

Private Charles Smith

Regimental number: 16603

"D" Company, 1st Battalion, Black Watch (Royal Highlanders)

born: about 1889 - died: 9 July 1918

Private Charles Smith was born in about 1889, the son of William Smith.¹ Charles was married and his wife, Mary Ann Smith, lived at 45 Nursery Street in Forfar, Scotland.² He fought with the 1st (Regular) Battalion of the Black Watch. His battalion went to France at the very beginning of the Great War,³ but Charles almost certainly joined the Battalion later.

On 6 July 1918, he was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with gun shot wounds to his head and a fractured skull.⁴ He died three days later and was buried the following day in Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 5, Row E, Grave No. 10) with the chaplain, R. K. Lambert presiding. His wife was notified of his death and she received the monies owing to him by the army after his death.⁵

When Charles was admitted to the 1st CCCS, he was among 174 patients to be admitted that day – the highest number to be admitted in one day so far that month.⁶ He was one of 39 who died at the 1st CCCS in July. There are over 1,000 First World War soldiers buried in the Pernes British Military Cemetery – most of them were soldiers who died at one of the nearby clearing stations.⁷ This cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when the 1st and 4th Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.

Charles was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).⁸

This is the information of which we can be certain about the military and civil life of Charles Smith. However, we can speculate that Charles may have been the son of William and Elizabeth Smith of Forfar, Scotland.⁹ William was born in about 1858 and his wife, the former Elizabeth Anderson, in about 1857, both in Forfar. William was a factory worker (dresser). In 1901, William and Elizabeth were living at 37 Nursery Feus [sic], where William was a flax and jute dresser.¹⁰ They had seven children living with them, but this did not include Charles. Charles may have been boarding in Dundee, where he was a scholar.¹¹ Sadly, his mother, Elizabeth, died in 1907.¹² In 1911, Charles and his sister, Mary Jane, were living with his father in the home of his grandfather, Charles Anderson at 10 Arbroath Road, Forfar.¹³ On 2 January 1915, Charles married Mary Ann Oram at the East United Free Church in Forfar.¹⁴ At the time, Charles was a postman and Mary Ann, a factory worker.

© BIFHSGO, 2015

¹ "Commonwealth War Graves Commission," (www.cwgc.org; accessed 24 April 2015), entry for Smith, Charles

² Ibid.

³ "Black Watch 1st Btn," *The Wartime Memories Project*

(<http://www.wartimememoriesproject.com/greatwar/allied/alliedarmy-view.php?pid=983>; accessed 26 April 2015)

⁴ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Library and Archives Canada, (records accessed 2013 & 2015), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 612

-
- ⁵ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 19 January 2015), entry for Charles Smith
- ⁶ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G)
- ⁷ "Pernes British Military Cemetery" *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>; accessed 13 January 2015)
- ⁸ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 26 November 2015), entry for Charles Smith
- ⁹ "1891 Scotland Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 26 April 2015), entry for Charles A. Smith, ED: 18, Household schedule number: 44, LINE: 17, Roll: CSSCT1891_99
- ¹⁰ "1901 census," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>; accessed 26 April 2015) entry for Elizabeth Smith, District: FORFAR, City/County: ANGUS, GROS data: 288/0A 001/00 024
- ¹¹ "1901 Scotland Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 26 April 2015), entry for Charles Smith, ED: 26, Household schedule number: 29, LINE: 11, Roll: CSSCT1901_98
- ¹² "SR Deaths," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>; accessed 26 April 2015) entry for Elizabeth Smith, District: FORFAR, City/County: ANGUS, GROS data: 288/0A 0043
- ¹³ "1911 census," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>; accessed 26 April 2015) entry for Charles Smith, District: FORFAR, City/County: ANGUS, GROS data: 288/0A 001/00 005
- ¹⁴ "Statutory marriages," *ScotlandsPeople* (<http://www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/>; accessed 26 April 2015) entry for Charles Smith, District: FORFAR, City/County: ANGUS, GROS data: 288/0A 0008