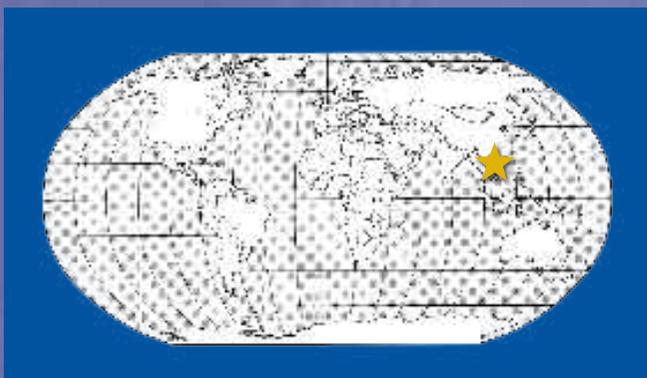




**Merle J. Smith**

Lieutenant  
Class of 1966



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**The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting  
the Bronze Star Medal (with Valor) to  
Lieutenant Merle J. Smith, Jr.  
UNITED STATES COAST GUARD**

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For service as set forth in the following Citation:

For meritorious service while serving with friendly foreign forces engaged in armed conflict against the North Vietnamese and Viet Gong communist aggressors in the Republic of Vietnam from February to December 1969. As Commanding Officer of United States Coast Guard Cutters Point Mast and Point Ellis, Lieutenant Smith performed Market Time patrols in the South China Sea. He combined aggressive leadership with mature and prudent judgment to make his units highly effective combatant forces. He directed more than eighty naval gunfire missions which resulted in heavy damage to numerous enemy structures and water craft. During an Operations Sea Lords raid, his vessel accounted for the damage or destruction of thirteen structures, ten bunkers, nineteen sampans and four rocket launchers. In early September, United States Coast Guard Cutter Point Ellis was selected for turnover to the Vietnamese Navy. His exceptional professionalism and devotion to duty enabled him to turnover that craft in a considerably shorter period of time than the previous boats. Lieutenant Smith's outstanding professionalism and devotion to duty were in keeping with the highest traditions on the United States Naval Service.

Lieutenant Smith was later a Law Instructor at the Coast Guard Academy and Advisor to the Class of 1977, and retired at the rank of Commander.

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