

**Brookwood Military Cemetery,
Brookwood, Surrey, England**

War Graves



Lest We Forget

World War 1



5226 PRIVATE

W. G. T. SMITH

8TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

13TH AUGUST, 1918 Age 36

William George Thomas SMITH

William George Thomas Smith was born at Port MacDonnell, South Australia on 29th July, 1882 to parents William George and Catherine Smith (nee Dewar). [Note: William George Thomas Smith stated on his Attestation Papers that he was born at Lygar St North, Ballarat.]

William George Thomas Smith attended Port MacDonnell, South Australia. (listed as Port McDonald on information supplied by his widow for the Roll of Honour)

William George Thomas Smith married Clarissa May Lane in Victoria in 1909.

Births were registered in Victoria in 1910 for William George Smith, son of William George Thomas & Clarissa May Smith (nee Lane) & in 1912 for Gwendoline Amelia A. Smith. (as listed on Victorian Births Deaths & Marriages website; however according to a newspaper item from *The Ballarat Courier* in 1918 "He leaves a widow and four children.")

William George Thomas Smith was a 34 year old, married, Labourer from Lygar Street, Ballarat, Victoria when he enlisted on 24th January, 1916 with the Australian Imperial Force (A.I.F.). His service number was 5226 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his wife – Mrs C. Smith, Lygar Street, Ballarat, Victoria.

Private William George Thomas Smith was posted to 14th Depot Battalion at Ballarat, Victoria on 2nd February, 1916 for recruit training. He was transferred to 8th Battalion, 16th Reinforcements at Broadmeadows on 23rd March, 1916.

Private William George Thomas Smith embarked from Melbourne, Victoria on HMAT *Suffolk (A23)* on 1st April, 1916 with the 8th Infantry Battalion, 16th Reinforcements & disembarked at Suez on 14th May, 1916.

Private William George Thomas Smith embarked from Alexandria on 28th May, 1916 on Troopship *Tunisian* to join B.E.F. (British Expeditionary Force). He disembarked at Marseilles, France on 4th June, 1916. Private Smith was marched in to 1st Divisional Base Depot at Etaples, France on 7th June, 1916. He joined 8th Battalion in France on 29th July, 1916.

Private William George Thomas Smith reported sick on 2nd December, 1916. He was admitted to 2nd Australian Field Ambulance on 3rd December, 1916 then transferred to Casualty Clearing Station with Gonorrhoea. Private Smith was transferred to Ambulance Train 5 on 4th December, 1916 & admitted to 1st Stationary Hospital – cause N.Y.D. (not yet determined). He was transferred on 7th December, 1916 & admitted to 51st General Hospital at Etaples, France on 8th December, 1916 with V.D.G. (Venereal Disease Gonorrhoea). Private Smith was discharged to Base Depot on 24th December, 1916 – Total V.D. period 22 days.

Private William George Thomas Smith was posted to 1st A.D.B.D. (Australian Divisional Base Depot) at Etaples on 24th December, 1916. He was struck off strength of 1st A.D.B.D. on 30th December, 1916 & rejoined 8th Battalion in France on 2nd January, 1917.

Private William George Thomas Smith proceeded on Leave on 31st August, 1917 & rejoined 8th Battalion from Leave on 17th September, 1917.

Private William George Thomas Smith was wounded in action in Belgium on 28th October, 1917 – Gassed. He remained on duty.

War Diary – 8th Battalion

Narrative of Operations 23-30th October, 1917

27th October, 1917:

Situation somewhat quieter. Front and Support Coys, heavily shelled during afternoon. Officers from relieving Bn (6th Bn. A.I.F.) reconnoitred Line as far as possible. Bn. relieved during afternoon and evening by 6th Bn. A.I.F. Relief completed with one casualty by 1950. Bn. Proceeded, Headquarters & 3 Coys to ANZAC RIDGE, and one Coy. to WESTHOEK RIDGE. Enemy shelled heavily with Gas Shells during the night.

28th October, 1917:

Enemy shelled ANZAC RIDGE heavily during morning inflicting 7 casualties on "A" Coy. To avoid further casualties this Coy. was moved to WESTHOEK. Many men suffering from bad feet and severe weather conditions.

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Mrs C. M. Smith, Lygar Street, Ballarat, Victoria, was advised by Base Records on 29th November, 1917 that Private W. G. T. Smith had been wounded slightly and remained at duty.

Private William George Thomas Smith was reported to be with his Unit on 9th August, 1918. (This usually occurred when no activity had been entered for a period on the Casualty Form – Active Service.)

Private William George Thomas Smith was wounded in action on 9th August, 1918. He was admitted to 8th Australian Field Ambulance on 10th August, 1918 with shrapnel wounds to right leg. He was transferred to Casualty Clearing Station then transferred & admitted to 2nd Canadian Stationary Hospital at Outreau, France on 11th August, 1918 with Shrapnel wounds to right Thigh. Private Smith embarked from France on 11th August, 1918 for England on Hospital Ship *St. Denis* with G.S.W. (Gunshot wound/s) to Thigh.

8th Battalion

The 8th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF during the First World War. Like the 5th, 6th and 7th Battalions, it was recruited from Victoria and, together with these battalions, formed the 2nd Brigade.....

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the battalion returned to Egypt. In March 1916, it sailed for France and the Western Front. From then until 1918 the battalion was heavily involved in operations against the German Army. The battalion's first major action in France was at Pozieres in the Somme valley in July 1916..... After Pozieres, the battalion fought at Ypres, in Flanders, returning to the Somme for winter. In 1917, the battalion participated in the operations that followed-up the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line, and then returned to Belgium to join the great offensive launched to the east of Ypres.

In March and April 1918 helped to stop the German spring offensive. The battalion subsequently participated in the allies' own offensive, launched near Amiens on 8 August 1918. The advance by British and empire troops was the greatest success in a single day on the Western Front, one that German General Erich Ludendorff described as, "the black day of the German Army in this war".....

(Extract of Battalion information from the Australian War Memorial)

From War Diary – 8th Battalion:

Narrative of Operations conducted by 8th Battalion on 9th, 10th and 11th August, 1918.

At 8.45 am on the 9th the order to move was received and the Battalion proceeded in column of route, 200 yards between Coys., through VILLERS-BRETONNEUX in direction of WARFUSEE.....

Our casualties were:-

	<i>Killed</i>	<i>Wounded</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>OFFICERS</i>	3	9	12
<i>Other Ranks</i>	27	175	202
<i>TOTAL</i>	30	184	214

In addition nine men also are missing, believed either blown to pieces or gone to the rear wounded and unobserved by Regimental Aid Post.

(Extract of War Diary from the Australian War Memorial)

Private William George Thomas Smith was admitted to Edmonton Military Hospital, England on 12th August, 1918 with G.S.W. to Thigh. He was reported to be dangerously ill.

Private William George Thomas Smith died at 8.20 pm on 13th August, 1918 at Edmonton General Military Hospital, England from wounds received in action – G.S.W. left Thigh (amputated).

A death for William G. T. Smith, aged 36, was registered in the September quarter, 1918 in the district of Edmonton, Middlesex, England.

Private William George Thomas Smith was buried at 1.30 pm on 17th August, 1918 in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England – Australian Military Burial Ground - Plot number 181398

From the burial report of Private William George Thomas Smith - Coffin was good polished Elm. The deceased soldier was accorded a Military funeral. Firing Party, Bugler and Pallbearers were supplied by Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London. The coffin was draped with the Australian Flag. Chaplain Vine conducted the service at the graveside and the "Last Post" was sounded. Administrative Headquarters, A.I.F. London were represented at the funeral.

Base Records wrote to Mrs C. M. Shaw (remarried widow of the late Private Smith), 76 Tarrangower St, Yarraville on 17th April, 1923 stating that the site of No. 5226 Private W. G. T. Smith's grave in Brookwood Military Cemetery had been officially registered as Plot 4 Row C Grave 2. *"While the actual place of burial remains unchanged the previous registration allotted thereto has been altered to conform with the uniform layout of this Cemetery."*

This is now recorded by CWGC as Memorial reference – IV. C. 2. Private William George Thomas Smith now has a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone.

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Private William George Thomas Smith contains two updates on his condition by E. A. Dando, 30 Fairfield Rd, Edmonton.

- The first update was date 12th August, 1918: *"A large convoy came in here last night and I regret to have to say two of our men are very ill and put on the danger list this morning there names are Pte Smith W. 5226, 8th Batt G.S.W. Thigh
Pte Miller, W. 2202, 13th Batt G.S.W. Back.
I will write you again in a few days concerning them as I know it is your wish."*
- The second update from E. A. Dando, Edmonton Military Hospital, Silver Street, dated 14th August, 1918 reads: *"I regret to have to report Pte W. Smith 5226 8th Batt. Whom I wrote to you about on the 12th as being on the danger list died last night....."*

Private William George Thomas Smith requested in his Will dated 5th August, 1917 that all his real estate & personal estate be bequeathed to his wife – Clarissa May, Sith, Lydiard Street, Ballarat North, Victoria.

Base Records wrote to Mrs C. M. Smith, Lygar Street, Ballarat, Victoria, on 25th March, 1919 forwarding two photographs & description of the locality of the grave of her husband the late Private William George Thomas Smith. Communications from Base Records to Mrs C. M. Smith, Lygar Street, Ballarat, Victoria were returned unclaimed in April, 1919.

The letter was readdressed to Mrs C. M. Smith, Lydiard Street, Ballarat North, Victoria on 17th April, 1919.

Private William George Thomas Smith was entitled to British War Medal & the Victory Medal. A Memorial Scroll & Memorial Plaque were also sent to Private Smith's remarried widow – Mrs C. M. Shaw, as the closest next-of-kin. (Scroll sent December, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The Memorial Scroll addressed to Mrs C. M. Smith, Lydiard Street, Ballarat North, Victoria was returned to Base Records. They re-addressed the item on 31st January, 1922 to Mrs C. M. Shaw, 76 Tarrangower St, Yarraville, Victoria. Mrs Shaw (nee Smith) signed for receipt of the Memorial Scroll on 21st February, 1922.

Base Records wrote to District Finance Officer, 3rd District Base on 23rd May, 1923 with the following (Note: there is no other correspondence regarding the matter) :

23rd May, 1923. xxx

District Finance Officer,
3rd District Base.

Appended hereunder for your information and any action deemed necessary in the circumstances is a copy of a communication dated 19.5.23 received from T.H. Atkinson, Esq., Chairman, Destitute Board Offices, Kintore Avenue, Adelaide, S.A., regarding the dependence of an illegitimate child of the late No. 5226, Private W.G.T. Smith, 8th Battalion :-

"An illegitimate female child Barbara Joyce Smith now aged 7 years C/- Mrs E.A. Smith of Port McDonnell in this State is in necessitous circumstances and at present being assisted by this Department.

It is reported that the father of the child the above William George Thomas Smith was killed in the War and I wish to enquire whether any of his dependents are in receipt of pension in Victoria and whether a pension would be available for the above named child.

It is reported that Smith the father of the child was a married man and left for Ballarat after the child was born.

The mother Martha Emma Smith died on 30th June 1915 after the birth of her child which took place on 10th June 1915.

Nothing relating to these particulars can be found on the Military records of this State so that it is considered that your State might know something about them.

The grandmother of the child Esther Alfreda Smith has recently been left a widow in indigent circumstances which is the cause of her seeking assistance from this Department.

We will be obliged if you can give us any information in the direction indicated."

The original communication has been referred to the Deputy Commissioner, Department of Repatriation, Melbourne, for attention in connection with the claim for war pension.

It is noted from the records that next of kin is recorded as (widow - remarried) Mrs C.M. Shaw, of 76 Tarrangower Street, Yarraville, Vic., who is also named as sole beneficiary under the late soldier's will.

Captain,
Officer i/c Base Records.

Clarissa May Shaw (nee Smith), Nellie St, Altona applied for Nearest Female Relative Badge (date illegible). The form was marked "Application form No. 47332 shows Badge No. 33197 issued. Badge returned unclaimed, Re-issued by RP 29/12/22."

Base Records replied to Mrs C. M. Shaw on 5th January, 1925 advising that the Badge was being forwarded per separate post.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private William George Thomas Smith – service number 5226, aged 36, of 8th Battalion, Australian Infantry. He was the son of William George and Catherine Smith.

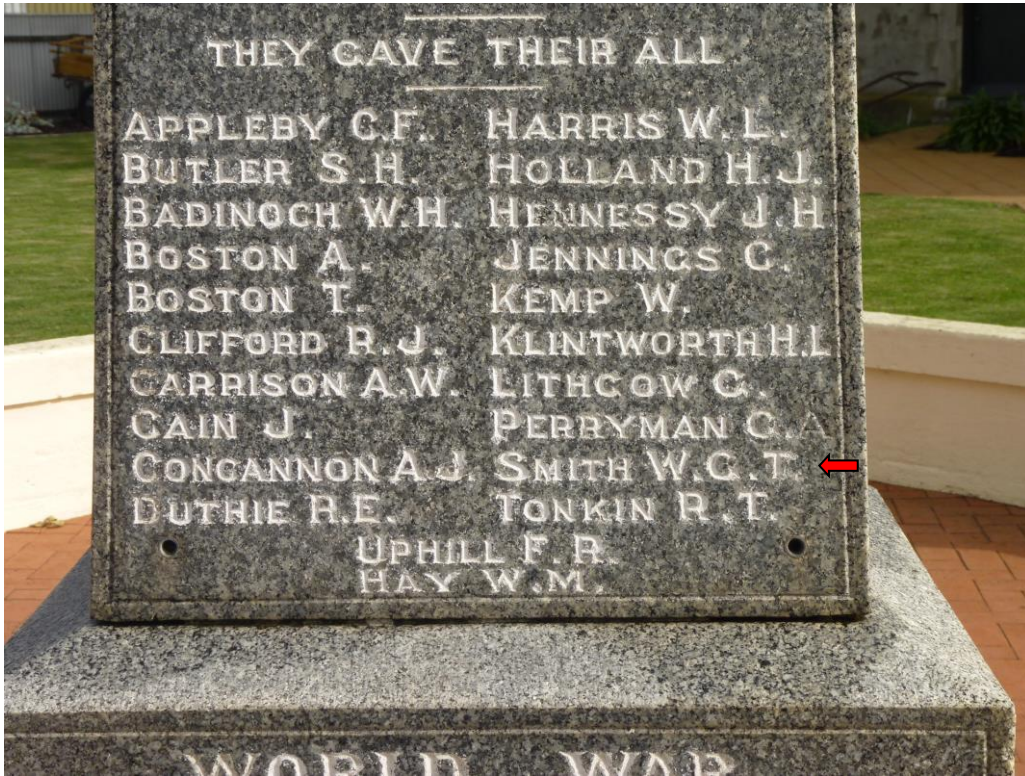
Private W. G. T. Smith is commemorated on the Roll of Honour, located in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 54.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

W. G. Smith is remembered on the Port MacDonnell War Memorial, located at Sea Parade & Charles Street, Port MacDonnell, South Australia.





Port MacDonnell War Memorial (Photos from *AWM Places of Pride* – Henry Moulds)

W. G. Smith is remembered on the Ballarat Memorial Wall & Rotunda located at Sturt Street and Learmonth Avenue, Ballarat, Victoria.



Ballarat Memorial Wall & Rotunda (Photo from *Carol's Headstone Photos*)

Private William G. Smith is also remembered on the Ballarat Avenue of Honour (1917-1919) where almost 4,000 trees were planted to represent the number of men and women from the Ballarat district who served in World War 1. The trees were planted at intervals of 12 metres along 22 kms of the Ballarat-Burrembeet Road. The Ballarat Avenue of Honour is famous for being the first avenue of its kind in Australia. Plaque number 2028 planted by Mr W. Montieth – species – Ulmus Sp.



The Arch of Victory was built as an entrance to the Avenue of Honour (*Photo from Monument Australia*)



Ballarat Avenue of Honour (*Photo from Victorian War Heritage Inventory*)

(65 pages of Private William George Thomas 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 HONOR

VICTORIAN LIST

WOUNDED

Pte W. G. T. Smith, Ballarat (and rem. on duty)

(Weekly Times, Melbourne, Victoria – 29 December, 1917)

ON THE FIELD OF HONOR

426th OFFICIAL LIST

DIED OF WOUNDS

Pte W. G. T. Smith, Ballarat

(The Ballarat Courier, Victoria – 31 August, 1918)

Fallen Heroes Honored- The recent fighting on the Western front has taken a big toll from the ranks of the Ballarat and district men, no fewer than 19 deaths on active service being recorded last week. To mark a civic tribute of respect to the memory of the fallen, the flags on the City, Ballarat, East and Sebastol Halls were flown at the half-mast yesterday morning. The names of those who have made the supreme sacrifice are:.....Private S. Brew, W. Chimnall, T. Curnow, H. Floate, J. W. C. Horgan, E. Morrison, E. Mullard, G. L. Reeves, W. G. T. Smith, and A. E. Taylor.

(The Ballarat Star, Victoria – 2 September, 1918)

PRIVATE W. G. T. SMITH

Word has been received by Mrs W. G. T. Smith, of Lydiard street north, that her husband, Pte W. G. T. Smith, of A Company, 8th Battalion, had died of wounds in Edmonton Hospital on 13th August. Pte Smith enlisted in February, 1916, and sailed for Egypt on 1st April, 1916. Subsequently he was transferred to France. Pte Smith was 36 years of age, and prior to enlisting he was employed by the Geelong butter factory in the Ballarat district. He leaves a widow and four children.

(The Ballarat Courier, Victoria – 7 September, 1918)

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)

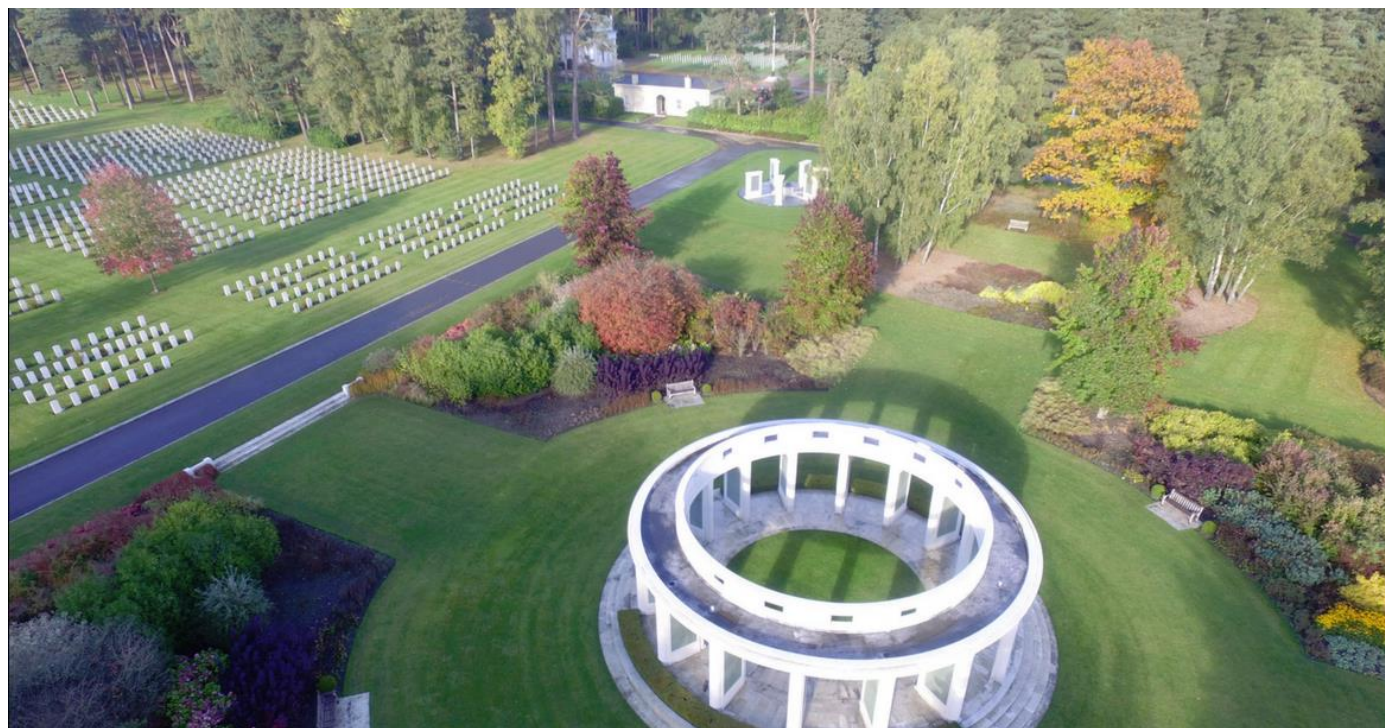
Private W. G. T. Smith does not have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England

Located 30 miles from London in Surrey, Brookwood Military Cemetery is the largest CWGC cemetery in the United Kingdom. The cemetery contains the graves of more than 1,600 servicemen of the British Empire in the First World War and over 3,470 from the Second World War.

Brookwood Military Cemetery lies adjacent to Brookwood Cemetery (The London Necropolis), a vast space which covers 500 acres. In 1917, an area to the north of the cemetery was set aside as Brookwood Military Cemetery for men and women of Commonwealth forces who died, many of battle wounds, in the London district. This site was further extended to accommodate Commonwealth casualties of the Second World War. *(Information from CWGC)*

There are 446 Australian War Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery – 351 from World War 1 & 95 from World War 2.



Brookwood Military Cemetery *(Photo from CWGC)*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

D00185

A large crowd attends an A.I.F. military funeral at Brookwood Cemetery. In the foreground wooden crosses mark rows of graves. (Photo c1919)

Identified: Front row, left to right: Second Lieutenant Douglas Abbott Ferguson, Australian Flying Corps, died of accidental injuries 18 August 1918; Lieutenant (Lt) Francis John Smedley MC, 7th Battalion, died of wounds 20 August 1918. Second row: 6860 Private (Pte) James Alexander McKeown, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 20 June 1918; 3622 Pte S T Wilson, 2nd Australian Pioneers, died of wounds 4 July 1918; 2390 Sergeant Frederick Charles Stronell, 21st Battalion, died of wounds 9 July 1918; Lt Arthur Melville Lilburne MC, 6th Brigade Australian Field Artillery, died of disease 11 July 1918.



Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photo by Magicfingers)



Australian Graves in Brookwood Military Cemetery (Photos by Magicfingers)





(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher)



Australian War Graves *(Photo courtesy of Neil Bright 2020)*

Photo of Private W. G. T. Smith's Commonwealth War Graves Commission Headstone in Brookwood Military Cemetery, Surrey, England.



(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher)



(Photo courtesy of Ian Fletcher – Jan 2021)

