

Commanding Officer



Captain Leon I. Smith Jr., BOSTON's Commanding Officer, was born in Jersey City, New Jersey, on August 29, 1922. Upon graduation from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1943, he reported aboard USS NEVADA (BB-36), participating in the Normandy landings, invasion of Southern France, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and operations of the Third Fleet.

Captain Smith served in USS WINSLOW (EAG-127) as Project, Gunnery and Executive Officer from 1947 to 1950. He attended the Naval Post Graduate School at Annapolis for a year, followed by duty on the Joint Planning Staff of Commander in Chief, U.S. Naval Forces Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean in Naples and London.

In 1955 Captain Smith became Executive Officer of USS BEARSS (DD-654). Duty as Commanding Officer of USS COATES (DE-685) followed from December 1956 to July 1958. His next assignment was as a student at the Armed Forces Staff College, and in 1959 he became head of the Fleet Unit, Personnel Plans Division and later Special Assistant for JCS Personnel Matters in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations.

In October 1961 he assumed command of USS MANLEY (DD-940) and was relieved in March 1963. After attending the Fleet Guided Missile School at Dam Neck, Virginia, Captain Smith took command of USS DAHLGREN (DLG-12) and was relieved in June 1964. He was then assigned to the Bureau of Naval Personnel as Director Policy Division, later becoming Deputy Chief for Plans and Programs for BUPERS. For a variety of services to the Secretary of the Navy, Under Secretary of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations and the Chief of Naval Personnel during this period, Captain Smith was awarded the Legion of Merit. In August 1966 he began a year's study at the National War College.

Captain Smith assumed command of USS BOSTON in Sasebo, Japan, on 3 July 1967 and completed the second half of BOSTON's first deployment to Vietnam. For actions as Sea Dragon on-scene commander and as BOSTON's Commanding Officer, Captain Smith was awarded the Bronze Star with Combat "V."

Captain Smith resides with his wife and two children in Alexandria, Virginia.

