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A Salute to Mode Smith

On September 12th, George Clark Harlan Post #84 of the American Legion lost a beloved member, Leo J. (Mode) Smith. Mode had given 68 years of loyal and devoted service to the Legion and will be greatly missed.

The following is an account of Mode's service in World War I as written by himself some years ago:

"I signed up to join the Army on August 17, 1917, at Sedalia. I was sent to Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis. Here I was equipped, assigned to an outfit, and sent to San Antonio, Texas. We received boot training here, and early in November 1917 we were shipped to Long Island, New York. We boarded the U.S.S. Huron and landed in St. Nazarre, France, on December 24, 1917.

"I was sent to Tours, France. An urgent call for truck drivers came in, and I volunteered. We were assigned trucks, given some training, and on May 24, 1918, we arrived in Paris. We were immediately turned over to the French Army and sent to Versailles, the old French capital. We learned our job was to help evacuate the French Army ahead of the German's advance in the Chateau Thiery area. This was early June, 1918.

"With a French guide, we went into the war zone. The French Army was in full retreat. Great droves of civilians were moving back, trying to keep ahead of the Germans. On one trip three trucks loaded the French Headquarters and moved it back south-east of Paris to the Rothchild Chateau. While here, we visited a first aid field hospital. Three American nurses who had joined the French early were here. They were so thrilled to meet a real American soldier. We were the first they had seen. They had showed us the entire hospital, and one surprised wounded German prisoner received the same treatment as French soldiers.

"Soon the Fifth and Sixth Regiments of Marines were moved in and stopped the Germans. We were then assigned routine work of transporting supplies from Paris to the front.

"An order came for some trucks to go to Torino (Turin), Italy, for much needed supplies. I was lucky and was used for the trip. We left Paris early in September and crossed the Alps Mountains at the Lake Cenesse Pass. The Italian side was rougher and steep. We would back up to make the hairpin turns. We followed the Po

River to Torino. Coming back one driver lost control of his truck and turned over on the mountain-side. We lost a day taking care of the accident.

"I was in Nantes, France, which was the front line, the day of the Armistice, November 11, 1918. I spent the great celebration in Paris. It lasted for a week. I sailed home on the U.S.S. Veelanda and arrived in Newport, West Virginia, in June 1919. I received an honorable discharge with the rank of Chauffeur soon after."

We "SALUTE" Mode and his service to his country and community.



Leo "Mode" Smith joined in 1920 and Amandus Schoen joined in 1970.