

Sutton Veny War Graves



Lest we Forget

World War 1



8062 PRIVATE

J. W. SMITH

12TH BN. AUSTRALIAN INF.

17TH MAY, 1918 AGE 18

Deeply Mourned By

Father, Mother

Sister And Brother

In Far Tasmania

*CWGC Headstone for Pte J. W. Smith is located in
Grave Plot # 252A. B. 20. of St. John the Evangelist Churchyard, Sutton Veny*

James Willis SMITH

James Willis Smith was born at Moorleah (late Upper Flowerdale), Tasmania on 20th June, 1899, to parents James Albert & Amelia Smith (nee Craig). He was an 18 year old, single, Farmer from Moorleah, Tasmania when he enlisted at Wynyard, Tasmania on 2nd October, 1917 with the 12th Infantry Battalion, 27th Reinforcements of the Australian Army (A.I.F.). His service number was 8062 & his religion was Church of England. His next of kin was listed as his mother – Mrs A. Smith of Moorleah, Tasmania. As James Willis Smith was under the age of 21, he needed his parents' consent to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force for active service abroad. Army form B73485 to the Enrolling Officer, 6th Military District was signed on 28th August, 1917 by James Albert Smith & Amelia Smith.

Private James Willis Smith was admitted to Field Hospital at Claremont Camp, Tasmania from 27th January, 1918 to 4th February, 1918 with Influenza.

Private James Willis Smith was again admitted to Field Hospital at Claremont Camp, Tasmania from 13th – 15th February, 1918 with Suflacuation (?) of leg.

Private James Willis Smith embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Nestor* (A71) on 28th February, 1918 & disembarked at Liverpool, England on 20th April, 1918. Pte Smith had been admitted to Ship's Hospital while at Sea from 5th to 6th March, 1918 with Thrombosis.

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 James Willis Smith was marched in to 1st Training Battalion at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire from Australia on 20th April, 1918.

Private James Willis Smith was sent sick to Group Clearing Hospital at Sutton Veny with Influenza on 9th May, 1918 & admitted to the Military Hospital at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire on 10th May, 1918 with Measles.

Private James Willis Smith died at 8.20 am on 17th May, 1918 at the Military Hospital, Sutton Veny of Measles, Acute Bronchitis & Oedema of the Lungs. The cause of death was verified by a Post Mortem. Pte Smith's parents had been incorrectly advised that their son had died at 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield. A letter was sent 1st July, 1918 advising them that their son had died at Sutton Veny Military Hospital, England.

A death for James W. Smith, aged 18, was registered in the June quarter, 1918 in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire.

Private James Willis Smith was buried on 20th May, 1918 in St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny - Grave no. 252A. From the burial report of Pte Smith - *Coffin was good polished Elm with Brass Mounts – Deceased was buried with full Military Honours. Band, Firing Party, Pallbearers and a Company of N.C.O.'s and men preceded the funeral. Wreaths were sent by Officers, N.C.O.'s and men of deceased late Unit, also Nurses and Staff of Sutton Veny Military Hospital, and Australian soldiers in Sutton Veny Hospital. Deceased was very popular with both Officers and men and his loss os very keenly felt. Also in attendance at the funeral were Mr & Mrs W. G. Slater (Uncle & Aunt) of Stamford Hill, London.*

The Red Cross Wounded & Missing file for Pte James Willis Smith contains a request from the Red Cross on behalf of the family for information into the death of Pte Smith – “Did he suffer very much and if conscious at the time of his death, did he have any messages”. A reply was sent by Officer in charge of Medical Divison which in part reads: “Adm. 10-5-18 with severe attack of measles – Temperature fell to normal. Patient was one of several who went to W.C. in shirt only without putting on trousers & shoes. Recurrence of acute bronchitis next day May 15th. Patient removed to special ward No. 15. Warmed oxygen increasing doses of brandy of no avail. Had 15 C.C. Antistreptococcus serum, on evening of 16th inst. Post mortem revealed, Oedema of lungs, purulent bronchitis & oedema introconsolidation of lungs. Clonoy swelling of myo-cardium with great dilation of right auricle & ventricle.”

Pte James Willis Smith requested in his Will dated 14th February, 1918, that the whole of his property & effects be left to his mother – Mrs Amelia Smith of Moorleah, Tasmania.

Private J. W. Smith is commemorated in the Hall of Memory Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia on Panel 67.



Roll Of Honour WW1 Australian War Memorial Canberra, Australia

Willis J. Smith & his brother Francis E. Smith, are both remembered on the Moorleah Honour Roll located in Moorleah Hall, Preolenna Road, Moorleah, Tasmania.



Moorleah Honour Roll (Photo from Monument Australia – Arthur Garland)

J. W. Smith is also remembered on the Wynyard War Memorial located in Richard Gutteridge Gardens, Goldie Street, Wynyard, Tasmania.



Wynyard War Memorial (Photo from Monument Australia – Arthur Garland)

Pte James Willis 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 Pte Smith's father – Mr J. A. Smith (Scroll sent July, 1921 & Plaque sent November, 1922).

The CWGC lists Private James Willis Smith, 8062, of 12th Battalion, Australian Infantry, A.I.F., as the son of James Albert & Amelia Smith of Willesden, Moorleah, Tasmania.

(55 pages of Pte James Willis Smith's Service records are available for On Line viewing at National Archives of Australia website).

Information obtained from the Australian War Memorial (Roll of Honour, First World War Embarkation Roll, Red Cross Wounded & Missing file) & National Archives.



[Connected with Pte James Willis Smith:](#)

Only Brother – Pte Francis Ernest Smith, 485, Light Horse Regiment; enlisted August, 1914, was wounded at Gallipoli & returned home March, 1918.

Newspaper Reports

ROLL OF HONOUR

Mr and Mrs J. Albert Smith, of Moorleah, have received the sad news that their youngest son died in the Australian Hospital in England on May 17th. He was 18½ years, and only left Tasmania on March 2. Their only other son has been serving with the Light Horse since the beginning of the war and has just had six weeks' leave of absence, and is back again in camp.

(Examiner, Launceston, Tasmania – Thursday 23 May, 1918)

ROLL OF HONOUR

AUSTRALIAN CASUALTIES – 409th LIST RELEASED

DIED – OTHER CAUSES

Pte James Willis Smith, Moorleah

(Zeehan and Dundas Herald, Tasmania – Monday 17 June, 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 at St. John the Evangelist Churchyard at Sutton Veny. 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)

Pte James Willis Smith does have a personal inscription on his headstone.

Deeply Mourned By Father, Mother Sister And Brother In Far Tasmania

Photo of Private J. W. Smith's CWGC headstone in St. John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.



(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)



War Graves at Sutton Veny *(Photos from CWGC)*

