

Frederick Barnabas George SMITH (1896-1917)

Frederick Barnabas George Smith's connection to South Lopham is by birth and residency.

Frederick Barnabas George SMITH, son of George William SMITH (c. 1871-) and Emma Rebecca SELF (c. 1861-), was born on 8 August 1896 in Garboldisham, Norfolk.¹ He was baptised on 13 September 1896 in Garboldisham - parents George and Emma Rebecca.²

In the 1901 Census (31 Mar 1901) he appeared at Low Common in South Lopham, Norfolk - 4, living with uncle Barzillai SELF (HEAD, 49, farmer), parents George (30, agricultural labourer) and Emma (40), and sister May (6, scholar).³

At the time of the 1911 Census, Frederick was living at Low Common in South Lopham - 14, working on farm, living with parents George (40, horseman on farm) and Emma Rebecca (50), and sister Margaret May (16, housework).⁴

Frederick enlisted at Norwich, Norfolk on 15 September 1914. To 15 March 1916 he served on home soil. On 16 March 1916 he was posted to 1/4th Battalion Norfolk Regiment, Serv. No. 200547, serving in the British Middle Eastern Force in Egypt and Gaza. He died on 19 April 1917 in Gaza - first reported missing then conformed killed in action.

There was some confusion over the reporting of the death of Frederick and the letter below from his sister explained his family's query:

**Crown and Anchor
Blo Norton
Thetford Norfolk**

November 2nd 1917

Record Office

I am writing on behalf of my father to know if you have heard of any further news concerning my brother 200547 Pte. F G Smith of the 4th Norfolk who have been reported wounded and missing since April 19th 1917 in Egypt.

We have had a letter from the Red Cross some five weeks back saying they

have received a report about my brother from a chap named Barber who was beside him when he was hit in the leg and body and he left him for dead. If you have not had the report we will forward the letter that we had from the Red Cross should you want it. Awaiting your reply.

Yours truly
Miss Smith

Frederick's sister's letter was further followed up by a letter from his father:

South Lopham
Nr. Thetford, Norfolk
March 11th 1919

To the Officer in charge
No. 1 Infantry Records
No. 9 District, Warley

Sir.

I am in receipt of your letter of the 24-2-19, WR/54606/8 referring to my son, Frederick George Smith late No. 200547 - 4th Norfolk Regt. in which you state that it was found necessary to exhume the body and re-inter. This account is very difficult to understand as according to the Official Report first saying he was "wounded" and the next was that he was "wounded and missing" on April 19th 1917 and that death was assumed.

I should be glad of further information on this matter.

I am Sir
Yours truly
George Smith

No copy of the letter referred to has been found nor has any response to George's letter.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission grave registration entry for Frederick was "SMITH, Pte. Frederick George, 200547. 1st/4th Bn. Norfolk Regt. 19th April, 1917. Age 20. Son of George and Emma Rebecca Smith, of South Lopham, Attleborough, Norfolk. XXIII. C. 7."⁵

Frederick is commemorated at Gaza War Cemetery - XXIII. C. 7.⁶

Sources

1. *CR Birth*. 1896 Q3 Guiltcross Norfolk Vol 4B Page 243. Cit. Date: Q3 1896.
2. *PR - Baptism*. Garboldisham, Norfolk. Cit. Date: 13 September 1896.
3. *1901 Census*. RG13 Piece 1966 Folio 23 Page 9 Schedule 90. Cit. Date: 31 March 1901.
4. *1911 Census*. RG14 PN11746 RD239 SD2 ED19 SN87. Cit. Date: 2 April 1911.
5. CWGC. <https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/651335/frederick-george-smith/>.
6. CWGC. <https://www.cwgc.org/visit-us/find-cemeteries-memorials/cemetery-details/71701/gaza-war-cemetery/>.