

**St. Lawrence Churchyard,
Stratford-sub-Castle, Wiltshire**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



2740 PRIVATE

D. B. SMITH

55TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

26TH OCTOBER, 1917 Age 18

Dearly Loved And Missed

At Rest

Darcy Benedict SMITH

Darcy Benedict Smith was born at 54 Carlisle Street, Leichhardt, Sydney, NSW on 1st September, 1899 to parents Thomas William and Julia Martha Mary Ann Smith (nee Ryan).

Darcy Benedict Smith attended Public School at Newtown, Sydney, NSW.

Julia Martha Smith, mother of Darcy Benedict Smith, died 1st September, 1906 at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Camperdown, Sydney, NSW.

Thomas William Smith, father of Darcy Benedict Smith, died 31st October, 1912 at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Camperdown, Sydney, NSW.

Darcy Benedict Smith was an 18 year old, single, Labourer from Newtown, NSW when he enlisted on 8th May, 1916 at Goulburn, NSW with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His religion was Roman Catholic & his next of kin was listed as his sister – Miss Irene Smith, Lonsdown Street, Newtown, NSW. As Darcy Smith was under the age of 18 his parents' were required to sign their consent for their son to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force for active service abroad. Darcy B. Smith signed his Application to Enlist in the Australian Imperial Force form & it was noted on the form "*both parents dead no guardian.*"

Private Darcy Benedict Smith was posted to "F" Company, 55th Battalion on 8th May, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to "B" Company, Depot Battalion at Goulburn on 15th May, 1916 then transferred on 23rd June, 1916 to "A" Company, 55th Battalion at Goulburn, NSW.

55th Battalion

The 55th Battalion was raised in Egypt on 12 February 1916 as part of the "doubling" of the AIF. Half of its recruits were Gallipoli veterans from the 3rd Battalion, and the other half, fresh reinforcements from Australia. Reflecting the composition of the 3rd, the 55th was predominantly composed of men from New South Wales. The battalion became part of the 14th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division.

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private D'arcy (name as per Embarkation Roll) Benedict Smith, Service number 2740, embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Ceramic (A40)* on 7th October, 1916 with the 55th Infantry Battalion, 6th Reinforcements & disembarked at Plymouth, England on 21st November, 1916.

Reinforcements were only given basic training in Australia. Training was completed in training units in England. Some of these were located in the Salisbury Plain & surrounding areas in the county of Wiltshire.

Private Darcy Benedict Smith was sent sick from 14th Training Battalion at Hurdcott, Wiltshire to Military Hospital at Bulford with VD on 27th April, 1917. He was transferred to Parkhouse on 14th May, 1917 & discharged from Hospital on 16th May, 1917 – 20 days. Private Smith was marched in from Hospital at Parkhouse to Convalescent Training Company, No. 1 Camp at Parkhouse, Wiltshire on 16th May, 1917.

Private Darcy Benedict Smith was marched out from No. 1 Convalescent Training Company at Bulford on 6th July, 1917 & marched in to No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs, Wiltshire the same day. He was marched out from No. 1 Command Depot at Perham Downs to 14th Training Battalion at Hurdcott on 10th July, 1917.

Private Darcy Benedict Smith was sent sick to Group Hospital at Hurdcott, Wiltshire on 22nd October, 1917 from 14th Training Battalion. He was transferred to Military Hospital at Fovant, Wiltshire on 22nd October, 1917 then transferred to Group Isolation Hospital the same day.

Private Darcy Benedict Smith died at 8 am on 26th October, 1917 at Salisbury Isolation Auxiliary Hospital, Wiltshire, England from Inflammation of Pancreas.

A death for Darcy B. Smith, aged 19, was registered in the December quarter, 1917 in the district of Salisbury, Wiltshire, England.

Private Darcy Benedict Smith was buried on 31st October, 1917 in St Lawrence's Churchyard, Stratford-sub-Castle, Wiltshire, England – Plot number 126 and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Private Darcy Benedict Smith - Deceased was accorded a military funeral and the *Coffin provided was of polished Elm, brassed furniture and engraved breast plate. No. 2740 Pte D. B. Smith, 55th Bn, A.I.F. died in Salisbury Isolation Auxiliary Hospital on the 26th October, 1917. Three wreaths placed on grave 1 from Sgts 14th Trng Bn; 1 from Officer 14th Trng Bn & 1 from 14th Trng Bn.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private Darcy Benedict Smith contains a letter from Matron – Miss C. Alexander, Salisbury & District Joint Isolation Hospital which reads: *"I have already written to the Relatives of 2740, Pte D. B. Smith, 55th Btn, A.I.F. & told them all I could, it was very little. He was brought here on the 25th October 1917 quite unconscious & died the next day without regaining consciousness. He was buried with full military honours in Stratford sub Castle Church yard & his effects returned to his Battalion. He died from Cerebro Spinal Meningitis. The people in the village are taking care of all the Australian graves & the Government will erect a cross bearing his name and battalion. If you wish any further information I shall be pleased to give it you."*

[Note: Discrepancy in the cause of death – forms in the Service Record file of the late Private Darcy Benedict Smith state he died from Inflammation of Pancreas while the Red Cross Wounded & Missing file has a letter from the Matron who states he died from Cerebro Spinal Meningitis.]

The personal effects of the late Private Darcy Benedict Smith were sent to his sister – Miss Irene Smith. Two parcels were signed for by Irene Smith – May, 1918 & August, 1918.

A claim for a War Pension was made by Irene Veronica Smith, of 5 Longdown St., Newtown, sister of the late Private Darcy Benedict Smith. The claim was rejected & withdrawn.

Darley Smith, 51 London Street, Enmore, NSW wrote to Base Records (no date) asking *"to find out if my brother Darcy Benedict Smith, No. 2740 Private, 55th Battalion, died 25 October 1917 at Salisbury Isolation Hospital, has left a Will and whom was it drawn in favour of, there are three of us without parents. I should deem it a favour if you could furnish me with the information I have asked."*

Base Records contacted Miss I. Smith, No. 3 Londown St. Newtown, NSW, on 13th April, 1921 stating she was registered on the records of the late Private D. B. Smith, as next-of-kin but desired to know if there were any nearer blood relatives than herself due to the "Deceased Soldiers Estates Act 1918" which stated that the War Medals & Mementoes of a deceased soldier were to be handed in the following order of relationship – Widow, eldest surviving son, eldest surviving daughter, father, mother, eldest surviving brother, eldest surviving sister etc. Miss Smith was asked if Private Smith's father and mother were living & if he had *"any brothers (stating the eldest) and any sisters older than yourself (stating the eldest)..."*

Base Records wrote to Headquarters, 2nd District Base on 26th October, 1922 stating that Miss I Smith had been contacted to ask if the parents or any brothers (stating the eldest) and any sisters older than herself were still alive & if so their address, Base Records stated they had not received a reply & were requesting any information *"possibly the War Gratuity files may assist..."*

A Statutory Declaration was signed by Darley Benedict Smith at Newtown on 18th November, 1922 stating that his brother the late Private Darcy Benedict Smith was single, had no children, father not living, mother not living. One brother whereabouts unknown. Sister Mrs Irene Veronica Underwood.

Mrs Irene Underwood, sister of the late Private Darcy Benedict Smith, made a claim on 13th December, 1913 for her brother's War Medals & Decorations.

Base Records wrote to Mr D. B. Smith, 51 London Street, Enmore, NSW, on 25th January, 1923 stating that the *“whereabouts of the eldest surviving brother of the late soldier are unknown, and so shall be glad to learn whether you desire deceased’s war mementos transmitted to you, or whether you would have any objections to all or a proportion of them being handed over to your sister, Mrs I. V. Underwood, who was nominated as next-of-kin. If you desire the mementos yourself, kindly complete the attached Declaration before a J.P. and return it to me at your earliest convenience.”*

The completed Statutory Declaration is located in the Service Record file for the late Private Darcy Benedict Smith – unsigned. The form has been stamped *“War Medals Etc to Sister (Mrs Underwood). Bond already held in file from Mrs Underwood.”*

Private Darcy Benedict Smith was entitled to British War Medal only as he had not entered a Theatre of War. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Smith’s sister – Mrs I. Underwood, as the closest known next-of-kin. (Scroll & Plaque sent March, 1923).

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Darcy Benedict Smith – service number 2740, aged 18, of 55th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of Thomas William and Julia Martha Smith.

Private D. B. 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 161.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

(57 pages of Private Darcy Benedict 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, Red Cross Wounded & Missing) & National Archives



Newspaper Notices

ROLL OF HONOUR

SMITH – Died of illness in hospital, Salisbury, England, October 26, Darcy B., the beloved brother of Irene Smith, Newtown.

When the weary one we love
Enter on their rest above,
Seems the earth so poor and vast,
All our life joy overcast ?
Hush, be every murmur dumb,
It is only till He come.

(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 21 November, 1917)

NSW CASUALTIES

The 260th and 261st Lists of Australian casualties were issued last night...

DIED OF ILLNESS

Pte DARCY BENEDICT SMITH, Newtown

(The Daily Telegraph, Sydney, NSW – 1 December, 1917)

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)

Private D. B. Smith does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Dearly Loved And Missed

At Rest

St Lawrence's Churchyard, Stratford-sub-Castle, Wiltshire, England

During the two world wars, the United Kingdom became an island fortress used for training troops and launching land, sea and air operations around the globe. There are more than 170,000 Commonwealth war graves in the United Kingdom, many being those of servicemen and women killed on active service, or who later succumbed to wounds. Others died in training accidents, or because of sickness or disease. The graves, many of them privately owned and marked by private memorials, will be found in more than 12,000 cemeteries and churchyards. Most of the 47 First World War burials in Stratford-sub-Castle (St Lawrence) Churchyard were made from the local hospital and more than half of them are of Australian servicemen who were based at the many Australian depots and training camps in the area. There are also two burials of the Second World War in the cemetery. (*Information from CWGC*)



St. Lawrence Church, Stratford-sub-Castle



Churchyard of St. Lawrence, Stratford-sub-Castle with CWGC Cross of Sacrifice



(Photo courtesy of The Venerable Alan Jeans, Archdeacon of Sarum – 2020)



(Photo courtesy of The Venerable Alan Jeans, Archdeacon of Sarum – 2020)



(Photo courtesy of The Venerable Alan Jeans, Archdeacon of Sarum – 2020)

Photo of Private D. B. Smith's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in St Lawrence's Churchyard, Stratford-sub-Castle, Wiltshire, England.



(Photo courtesy of The Venerable Alan Jeans, Archdeacon of Sarum – 2020)



Original Grave Markers

Stratford-sub-Castle War Graves

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
A	RAF	British Army			NZ	NZ	Rogers 3 AIF		Robson Nurse	NZ	
B			Nicol AFC	Mason 5 Aus Pioneer	Dundas 29 AIF	Thorsby 20 AIF	Walpole (Wilson) 3 AIF	O'Grady 10 AIF	Kubank 40 AIF	NZ	
C	NZ	Jacob 31 AIF	Wood 9 AIF	Smith 55 AIF ↑	British Army	British Army	Smith Aus ASC	O'Donnell 16 AIF	Knight 52 AIF	Lawrence 54 AIF	Edmonds 48 AIF
D		Lewis 30 AIF	British Army	Whitchurch 51 AIF	British Army	Dee 52 AIF	Greenslade 17 AIF	British Army	Thorburn 13 AIF	Knight 13 AIF	Hannabry 16 AIF
E					Adams 13 AIF	Crow Aus FA	British Army	Bolton 40 AIF	British Army	British Army	
F		British Army		British Army	British Army	British Army		Canada		British Army	

(Information for layout of graves – courtesy of The Venerable Alan Jeans, Archdeacon of Sarum – 2020)