

Private Fred Smith©
Regimental number: 19334
9th Battalion, Royal Sussex Regiment

born: 27 May 1899 - died: 2 June 1918

Private Fred Smith was born on 27 May 1899 in Radcliffe, near Manchester, Lancashire. He was the son of Fred Anderton Smith and Sarah Emma Hayes and was baptized on 5 July 1899 at St Thomas Church in Radcliffe.¹ His father was born on 28 April 1873² in Bury, Lancashire,³ and his mother about the same time in Little Lever, Lancashire.⁴ They married in the parish church in Little Lever on 20 October 1897.⁵

The family lived at 56 Victoria Street in Radcliffe for many decades. They were at that address in 1901⁶ and Fred's father was still there in 1939.⁷ Fred and Sarah had three children, but sadly two died in childhood, leaving Fred junior as their only child. After Fred's birth, they had a daughter, Elizabeth, born on 6 January 1901 and baptized on 15 January.⁸ It was a private baptism, so perhaps Elizabeth was already in poor health. She died within a few months of her birth.⁹ No evidence was found of the third child—perhaps he or she died so soon after birth that the birth was not registered.

Fred's father was an iron moulder.¹⁰ In 1911, when Fred was 11, his mother was also working as a cop winder¹¹—the person responsible for the machine that wound yarn from the skein onto a bobbin for weaving.¹²

Fred enlisted in the 9th Battalion of the Royal Sussex Regiment in Bury¹³ sometime after June 1917.¹⁴ Less than a year later, he was on the Front, near Loos in northern France. On 31 May 1918, “[a]bout 400 Gas Projectors [were] fired on to Battalion Sector at 11:45 p.m. and about 20 at 12:35 am. (1/6/18). These were of large size and produced a great concentration of gas. Casualties were rather heavy. 21OR . . . Killed and wounded.”¹⁵ Fred may have been one of them, because he was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 1 June, having been gassed. He died the following day and was buried in Pernes Military Cemetery (Plot 2, Row E, Grave 35) with the Canadian chaplain J. K. Tibbits presiding.

Fred's father was his next of kin and was notified of his son's death.¹⁶ He had the following inscription placed on his son's gravestone:

YOUR MEMORY DEAR FRED
REMAINETH AS A TREASURE
TO FATHER & MOTHER¹⁷

Pernes British Military Cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when No. 1 and No. 4 CCCS came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.¹⁸ In June 1918, over 4,000 soldiers were admitted to No. 1 CCCS, where there were 82 deaths.¹⁹

Fred was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).²⁰ His mother received the monies owing to Fred from the army upon his death.²¹

It is not known when Fred's mother died, but, in 1939, Fred's father was a widower and a retired iron moulder, but still living at 56 Victoria Street.²² He was alone, having lost his three children and his wife.

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¹ "Manchester, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 November 2017), entry for Fred Smith

² "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 16 November 2017), entry for Frederick A Smith, Ref: RG101/4863A/018/06 Letter Code: NWTD

³ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 11 January 2017), entry for Fred A Smith, Registration district: Bolton, Sub-registration district: Bury, Sub-registration district: Radcliffe, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 03, Piece: 3647, Folio: 65, Page: 28, Household schedule number: 171

⁴ 1901

⁵ "Manchester, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754–1930," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 July 2017), entry for Fred Anderton Smith, Reference number: L207/1/3/2, Item number: 5, Archive roll: 552

⁶ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 11 January 2017), entry for Fred A Smith

⁷ "1939 Register," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 16 November 2017), entry for Frederick A Smith

⁸ "Manchester, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 November 2017), entry for Elizabeth Smith

⁹ "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 November 2017), entry for Elizabeth Smith, Registration district: Bury, Inferred county: Lancashire, Volume: 8c, Page: 360

¹⁰ "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 11 January 2017), entry for Fred A Smith; "1911 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 17 November 2017), entry for Fred Anderton Smith, Registration district: Bury, Registration district number: 462, Enumeration district: 4, District number: 4, Sub-district: Radcliffe, Sub-district number: 6, Census reference: RG14PN23532 RG78PN1372 RD462 SD6 ED4 SN128, RG78 code number: 1372, Piece number: 23532

¹¹ "1911 England, Wales & Scotland Census," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 17 November 2017), entry for Fred Anderton Smith

¹² "Cop-winder," *Wordnik* (<https://www.wordnik.com/words/cop-winder>: accessed 17 November 2017)

¹³ "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 16 November 2017), entry for Fred Smith

¹⁴ 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: accessed 16 November 2017), entry for Fred Smith

¹⁵ "UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 November 2017), Regiment or unit: Royal Sussex Regiment, Sub-unit: 9th Battalion, Division: 24th Division, Diary dates: 1915 Aug - 1919 May, Piece description: Piece 2219/2: 9 Battalion Royal Sussex Regiment (1915 Aug - 1919 May), Piece number: 2219

¹⁶ "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca: accessed 5 July 2017), entry for Smith, F

¹⁷ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org: accessed 3 December 2017), entry for Smith, Fred, Service No: 19334

¹⁸ "Pernes British Military Cemetery," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>: accessed 13 January 2015)

¹⁹ “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=FINN&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G; accessed 15 December 2014)

²⁰ “British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 16 November 2017), entry for Fred Smith

²¹ “UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 16 November 2017), entry for Fred Smith

²² “1939 Register,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk; accessed 16 November 2017), entry for Frederick A Smith, Ref: RG101/4863A/018/06 Letter Code: NWTD