

11-14-86

Have laughed over the articles re The Rose of York, if you should ever need proof other than army records I have a copy of the Rushden Echo & Argus dated June 15, 1945 which devoted the complete front page to and about Thurleigh. It has photos of the Ceiling from officers mess, the King & Queen & Rose of York Snuffy getting his medal and a 15 day briefing photo.

E E Smith

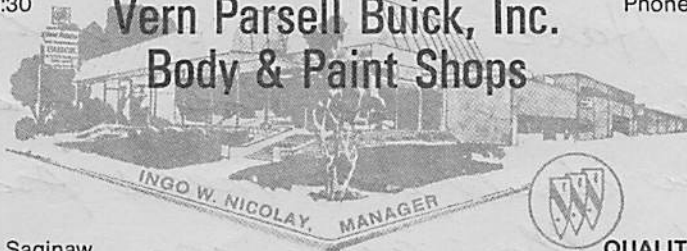
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T/Sgt. Ernest E. Smith, 24, of Chesaning, Mich., is chief of the welding section of the heavy repair division of the maintenance organization of his Flying Fortress base. Sgt. Smith's shop takes care of welding required on the planes, where they are able to do some welding of aluminum parts as well as steel parts. Damaged landing gear, air ducts and scoops, flame dampeners, and armor plating are regularly put back into service again by Sgt. Smith and his crew. In February, 1942, the shop developed a flax helmet which has since become widely adapted, by cutting away the parts of the regulation army helmet that cover the ears and welding a new piece on that would leave space for the earphones of the wearer. The shop also mounted guards near the waist guns so as to prevent the gun's being moved into line with the wing or tail of the ship in the heat of battle.

Previous to his entering the Service in October, 1941, Sgt. Smith worked as a metal finisher for the Buick Motor Co., Flint, Mich. Without having gone to any Air Corps schools, Sgt. Smith was sent overseas in October, 1942. He graduated from Chesaning High School in 1936 and from the General Motors Institute in January, 1940. His wife, Mrs. Virginia Smith, lives in Oakley, Mich., and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Oral Smith, live at 520 South St., Chesaning, Michigan.

Handwritten signature

'They were the ultimate saviors'

Island Queen crewmen save two from foundering boat

BY LETY LAUREL
Callier-Times

When Tom Rust left his wife to go fishing with two buddies Saturday, she forgot to kiss him goodbye. It almost was the last time she saw him alive.

Rust, 49, was one of three men aboard an 18-foot fishing boat that capsized near Port Aransas about 9:30 a.m. He, along with boat-owner Jack Stratton, survived. But Ernest Smith, known to his friends as Smitty, 81, was pronounced dead at North Bay Hospital. None of the men were wearing lifejackets.

"It reminded me that when you hug or

kiss somebody goodbye, you never know if you will see them again," said Rosella Rust.

Rust, a Winter Texan from Nebraska, was on his second trip in a fishing boat when a wave crashed onto the vessel and caused it to capsize.

"I was nervous as a cat," Rust said. "A wave hit us. I had my back to Smitty and all I could hear him say was 'Oh my gosh, the boat is going over.'"

A few seconds later Rust was under water, fighting to reach the surface. Deckhands working on the Island Queen, a fishing vessel anchored about 100 feet away when the boat capsized, pulled him out of the water.

"That's the only thing that kept me from drowning at that moment," Rust said. "I

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figure I only had about five more minutes to go. They were the ultimate saviors for me."

Larry Stimson, captain of the Island Queen, said first mate "T-Joe" Miguez and deckhands Ronnie Whited and Justin Straub jumped overboard to pull the men out of the water after screaming passengers aboard the Island Queen alerted the crew of the capsized boat.

"I told them to get their life jackets and empty their pockets because they were going swimming," he said.

Straub, a sophomore at Port Aransas High School, said he didn't think about jumping in to help. He just did it.

"I've always wondered what I would do if something like this happened," Straub said. "I guess now I know."

Whited said the situation could have been worse if the Island Queen hadn't been near.

"God has a purpose for everything," he said. "Everything happens for a reason and who are we to question it?"

Rust was able to return to his wife that day. Stratton, 77, was taken to Bay Area

Medical Center. He was released Monday. Smith received CPR at the scene but could not be resuscitated.

The Port Aransas Coast Guard had sent its only available boat to Corpus Christi to assist in the search of an Arlington teen-ager who disappeared Friday in the marina area of Corpus Christi Bay, said Master Chief Petty Officer Mario Gonzales. The Coast Guard sent an alert to boats in the area and sent a truck and helicopter to Port Aransas, he said.

If the Coast Guard had been there, it could have made the difference between life and death, Rust said.

The Coast Guard depends on the public to aid in rescues when they are unavailable, Gonzales said.

"We have to realize we can't respond to every call," he said. "We're limited to what we can do."

But it also might have been different if the men had been wearing their lifejackets, Rust said.

"We were idiots to be out there in the first place and bigger idiots to not have our lifejackets on," he said. "I've been severely humbled."

Contact Lety Laurel at 886-3716 or laurell@callier.com



George Gongora/Callier-Times

Tom Rust (second from left), was rescued by crew members of the Island Queen after his boat began foundering. The crew includes (from left) Larry Stimson, Justin Straub and 'T-Joe' Miguez.