

## **Obituary**

**Born:** Sunday, January 28, 1917

**Died:** Sunday, October 17, 2010

Wilber Elsworth "Smitty" Smith, aged 93, died October 17, 2010 at Audrain Medical Center in Mexico, Missouri. For the past year he has been a resident of the Missouri Veterans Home – Mexico in Mexico, Missouri. He was born January 28, 1917 in Reger, Missouri, the son of Walter Alva and Ada Elizabeth (Rogers) Smith.

Funeral services will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 23, 2010 at Resthaven Mortuary of Trenton. Rev. Barry Boulware will officiate. A scheduled visitation will be held one hour prior to service time. Burial will be in the Schrock Cemetery, south of Reger.

He was married to Hethie Lee Oliver of Dillwyn, Virginia on June 17, 1943 at the Methodist Church in Reger. Hethie died February 6, 1993 just four months from their 50th anniversary. To this union were born two sons, Neil of Jefferson City, Missouri and Randy of Monterey, California.

On December 7, 1942 he joined the U. S. Navy Seabees and trained at Camp Peary, Virginia. Two years later he joined the Naval Intelligence group SACO (Sino-American Cooperative Organization) and served in China from 1945 to 1946 working with the Chinese underground near Foochow preparing for a possible invasion of the Japanese occupied country. After his transport plane ran short of fuel and was forced down on a Japanese airstrip in China, he and twelve others were held prisoner for two days just two days before the war ended.

After returning to civilian life in 1946, he purchased a farm near Humphreys, Missouri. He continued farming there until 1951 when he moved to Kansas City, Missouri and became head bookkeeper for Anchor Savings and Loan in Kansas City, Kansas. A few years later he opened a Phillips 66 service station in Raytown, Missouri. In 1957 he moved his family to Trenton, Missouri and purchased the Helmandollar Oil Co and operated a Conoco service station on Mabel Street. In 1962 he built a new service station on the former Conoco bulk plant on 9th Street in Trenton and operated Smitty's Service Oil quite successfully until retiring in 1979.

His work life was varied as he mastered a variety of occupations including farmer, carpenter, bookkeeper, photographer, auto mechanic, service station owner, welder, and surveyor, in addition to being an accomplished hunter and fisherman. He was a well-respected business man and known for his hard work and fair and honest treatment of everyone. He was always willing to assist anyone in need.

He was a lifelong Methodist and a faithful member of the Wesley United Methodist Church in Trenton for many years.

He was preceded in death by his parents, brother Irvin Smith, and sisters Evelyn Pittaway, and Edith Collins. He is survived by sons Neil Smith and his wife Brenda and Randy Smith and his wife Belle, and four grandchildren; Morgan Smith and his wife Laura Donnelly-Smith of SilverSpring, MD, Veronica Wong and her husband Jeff Wong of Arlington, VA, Spenser Smith and Bryant Smith of Monterey, CA.

Those desiring may make memorial contributions to the Mexico Veteran's Home, Mexico, Missouri, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Washington, D.C., or the Wesley United Methodist Church in Trenton.

Online condolences may be made at [www.whitakereads.com](http://www.whitakereads.com)

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## **Service Summary**

### **Visitation**

9:00 AM to 10:00 AM, Sat Oct 23, 2010

Location: - *Not available* -

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**Funeral Service**

10:00 AM Sat Oct 23, 2010

Location: - *Not available* -