

## **Private Sydney Smith©**

**Regimental number: 202804**

**1st/4th Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry**

**born: about 1894 - died: 24 July 1917**

Private Sydney Smith was born in about 1894 in Sheffield, Yorkshire,<sup>1</sup> the son of William and Alice Ada Smith.<sup>2</sup> Both his parents were born in Sheffield—William in about 1866 and Alice Ada in about 1874.<sup>3</sup> They married on 21 September 1891 at St Philip's Church in the parish of St Philip's Sheffield. William was a bachelor, age 25 and a manufacturer. Ada Alice was reported as being 19; however, she was probably, in fact, only 15 or 16 when she married.<sup>4</sup> They had six children, three of whom survived to 1911:<sup>5</sup> Sydney, Gladys (born in 1898)<sup>6</sup> and Florence (born in 1900).<sup>7</sup> The identities of the three children who died are not known.

However, William had a son prior to his marriage to Ada Alice. In 1881, William was living at home with his parents at 16 Marsden Lane in Sheffield.<sup>8</sup> Like his father, William was a spring knife cutler. His son, William Henry, was probably born in about 1896 in Sheffield<sup>9</sup> and, in 1891, was living with his paternal grandparents—Joseph and Elizabeth Smith—at No. 2 Court, 9 Headford Street in Ecclesal Bierlow, near Sheffield. At the time, his father was living close by with his own brother, Henry, at 177 Martin Street, in Nether Hallam.<sup>10</sup> William was a cutler and scissor manufacturer and his brother was a spring knife cutler.<sup>11</sup>

Ten years after his marriage to Ada Alice, William and his family were living at 116 Mushroom Lane in Nether Hallam.<sup>12</sup> William was still working at as spring knife cutler on his own account and his wife was a grocery shopkeeper. William's first son, William Henry, had joined his father and was also working as a spring knife cutler. Two of their children, Sydney and Florrie, were living with them. Sydney's sister Gladys, age 4, was living at the time with her maternal grandparents—William and Jane Smith—at 173 Martin Street, Nether Hallam.<sup>13</sup>

In 1911, the family was living at 177 Martin Street in Sheffield—probably the same address at which he and his brother had been living 20 years earlier. William was still in the cutlery manufacturing business and Sydney had joined him as a spring knife cutler.

Sydney enlisted in the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry<sup>14</sup> sometime after July 1916.<sup>15</sup> He was serving with the 1st/4th Battalion when he died. This battalion landed at Boulogne, France, on 12 April 1915;<sup>16</sup> however, it is not known when Sydney joined the Western Front. He was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station<sup>17</sup> where he died on 24 July 1917.<sup>18</sup> He is buried in Adinkerke Churchyard Extension (Grave Reference: 843). His father requested the following inscription on his gravestone:

CALLED FOR HIGHER SERVICE  
MAY HE REST IN PEACE<sup>19</sup>

Adinkerke Churchyard Extension is in Adinkerke, near Veurne, Belgium. It is a Belgian Military Cemetery on the west side of the churchyard less than a kilometre from the Adinkerke Military Cemetery. Commonwealth troops held the Front from the Belgian coast inland for about 70 kilometres from June to November 1917. No. 1 CCCS was at Adinkerke for a short time in June. There are 67 Commonwealth graves from the Great War in the extension cemetery.<sup>20</sup>

His mother received the monies owing to him from the army upon his death.<sup>21</sup> After the war, his parents were living at 65 Bromley Street in Sheffield.<sup>22</sup>

Sydney was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).<sup>23</sup>

After the war, both his sisters married—Gladys married Joseph Watson in 1920<sup>24</sup> and Florence married Frederick Digby Ward in 1924.<sup>25</sup> Just before Florence's marriage, Sydney's father died on 13 March 1924 in Sheffield. A few years later, his mother died on 4 January 1927, also in Sheffield. No evidence was found of what happened to his step-brother William Henry.

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<sup>1</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 May 2017) entry for Smith, Sydney, Registration district: Ecclesal Bierlow, Volume 09C, Page 340

<sup>2</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 11 May 2017), entry for Smith, Sydney, Service No: 202804

<sup>3</sup> "1911 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 25 May 2017), entry for Sydney Smith, Registration district: Ecclesal Bierlow, Registration district number: 509, Enumeration district: 8, District number: 8, Sub-district: Ecclesal West Central, Sub-district number: 2, Census reference: RG14PN27728 RG78PN1588 RD509 SD2 ED8 SN200, RG78 code number: 1588, Piece number: 27728

<sup>4</sup> "Yorkshire Marriages," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 24 May 2017), entry for William Smith, County: Yorkshire (West Riding), Archive: Sheffield Archives & Local Studies, Archive reference: PR-10-21, Page: 60

<sup>5</sup> "1911 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 25 May 2017), entry for Sydney Smith

<sup>6</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 May 2017) entry for Smith, Gladys, Registration district: Ecclesal Bierlow, Volume 09C, Page 379

<sup>7</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 May 2017) entry for Smith, Florence, Registration district: Ecclesal Bierlow, Volume 09C, Page 356

<sup>8</sup> "1881 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 26 May 2017), entry for William Smith, Registration district: Sheffield, Sub-registration district: North Sheffield, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 24, Piece: 4647, Folio: 37, Page: 29

<sup>9</sup> "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 26 May 2017), entry for William H. Smith, Registration district: Ecclesal Bierlow, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 10, Piece: 3803, Folio: 28, Page: 10

<sup>10</sup> "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 26 May 2017), entry for William Smith, Registration district: Ecclesal Bierlow, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 2, Piece: 3793, Folio: 44, Page: 30

<sup>11</sup> A spring knife cutler probably made knives similar to modern day penknives.

<sup>12</sup> "1901 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 25 May 2017), entry for Sydney Smith, Registration district: Sheffield, Sub-registration district: North Sheffield, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 24, Piece: 4647, Folio: 37, Page: 29

<sup>13</sup> "1901 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 25 May 2017), entry for Gladys Smith, Registration district: Ecclesal Bierlow, Archive reference: RG13, Piece number: 4338 Folio: 8, Page: 7

<sup>14</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 23 May 2017), entry for Sydney Smith

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<sup>15</sup> Based on “War Gratuity Calculator” (<https://wargratitude.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator/>: accessed 18 May 2017); “UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 23 May 2017), entry for Sydney Smith

<sup>16</sup> “Unit History: King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry,” *Forces War Records* (<https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/units/445/kings-own-yorkshire-light-infantry>: accessed 7 April 2017)

<sup>17</sup> “No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 11 May 2017), entry for Smith, S.

<sup>18</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 11 May 2017), entry for Smith, Sydney

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> “Adinkerke Churchyard Extension,” *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/>: accessed 18 April 2017)

<sup>21</sup> “UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 23 May 2017), entry for Sydney Smith

<sup>22</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 11 May 2017), entry for Smith, Sydney

<sup>23</sup> “British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 23 May 2017), entry for Sydney Smith

<sup>24</sup> “England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 28 May 2017), entry for Gladys Smith, Registration district: Ecclesall Bierlow, Inferred county: Yorkshire West Riding, Volume: 9c, Page: 852

<sup>25</sup> “England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 28 May 2017), entry for Florence Smith, Registration district: Ecclesall Bierlow, Inferred county: Yorkshire West Riding, Volume: 9c, Page: 893