

**St. Mary's Churchyard,  
Bruton, Somerset, England**

**War Grave**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**13646 LANCE CORPORAL**

**E. J. SMITH**

**AUST. ARMY MEDICAL CORPS**

**8TH OCTOBER, 1919 Age 36**

*From Toil & Pain*

*To Endless Joy Awakening*

*Peace Perfect Peace*

## Ernest John SMITH

Ernest John Smith was born at Bruton, Somerset, England in 1882 to parents John and Sarah Jane Smith (nee Pople). He was baptised on 7th July, 1882 in the Parish Church, Bruton, Somerset, England.

The 1891 England Census recorded Ernest John Smith as an 8 year old Scholar, living with his family at Higher Backway, Bruton, Somerset, England. His parents were listed as John Smith (Coal Merchant, aged 40, born Kilmington, Somerset) & Sarah Jane Smith (aged 47, born Dorchester, Dorset). Ernest was one of six children listed on this Census (all born Bruton, Somerset except George) – George Arthur Albert Smith (Assistant to Head of Family, aged 15, born Glen Neath, Glamorganshire), Elizabeth Jane Smith (Scholar, aged 11), Thomas Frederick (Scholar, aged 10), then Ernest, Ada Mary Smith (Scholar, aged 7) & Mary Smith (Scholar, aged 5).

The 1901 England Census recorded Ernest J. Smith as an 18 year old Farmer's son, living with his family at Lusty Hill, Bruton, Somerset, England. His parents were listed as John Smith (Farmer, aged 50) & Sarah J. Smith (aged 56). Ernest was the eldest of two children listed on this Census – Ernest then Elizabeth J. Smith (aged 21).

According to information supplied for the Roll of Honour by his father – Ernest came to Australia when he was 25.

Ernest John Smith was a 32 year old, single, Labourer from Pinnacle via Mackay, Queensland when he enlisted at Rockhampton, Queensland on 26th October, 1915 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 13646 & his religion was Methodist. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs S. J. Smith, Lusty Hill, Farm, Bruton, Somersetshire, England.

Ernest John Smith was posted to No. 1 Depot Company, A.M.C. (Army Medical Corps) on 26th October, 1915 for recruit training. He was transferred to A.M.C. Special General Reinforcements on 16th March, 1916 then transferred to 14th Field Ambulance on 12th May, 1916 with the rank of Private.

Private Ernest John Smith embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Kanowna (A61)* on 29th March, 1916 with the Army Medical Corps, Special Reinforcements.

Private Ernest John Smith was taken on strength of 14th Field Ambulance at Railhead on 12th May, 1916 from Base Details.

Private Ernest John Smith embarked for overseas from Alexandria on 19th June, 1916 on *Royal George*. He disembarked at Marseilles, France (no date recorded).

Private Ernest John Smith was remustered as Driver with 14th Field Ambulance on 22nd February, 1917 vice Driver Guest evacuated sick on 21st November, 1916

Driver Ernest John Smith was on leave to England from 19th May, 1917 & rejoined his Unit on 3rd June, 1917.

Driver Ernest John Smith was sent sick to Hospital on 7th October, 1917. He was admitted to 2nd Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 7th October, 1917 with Pleurisy. Driver Smith was transferred to Ambulance Train on 9th October, 1917 & admitted to 16th General Hospital on 10th October, 1917. He was discharged to Base on 24th October, 1917.

Driver Ernest John Smith was marched in to A.G.B.D. (Australian General Base Depot) from Hospital on 25th October, 1917. He was marched out on 30th October, 1917 & rejoined 14th Field Ambulance on 2nd November, 1917.

Driver Ernest John Smith was reported to be with his Unit on 2nd July, 1918.

Driver Ernest John Smith was on leave to UK from 20th July, 1918. He rejoined from furlough on 6th August, 1918.

Driver Ernest John Smith was appointed Lance Corporal on 20th October, 1918 with 14th Field Ambulance.

Lance Corporal Ernest John Smith was sent to hospital sick on 11th November, 1918. He was admitted P.U.O. (Pyrexia (fever) of unknown origin). Lance Corporal Smith was transferred & admitted to 3rd Australian General

Hospital on 11th November, 1918. He was transferred to Ambulance Train on 30th November, 1918 & embarked for England on Hospital Ship *St. Denis* on 1st December, 1918.

Lance Corporal Ernest John Smith was admitted to Hospital at Torquay, England on 1st December, 1918 suffering from Fibroma. He was reported to be a patient on 19th March, 1919 & was unfit to be moved. Lance Corporal Smith was reported to be dangerously ill on 21st March, 1919.

Lance Corporal Ernest John Smith was transferred & admitted to No. 1 Australian General Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, England on 21st May, 1919 with Fibroma & was reported to be dangerously ill.

A Medical Report was completed on Lance Corporal Ernest John Smith on 4th June, 1919 at 1st Australian General Hospital, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire. His disability was listed as "*Multiple fibromata becoming oedematous (?)*."

Lance Corporal Ernest John Smith completed an "Application for a discharge in a country other than Australia" on 10th June, 1919. He requested to be discharged in the UK & stated he was "*suffering from Fibroma & according to Medical Officer am not likely to recover. My relations are all in England. I have no interest in Australia.*" Lance Corporal Smith was medically classified as C3 – permanently unfit for General or Home Service. (Normally a member of the Australian Imperial Force would be discharged in Australia where he had enlisted).

Lance Corporal Ernest John Smith's parents, from Lusty Hill, Bruton, Somerset, England, wrote to The Director, Repatriation & Demobilisation, London on 30th June, 1919 requesting that their son be discharged from the A.I.F. in England. They stated he has no relations in Australia & was not likely to fully recover from his sickness. The parents further stated "*he should spend his last few days with us.*"

Lance Corporal Ernest John Smith was reported as "*no improvement*" on 4th July, 1919 while a patient in No. 1 Australian General Hospital at Sutton Veny.

The Department of Repatriation & Demobilisation wrote to No. 1 Australian General Hospital, Sutton Veny on 29th July, 1919 asking if it was possible for Lance Corporal Smith to be handed over to his parent's care. The Registrar of 1st Australian General Hospital, Sutton Veny replied on 1st August, 1919 that it was "*not possible for this man to go out. He must remain in Hospital.*"

A letter written by Acting Registrar, No. 1 Australian General Hospital, Sutton Veny to D.M.S., A.I.F., London regarding Lance Corporal E. J. Smith "*The a/m soldier will never recover from his present illness. He is suffering from "General Malignant Growth."*

Lance Corporal Ernest John Smith was reported as "*no improvement*" on 22nd September, 1919 while a patient in No. 1 Australian General Hospital at Sutton Veny.

Lance Corporal Ernest John Smith died at 2 pm on 8th October, 1919 at No. 1 Australian General Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire, England from Neuro Fibroma.

A death for Ernest J. Smith, aged 36, was registered in the December quarter, 1919 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire, England.

Lance Corporal Ernest John Smith was buried on 11th October, 1919 in St. Mary's Churchyard, Bruton, Somerset, England and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Lance Corporal Ernest John Smith - *Coffin was Elm with brass mountings. The above mentioned was given a military funeral but arrangements for interment were made by relatives (Father).*

Lance Corporal Ernest John Smith was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Lance Corporal Smith's father – Mr John Smith, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque issued in England in August, 1922).

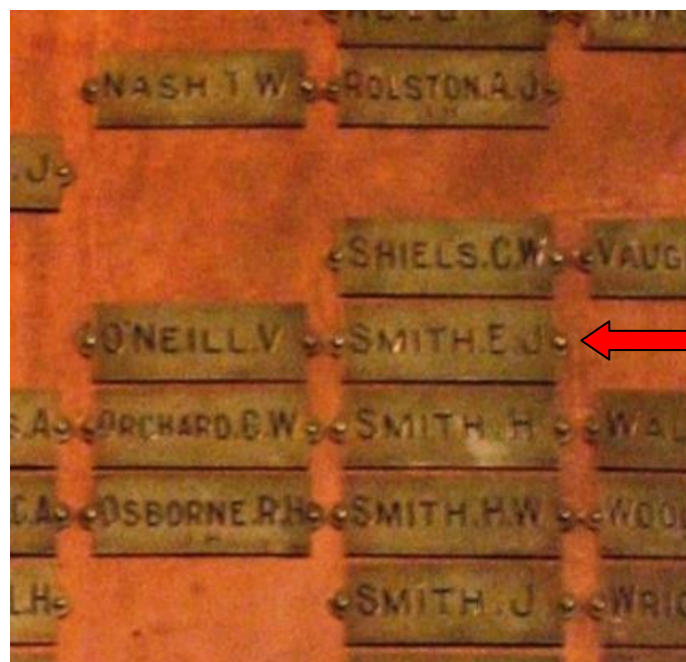
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Driver Ernest John Smith – service number 13646, aged 36, of 14th Field Ambulance, Australian Army Medical Corps. He was the son of John and Sarah Jane Smith, of Lusty Hill, Bruton, Somerset, England. (*Note: CWGC have amended their records to show the rank as Lance Corporal*).

© Cathy Sedgwick 2019

E. J. Smith is remembered on the Pinnacle and District Roll of Honour, located in Pinnacle Playhouse and Cultural Centre foyer, Elsie Nash Street, Pinnacle, Queensland.



**Pinnacle and District Roll of Honour** (Photo from Queensland War Memorials – Glen Hall, Mackay Historical Society)





E. J. Smith is remembered on the Mackay Methodist Circuit Honour Roll, located in St. Paul's Uniting Church, 21 Macalister Street, Mackay, Queensland.



**Mackay Methodist Circuit Honour Roll** (Photo from Monument Australia – John Huth)

Lance Corporal E. J. Smith is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 183.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(87 pages of Lance Corporal Ernest John Smith's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

*Information obtained from the CWGC, Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll) & National Archives*



## **Newspaper Notices**

### **THE ROLL OF HONOUR**

#### **CASUALTY LIST NO. 475**

##### **DIED OF ILLNESS**

13646 L. Cpl. Ernest John Smith, England, 14th F. Amb., 8.10.19 (prev. re. ill)

*(The Brisbane Courier, Queensland – 10 November, 1919)*

---

### **Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstones**

The Defence Department, in 1920/21, contacted the next of kin of the deceased World War 1 soldiers to see if they wanted to include a personal inscription on the permanent headstone. Space was reserved for 66 letters only (with the space between any two words to be counted as an additional letter) & the rate per letter was around 3 ½ d (subject to fluctuation).

The expense in connection for the erection of permanent headstones over the graves of fallen soldiers was borne by the Australian Government.

*(Information obtained from letters sent to next of kin in 1921)*

Lance Corporal E. J. Smith does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

*From Toil & Pain*

*To Endless Joy Awakening*

*Peace Perfect Peace*



**St. Mary's Churchyard, Bruton, Somerset, England**

St. Mary's Churchyard, Bruton contains 4 Commonwealth War Graves – 2 from World War 1 & 2 from World War 2.



**St. Mary's Church & Churchyard** (Photos by *julia&keld* – Find a Grave)





Photo of Lance Corporal E. J. Smith's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St. Mary's Churchyard, Bruton, Somerset, England.

*(Note: his Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone has his rank engraved as "Driver"). (CWGC were advised in December, 2019 of the error of rank)*

*(Update: CWGC have advised (January, 2020) that the headstone will be amended when the time comes to replace it.)*



*(Photo by julia&keld – Find a Grave)*



Ernest John Smith is also remembered on the Smith Family headstone located in St. Mary's Churchyard, Bruton, Somerset, England just near his Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone (marked by yellow arrow).



Smith Family Headstone in St. Mary's Churchyard, Bruton

