



**Walter  
Smith**

*Army Air Corps*

## Walter Smith

Oct 5, 1895 - Aug 9, 1961

**BIRTHPLACE:** Indianapolis, Indiana

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### SOLDIER DETAILS

**HIGHEST RANK:** Lt. General

**DIVISION:** Army Air Corps, Ike's Chief of Staff

**THEATER OF OPERATION:** European

**HONORED BY:** The Eisenhower Foundaiton

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### BIOGRAPHY

Walter Bedell Smith was born in Indianapolis, Indiana, on 5 October 1895, the elder of two sons of William Long Smith, a silk buyer for the Pettis Dry Goods Company, and his wife, Ida Francis née Bedell, who worked for the same company. Smith was called Bedell or "Beetle" from his boyhood. He was educated at St. Peter and Paul School, Public Schools #10 and #29, Oliver Perry Morton School, and Emmerich Manual High School, where he studied to be a machinist. There, he took a job at the National Motor Vehicle Company and eventually left high school without graduating. Smith enrolled at Butler University, but his father developed serious health problems, and Smith left to return to his job and support his family. In 1911, at the age of 16, Smith enlisted as a private in Company D of the 2nd Indiana Infantry of the Indiana National Guard. In 1913, Smith met Mary Eleanor (Nory) Cline. They were married many years but had no children. General Walter Bedell "Beetle" Smith was a senior officer of the United States Army who served as General Dwight D. Eisenhower's chief of staff at Allied Forces Headquarters (AFHQ) during the Tunisia Campaign and the Allied invasion of Italy in 1943, during World War II. He was Eisenhower's chief of staff at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) in the campaign in Western Europe from 1944 to 1945. Smith enlisted as a private in the Indiana Army National Guard in 1911. During World War I, he served with the American Expeditionary Forces and was commissioned to second lieutenant in 1917. He was wounded in the Aisne-Marne Offensive in 1918. After the war, he was a staff officer and instructor at the U.S. Army Infantry School. In 1941, he became secretary of the General Staff, and in 1942 he became the secretary to the Combined Chiefs of Staff. His duties involved taking part in discussions of war plans at the highest level, and Smith often briefed President Franklin D. Roosevelt on strategic matters. Smith became chief of staff to Eisenhower at AFHQ in September 1942 and acquired a reputation as Eisenhower's "hatchet man" for his demanding manner. However, he also successfully represented Eisenhower in sensitive missions requiring diplomatic skill. Smith was involved in negotiating the armistice between Italy and the Allies, which he signed on behalf of Eisenhower. In 1944, he became the chief of staff of SHAEF, again under Eisenhower. In that position, Smith also negotiated successfully for food and fuel aid to be sent through German lines for the cold and starving

Dutch civilian population, and he opened discussions for the peaceful and complete German capitulation to the First Canadian Army in the Netherlands. In May 1945, Smith met representatives of the German High Command in Reims, France, to conduct the surrender of the German Armed Forces, and he signed the German Instrument of Surrender on behalf of Eisenhower. After the war, he served as the U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union from 1946 to 1948. In 1950, Smith became the Director of Central Intelligence, the head of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the other intelligence agencies in the United States. Smith reorganized the CIA, redefined its structure and its mission, and gave it a new sense of purpose. Courtesy of Britanna.com and wikipedia.com