

163: Joseph Smith

Joseph Smith is currently [November 2018] not recognised by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission as a casualty of WW1 although he died in June 1918, in Neston, from medical conditions exacerbated by his active service. Similarly, Joseph is not recorded on the Regiment's Roll of Honour contained in the Regimental Chapel of St. George in Chester Cathedral.

It is hoped that fuller recognition of Joseph will be made by the CWGC.

Joseph Smith was the son of stonecutter/labourer William Smith of Neston and Jane. The 1891 census records William, 27, as an agricultural labourer and Jane, also 27, born Wales, as living on Chester Road, Bromborough.

William *may* have married Jane Jones in Liverpool in late 1890 but her maiden name is uncertain. However, Jane died 11 February 1899, aged 32, and by the 1901 census William and his three children were living with his widowed mother and William's younger brother, Ernest, on Victoria Road, Little Neston:

Mary Smith	Head	Wid	62	✓				Ches Neston
William do	Wid	36	✓	Stonecutter	Widow			do
Ernest do	Son	20	✓	Coalminer	Widow			do
Edward do	G. Son	8	✓					do
Joseph do	G. Son	4	✓					Bromborough
Jane do	G. Daughter	6	✓					do
Frederick Handfield	St. 1	62	✓					do

1901 census (extract) – Victoria Road, Little Neston

Mary Smith	62		born Neston
William	36	widower, stonecutter	born Neston
Ernest	20	coal miner	born Neston
Edward	8	grandson	born Bromborough
Joseph	4	grandson	born Bromborough
Jane	6	granddaughter	born Bromborough

Daniel Smith, William's father, had died on 24 November 1898, aged 65, and was buried at Neston Parish Church. Mary, William's mother, died 1 March 1911 aged 72 and was also buried at Neston. Ernest, William's brother, married Mary Jane Booth at Our Lady & St Nicholas & S. Anne, the Liverpool Parish Church, in April/June 1902 and at the time of the 1911 census Ernest, Mary and their four young children (two others had died) were living at 7 New Street, Colliery. Ernest was a coal miner (hewer); he died, aged 90, on 7 April 1970. Ernest's wife, Mary Jane (Molly) had died on 30 March 1954 aged 62. Ernest and Molly are buried at Neston Cemetery.

William's youngest brother, Joseph's uncle, Alfred Smith, was killed in France on 25 September 1918 and he and the Smith family are detailed in this work [see [161: Alfred Smith](#)].

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Number of Schedule 93
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after collection.)

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.

The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, or in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family.	AGE last Birthday and SEX.	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.				PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards.				BIRTHPLACE of every person.	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country.	INFIRMITY.
			State for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the number of—	Children born alive to present Marriage. (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7.)	Completed years the present Marriage has lasted. If less than one year write "under one year."	Total Children Born Alive.	Children still Living.	Children who have died.	Personal Occupation.	Industry or Service with which worker is connected.			
1 William Smith	Head	39	Widower	3	3	—	—	—	Labourer Bx Building Trade	Widower	At Home	Blache Little Neston	
2 Edward William Smith	Son	18	Single	—	—	—	—	—	Gardener (Domestic)	Widower	At Home	Blache Bromborough	
3 Joseph Smith	Son	14	Single	—	—	—	—	—	Labourer 140 Agricultural	Widower	At Home	Blache Bromborough	

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

I certify that—		
(1) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex column.	Total.	
(2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 3 and 4 separately, and have compared their sum with the total number of persons.	Males	Females
(3) After making the necessary corrections I have compared all entries on the Schedule which appeared to be defective and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.	3	3
Initials of Enumerator	J.M.S.	

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (House, Tenement, or Apartment), Count the kitchen as a room but do not count outhouse, landing, lobby, closet, bedchamber, nor warehouse, office, shop.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: *William Smith* (H.M. Enumerator)
 Postal Address: 906 New Street, 71000, Blache

1911 census (condensed) – 6 New Houses, Ness

William Smith	39	widower, labourer, building trade	born Little Neston
Edward William	18	gardener (domestic)	born Bromborough
Joseph	14	labourer, agricultural	born Bromborough

William recorded that he had three children.

By the time of the 1911 census Jane Smith had left home and William and his two sons were living at 6 New Houses, Ness. Recorded as a labourer in the building trade, it is likely that he was working at the colliery; New Houses, a short terrace (since demolished) on New Houses Lane (the track leading from Well Lane, Ness, to the old colliery site by the marshes) had been constructed to house colliery employees.

Recorded as a domestic gardener in 1911 Joseph Smith attested in Neston for the 13th Battalion Cheshire regiment on 5 September 1914 when he gave his age as 17 years 350 days. This would indicate that Joseph was born on, or about, 20 September 1896.

When Joseph Smith attested in Neston he was recorded as being 5ft 5ins tall, weighed 9 stone (57.25kg) and with a 36½-inch expanded chest. His eyes were grey, his hair black and his complexion was described as florid. Although he gave his religion as Congregationalist, he is not commemorated on the tablet in the URC in Parkgate Road. Although, considering his later medical history, he was probably not in the best of health, he was considered fit for service when he attended his medical examination.

The 13th (Service) Battalion, Cheshire Regiment - known unofficially as the Wirral Battalion - was raised in Port Sunlight on 1 September 1914 by Gershom Stewart, MP. Although a recruitment campaign in Port Sunlight, and Levers' soap Works, produced a large influx of new troops recruitment was Wirral-wide and local recruitment offices in many towns.

The battalion moved to Chester and joined the 74th Brigade, 25th Division in Kitchener's Third New Army. The Division assembled in the area around Salisbury for training and the 13th Cheshires spent the winter in billets in Bournemouth. The division moved to

Aldershot in May 1915 for final training before proceeding to France on 25 September 1915 and concentrated in the area of Nieppe. Their first action was in defence of the German attack on Vimy Ridge on 21 May 1916 although Joseph will have seen none of this action as a consequence of his medical conditions.

Joseph Smith's Service Record - his Service Number was W/1138, the W signifying the Wirral Battalion - is dominated not by his military actions but by the medical conditions he experienced.

Having arrived in France as part of the Expeditionary Force on 25 September 1915 Joseph was admitted to a Field Ambulance at Armentières, west of Lille and close to the Belgium border, on 10 October as he was suffering from influenza. A Field Ambulance was not a vehicle but a mobile front line medical unit; each Division had three Field Ambulances assigned to it, comprising 10 officers and 224 men in total.

On 18 October Joseph was described as suffering from 'debility', presumably weakness and fatigue brought on by his 'flu, and Joseph was transferred to the North Midland Casualty Clearing Station at Bailleul, a large town in France near the Belgian border and about 9 miles south west of Ypres (Ieper). Bailleul had been occupied on 14 October 1914 by the 19th Brigade and the 4th Division and it became an important railhead, air depot and hospital centre. Casualty Clearing Stations (CCS) were part of the casualty evacuation chain and further from the front line than the Field Ambulances. The role of the CCS was to provide treatment which would permit the patient to return to duty or, in most cases, to enable him to be evacuated to a Base Hospital. Many, as at Bailleul, were located on or near railway lines to facilitate the movement of casualties from the battlefield and on to the hospitals.

Influenza was, internationally, a serious medical problem and a cause of millions of deaths annually; between 1918 and 1919 a pandemic of a virulent form of the disease (known as 'Spanish Flu') is estimated to have caused between 50 million and 100 million deaths. A significant problem in the early 20th century was that the cause and nature of influenza was poorly understood with most medical practitioners mistakenly believing that influenza was caused by a bacterium, *Pfeiffer's bacillus*. This bacterium had been first identified as the cause of influenza by Robert Friedrich Pfeiffer, a leading German scientist, although he had failed to provide definitive proof that this bacillus actually caused the disease. However, influenza is a viral infection and not caused by bacteria and it can now be prevented by vaccines which were unavailable at that time.

Moving westwards towards the coast, Joseph arrived at N^o. 15 CCS at Hazebrouck where, on 25 October, he was diagnosed with bronchitis catarrhalis, a pathogenic disease causing infections of the respiratory system, middle ear, eye, central nervous system and joints.

The following day (26 October 1915) Joseph Smith was at the Rawal Pindi British General Base Hospital at Wimereux, a coastal town about 3 miles north of Boulogne,

where he was diagnosed with myalgia, muscle pains which may be symptomatic of many diseases and disorders and is often due to viral infections.

A Base Hospital was part of the casualty evacuation chain and even further back from the front line than the Casualty Clearing Stations. British hospitals were generally located near the coast and near a port where men could be evacuated for longer-term treatment in Britain. The Rawal Pindi centre appears to have been formed from British medical units based in India and sent to France in October 1914 with the large contingent from the Indian Army.

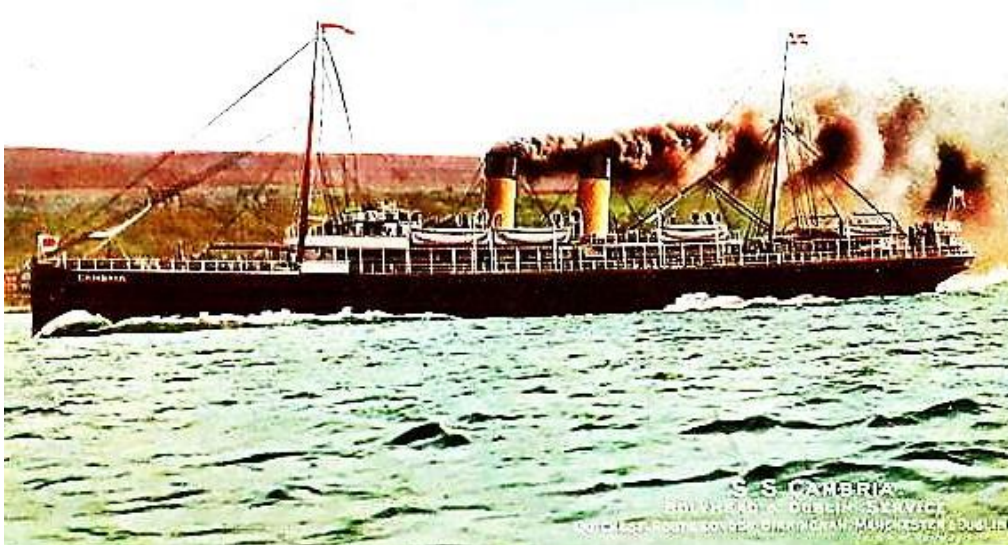
Moved again, Joseph was at N^o. 1 Command Depot at Boulogne on 1 November 1915 where he was diagnosed with bronchitis. Command, or Convalescent, Depots were half way houses for sick or wounded soldiers who were considered to be regaining their health and who no longer required hospitalisation but were not yet fit to rejoin their units. It must have been believed that Joseph was becoming fit to return to active service as, on 12 November, he was admitted to the 25th Infantry Base Depot at Étaples which provided training for new recruits and veterans about to return to the front line. Soldiers at Étaples had intensive training in gas warfare and bayonet drill, and long sessions of marching at the double across the coastal dunes. Étaples Depot had a poor reputation and it was said that after two weeks many wounded and ill soldiers would rather return to the front with unhealed wounds than remain at Étaples. Indeed, on 22 November 1915 Joseph was declared to be fit for service.

However, Joseph Smith's health then appears to have deteriorated at Étaples as he remained at the Depot for six weeks before, on 23 December, he was moved to the Étaples Isolation Hospital (N^o. 46 Stationary Hospital).

With no indication that Joseph would recover and be fit to return to the front line, it was decided to return him to Britain and so, on 5 January 1916, he embarked on the Hospital Steam Ship *Cambria*. Prior to embarkation, Joseph was at N^o. 23 General

Hospital, Étaples, (admitted with laryngitis) where he was recorded as suffering from inflamed glands in the neck, anaemia and slight haemoptysis (coughing blood).

Arriving back in Britain Joseph Smith was taken to the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD) at Dallington, to the north of Northampton.



SS *Cambria*

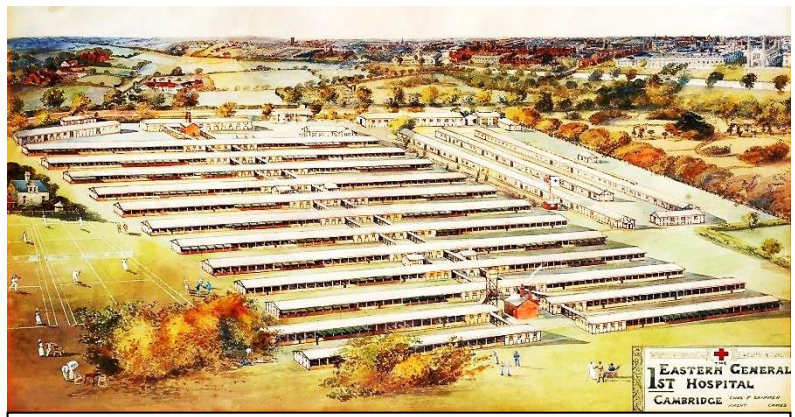
[Source:

<http://www.roll-of-honour.com/Ships/SSCambria.html>]

As their name suggests, Voluntary Aid Detachments were voluntary units providing field nursing services, mainly in hospitals, in Britain and other parts of the British Empire. Founded in 1909 through the Red Cross and the Order of St John or Jerusalem (the 'Joint War Committee'), by the summer of 1914 there were over 2,500 Voluntary Aid Detachments in Britain and of the 74,000 VAD members in 1914, two-thirds were female. The organisation was able to set up temporary hospitals, in a wide variety of buildings, as soon as wounded and sick men began to arrive from abroad. The most suitable buildings were established as auxiliary hospitals attached to central Military Hospitals, and the patients remained under military control. In Cheshire 77 VADs were established, the three most local being the Parkgate Convalescence Home, the Neston Institute on Hinderton Road and Thornton Manor.

At Dallington, on 6 January 1916, Joseph Smith was diagnosed with swollen glands and sometime afterwards was transferred to the First Eastern General Hospital at Cambridge. This large hospital, planned before the outbreak of war, was built in just ten weeks on a former cricket field belonging to King's and Clare Colleges. The completed hospital, a series of pre-fabricated wooden huts, had up to 1,700 beds, operating theatres and ancillary buildings, a Post Office, shop, cinema and other recreational facilities; it has been called the 'small city on the Backs'.

The First Eastern's open air wards - the south-facing 'walls' were just curtains - and its curative use of direct sunlight and saline baths in the treatment of war wounds attracted much public attention. The site later became the University Library and is now largely forgotten.



The First Eastern General Hospital, Cambridge. The first patients were admitted on 17 October 1914 and by 1916, when there was an influx of patients, accommodation was expanded to include tents and marquees. When the hospital closed in 1919 some of the buildings were converted into housing for council tenants waiting to be re-housed. In 1929 the site was cleared and the current University Library building, which now sits on this site, was constructed between 1931 and 1934 by architect Giles Gilbert Scott.



Discharged – Being no longer physically fit for War Service – para. 392 (xvi) KR on 15/6/16

1901 W887/241684 1,250,000. 4/17. CAR.P.Ltd. (E1172)

NEXT OF KIN. Army Form W. 8040

Relation	Name	Address
Father	Mr. J. Smith	10, Colchester Road, Cambridge
Discharged - Being no longer physically fit for War Service - para 392 (xvi) KR on 15/6/16		
for the Genl		
Regt. Infantry. Records.		
Shrewsbury.		

Date of Enlistment 5-9-14

A.F. D400 and D453 issued.

Date of Mobilization

5.7.1916

Cause of Discharge Medically Unfit Glands in neck.

Report of Medical Board (dated 11-5-16.)

On 16 May 1916 Joseph was discharged from the First Eastern General Hospital and sent to his home to await instructions.

It must have been clear to the

Originated Dec. 1915 at Etaples. Patient has very marked enlargement of cervical glands practically all the groups being enlarged. Accelerated by active service - exposure. Permanent. Prevents 1/2 at present, future uncertain. A. F. B. 103. Isolation Hospital Etaples. 23.12.15. England 5.1.16.

army that it was unlikely that Joseph would recover sufficiently to be recalled to the front, and it would appear that they did not even consider him for more general duties in Britain for, on 15 June 1916, he was formally discharged as being physically unfit. By that date (he was aged 19 years 8 months) he had served for 1 year 284 days although, even having been on the front line in France, it is quite possible that he was not involved in any significant action.

There were 29 different ways in which someone could be discharged under the King's Regulations, each defined by a paragraph number and section.

20.1.17 SB 68. Dear Sir I wish to make an application for Silver Badge. I have been discharged from the Army, after serving 1 year 284 days as no longer fit physically for War Service. (Para 392 XV1, K.R., Hoping this is quite in order. Yours sincerely J. Smith Sunset Cottages Ness Neston Cheshire

Joseph's discharge papers noted that he was medically unfit and that the 'Patient has very marked enlargement of cervical glands practically all the groups being enlarged : accelerated by active service - exposure. Prevents 1/2 at present, future uncertain'.

Like many other young men who had been discharged from military service and returned home, Joseph must have been very conscious of his position. Accordingly, to demonstrate that he had served his country, Joseph wrote a postcard to the army in January 1917 to request a Silver War Badge.

20.1.17 SB 68

Dear Sir.

I wish to make an application for Silver Badge. I have been discharged from the Army after serving 1 year 284 days as no longer fit physically for War Service.

(Para 392 XV1 K.R. Hoping this is quite in order.

Yours sincerely,

J. Smith

Sunset Cottages

Ness

Neston, Cheshire

Late W/1138 13 Cheshires Regt

The Silver War Badge

The British Empire lost more than 700,000 service personnel in WW1 and an even greater number was discharged because of wounds or illness.

In September 1916, King George V authorized the Silver War Badge (SWB) to honour military personnel who had served at home or overseas after the outbreak of war (4 August 1914) and who had been discharged because of wounds or illness. The SWB was a small, circular badge of sterling silver, bearing the king's initials, a crown, and the inscriptions 'For King and Empire' and 'Services Rendered'.



The SWB was not simply an honour; it also served a practical purpose. At the time, men of military age who were not obviously in the service were sometimes accosted or insulted by civilians presenting them with white feathers — a symbol of cowardice — for shirking their patriotic duty. The badge served as an outward symbol that the wearer's duty to country had been honourably fulfilled.

Almost half of the 2 million military personnel discharged from the armed forces during the war for illness or injury (including those who left before the award was instituted in 1916) applied to wear the SWB. The award was not confined to Britons: servicemen (or women) from anywhere in the Empire were entitled to it.

The Silver War Badge, sometimes known as the Discharge Badge, Wound Badge or Services Rendered Badge, was first issued in September 1916, along with an official certificate of entitlement.

The sterling silver lapel badge was intended to be worn on civilian clothing badge, on the right breast, but it was forbidden to wear it on a military uniform.

Each badge was uniquely numbered on the reverse. The War Office made it known that they would not replace Silver War Badges if they went missing, however if one was handed into a police station then it would be returned to the War Office. If the original recipient could be traced at his or her discharge address then the badge would be returned.

This was 7 months after his discharge and four months after the badge was introduced.

Joseph was successful in his application and received his badge, numbered 26730, and he would also have received the ornate King's Certificate of Discharge.

Army Form B.268 - *Proceedings on Discharge* was an important document issued to authenticate the details of the discharged soldier and to provide evidence for the issue of a pension. The form shows that there had been little change in Joseph's appearance since his enlistment, although he had grown by one inch and his hair was now brown rather than black. He now also had a tattoo of a heart on his right forearm!

Joseph was awarded a pension of 10 shillings per week in July 1916 although

Army Form B. 268.

This space to be left blank for the Chelsea Number.

99584

Proceedings on Discharge.

(When forwarded for confirmation the documents named on page 4 should be enclosed.)

No. <i>11138</i>	Army Rank <i>Pte</i>
Name <i>Joseph Smith</i> <small>(The name must agree strictly with that on enlistment, unless changed subsequently by authority.)</small>	
Corps <i>Lancashire Regt</i>	
Battalion, Battery, Company, Depot, &c. <i>Depot</i> <small>(If attached to the Regular Establishment of the Special Reserve or Permanent Staff of the Territorial Force, &c., or to General Staff of the Army, it should be so stated.)</small>	
Date of discharge <i>16th June 1916.</i>	
Place of discharge <i>Lancaster</i>	
1. Description at the time of discharge.	
Age <i>19</i> years <i>8</i> months Height <i>5</i> feet <i>6</i> inches Chest measurement [girth when fully expanded <i>36^{1/2}</i> ins. range of expansion <i>13</i> ins. Complexion <i>Fresh</i> Eyes <i>Grey</i> Hair <i>Brown</i> Trade <i>Labourer</i> Intended place of residence <i>Sunset Cottage, New, Keaton, Lancaster.</i> <small>(To be given as fully as practicable.)</small> <small>(If the measurements and description should be carefully taken on the day the man leaves his unit, but in the case of men sent home from a hospital for discharge, the age and intended place of residence should be left blank: to be filled in by the Officer who confirms the discharge at home.)</small>	Descriptive marks. <i>Tattoo - heart on rt forearm</i>
2. The above-named man is discharged in consequence of <i>Being no longer physically fit for War Service.</i> <small>(Para 392 XVI K.R.)</small>	
<small>(The cause of discharge must be worded as prescribed in the King's Regulations and be identical with that on the discharge certificate. If discharged by superior authority, the No. and date of the letter to be quoted.)</small>	
3. Military character — <i>Good.</i>	
4. Character awarded in accordance with King's Regulations:— <i>Steady & Steady</i>	
To be filled in on the soldier quitting the Colours.	
Certified that the above is an accurate copy of the character given by me on Army Form D. 2667* and that Army Form D. 489 was awarded in this case.	
Initials of Commanding Officer.	

A. 46.

Board,

ROYAL HOSPITAL,
CHELSEA, S.W.
191

SIR,
I am directed by the Lords and others, Commissioners of this Hospital, to inform you of the undermentioned decisions in the cases of Men whose discharge Documents have been recently received with the view of having the claims to pensions considered.

I have the honour to be,
SIR,
Your obedient Servant,

To
The Officer Commanding
Cheshire Regiment. Depot Assistant Secretary.

Corps.	Rank.	Name and Regimental Number.	Allowances for Children.	Decision. Weekly Pension	
Cheshire Depot	Pte	Joseph Smith W/1138		10/-	6 months 6 months

Joseph Smith's Army Pension form showing his entitlement to 10/- per week.

this was conditional to a review in six months' time. Unfortunately, no documents exist to illustrate Joseph's life over the next two years - it is not even known whether he was fit to return to work as a labourer - but it is known that he died on 11 June 1918 aged 21.

Ref. Med/X/1003/Ches.

I hereby acknowledge the receipt of the
1914 - 15 Star.
granted in respect of the service of No. 1138. Pte. J. SMITH.
The CHESHIRE REGIMENT.

Date 30.6.20. 1919

Signature William Smith.

Mr. W. Smith, Sunset Cottage, Ness, Neston, Cheshire.

The 1914-15 Star was awarded to officers and men of British and Imperial forces who served in any theatre of World War I against the Central European Powers during 1914 and 1915. The medal was never awarded singly and recipients were also awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal. Some 2.36 million medals were awarded to soldiers and supporting personnel of British military forces.

The British War Medal was instituted on 26 July 1919 as an award for those who had rendered service between 5 August 1914, the day following the British declaration of war against Germany, and the armistice of 11 November 1918. Around 6.5 million medals were struck in silver.

I hereby acknowledge the receipt of the
British War Medal.
granted in respect of the service of No. 1138,
J. Smith, The Cheshire Regt.
Date 22/3/21.
Signature William Smith.
Mr Wm Smith, Sunset Cottages, Ness, Neston Ches.

Following Joseph's death, William Smith, Joseph's father, received the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal on his behalf.

Sheet B/607.

I hereby acknowledge the receipt of the
 Victory Medal
 granted in respect of the service of
 1138. J. Smith. Berkshire Regt.

Date 8/10/21

Signature William Smith.

W. Smith
 unsat bottom
 H.S.S.
 recto. b. 607.

The Victory Medal was a First World War campaign medal of Britain which was issued to all those who received the 1914 Star or the 1914-15 Star, and to most of those who were awarded the British War Medal - it was never awarded singly. Over 6.3 million were issued.

858979	453813	Smith	13 th Bn.	Dischd.						8819	7a + Sol. by.	8	-
		Joseph	Berkshire R.	15. 6. 16.							William		
			Private	War Graces									
			1138	Trans. Ho 3859 1/4/19									
			Eff. 1010 ps	Regd. Paper 2/1/19 6									
				Genl. S. & Ho. 678									

Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929

In 1919 the army paid outstanding credits – mainly remaining wages – to soldiers or, in the case of those who had died, their family or nominated representatives. At the same time a War Gratuity was often paid. Joseph's father, William, as sole legatee, received a War Gratuity of £8. This is equivalent to a *labour value* (wages) of around £1240 in 2016. As Joseph had died after being discharged from the army, no remaining wages had accrued.

The War Gratuity was introduced in December 1918 as a payment to be made to those men who had served in WW1 for a period of 6 months or more home service or for any length of service if a man had served overseas. The rules governing the gratuity were implemented under Army Order 17 of 1919 but the amount paid was related to the length of war service.

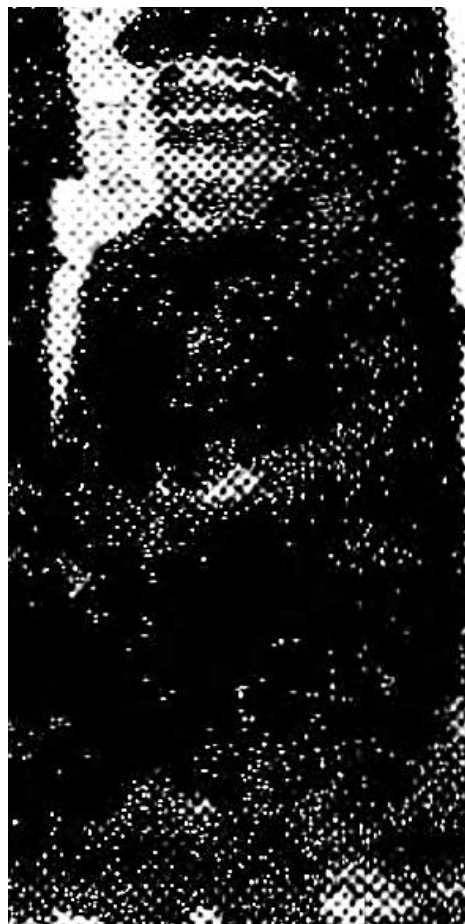
British Army WWI Medal
 Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
SMITH.	Berk: R.	Pvt.	10/1138.
Joseph.			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	J/2/101	77	
BRITISH	do	do	
15. STAR	J/2/181	95.	Disc: 15-6-16.
Sheet B List.	J/381.		
Theatre of War first served in	(1) France.		
Date of entry therein	25.9.15.		

Whilst it is presumed that Joseph Smith was buried at Neston Cemetery his grave has not been found.

The headstone (below, right, Neston Parish Church) is of Daniel and Mary, Joseph's grandparents, Joseph's uncle (also Joseph, died 3 December 1888 aged 28) and Joseph's mother, Jane.

The headstone below, left (Neston Cemetery) is that of Joseph's uncle, Ernest, and his wife Mary Jane (Molly).



Cheshire Observer - Saturday
26 December 1914

In the 1939 Register William Smith, Joseph's father, was recorded as still living at 1 Sunset Cottages, Ness:

William Smith	born 7 August 1864	widower, builder's labourer
Margaret Edwards	born 29 May 1894	cook, general (unemployed)
Martha E Edwards	born 5 September 1896	

The relationship, if any, between William Smith and Margaret and Martha Edwards is unclear. It is not known when William Smith died.

Ernest Smith, Joseph's uncle, was living at 5 New Street, Little Neston, at the time of the 1939 Register:

Ernest Smith	born 22 January 1880	corporation employee, general labourer
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Mary	born 1 July 1883	
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Alfred	born 23 June 1916	single	general labourer, oil works
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Vera	born 14 July 1918	single	
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One line of the record has been redacted

Ronald	born 5 August 1924	single	market gardener's apprentice
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Vera Smith married Harold Basford at a Civil Marriage on Wirral in early 1940.

As noted previously, Ernest and Mary Jane (Molly) are buried at Neston Cemetery; Mary Jane died on 30 March 1954 aged 62 and Ernest died on 7 April 1970 aged 90.

For additional detail on the Smith family see [161: Alfred Smith](#).

WIRRAL BATTALION

Magnificent response at Port Sunlight Over 500 Enrolled

A Wirral Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment is now in the course of formation, and judging by the enthusiasm with which the project was greeted at Port Sunlight yesterday the full complement of men will soon be obtained. In addition to the 400 men, including members of the St John Ambulance Brigade, who have already left for active service, close upon six hundred others have signified their intention of joining the new battalion

This rush to recruit arose chiefly out of a notice, posted in the works on Monday, which under the heading "The Call to Arms" ran as follows;

"In view of the present grave crisis the directors desire to make it known to all employees that they hope and expect that all men between the ages of 19 and 35 will offer their services to their King and country.

The situations of each will be kept open for them against their return. In the case of married men on weekly pay, the practice already adopted of making an allowance of half-wages will apply, and similarly in the case of unmarried men. The present practice of considering any very special case where immediate dependants are left behind will also apply. The time during which employees are thus serving their king and country will be counted in calculating their length of service with the company for the purpose of co-partnership, long service awards, employees' benefit fund etc.

Time allowance will be made to those requiring to visit recruiting stations during working hours, provided application is made beforehand to the head of department"

The news that General Sir Henry MacKinnon had sanctioned the raising of a Wirral battalion, in which all the recruits from Port Sunlight would be kept together was greeted by thunderous applause at a crowded meeting at the Gladstone Hall yesterday afternoon. Mr Gershom Stewart, who is displaying an active interest in the raising of the battalion, attended the meeting and delivered a rousing address.

He spoke of the grave danger with which the nation was confronted and of his desire to raise a battalion of a thousand Wirral men, who he hoped would do everything to uphold the glorious traditions of the 22nd Cheshires. He understood that from those works alone he could depend on 500 men (a voice "a thousand if necessary"), and with such a prospect in view he felt certain that the ranks would be full in no time. He hoped that by the time they were fit and ready the Germans would have had enough of British pluck and determination, but whatever happened, he could reply upon them doing their duty and behaving like men and British soldiers (applause).

He assured them that everything would be done to ensure the men being combined in one regiment so that they would drill, work, and if necessary, fight together.

The meeting was characterised by scenes of unparalleled enthusiasm. At the close Gladstone Hall was opened as a recruiting depot, and the men to the number of considerably over five hundred, most of them of sturdy structure and full of vim and vigour, formed in a queue for the purpose of medical examination and enrolment.

[Birkenhead News – 2 September 1914]