

THE FALLEN OF SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN



GORDON SMITH

LEICESTERSHIRE REGIMENT

KILLED IN ACTION 3^RD MAY 1917

BORN IN 1896 AT SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN, THE SON OF
WILLIAM AND ELIZABETH SMITH

Smith Family History

- **1901 census** shows William, his wife Elizabeth and their 5 children living at 5, Raspberry Place, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
William (Head)	47	Wool sorter in worsted mill	Keighley, Yorkshire	1854
Elizabeth (wife)	42		Wakefield, Yorkshire	1859
Firth	14	Doffer in worsted mill	Sutton-in-Craven	1887
Horace	8		Sutton-in-Craven	1893
Gordon	5		Sutton-in-Craven	1896 - 1917
Marion	3		Sutton-in-Craven	1898
Venia	baby		Sutton-in-Craven	1901



Raspberry Place, Sutton-in-Craven

- **1911 census** shows William, presumably previously widowed and now re-married to Mary Alice for less than 12 months. They had a 2 week old daughter who was yet to be named. It also shows the Smith family now living at Holly Bank, Bent Lane, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
William (Head)	57	Wool sorter in worsted mill	Keighley, Yorkshire	1854
Mary Alice (2nd wife)	42	House hold duties	Halifax, Yorkshire	1869
Horace	18	Bobbin setter	Sutton-in-Craven	1893
Gordon	15	School boy	Sutton-in-Craven	1896 - 1917
Marion	13	Spinner	Sutton-in-Craven	1898
Venia	10	School girl	Sutton-in-Craven	1901
Not named	2 weeks		Sutton-in-Craven	1911

During the Great War the Smith family were recorded as living at Crag View, Sutton-in-Craven.



Crag View, Sutton-in-Craven
(source: photo taken by Barbara & Allen Chapman)

World War 1



It had been **99 years** since Britain was last involved in a major European conflict following the defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815

August 4th 1914 **Britain declares war on Germany**

In the autumn of 1914, the young men of the nation came from town and village to take the King's shilling and to offer him their dedicated services in defence of their homeland. From mills and mines, from shops and farms, from office chairs and civic departments, from loom, lathe, bench, plough and counter they flooded into the recruiting centres in answer to their nation's call for young manhood. These new recruits came to be known as **'Kitchener's Volunteers'**

The New Armies: "Kitchener's Volunteers"



Earl Kitchener recruitment poster 1914



Parliamentary Recruiting Committee
London, 1915



British volunteer recruits, August 1914
These men would form Kitchener's New Army

As a scholar at St Thomas's Church school, Gordon Smith won a county scholarship and spent 3 years at the Keighley Trade and Grammar School.

At the outbreak of the Great War, Gordon Smith was employed in the textile designing department at Messrs. T. and M. Bairstow.

Shortly afterwards, he left Sutton Mills to take up work as a clerk in the office of his uncle, Mr Andrew Broadhead, a well known timber merchant at Nelson.

In July 1916, Gordon Smith attested under the Derby Scheme and joined the Forces. He initially enlisted with the Lancashire Fusiliers and together with 6 others, commenced special training to become Drill Instructors. However, shortly afterwards, the party was drafted into the Leicestershire Regiment in order to make it up to strength before going out to France.

At the beginning of December 1916, Gordon Smith entered the Theatre of War in France with the 8th (service) battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment. His regimental number was 37633 and his rank was Private.

Name.		Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
SMITH		Leic R	Pte	36733
GORDON				
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.	
VICTORY	F/102B13	1542		
BRITISH	— do —	—		
STAR				
Theatre of War first served in				
Date of entry therein				

K. 1389

MEDAL INDEX CARD for Gordon Smith (source: *The National Archives*)

The Leicestershire Regiment was an infantry regiment of the British Army with a history going back to 1688. It saw service for three centuries, before being amalgamated into The Royal Anglian Regiment in 1964.

During the Great War, the Leicestershire Regiment increased from 5 battalions to 19, serving in France & Flanders, Mesopotamia and Palestine. The regiment lost approximately 6,000 dead during the four years of war



WW1 Leicestershire Regiment Cap Badge

The Western Front, 1917

At the beginning of 1917, the British and French were still searching for a way to achieve a strategic breakthrough on the Western Front. The previous year had been marked by the costly failure of the British offensive along the Somme river, while the French had been unable to take the initiative due to intense German pressure at Verdun.

For much of the war, the opposing armies on the Western Front were at a stalemate, with a continuous line of trenches stretching from the Belgian coast to the Swiss border. In essence, the Allied objective from early 1915 was to break through the German defences into the open ground beyond and engage the numerically inferior German army in a war of movement.

The Arras offensive was conceived as part of a plan to bring about this result.

The **Battle of Arras** was a British led offensive on the German trenches near the French city of Arras on the Western Front. The offensive started on the 9th April 1917 through until the 16th May 1917. The aim of the Arras offensive was part of the larger plan to break through the German defences. This would force them into the open ground when the numerical superiority of the Allies should prove victorious. The Arras offensive would embark at the same time as a French offensive about 50 miles to the south with the combined aim of ending the war within 48 hours.



British machine-gunners fire on German aircraft, Arras, 1917

As in the Somme a year earlier, The Battle of Arras was preceded with a huge artillery bombardment on enemy lines. The difference was that this time, the attack front was limited to a 24 mile stretch in order to concentrate the attack which had not been the case on the Somme.

Following the huge artillery bombardment on German lines, the first assaults took place on 9th April 1917 in the First Battle of Scarpe, the Battle of Vimy Ridge and the First Battle of Bullecourt.

Gains were made at Scarpe and Vimy Ridge, but at Bullecourt the initial gains made by the British and Australians were counter attacked by the Germans and heavy losses were incurred as they retreated. The first phase of the Battle of Arras ended on the 12th April 1917



Battle of Arras, 1917

The second phase of the Battle of Arras saw the Allies move to consolidate the gains they had already made. The plan of attack was to continue in the area to the east of Arras with the aim of breaking through enemy lines along with the French. However, the French offensive was failing.

In addition, the various battles of the second phase were fought over a period of time as opposed to simultaneously as had happened during the first phase. From the 15th April - 17th May 1917, the Battle of Lagnicourt, Second Battle of the Scarpe, Battle of Arleux, Second Battle of Bullecourt and the **Third Battle of the Scarpe** were fought.

By the end of the Arras offensive, the British had suffered more than 150,000 casualties and gained little ground since the first day. Despite significant early gains, the Battle of Arras ended with the Allies having failed to effect a breakthrough and the situation reverted to stalemate.

The **Third Battle of the Scarpe** was fought from the 3rd – 4th May 1917 as part of the second phase of the Arras offensive.

Here the 8th battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment, as part of the 21st Division, launched another attack near the Scarpe on the 3rd May. However, having failed to make any significant advances the attack was called off the following day having incurred heavy casualties.



Battle of the Scarpe, 1917

Pte Gordon Smith was **Killed in Action** on the **1st day of the Third Battle of the Scarpe**. Initially he had been listed as missing from his battalion since the engagement of the 3rd May 1917. However, more than 9 months later it was confirmed by the War Department that he was presumed killed on this day, despite his remains never being identified.

He was 21 years of age



Article Date: 08 June 1917

SUTTON

A MISSING SOLDIER - Mr and Mrs Wm. Smith, of Crag View, have received official information that their son, Pte. Gordon Smith, of the Leicester Regiment, has been missing since May 3rd. Pte. Smith, who recently attained his 21st birthday, was the third son of Mr. Smith. As a scholar at St. Thomas's Church day school he won a county minor scholarship and spent three years at the Keighley Trade and Grammar School. At the outbreak of the war he was employed by his uncle, Mr. Andrew Broadhead, timber merchant, of Nelson, as clerk. He attested under the, Derby Scheme and joined the forces in July, 1916, going across to France in December. Pte. Gordon Smith is very well known and respected in the village. He was a member of the Baptist Church. and on Sunday afternoon last at the monthly communion service the pastor, Rev. F. Ward Pollard, made sympathetic reference to the missing young man, and expressed in the name of the members of the church deep sympathy with the parents and family in their great anxiety.

(source: *Craven's Part in the Great War* www.cpgw.org.uk)



Article Date: 28 March 1918

CRAVEN AND THE WAR

Death of Private Gordon Smith

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Smith, of Crag View, Sutton, have received official intimation that their youngest son, Pte. Gordon Smith, of the

Leicester Regiment, who was reported missing on the 3rd of May last, and about whom exhausted inquiries have been made, is now regarded as having been killed on May 3rd or has died since. The deceased, who was in his 23rd year, joined up in July, 1915, becoming attached to the East Lancashire Regiment, but was transferred to the Leicester Regiment. He went out to France in December, 1916. At the time of his enlistment he was employed with his uncle, Mr. Andrew Broadhead, timber merchant, Nelson. As a boy he went to the Sutton Church School, and while there he won a scholarship tenable for three years at the Keighley Trade and Grammar School. Prior to leaving the district he was a worker in connection with the Sutton Baptist Sunday School, in the junior department. He was also a member of the church. He was a young man, very highly respected by all who knew him. His loss is greatly deplored and much sympathy is felt with his parents, who have their two remaining sons in the army.

(source: *Craven's Part in the Great War* www.cpgw.org.uk)



Casualty Details

Name: SMITH, GORDON

Initials: G

Nationality: United Kingdom

Rank: Private

Regiment/Service: Leicestershire Regiment

Unit Text: 8th Bn.

Date of Death: 03/05/1917

Service No: 36733

Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead

Grave/Memorial Reference: Bay 5.

Memorial: ARRAS MEMORIAL

(source: *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* www.cwgc.org/)

ARRAS MEMORIAL



Arras memorial, France

(source: *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* www.cwgc.org/)

The Arras memorial commemorates almost 35,000 servicemen from the United Kingdom, South Africa and New Zealand who died in the Arras sector between the spring of 1916 and the 7th of August 1918 on the eve of the Advance to Victory and have no known grave.

The most conspicuous events of this period were the Arras offensive of April - May 1917, and the German attack in the spring of 1918.

Canadian and Australian servicemen killed in these operations are commemorated by memorials at Vimy and Villers-Bretonneux.

Pte Gordon Smith is also remembered on the Sutton-in-Craven war memorial

WAR MEMORIAL, SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN PARK



(source: *South Craven, the official guide, 1950*)



Sutton-in-Craven War Memorial (photo taken by Paul Wilkinson)

Pte Gordon Smith was posthumously awarded the
British War Medal & Victory Medal



Original pair of WW1 medals (source: owned by Andrew Monkhouse)

A Memorial Plaque inscribed with the soldiers name was also given to the family of those who were killed during WW1



Original WW1 Memorial Plaque (name digitally altered)
Also referred to as a Death Plaque or Dead Man's Penny
(source: owned by Andrew Monkhouse)

Lest we Forget

CRAVEN'S ROLL OF HONOUR



PRIVATE GORDON SMITH, Leicester Regt., son of Mr. & Mrs. William Smith, North View, Sutton, reported missing 3rd May, 1917. Aged 21 years.

source: *Craven's Part in the Great War*

Original 1919 copy owned by Andrew Monkhouse

FOR THE FALLEN

*THEY SHALL NOT GROW OLD, AS WE THAT ARE
LEFT GROW OLD*

*AGE SHALL NOT WEARY THEM, NOR THE YEARS
CONDEMN*

*AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND IN THE
MORNING*

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

LAURENCE BINYON, 1869-1943



(Information compiled by Andrew Monkhouse 2011)