

# Master Sgt. (Retired) Richard E. Smart

A home going celebration for retired Master Sgt. Richard E. Smart, 96, Lawton, will be at 11 a.m. Friday at New Zion Missionary Baptist Church with the Rev. Dr. James E. Gorham officiating.

Burial with full military honors will follow as Master Sgt. Smart rejoins his beloved wife Ruth at Fort Sill Post Cemetery.

Master Sgt. Smart died Thursday, Jan. 31, 2013, in Lawton.

Wake service will be at 6 p.m. Thursday at Whinery-Huddleston Funeral Home, followed by a reception for family and friends.

He was born April 10, 1916, in Jacksonville, Ark., to the Rev. John W. and Mary Cole Smart. Richard was raised and attended school in Muskogee. He left school prior to graduation in order to work and help his family survive the Depression. Richard enlisted in the U.S. Army when World War II started and began 25 years of loyal and honorable service to his country. During this period of time, he received numerous decorations and awards, some of which were seldom bestowed on Buffalo Soldiers. He received the Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal (4 times), a field promotion to first sergeant while in Africa, EAME Theatre w/2 Bronze Stars, World War II Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal, American Defense Medal, World War II Victory Medal, and several additional citations, awards and decorations. Shortly after entering the military, Richard met and married the love of his life, Ruth Helen Cargile. Their devotion and love for each other spanned nearly six decades prior to her death in 1997. After his retirement from the military, Richard worked tirelessly to improve himself and his family, attending Oklahoma State University at Okmulgee, where he studied culinary arts, and LaSill University earning a certificate in business administration. He worked on post for many years as a maintenance supervisor and was active in various community organizations. Richard was a devoted member of New Zion Missionary Baptist Church, where he served as a deacon for many years and worked closely with Dr. N. H. Jones, Pastor Kelvin Page and Dr. James E. Gorham in developing the church. Richard will be fondly remembered by family and friends as a devoted family man, exceptional soldier and a Christian gentleman who believed in the power of prayer.

He was preceded in death by his wife Ruth; parents; four brothers and three sisters; a daughter, Maxine Finnie; her husband, Nathaniel and their daughter Vickie; and one grandson, D'Montre Smart.

Survivors include three sons: James R. L. Smart and Leigh Alexander, of Santa Fe, N.M.; Paul Smart, of Los Angeles; and Charles Smart and wife Anitta, of Augusta, Ga.; six daughters: DeLois Muhammad, of Fort Worth, Texas; Verla Smart, and Shirley Starke, both of Lawton; Carolyn Smart-Craig and husband Richard, of Augusta, Ga.; Kathy Smart, of Lawton; and Beverly Smart-Lowe and husband William, of South Carolina; 16 grandchildren; 32 great-grandchildren; seven nieces and nephews, a loving church family; and many additional extended family members and friends.

Richard's family would like to extend a special thanks to the New Zion Missionary Baptist Church and it's Deacons/Brotherhood, Dr. James E. Gorham, the wonderful and compassionate staff at the Lawton/Fort Sill Veterans Center, and Whinery-Huddleston Funeral Home.