



Group Captain P.R. SMITH RFD, AE

[1920 - 2002]



Group Captain Smith was President of the Club 1973-74

Percy Raymund ("Ray") Smith was born on 10 January 1920 at Warwick. He was the son of Percy Reginald Smith, an accountant, and Anne (née Kennedy).

The family moved to Brisbane and lived at Ascot. Ray was schooled at St Agatha's Convent, Clayfield (1925-26), Christian Brothers College, Albion (1927) and St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace (1927-34).

He worked at the Queensland National Bank (1935-38) and then with the Shell Co. of Australia before enlisting for active service.

He passed the Senior Public University Examination in 1946 under the Post-war Reconstruction Scheme, and graduated Bachelor of Law at the University of Queensland in 1951. Throughout his

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working life (other than when a Member of Parliament) he practised as a barrister and had chambers at Level 16 MLC Building in George Street, and later at *Inns of Court* in North Quay.

Ray married Cecile Judith Margaret (née Clowes) on 14 December 1949. They had three sons and one daughter. They lived initially at Taringa, and then for many years at Aspley.

Ray enlisted in the RAAF in 1940. His initial flying training was at Amberley and on completion he was mustered as a Sergeant pilot in October 1941. He then principally flew *Ansons* as a staff pilot. He was commissioned as a pilot in the General Duties Branch in October 1942. He principally flew *Beaufighter* and *Beaufort* aircraft.

In late 1942 he joined 31 Squadron RAAF in the Northern Territory in operations over Timor and the Netherlands East Indies. He remained in the Northern Territory during 1943 at Gorrie Airfield with 55 Operational Base Unit. In late 1943 he joined 100 Squadron as it moved through New Guinea from Milne Bay to Goodenough to Nadzab. In his nine months with 100 Squadron he flew 48 operational sorties.

Flight Lieutenant Smith demobilized in October 1945. In 1948 he became a Temporary Flight Lieutenant in the newly formed RAAF Reserve / Citizens Air Force. In 1951 he was engaged as a flying instructor. He then returned to the Inactive Reserve.

In 1959 he returned to the Active Reserve as a Flight Lieutenant in the legal branch. He was promoted Squadron Leader in 1960; and in 1964 was appointed Acting Judge Advocate General for the RAAF. From 1964 – 76 he was Deputy Judge Advocate General for the RAAF. In 1967 he had a short service stint as a RAAF staff officer, Australian Forces Vietnam. In 1976 Ray went on to the Retired List with the honorary rank of Group Captain.

Group Captain Smith was awarded the Reserve Forces Decoration in 1992, having been previously awarded the Air Efficiency Award.

His political life formally started when he joined the Liberal Party in 1949.

Elected to the Queensland Legislative Assembly as the member for Windsor in August 1957, he served until his retirement in March 1969. His parliamentary service included Chairman of Committees; Chairman of the Parliamentary Justice Committee for six years; and Chairman of the All-Party Committee Investigating Motor Vehicle Insurance.

He retired from Parliament to be appointed as a foundation member of the Law Reform Commission of Queensland from 1969-76.

He was elected as the Liberal alderman for the Brisbane City Council Ward of Stafford in 1972, and then of the Chermside Ward for two terms from 1975-81.

Among his outside interests were tennis, golf, and woodwork. He was a Rotarian; and was actively involved in the community. Amongst his roles were:

- Member, Board of Advice Lifeline Consumer Credit Counselling Service
- One-time Honorary Secretary of the Bar Association of Queensland
- Member, Davis Cup Committees (1958 and 1962)
- Chairman of more than 40 Co-operative Housing Societies
- President, Australian American Association (Queensland Division)
- President, Kedron-Wavell RSL Club
- President, Air Force Association, North Brisbane Branch
- President, United Services Institute, Queensland (1973-90)

Ray joined the Club in 1946 on return from his war service. He first joined the Committee in 1969 and in 1972 became Vice-President. He was President 1973-74 and served as Immediate Past President 1975-76.

He was known as an active club member who enjoyed the social life of the Club. He chaired a sub-committee that considered the re-development of the Club lands in 1972 and 1973. Deliberations and negotiations continued for a few years but were ceased following the 1974 Brisbane floods.

Group Captain Smith died on 10 February 2002 on the Gold Coast.

Sources included:

- Various web pages
- *United Service Club, Queensland: The First Century, 1892-1992* by Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton
- Club Meeting Minutes, Annual Reports and sundry documents
- Queensland Parliament. Former Member's Biography.
- Hansard, Queensland Legislative Assembly, 19 February 2002