

# Joseph Smith (1883 – 1914)

Although born in Dent in 1883 Joseph Smith lived most of his life in Farnhill – attending Kildwick National School with his elder brother.

When he was 18 he became a professional soldier and served for eight years. He had been married for just over four years, and had become a father twice, when, in August 1914, he returned to the army. His war service was brief – he was killed a month later, the first of the Farnhill WW1 Volunteers to die.

Joseph Smith has no known grave. His name is recorded on the Kildwick War Memorial and was also included on the Kildwick School memorial.



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## Pre-war life

Joseph Smith was born in Dent on New Year’s Day 1883 and was baptised in St. Andrew’s Church, Kildwick, on 28<sup>th</sup> January. He was the son of Alfred Smith, a stonemason, originally from Glusburn, and his wife Margaret Ann (nee Stephenson) who came from Morton near Bingley.

The 1891 census showed that the Smith family were living in Hanover Street in Farnhill and Joseph had a brother, William, who was two years older. Both boys attended Kildwick National School – Joseph probably left there when he was fourteen years of age and likely went to work in one of the local mills.

Civil Parish of <i>Farnhill</i>		Municipal Borough of _____			Municipal Ward of _____		Urban Sanitary District of _____			Town or Village or Hamlet of <i>Farnhill</i>		Rural Sanitary District of <i>Kepton</i>		Parliamentary Borough or Division of <i>Kepton</i>		Ecclesiastical Parish or District of <i>Kildwick</i>	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES	Widow inhabiting (1)	Number of rooms occupied if less than five (2)	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of	Sex	PROFESSION or OCCUPATION	Employed	Employed in Manufactory	Where Born	(1) Deaf-and-blind (2) Blind (3) Lame, Paralytic, or Idiot			
116	127	1			<i>Alfred Smith</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>Stonemason</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<i>do Kildwick</i>				
					<i>Margaret A. Do</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>f</i>				<i>do Morton</i>				
					<i>William D. Do</i>	<i>Son</i>		<i>10</i>	<i>m</i>				<i>do Kildwick</i>				
					<i>Joseph Do</i>	<i>Son</i>		<i>8</i>	<i>m</i>				<i>do Dent</i>				

Extract from 1891 census for Hanover Street, Farnhill  
Used under licence from the National Archive

By the time of the 1901 census, Joseph’s parents had moved to 9 Bucklar Hill. They were living alone by this time, both sons having left home.

Joseph joined the West Riding Regiment on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1901; signing on for a period of seven years, which he later extended to eight. When he joined up he was aged 18 years and 1 month and gave his occupation as “weaver”. His service record state that he was 5 feet 4 inches tall, with brown eyes and light brown hair; he weighed 8 stones and 4 lbs.

He initially served with the army in Ireland and then, from October 1905 until January 1909, in India. Having completed his eight years’ service he returned to this country in the middle of January 1909 – leaving the army on 21<sup>st</sup> February 1909. As was the practice at the time, he was automatically transferred to the army reserve for a four year period.

On a form completed on leaving the regular army he was described as a “bandsman” and listed the trade or employment he desired in civil life as “Musician attendant in an asylum”. This didn’t happen, but about this time he joined the Kildwick and District Brass Band as a solo tenor horn player.

**Note:** The comment about his future employment may have been a sarcastic jibe about what sort of civilian career eight years as an army bandsman prepared a man to enter. However no less a figure than Edward Elgar – by this time the pre-eminent English composer – had begun his career as the bandmaster at the Worcester City and County Lunatic Asylum, in 1879. Perhaps Joseph knew that ?

Joseph married Mary Elizabeth Grainger, at St. Thomas’s Church in Sutton in Craven, on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1910. She had been born in Ripon but at the time of the marriage her family were living in Sutton. The marriage was witnessed by Joseph’s brother William Dixon Smith, and Mary’s sister Lily Grainger.



St. Thomas’s Church, Sutton  
(Photograph courtesy of Barry Durham)

The pair may have lived for a time in Sutton after they married (possibly with Mary’s parents ?) as it was at Sutton Mill that Mary gave birth to their first child, Cecilia, on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1910. However, by the time of the 1911 census, the three of them were living back with Joseph’s parents, by this time at 15 Bucklar Hill. Joseph gave his employment as a Labourer in an Iron Foundry. Subsequently he found work at Horsfall’s Mill in Glusburn.

On 21<sup>st</sup> January 1913 Joseph Smith signed-up for a further four years in the army reserve, putting his signature against the statement:

*I understand that I shall be liable to be called out for permanent service, in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, in the case of imminent national danger or of great emergency.*

Joseph's father Alfred died on 17<sup>th</sup> October of the same year, aged 55 years, and was buried at St. Andrew's, Kildwick.

The next year, 1914, on 21<sup>st</sup> June, Mary gave birth to the couple's second son. Baptised Clarence Alfred at St. Andrew's Church on July 14<sup>th</sup>, the infant died just one week later.

## WW1 service

Joseph Smith's WW1 service was brief.

On the outbreak of war he returned to army service, as a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion, West Riding Regiment, on 5<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> August 1914 – the documents conflict. He was sent out to France on 13<sup>th</sup> August and on the 16<sup>th</sup> wrote home to say that he was quite well.

Joseph Smith was killed in action on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1914 – the first man from Kildwick parish to be killed in the war. He was aged 31.

(1400) Wt. 7405-100. 500 M. 3.13. F. T. & Co., Ltd. Army Form B. 103.

**Casualty Form—Active Service.**

Regiment or Corps WEST RIDING REGIMENT ✓

Regimental No. 6666 Rank Private Name J. Smith

Enlisted (a) 22.2.1901 Terms of Service (a) 75 Service reckons from (a) 22.2.1901

Date of promotion to present rank } Date of appointment to lance rank } Numerical position on roll of N.C.O.s }

Extended 14.1.1904 Re-engaged 22.2.1913 Qualification (b) \_\_\_\_\_

Report Date	From whom received	Record of promotions, reductions, transfers, casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case	Place	Date	Remarks taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents
		<u>killed in action</u>		<u>19<sup>9</sup>/<sub>14</sub></u>	

Joseph Smith's WW1 Casualty Form  
Used under licence from the National Archive

## Circumstances of death

During the period of Joseph's service in France, the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion West Riding Regiment formed part of the 13<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division of the British Army. As such, he may have seen action at Mons – the first British engagement on European soil since the battle of Waterloo – and the retreat that followed; the battle of the Marne; and the battle of the Aisne – all of which took place in the period between 23<sup>rd</sup> August and 21<sup>st</sup> September 1914.

Joseph Smith is commemorated on a panel (no. 16A) forming part of the La Ferté-sous-Jouarre Memorial to the Missing. There is no grave.



La Ferté-sous-Jouarre Memorial to the Missing

Photograph by kind permission of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org))

## Postscript

On 17<sup>th</sup> October 1914 the following article appeared in the Keighley News:

**FARNHILL.**

**FARNHILL SOLDIER'S DEATH.**

Mrs. Joseph Smith, 15, Buckler Hill, Farnhill, received an official communication on Tuesday morning last announcing the death of her husband, Private Joseph Smith, of the Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment, at an unknown place in France. Private Smith was a Reservist at the time war broke out, and was employed on alterations at "Beanlands," in Glusburn. He had been connected with the Army for fourteen years as a bandsman, and after leaving to take up civilian work at the end of his time he joined the Kildwick Brass Band. He was particularly interested in music, and he could play a number of wind instruments. On August 16 he wrote home from France saying he was quite well. In a letter dated August 27, Mr. Fred Simpson, another soldier, wrote home saying that by then they would know that Mrs. Smith was a widow. Nothing definite had been received by Mrs. Smith to confirm this statement until last Tuesday, although she had heard that soldiers in letters to their friends at Haworth, Embsay, Junction, and Addingham all mentioned Smith's death. The Monday night previously, his brother, who resides at Skipton, received an undated postcard written by him saying he was quite well, and this naturally led them to believe he was still alive. Mrs. Smith has a little girl.

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The following week, a memorial service was held for him at St. Andrew's Church.

**FARNHILL.**

**Funeral Service.**—On Sunday evening last a funeral service was held in memory of Mr. Joseph Smith, of Farnhill, who died serving his country in the battle of the Marne, on Sept. 19th. All who knew him flocked to show their sympathy with those whom he has left behind. The Kildwick and District Brass Band, of which up to the time of his death he was a member, met at his home, and preceded by a detachment of Scouts from the district, proceeded to the church to the strains of Chopin's Funeral March. After the band came Mr. Smith's relations, followed by his friends and fellow workers. Suitable hymns were sung during the service at the church, which was conducted by the Rev. J. W. Rhodes.

Report from Craven Herald, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1914; reproduced by kind permission of the Craven Herald

In April 1915 Joseph's widow, Mary, received notification that she had been granted a pension of fifteen shillings a week for herself and her five year old daughter, Cecilia; and in June the War Office returned Joseph's personal possessions to her – she was still living with her mother in law in Bucklar Hill at this time, although they all moved to 9 Starkey Lane at a later date.

Subsequent communications from the War Office concerned the despatch of his medals: a Mons Star, with clasp; a British War Medal; and a Victory Medal. Mary Smith would also have received a bronze plaque (colloquially known as a "death penny") and a scroll, both of which were usual for families of men killed in action.

Name.	Corps.	Rank	Regtl. No.
SMITH J	* 2 Bn W Rind Regt.	Private	6666
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	0/2/101 B.2.	141	K. in Action 19/9/14.
BRITISH	do	do.	
14 STAR	0/2/5	117	
Clasp/2/2594			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein 10/8/14			

K. 1380.

Joseph Smith's WW1 medal card  
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**A Mons Hero.**—Mrs. J. Smith, of Buckler Hill, Farnhill, widow of the late Pte. Joseph Smith, of the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Regiment, who was recalled to the Colours at the commencement of the war and paid the supreme sacrifice in the retreat from Mons, has this week received from the War Office the Mons Star which he earned, and also a letter of appreciation for the services rendered by him on that memorable occasion.

Report from Craven Herald, 30<sup>th</sup> May 1919; reproduced by kind permission of Craven Herald

In February 1920, the following news report appeared throughout the local press:

*A beautiful memorial, provided by former scholars of Kildwick National School to commemorate the sacrifices of old scholars in the great war was unveiled in Kildwick National School on Sunday afternoon. The schoolroom was quite filled with old scholars, relatives and friends, the company including Mr. James Bairstow (Springfield), and Mr. W.A. and Mr. J.J. Brigg (Kildwick Hall). The service was in charge of the vicar of Kildwick (the Rev. C.E.V. Hodge), who said they were met to dedicate the tablet to the memory of the sons of that school who had fallen in the war.*

*The unveiling ceremony was fittingly performed by Mr. Thomas Appleby, who had been in charge of the National School as headmaster during the school days of most of those who had fallen. ...*

*The memorial is of carved oak with brass panels on which are engraven the names of the fifteen old scholars who have fallen. The centre picture is of St. George kneeling, and is a replica, in colour, of the glass panel by Mr. G.W.P. Hutchinson, exhibited at the Royal Academy. ...*

*The names inscribed on the memorial are: Tom Allsopp, Willie Barker, A.L. Backhouse, Fred Carlton, Walter Dawson, Fred Dixon, Joseph Green, William Mosley, Fred Scarfe, **Joseph Smith**, J. Allan Smith, Archie Sugden, T.H. Stephens, Frank Thompson, and H. Walmsley.*



The only known photograph of the Kildwick School WW1 memorial, courtesy of Anne Hweitt.  
The memorial itself remains missing, presumed destroyed.

An entry in the Kildwick School log book, dated 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1921 reads:

*The elder scholars attended the unveiling of the War Memorial for Kildwick & District this evening. A cross of flowers from the teachers and scholars was placed on the memorial by Emma Booth and Cecilia Smith, two girls whose fathers were killed during the War.*

Joseph Smith is commemorated on the Kildwick war memorial:



Photographs provided by Keighley and District Digital Archive



His name was included on the Kildwick School WW1 memorial, which records the names of former pupils who died in the war.



The only known photograph of the Kildwick School WW1 memorial, courtesy of Anne Hweitt.  
The memorial itself remains missing, presumed destroyed.

The 1921 census records Mary Elizabeth Smith and her daughter Cecilia living with Joseph's mother, Margaret Ann, at 9 Starkey Lane.

Later that year, Mary Elizabeth remarried. Her second husband was Cyril Edgar Newhouse and the marriage probably took place at Christ Church in Skipton on 11<sup>th</sup> December. It is thought that she died in 1935, aged 49 years, in the Keighley area.

Joseph's mother, Margaret Ann Smith, died at 9 Starkey Lane Farnhill in January 1928 aged 73 years and was buried in St. Andrew's, Kildwick, on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Joseph's nephew Wright Smith, the son of William Dixon Smith, married Mary Ward somewhere in the Skipton area in early 1929. It is thought that they had two children, and it is likely that there are living descendants possibly still living in the area.

Cecilia Smith, Joseph and Mary's daughter, married Hugh Clarkson in 1936. They made their home in Silsden and had at least one child, a daughter, born in 1943. In 1951 the Clarkson family emigrated to Australia. They settled in Melbourne, where Cecilia died in 1997.



Cecilia Clarkson's gravestone  
from <https://billiongraves.com/> (Public domain image)

## Joseph Smith – a life in summary

**Born:** 1/1/1883, Dent  
**Baptised:** 28/1/1883, Kildwick  
**Died:** 19/9/1914, Seine-et-Marne, France      **Aged:** 31

### Parents

**Father:** Alfred; b. 27/2/1857, Glusburn; d. 17/10/1913, Farnhill; buried 21/10/1913, Kildwick  
**Mother:** Margaret Ann (nee Stephenson); b. 1855, Morton (Bingley);  
d. January 1928, Farnhill; buried 19/1/1928, Kildwick  
**Married:** 1878, Skipton (Registration district)

### Siblings

William Dixon Smith; b. 25/3/1881, Farnhill; bapt. 29/6/1881, Kildwick;  
m. Mary Elizabeth Nelson, 16/7/1904, at St. Mary's Church, Embsay

### Marriage

**Wife:** Mary Elizabeth Grainger; b. 1886, Ripon (Registration district);  
d. 1935, Keighley (Registration district) – as Mary Elizabeth Newhouse  
**Date:** 16/7/1910; at St. Thomas's Church, Sutton-in-Craven

### Children

Cecilia; b. 20/10/1910; bapt. 4/12/1910, Kildwick;  
m. Hugh Clarkson, 1936, Keighley (Registration district); d. 13/7/1997, Australia  
Clarence Alfred; b. 21/6/1914; bapt. 14/7/1914, Kildwick; d. 21/7/1914

### WW1 service

**Signed-up:** 5/8/1914 (recalled from the Reserves)  
**Regt.:** 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion, West Riding Regiment; Private, no. 6666  
**Medals:** 1914 Mons Star, with clasp; British War Medal; Victory Medal  
**Home address:** 15 Bucklar Hill

