

Public Information Division
U. S. Coast Guard Headquarters
Washington, D. C. 20591

Biographical Sketch

REAR ADMIRAL ORVAN R. SMEDER,
U. S. COAST GUARD

Orvan Ronald Smeder was born on June 11, 1915, at Holcombe, Wisconsin, where he was graduated from high school in 1932. After two years of study at Eau Claire State Teacher's College, Wisconsin, he entered the U. S. Coast Guard Academy, New London, Conn., with an appointment as cadet on August 10, 1935. On May 29, 1939, he was graduated with a B. S. Degree and a commission as Ensign in the U. S. Coast Guard.

He served his first tour of duty on board the Coast Guard Cutter ITASCA, based at San Diego, which included patrol in the Pacific and a good-will tour of Central American countries. From May to October of 1941, he was attached to the Cutter BIBB under the Fifth Coast Guard District, Portsmouth, Va. During most of the period, however, he attended the Navy Mine Warfare school at Yorktown, Virginia. Consequently, he was detailed to the Navy Bureau of Ordnance, Underwater Section, Washington, D. C., where his duties involved research and development of net and boom defenses until July 1943 of the World War II period.

BECOMES AVIATOR

Ordered next to flight training, he was graduated from the Naval Air Station at Pensacola, Florida, with the designation of Coast Guard Aviator on January 26, 1944. His first flight patrols were made from the Coast Guard Air Station at St. Petersburg, Florida, over a period of nearly four months. During the remainder of the war period, he served as Training Officer and Executive Officer at the Coast Guard Air Station in Brooklyn, N. Y. While acting as Training Officer there he organized a ground school course covering fundamental rotary wing theory and practical helicopter maintenance.

In June 1946, he was assigned as Operations Officer at the Coast Guard Air Station at San Francisco. Four months later, he left the aviation wing of the Service to return to sea duty as Executive Officer of the 255-ft. Coast Guard Cutter ESCANABA which operated out of San Francisco at that time.

He next commanded the tender BUTTONWOOD on aids to navigation work and search and rescue in Pacific Islands under the province of the Commander, 14th Coast Guard District, Honolulu, from December 1947 to April 1948. That was followed by a tour of duty as Chief, Personnel Division in the 14th District Office until January 1952. He then commanded the 255-ft. Cutter CHAWTAQUA in the Pacific for two years.

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His next tour of duty was as Asst. Chief, Special Services Division at Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D. C., from January 1954 to August 1958. During the following two years, he commanded the Cutter ANDROSCOGGIN out of Miami on search and rescue missions and training cruises. Under his command that cutter also served on the 1959 International Ice Patrol when severe ice conditions off Newfoundland required a cutter to help the Coast Guard aerial ice observation patrol to monitor icebergs drifting too near the North Atlantic shipping lanes. In January 1960, he took that vessel on a special mission to Reykjanik, Iceland, and afterward on a visit to Glasgow, Scotland.

He served as Chief, Law Enforcement and Intelligence Section at the 7th Coast Guard District office in Miami from July 1960 to August 1962. He then returned to Headquarters in Washington to serve as Staff Assistant to the Chief, Office of Personnel.

In July 1965, he assumed command of the Coast Guard Reserve Training Center at Yorktown, Va. During that tour of duty he was nominated by the President on April 3, 1967, and confirmed by the Senate for appointment to two-star flag officer with permanent rank of Rear Admiral effective July 1, 1967.

Subsequently, the newly promoted Captain to Rear Admiral was assigned as Assistant Chief of Staff for Research and Development at Headquarters. In November 1968, his title was changed to Chief, Office of Research and Development. During the following month he was designated Assistant Chief of Staff for Ocean Science.

In July 1970, RADM Smeder assumed the post of Commander, 7th Coast Guard District, Miami, who has operational jurisdiction over Coast Guard activities in the States of South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, part of the Gulf of Mexico, and in the Caribbean area, his present post.

Following is a resume of RADM Smeder's appointments in rank: Ensign, May 29, 1939; Lieutenant (jg), December 31, 1941; Lieutenant, June 26, 1942; Lieut. Commander, February 1, 1944; Commander, January 26, 1951; Captain, July 1, 1960; Rear Admiral, July 1, 1967.

RADM Smeder's wife is the former Helen M. Crocker of Washington, D. C. They have two sons, Ronald C., and Lawrence D.