

Victoria Cuen, Blake Munro

Period 1

Roy Smith

US Army

3 years of service

2017

### Roy Smith

Everyone's life is made of a sequence of stories, and it's through these stories that we are remembered by others. Roy Smith's story began in 1929 in Holtville, California, where he lived a relatively normal childhood. This normalcy continued through age 21, when he was attending college and maintaining a steady job. His daily routine was interrupted, and life became vastly different, when he was drafted into the Army to serve in the Korean War. Smith served in the military for a total of three years. During this time, he spent 21 months working as an aircraft mechanic through active duty, and got to contribute to the war effort both in Korea and back in California.

Born on December 23, 1929, Smith grew up in various cities throughout Southern California. As a child, he never wanted to join the Army, but had always been interested in aircraft. He attended Chaffey High school in Ontario, California, despite living in Fontana. This commute made extracurricular activities difficult, so he focused more on his studies. After graduating, he began attending Chaffey College to study in their aircraft program. During this

time, it became apparent to him that he would probably have to serve in the military because he had to sign up for the draft. Smith decided to apply for the Air Force, because he would rather do something he was already good at than be drafted into the Army. Contrary to his wishes, however, soon after applying for the Air Force, Smith was drafted into the Army. Although he was aware of being in the draft, the news still came as a surprise to him and his family. He did not try to get out of his duty, as many others did, because he felt it was not something that you could argue with.

At the age of 21 Roy Smith was drafted into the 24th division of the Army. Smith's commitment called for 3 years of service. He attended basic rifleman training in Fort Ord California, then was sent to Japan, which was the middle ground between America and Korea where soldiers landed before entering the war zone. Although he trained to be a rifleman for the most part, his previous knowledge of aircraft gave him the opportunity to step away from the front lines. He got to become part of a rotation of aircraft mechanics that would work in Korea, then after some time, would go back to a base in America. Smith's regiment oversaw two planes, which were used to search for enemy positions. Aside from the fighting itself, the countries the men traveled through were not very safe. Many men, such as Smith, faced malaria and other diseases that were contracted in those countries. Coincidentally, on April 1st, Roy Smith was promoted to Sergeant. Being April Fool's Day, he first thought it was a joke. Smith's active service ended after 21 months in October of 1952.

Through the G.I. Bill, Smith continued his education at Chaffey College after returning from the war and received his AA in aircraft. Within two months of the discharge Smith landed a job as a mechanic at Lockheed, the company who later built the fastest airplane of its time. The

war experience and the things learned such as discipline, positivity and knowledge of aircraft proved to come in very handy down the road as he continued to work at Lockheed for the next 40 years.

Roy Smith's time spent serving in the military was an important and memorable time in his life. He was taught discipline and was enlightened by the experience as a whole. Personally, Smith believes that the military is a great place to go to receive disciplinary training and to learn respect. As a whole, the war in Korea was not widely discussed in America, so Smith did not receive a ton of praise upon returning from the war. Although not many people were educated about the war, it was a major event for Smith and the many other men who fought alongside him.