

**Grangeegorman Military Cemetery,  
County Dublin, Republic of Ireland**

**War Graves**



*Lest We Forget*

**World War 1**



**4530 PRIVATE**

**M. E. SMITH**

**19TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.**

**10TH OCTOBER, 1918 Age 25**

## Michael Ernest SMITH

Michael Ernest Smith was born in 1893 at Nymagee, New South Wales to parents James and Margaret Smith (nee Bryant).

Michael Ernest Smith attended Nymagee Convent School, NSW.

Michael Ernest Smith was a 23 year old, single, Labourer (listed as an Electrician by his father for the Roll of Honour) from Cameron Street, Rockdale, Sydney, NSW when he enlisted at Casula, Sydney, NSW on 1st February, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 4530 & his religion was Roman Catholic. His next of kin was listed as his father – Mrs J. Smith, Dyo Station via Cobar, NSW. Michael Smith was 5ft 2 ½ in with dark brown hair, brown eyes & a sallow complexion.

Private Michael Ernest Smith was posted to "A" Company, 11th Reinforcements of 19th Battalion at Casula, Sydney, NSW on 1st February, 1916 for recruit training.

Private Michael Ernest Smith embarked from Sydney, NSW on HMAT *Nestor* (A71) on 9th April, 1916 with the 5th Infantry Brigade, 19th Infantry Battalion, 11th Reinforcements. He embarked again from Alexandria on H.M.T. *Megantis* on 29th May, 1916 then disembarked at Plymouth, England on 7th June, 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 Michael Ernest Smith proceeded overseas to France from 5th Training Battalion in England on 5th September, 1916. He was marched in to 2nd A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples, France on 6th September, 1916. Pte Smith was marched out from 2nd A.D.B.D. on 19th September, 1916 & was taken on strength of 19th Battalion in France on 20th September, 1916 from 11th Reinforcements.

Private Michael Ernest Smith was sent to Stokes Mortar School on 2nd October, 1916 & returned to his Battalion on 8th October, 1916.

Private Michael Ernest Smith was wounded in action in France on 14th November, 1916.

### War Diary – 19th Battalion

*14th November, 1916 – France near Flers – 6.45 am.*

*Attack by composite 5th Brigade 19th Battn, 25th & 26th Battalion, 7th Brigade and by British 149th Brigade on GIRD TRENCHES N. of Eaucort, L'Abbaye and Flers.*

*19th Battn went into action 451 all ranks. 19th Battn & part of 5th Northumberland Fusiliers took & consolidated part of Enemy's first line. Attack of 25th & 26th Battalions on the Right & of British on left of 5 N.F. failed.*

*19th Battn Casualties – 12 Officers 369 O.R.*

(War Diary information from the Australian War Memorial)

Private Michael Ernest Smith was admitted to 45th Casualty Clearing Station on 15th November, 1916 with shrapnel wounds to right arm. He was transferred by Ambulance Train on 16th November, 1916 & admitted to 6th General Hospital at Rouen, France on 16th November, 1916. He was transferred to 2nd Convalescent Depot at Rouen on 19th November, 1916. Pte Smith was discharged to Base Depot on 23rd November, 1916. He was marched in to 2nd A.D.B.D. at Etaples on 25th November, 1916 & rejoined his Battalion in France on 25th December, 1916.

Private Michael Ernest Smith was on leave to England from 29th August, 1917 & rejoined his Battalion from leave on 11th September, 1917.

Private Michael Ernest Smith was with his Unit in Belgium on 18th February, 1918.

Private Michael Ernest Smith was sent to Gas School in France on 26th April, 1918 & rejoined his Unit on 6th May, 1918.

Private Michael Ernest Smith was with his Battalion in France on 9th September, 1918.

Private Michael Ernest Smith was on leave to UK from 26th September, 1918.

### 19th Battalion

After a spell in a quieter sector of the front in Belgium, the 2nd Division, which included the 5th Brigade, came south again in October. The 19th Battalion attacked near Fliers between 14 and 16 November, in conditions that Charles Bean described as the worst ever encountered by the AIF.

In 1917, the 19th was involved in the follow-up of German forces after their retreat to the Hindenburg Line, and was one of four battalions to defeat a counter-stroke by a German force, almost five times as strong, at Lagincourt. The Battalion took part in three major battles before the year was out, second Bullecourt (3-4 May) in France, and Menin Road (20-22 September) and Poelcappelle (9-10 October) in Belgium.

The spring of 1918 brought a major German offensive that the 19th Battalion helped to stop. For his actions during the fighting around Hangard Wood on 7 April, Lieutenant Percy Storkey was awarded the Victoria Cross. With this last desperate offensive defeated, the 19th participated in the battles that pushed the German Army ever closer to defeat: Amiens on 8 August, the legendary attack on Mont St Quentin on 31 August, and the forcing of the Beaufort Line around Montbrehain on 3 October. Montbrehain was the battalion's last battle. The casualties of 1918, combined with long-term leave for 1914 enlistees, and dwindling new enlistments had sapped the strength of the AIF. On 10 October 1918 the 19th Battalion was disbanded to reinforce other battalions in the brigade.

*(Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)*

Private Michael Ernest Smith drowned on 10th October, 1918 as a result of enemy action on the R.M.S. *Leinster* which was torpedoed by German submarine *UB-123* while at Sea off the coast of Ireland on 10th October, 1918. His body was located & taken to King George V Hospital, Dublin, Ireland for identification.



### R.M.S. *Leinster*

*RMS Leinster* was a vessel operated by the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company, served as the Kingstown (now Dún Laoghaire)- Holyhead mail boat.

*Just before 10 a.m. on 10th October, 1918 as the Leinster was sailing east of the Kish Bank in a heavy swell, passengers saw a torpedo approach from the port side and pass in front of the bow. A second torpedo followed*

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shortly afterwards, and it struck the ship forward on the port side in the vicinity of the mail room. Captain Birch ordered the ship to make a U-turn in an attempt to return to Kingstown as the ship began to settle slowly by the bow; however, the ship sank rapidly after a third torpedo struck the *Leinster*, causing a huge explosion.

Despite the heavy seas, the crew managed to launch several lifeboats and some passengers clung to life-rafts. The survivors were rescued by HMS *Lively*, HMS *Mallard* and HMS *Seal*. The first member of the Women's Royal Naval Service to die on active duty, Josephine Carr, was among those killed. Captain Birch was also among those lost in the sinking. Wounded in the initial attack, he was drowned when his lifeboat became swamped in heavy seas and capsized while trying to transfer survivors to HMS *Lively*. Several of the military personnel who died are buried in Grangegorman Military Cemetery.

Survivors were brought to Kingstown harbour. The ship's log states that she carried 77 crew and 694 passengers on her final voyage under the command of Captain William Birch. The ship had previously been attacked in the Irish Sea but the torpedoes missed their target. Those on board included more than one hundred British civilians, 22 postal sorters (working in the mail room) and almost 500 military personnel from the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force. Also aboard were nurses from Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States.

(Extract of information on RMS *Leinster* from Wikipedia)

The anchor of R.M.S. *Leinster* is part of a memorial to those who lost their lives following the sinking of the R.M.S. *Leinster* on 10th October, 1918. It is located at Carlisle Pier, Dún Laoghaire, adjacent to the National Maritime Museum.



### **R.M.S. *Leinster* Memorial**

*In memory of the  
501 passengers, crew and  
postal workers  
who lost their lives  
following the sinking  
of the RMS *Leinster*  
on 10 October 1918*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Michael Ernest Smith contains various handwritten notes & typed letters. The most relevant to Pte Smith & the sinking are listed below:

- A Statement from W/O S. E. Yeoman, representing Australian Headquarters wrote: "On arrival at Dublin I went to King George V Hospital and saw the bodies of 3 Australian soldiers lying in the Mortuary. They were drowned as a result of the R.M.S. "Leinster" disaster. Identification was established by means of papers etc found on their person. After identifications were completed I saw only three bodies labelled unknown. I made enquiries in Dublin for any Australian soldiers who were survivors and was successful in locating 3 whose names appear in the summary attached. They accompanied me to the Mortuary where one Pte Meigan, 19th Battalion, A.I.F. identified one of the bodies as being that of No. 4538\* (\*In pencil - We understand that the correct No. of Pte M. Smith is 4530; 4538 is a clerical error from Headquarters) Pte Smith, Michael, 19th Battalion, A.I.F. The deceased was personally known to him. Therefore the features are well known, also a gold ring was recognised. This was the only case of identification. I reported this matter to the Hospital Authorities who subsequently made their report to the War Office. Later I discovered another survivor in the person of No. 649 Pte Moore, J. H. 1st M.G. Coy lying in King George V. Hpl suffering from Influenza. Statements from the four survivors attached. Funeral arrangements and burials were duly carried out under my supervision. Burials with Military Honours. Inquests on all Military bodies were dispensed with by the City Coroner of Dublin. Applications should be made to the President Effects Branch, General Headquarters, Ireland for the personal effects of these soldiers.

Coleman's Statement: Vessel left punctually 9 am. Ship very crowded. Morning dull. Roughness at sea out of harbour. Life belts were around but left to individual discretion of putting on. Majority availed themselves. Good headway. 10 to 10 o'clock saw a torpedo. Struck bow on port side. No undue panic- lowering of boats satisfactory. 2nd torpedo 10 mins after. Struck straight amid ships practically severed vessel and smashed 2 life boats. Boilers blown up. Then every man for himself. Raft till picked up by H.M.S. "Lively". Washed off several times. Sea running high – many drowned while hanging on to the raft. Taken to King George Hospital – given food and clothing – and to North Dublin Rest Camp, and medically treated. I saw an Australian, who by the colour patches was 4th M.G. Battalion- could not get into a life boat and was drowned through exhaustion let go.

Roach was sitting with a New Zealander. He said he saw a porpoise – I saw something (took it to be a whale). Thought no more till the boat was struck by torpedo – second soon after. Got on a raft – pulled off – got to a water logged boat which was later turned upside down by the waves. Hung on till picked up by H.M.S. "Help". Several people on this boat and we were all washed off several times.

Meigan I got to a raft where 14 others were clinging. On the raft was another Australian with whom I spoke. He belonged to the A.F.C. Raft was overturned by a large wave and every one washed off. On regaining the raft I asked if the Australian was there but could not see him. On the ship, I also saw another Australian whose name was, I think, Brissett. He lived at Robertson's Temperance Hotel, Donegal Street, Belfast with me on the 5th and 6th October. He signed the Hotel Register 2689 L/Cpl/ J. B. Murray, 1st M. Y. Company. Supply Section.

2531 Dvr. F. L. Hopkins, 1st M.T. Company, No. 3 Transport Section.

Extracts from statement made at A.H.Q. B. Records 15-10-18

"In water nearly an hour before being picked up by a lifeboat."

"We never knew the names of any of the Australians who embarked on the Leinster on 10th October but remember having seen men, whose regimental colours lead us to judge them to belong to the Units mentioned.

Two men of the 19th Battalion

One man from the 3rd M.T. Company

" " " " 1st Div. Train

" " " " 3rd Div Hqrs.

" machine gunner of the 3rd Div Hqrs

Cert: by A.I.F. Hqrs 17-1-19

Private Michael Ernest Smith was buried on 15th October, 1918 in Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Dublin, Ireland – Plot number RC. 3. and has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone. From the burial report of Pte Michael Ernest Smith - *Coffin was good, polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Full Military funeral, Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers being in attendance. The coffin was draped with the Union Jack, and conveyed to the graveside where the Last Post was sounded, and the burial service conducted by the Canon Burke R.C. A procession of about half a mile long followed the remains to the graveside. The grave will be turfed, and an oak cross erected by the A.I.F. London. Australian Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.*

Private Michael Ernest Smith requested in his Will, dated 22nd January, 1916, that all his real & personal estate be given to his sister – Ivy Smith (usually known as Ivy Bryant) & his brother, Joseph Henry Smith was appointed as Executor.

Private Michael Ernest Smith was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Pte M. E. Smith's father – Mr J. Smith, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent January, 1922 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

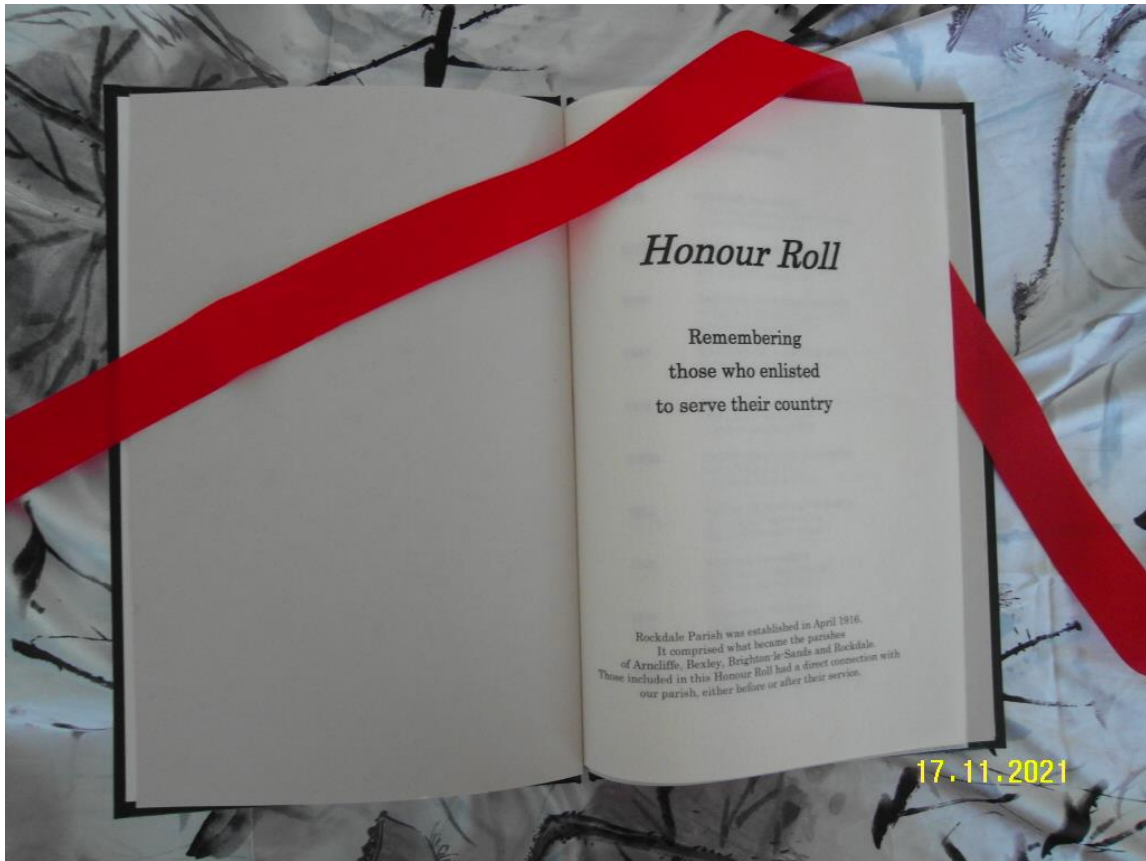
The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private Michael Ernest Smith – service number 4530, aged 25, of 19th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of James and Margaret Smith, of Mulgawarrina St., Coolabah, New South Wales. Born at Sydney, Australia.

Private M. E. 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 89.

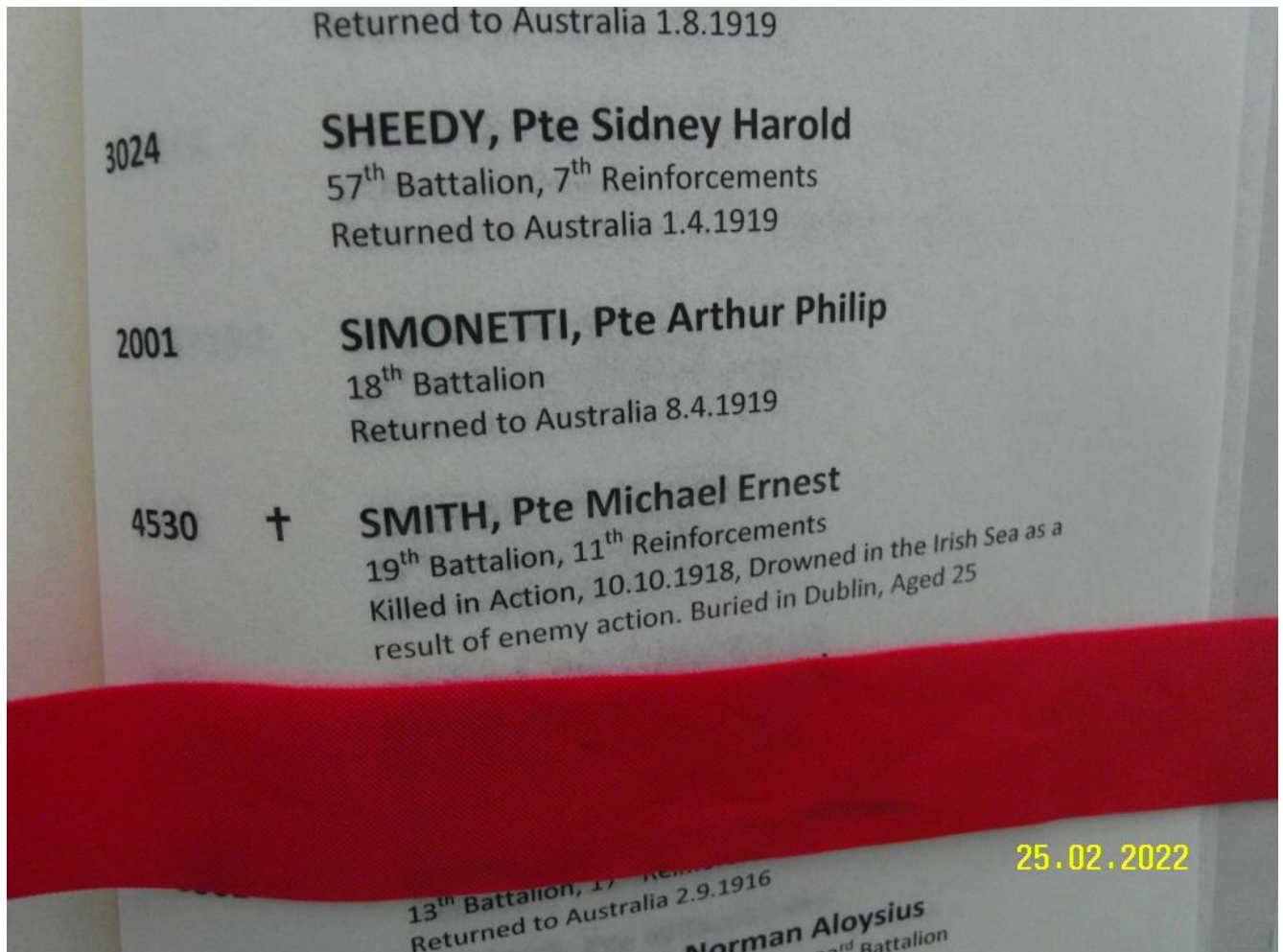


*Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia*

Pte Michael Ernest Smith is remembered in St. Mary Mackillop's Parish (Rockdale City) Honour Roll.



(Photos courtesy of St Mary MacKillop's Parish, Rockdale City)



(64 pages of Private Michael Ernest 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 – Drowned, s.s. Leinster, October 16, 1918, Pte M. E. Smith, of Rockdale, late Nymagee, 19th Batt., after serving 2 ½ years. Inserted by his loving dad, James.

SMITH – Drowned, s.s. Leinster, October 16, 1918, Pte M. E. Smith, of Rockdale, late Nymagee, 19th Batt., after serving 2 ½ years. Inserted by his loving sister and brothers, Ida, Barney and B. G. (o.a.s.)

SMITH – Drowned, s.s. Leinster, October 16, 1918, Pte M. E. Smith, of Rockdale, late Nymagee, 19th Batt., after serving 2 ½ years. So dearly loved, so sadly missed. Inserted by his sorrowful friends, Mr and Mrs T. Mitchell, Fairfield.

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 26 October, 1918)*

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### **ROLL OF HONOUR**

SMITH – Drowned S.S. Leinster, October 16, 1918, Private M. E. Smith, of Rockdale, late Nymagee, 19th Battalion, loving and sincere friend of Lin Clarkson, Granville. Thy will be done.

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 2 November, 1918)*

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### **DOUBLE CASUALTY LIST**

#### **NEW SOUTH WALES**

#### **DIED – OTHER CAUSES**

Pte MICHAEL ERNEST SMITH, Fairfield

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 26 November, 1918)*

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### **IN MEMORIAM**

SMITH – In loving memory of our dear grandson, Private M. E. Smith, 19th Battalion, drowned in the s.s. Leinster, torpedoed October 10th, 1918, off Irish Coast, after three years' active service, aged 25 years.

Safely, safely, gathered in,

No more sorrow, no more sin;

God has saved from weary strife

In its dawn this fresh young life.

Inserted by his loving grandparents, C. and M. Bryant, Gipps-street, Dubbo.



SMITH – In loving memory of our my dear brother, Private M. E. Smith, 19th Battalion, drowned in s.s. Leinster, torpedoed October 10th, 1918, off Irish Coast, after three years' active service, aged 25 years.

How little I thought when I kissed you good-bye

It was the last parting between you and I;

I mourn for you dear brother,

But not with outward show,

For those who mourn sincerely

Mourn silently and slow.

Inserted by his loving and only sister, Ivy.

*(The Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate, NSW – 10 October, 1919)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

SMITH – In memory of my dearly loved son, Pte Michael Ernest, 19th Batt., who was drowned, S.S. Leinster, October 10, 1918. Dearly loved by all who knew him. Inserted by his loving dad, James.

SMITH – In memory of our dearly loved brother, Pte Michael Ernest, 19th Batt., who was drowned, S.S. Leinster, October 10, 1918. Gone but not forgotten. Inserted by his loving sister and brother, Ida and Barney.

SMITH – In loving memory of my dear brother, Pte M. E. Smith, 19th Batt., late Nymagee, drowned, S.S. Leinster, October 10, 1918. Inserted by his loving brother, Ben., and friend, Nell.

SMITH – In loving memory of my dear friend, Pte Michael Ernest, 19th Batt., who was drowned, S.S. Leinster, October 10, 1918. Inserted by his loving friend, Lin Clarkson.

SMITH – In loving memory of our dear friend, Pte M. E. Smith, 19th Batt., late Nymagee, drowned, S.S. Leinster, October 10, 1918. Inserted by his dear friends, Mr and Mrs Mitchell and family, Fairfield.

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 10 October, 1919)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

SMITH – In loving memory of my dear son, Michael Ernest, drowned, steamer Leinster, October 10, 1918, while O.A.S.

Gone, but not forgotten.

Inserted by his loving dad, Jim.

SMITH – In loving memory of our dear brother, Michael Ernest, drowned, steamer Leinster, October 10, 1918, while O.A.S.

Dearly loved by all who knew him.

Inserted by his loving brother and sister, Barney and Ida.

SMITH – In loving memory of my darling brother, Pte M. E. Smith, 19th Batt., A.I.F., drowned steamer Leinster disaster, October 10, 1918. Inserted by his only sister, Ivy.

SMITH – In loving memory of my dear brother, Pte M. E. Smith, 19th Batt., who was drowned October 10, 1918, off steamer, Leinster.

Fond memories live for ever

Inserted by his loving brother, Ben.

SMITH – In loving memory of our dear grandson, Pte M. E. Smith, 19th Batt., A.I.F., drowned, steamer Leinster disaster, October 10, 1918. Inserted by his loving grandparents, C. and M. Bryant.

SMITH – In fond memory of our dear friend, Pte M. E. Smith, who was drowned, October 10, 1918. Inserted by his dear friends, Mr and Mrs Mitchell and family.

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 9 October, 1920)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

SMITH – In loving memory of my dear son Private M. E. Smith, 19th Batt., drowned steamer Leinster while on active service, October 10, 1918. Inserted by his loving father, James Smith.

SMITH – In loving memory of our dear brother, Pte M. E. Smith, 19th Batt., drowned steamer Leinster, October 10, 1918, while on active service. Inserted by his loving brother and sister, Barney and Ida.

SMITH – In loving memory of our dear brother, Pte M. E. Smith, 19th Batt., drowned result of enemy action through torpedoing steamer Leinster, October 10, 1918.

Fond memory lives for ever.

Inserted by his loving brother and sister-in-law, Ben and Nellie.

SMITH – In loving memory of our dear grandson and brother, Pte M. E. Smith, 19th Batt., A.I.F., drowned steamer Leinster disaster, October 10, 1918. Thy will be done. Inserted by his loving grandparents, M. and C. Bryant, and only sister, Ivy.

SMITH – In fond memory of Pte M. E. Smith, 19th Batt., drowned, October 10, 1918. Inserted by his dear friends, Mr and Mrs Mitchell and family.

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 10 October, 1921)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

SMITH – In loving memory of Private M. E. Smith, 19th Battalion, drowned S.S. Leinster, October 16, 1918, dear friend of L. Clarkson.

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 15 October, 1921)*

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## **IN MEMORIAM**

### **On Active Service**

SMITH – In loving memory of our dear brother, Michael Ernest, 19th Battalion, who was drowned S.S. Leinster, October 10, 1918, while on active service. Inserted by his loving brother and sister, Barney and Ida.

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 10 October, 1922)*

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### **On Active Service**

SMITH – In loving memory of our dear brother, Pte M. E. Smith, 19th Batt., drowned result of enemy action through torpedoing steamer Leinster, October 10, 1918.

Death divides, but memory clings.

Inserted by his loving brother and sister-in-law, Ben and Nellie.

SMITH – In loving memory of our dear grandson and brother, Pte M. E. Smith, 19th Batt., A.I.F., drowned s.s. Leinster, 10/10/18.

May the heavenly winds blow softly

Over that sweet and hallowed spot.

Though the sea divides his grave from us,

He will never be forgotten.

Inserted by his loving grandparents, M. and C. Bryant, and only sister, Ivy.

SMITH – In fond memory of Pte M. E. Smith, 19th Batt., drowned October 10, 1918. Inserted by his dear friends, Mr and Mrs Mitchell and family.

*(The Sydney Morning Herald, NSW – 10 October, 1922)*

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\*\*Notices were placed in 1923, 1924, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1928 & 1929

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### 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)*

A letter from Base Records, dated 10th August, 1921, to Mr J. Smith, c/o Mrs T. Mitchell, Hamilton Road, Fairfield, NSW, advised that a letter from the Defence Dept. concerning an inscription on the headstone of his son, the late Pte M. E. Smith, had not been answered & non-receipt of a reply within 21 days would have to be accepted as indicating that no further action was to be taken. Based on further correspondence between Base Records, Melbourne & District Accounts Office, Sydney – the father of the late Pte M. E. Smith was incorrectly listed as Mr T. Mitchell of Mulgawarrina, Coolabah, Bogan River, NSW, later corrected to Mr James Smith of the same address at Coolabah.

Private M. E. Smith does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

## Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Dublin, Ireland

Grangegorman Military Cemetery was opened in 1876 and was used for the burial of British service personnel and their near relatives. It contains war graves from both world wars. Some of the graves were re-located to this site at a later date (nine from King George V Hospital grounds, two from Trinity College grounds, three from Portobello (Barracks) Cemetery, two from Drogheda (Little Calvary) Cemetery and one from Oranmore Old Graveyard).

The "Leinster" graves are in several trenches in the different denominational plots.

A Screen Wall Memorial of a simple design standing nearly two metres high and fifteen metres long has been built of Irish limestone to commemorate the names of those war casualties whose graves lie elsewhere in Ireland and can no longer be maintained. Arranged before this memorial are the headstones of the war dead buried in Cork Military Cemetery but now commemorated here.

There are now 613 Commonwealth burials of the 1914-1918 war, 2 of which are unidentified, and 12 of the 1939-1945 war, 1 of which is unidentified, commemorated here.

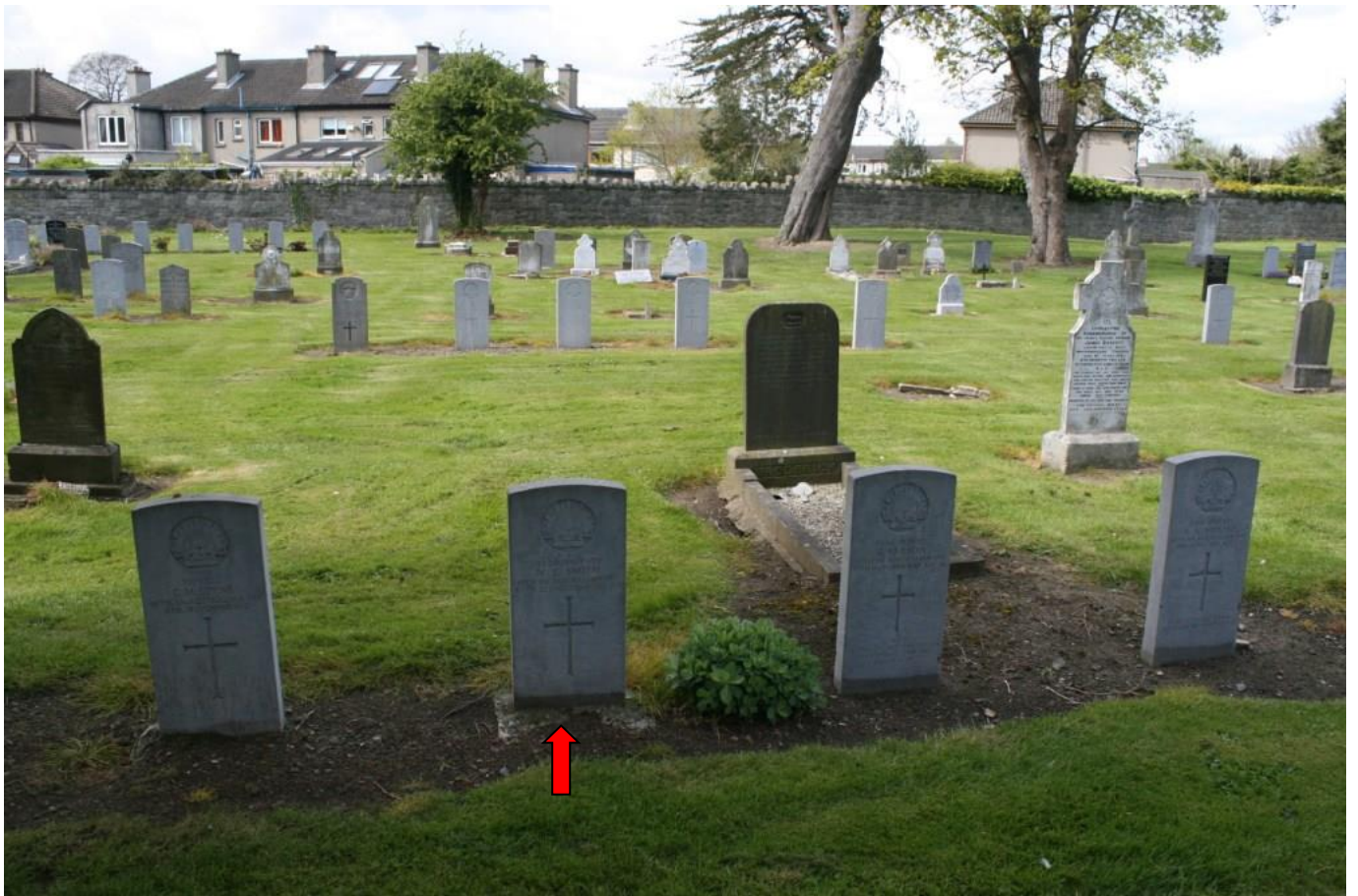
There are 7 Australian War Graves from World War 1 & 1 New Zealand War Grave.

4 Australian Soldiers & a New Zealand Soldier who were drowned on the *Leinster* were buried in Grangegorman Military Cemetery - Private Joseph Thomas Barnes, 6784, 48<sup>th</sup> Battalion, A.I.F.; Private Edwin Johnson Carter, 2880, 29<sup>th</sup> Battalion, A.I.F.; Private Joseph Gratton, 2872, 4<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Battalion, A.I.F; Private Michael Ernest Smith, 4530, 19<sup>th</sup> Battalion, A.I.F. & Lance Corporal Peter Freitas, 14/191A, New Zealand Army Corps (born in Australia).

*(Information & photos from CWGC)*



**Grangegorman Military Cemetery**



**4 Australian Graves in Grangegorman Cemetery – (left to right) Byrne/Smith/Bardon/Murphy**  
*(Photo from Magicfingers)*

Photo of Private M. E. Smith's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Grangegorman Military Cemetery, Dublin, Ireland.



*(Photo courtesy of Richard J. Edgar)*