

THE BLEASDALE FALLEN OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

PRIVATE
WILLIAM HENRY SMITH
1893 – 1919
LANCASHIRE FUSILIERS



(1ST WORLD WAR REGIMENTAL BADGE OF THE LANCASHIRE FUSILIERS REGIMENT)

DIED OF ILLNESS ON 7TH APRIL 1919
CONTRACTED DURING HIS SERVICE



REMEMBERED WITH HONOUR

PRIVATE WILLIAM HENRY SMITH 1893 – 1919

Lancashire Fusiliers

William Henry Smith was born in 1893, the son of James and Grace Smith, who farmed in Goosnargh, on the edge of Bleasdale Parish. The family moved away from the area and in September 1914, William Henry joined the Lancashire Fusiliers. He was discharged suffering from T.B. in November 1918, and died in Stretford on 7th April 1919. He was 25 years old.

FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EARLY LIFE

William Henry Smith was born in 1893, the son of James and Grace Smith, then of Gill Barn, and later of Wickens Farm, both in Goosnargh. He was christened at St. Eadmer's Church, Bleasdale, and attended Bleasdale School. However, the family moved to Preston in the mid 1900's. An entry in the School Logbook states:

'7th May 1906: W. Smith left the district.'

After the death of his mother in 1908, his father returned to Bleasdale. In 1911 he remarried and the couple lived at Hazelhurst Cottage where he worked as a jobbing builder until his death in 1923. William Henry remained in Preston, where he and two of his brothers and a sister lived together at 4, Salisbury Street. William Henry was employed a nurseryman and his brother, George Thomas, was a market gardener. His sister, Grace, kept house for them all.

ENLISTMENT, ARMY CAREER AND DEATH

William Henry joined the Lancashire Fusiliers on 7th September 1914, at Manchester, at the same time as his brother, George Thomas, who joined the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment. He served in France where he was wounded and discharged on 19th November 1918, with a War pension. He had already contracted pulmonary tuberculosis (or 'consumption') before his discharge, and after returning home to Stretford, he caught influenza early in 1919. He died on 7th April, 1919.

It is stated on his death certificate that he died at 58, Trafford Grove, Stretford. His brother, George Thomas lived at 71, Trafford Grove following his discharge from the Army in 1916, due to deafness. He may have moved to No. 58 by 1919, or William Henry was being cared for in a separate house. The report in the Garstang Deanery Magazine of April 1919, however, suggests William Henry died in hospital:

'We much regret to announce the death in hospital of another Bleasdale soldier, William Henry Smith from consumption due to injuries received in the war. To the bereaved relatives and friends we offer our sincere sympathy. Private Smith is the twelfth Bleasdale soldier to lay down his life in the Great War. R.I.P.'

His death was not recorded by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, but his father must have made sure that his name was included on the Bleasdale War Memorial in St. Eadmer's Church, the erection of which was under discussion from April 1919.

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References and acknowledgements:

For references etc. see the Acknowledgement Page.