystery story fan, the story goes, and he is supposed to have made his wife lie all night long on their bedroom floor re-enacting the part of a corpse in some current thriller. At least, that's what her testimony said in court. (ONS)

Air-O-Mech goes to... A Carnival

and watches a bunch of GI's from the field having themselves a time at a combined fair and carnival in town.



DO NOT FEED the animals. Like a lot of other restrictions, the lads are not paying too much attention as they cram popcorn down the trunk of a friendly elephant at the fair. Popcorn has other uses, we have found. One can also eat it with butter and salt sprinkled over it. The boys found that out, too. We didn't determine just what the elephant thought of the whole scheme, but he refused to say anything for quotation.



OFF WE GO into the wild blue yonder, but watch out for the traffic. Intrepid Air Force men dare the upper reaches of the atmosphere in a series of highly-specialized aerobatics which has the assembled crowd craning their necks. The Airplane Ride has our GI friends loopy after three times around, but it's all a lot of fun. The planes being used are an experimental type designated XA-01, a highly guarded military secret.



BIDE 'EM COWBOY! This AAF cowhand clinches his bow legs around his trusty steed and heads for the open country. The little lady in the background is probably a damsel in distress, but we didn't stop to find out. Soldiers have often been accused of running around in circles, but it's more fun on a Merry-Go-Round, according to experts. Incidentally, nobody could lasso themselves one of those brass rings. Tenderfoot!