



## Ernest Alvia “Smokey” Smith, VC

Ernest Alvia “Smokey” Smith was born on 3 May 1914 in New Westminster, British Columbia and enlisted with the Seaforth Highlanders of Canada in March 1940.

On the night of 21-22 October 1944, Private Smith’s unit attempted to establish a bridgehead across the Savio River in northern Italy. They were suddenly counter-attacked by three German tanks, two self-propelled guns and about thirty infantry. Under heavy fire from the approaching tanks, Smith led his PIAT (anti-tank weapon) group across an open field to a suitable defensive position. His men then found themselves face-to-face with one of the German tanks coming down the road, its machine guns blazing. Smith held his ground, and at ten metres range he fired the PIAT and disabled the tank. As the attack continued, Smith raked the enemy soldiers with fire from his Tommy gun and held his position—protecting his comrades—until the Germans finally gave up and withdrew in disorder.

For his brave actions during this battle, Private Smith was awarded the Victoria Cross. At the time of his death on 3 August, 2005, Smokey Smith was the last living Canadian recipient of the Victoria Cross.