

"For God and Country"



Pfc. Stephen J. Smith (ARMY)

Unit(s): A Co, 1st BN, 35th Infantry Regiment

Dates of Service: 1966 - KIA 9 October, 1967

Locations of Service: Ft. Leonard Wood, MO; Ft. Polk, LA; Quang Tin Province, South Vietnam



County GI Killed In Vietnam

Another Jefferson county serviceman has given his life for his country in Vietnam.

Mrs. Elizabeth Smith, of Route 4, Mt. Vernon was notified this morning that her husband, Stephen, has been killed.

Mrs. Smith is the former Elizabeth Baltzell.

Pfc. Smith, 24, had been serving in Vietnam since the middle of May.

He was with the Fourth Infantry Division.

Relatives were informed this morning that Pfc. Smith had been killed in action.

No details were immediately learned.

He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Omar H. Smith, of R 4, Mt. Vernon.



Posthumous Award For Mt. V. Hero



MRS. ELIZABETH SMITH receives the posthumous Bronze Star and Purple Heart medals for her husband, Pfc. Stephen J. Smith, who was killed in combat in Vietnam October 9, 1967. Presenting the awards were Lieutenants John Goodell and Thomas Kerr.

Private First Class Stephen J. Smith Award Bronze Star To Soldier Killed In War

The Bronze Star and Purple Heart medals and citations awarded posthumously to Private First Class Stephen J. Smith were recently presented to his wife, Mrs. Elizabeth A. Smith of Route 4, Mt. Vernon, by Lieutenants John Goodell and Thomas Kerr from the Granite City Army Depot, Granite City, Illinois.

The awards were presented at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Omar Smith, Route 4, Mt. Vernon.

Smith was awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart medals, signifying his bravery and extreme devotion to duty and mission in Vietnam, where he was mortally wounded under enemy fire on October 9, 1967. His record reflects great credit upon himself, his unit and the United States Army.

Private First Class Smith graduated from Mt. Vernon high school in 1961; he also attended Mt. Vernon Community College in 1961 and 1962, and Southern Illinois University, Carbondale in 1962 and 1963. He was a member of Mason-Jefferson Lodge 307, Opeka, and attended the Bakerville Baptist church.

Smith was inducted into the Army November 7, 1966; received his basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; advanced infantry training at Fort Polk, Louisiana, and was sent to Vietnam in May, 1967.

Also attending the awards ceremony were Mr. and Mrs. Baltzell, parents-in-law of Pfc. Smith, and many friends and relatives.

The citation which accompanied the Bronze Star medal said: "For heroism in connection with military operations against an armed hostile force in the Republic of Vietnam."

"On October 9, 1967 Private First Class Smith distinguished himself while serving as a rifleman in Company A, 1st Battalion, 35th Infantry, on a search and destroy mission near Phouc Son.

"Private First Class Smith's

platoon was approaching a suspected enemy concentration when it began receiving fire from enemy positions concealed in the thick underbrush.

"The platoon immediately began to engage the enemy, but the success of its struggle was jeopardized by an enemy machine gun so positioned that it could deliver formidable and highly accurate fire on the advancing platoon. Disregarding the peril to his life, Private First Class Smith charged forward through the intense hostile fire and singlehandedly destroyed the machine gun. He was mortally wounded before he could return to safety, but by his timely and decisive action he eliminated a grave danger to his platoon and saved the lives of many of his comrades.

"His initiative and aggressiveness in the face of the enemy were an inspiration to his fellow platoon members and aided greatly in the accomplishment of the unit's mission.

"Private First Class Smith's personal bravery and devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service and reflect great credit on himself, his unit and the United States Army."

