



A Rededication Service for

**Lieutenant Harold Rymer Smith
2/6th Battalion The North Staffordshire Regiment
(The Prince of Wales's)**

**10:00 hours Thursday 23 March 2023
CWGC Écoust Military Cemetery, France**

**Service conducted by The Reverend Daniel Njuguna CF
Chaplain to 1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment
Déroulement de la Cérémonie présidé par
le Révérend Daniel Njuguna CF**

Lieutenant Harold Rymer Smith



Lieutenant Harold Rymer Smith was born in Barnet, Middlesex, in 1895. He was one of eight children born to Joseph Ralph Smith and his wife Abigail. On 26 March 1915, Harold was Commissioned into The North Staffordshire Regiment as a Second Lieutenant. He arrived on the Western Front on 1 November 1915.

On 19 March 1918, 2/6th Battalion The North Staffordshire Regiment, to which Lieutenant Smith belonged, moved into the Bullecourt Sector and took up positions in support around Écoust-Saint-Mein. Two days later on 21 March, the Germans launched Operation Michael, the first phase of their Spring Offensive. Three attacks were made on Écoust-Saint-Mein that day and ultimately the German advance could not be repulsed.

Lieutenant Smith was wounded by a shell and taken to the Regimental Aid Post which was located next to the Battalion Headquarters on the northwestern edge of the village, near the Croisilles to Écoust Road. As casualties mounted, the Regimental Aid Post, the tunnel under the embankment and Battalion Headquarters were filled with the wounded in the space of a few minutes. Captain G Adams later reported that Lieutenant Smith had been lying on the stretcher next to him and that he had died. Lieutenant Smith was 23 years old.

Having captured Écoust-Saint-Mein the Germans set about clearing the village and created a mass grave close to the location of the Regimental Aid Post. Lieutenant Smith was buried there, and his death and burial were reported through the Red Cross. His personal effects were returned.

In September 1920 the mass grave was exhumed, and the soldiers buried there were moved into Plot II, Row B in Écoust Military Cemetery. One of the casualties was identified as being an Officer who had the initials 'H S' marked on his clothing, but no identification could be made. Lieutenant Smith was therefore commemorated on the Arras Memorial to the

missing. However, new research has shown that this Officer is in fact Lieutenant Harold Rymer Smith.

The headstone over the grave has now been changed. Today we will remember Lieutenant Harold Rymer Smith and his grave will be rededicated. We also remember his brother, Second Lieutenant Ralph Pritchard Smith who was killed near Ypres on 5 August 1917 whilst serving with 8th Battalion The North Staffordshire Regiment. Second Lieutenant Smith is buried in Somer Farm Cemetery.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's Écoust Military Cemetery was begun in April 1917 when the village of Écoust-Saint-Mein was first captured by the 8th and 9th Devons. It continued to be used until March 1918, when control of the village was lost, with subsequent burials made by German forces. After the Armistice several more graves were added to Plot II, Row B from a position just outside the cemetery. This included the previously unidentified Lieutenant Smith.

Lieutenant Harold Rymer Smith est né à Barnet, Middlesex, en 1895. Il été un des huit enfants nés à Joseph Ralph Smith et sa femme Abigail. Le 26 mars, 1915, il a obtenu une commission comme Second Lieutenant dans le North Staffordshire Regiment. Il est arrivé sur le Front Occidental le 1 novembre, 1915.

Le 19 mars, 1918, 2/6^e Bataillon du North Staffordshire Regiment, le bataillon auquel appartenait Lieutenant Smith a pris part, se déplace dans le secteur de Bullecourt et prend des positions de soutien autour d'Écoust-Saint-Mein. Deux jours plus tard, le 21 mars, les Allemands lancent l'opération Michael, la première phase de leur offensive de Printemps. Trois attaques ont été lancées sur Écoust-Saint-Mein ce jour-là et l'avancée allemande n'a finalement pas pu être repoussée.

Lieutenant Smith a été blessé par un obus et il a été pris au poste de secours régimentaire qui été à côté de la quartier général du bataillon au nord-ouest du village près de la route de Croisilles à Écoust. Alors que les blessés s'accumulent, le secours régimentaire, le tunnel sous le remblai et le quartier général du bataillon sont remplis des blessés en l'espace de quelques minutes. Captain G Adams a rapporté plus tard que Lieutenant Smith était allongé sur la civière à côté de lui et qu'il était mort. Lieutenant Smith était âgé de 23 ans.

Après avoir capturé Écoust-Saint-Mein, les Allemands ont commencé à nettoyer le village et ont créé une fosse commune près de l'emplacement du poste de secours régimentaire. Lieutenant Smith y a été enterré la, et sa mort et son enterrement ont été signalés par la Croix-Rouge. Ses effets personnels ont été retourné.

En septembre 1920, la fosse commune est exhumée et les soldats qui y sont enterrés sont déplacés au Écoust Military Cemetery. Un des blessés a été identifié comme étant un officier dont les vêtements portaient les initiales "H S", mais aucune identification n'a pu être faite. Lieutenant Smith est ainsi commémoré sur le monument commémoratif des disparus à Arras.

Cependant, la nouvelle recherche a permis le site de son dernier repos d'être identifié. Aujourd'hui nous nous souviendrons de Lieutenant Smith et sa tombe sera consacrée une nouvelle fois. Nous nous souvenons également de son frère, Second Lieutenant Ralph Pritchard Smith, tué près d'Ypres le 5 août, 1917, alors qu'il servait dans le 8^e Bataillon du North Staffordshire Regiment. Second Lieutenant Smith est enterré au Somer Farm Cemetery.

Call to Worship*Appel à Adoration*

In the name of Christ, who died and was raised to the glory of God the Father; grace, mercy and peace be with you.

We meet this day to remember before God Lieutenant Harold Rymer Smith who lived and died in the service of his country and for the peace of the world; and to rededicate his grave. We remember, also, his brother Second Lieutenant Ralph Pritchard Smith.

Bidding Prayer*Prière**Let us pray.*

Almighty God, eternal father of our Lord Jesus Christ, creator of all that is seen and unseen, we give thanks for your servants Harold and Ralph. In your mercy establish, guard and guide us till, with them, we take our place in your heavenly Kingdom.

All **Amen.**

Scripture Reading

Lecture des Écritures Saintes

Read by Colonel Campbell Close

On behalf of the British Embassy Paris

Romans Chapter 14 v 7-13 (NIV)

For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written:

“ ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord,
‘every knee will bow before me;
every tongue will acknowledge God.’ ”

So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.

A Tribute to Lieutenant Harold Rymer Smith

Un Hommage à Lieutenant Smith

Read by a member of Lieutenant Smith's Family

Great Uncle Harold,

It has been 106 years since you died and your family are here today at this service of rededication at your final resting place. It is thanks to the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission that you have been found and we are so grateful to all those involved in this and most especially to Richard Ellis, the researcher. What a profound moment this is for us all. Both you and your brother Ralph were killed in action just months apart. Ralph is buried nearby in Somer Farm Cemetery, south of Ypres. But although your death was reported, you were never identified and you remained an unknown soldier.

Your loss was felt so deeply by your mother Abigail and your father Joseph, by your older brothers, your sister Helen and by your brother Reginald, our grandfather who we called Poppa. Poppa was tall like you – you look even taller in the pictures. We know so little about you as he did not speak about you to us, his grandchildren, and we imagine this was to protect us and because he felt the loss of both you and Ralph so keenly. We honour your bravery in war. And we celebrate your 23 years of life. How do we take after you and what were the joys of your short life? Poppa was a gentle, kind, good-humoured man with a big heart and we would love to have known you, his brother who no doubt shared these traits. We are here just a few of your large family, to bring you the legacy you did not know that you would have. And we are here too for the generations of family who are unable to be with us.

Although there have been burial services as one of many fallen soldiers, it brings us all peace in our hearts today to finally stand at your grave and offer you our blessings, our love and the care you deserve. We feel so fortunate this can happen when so many more still lie unrecognised. Drawing from the poets of war, Brooke and Sassoon, Dawn was yours and sunset and the colours of the earth. You had seen movement, known slumber and waking, loved, gone proudly friended, felt the quick stir of wonder, sat alone. You lived.

We look up and swear by the green of the spring that we'll never forget.

Gospel Reading

Lecture de l'Évangile

Read by Second Lieutenant Richard Langley
1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment

John Chapter 10 v 11-15 (NIV)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.
"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.

Address

Allocution

The Act of Dedication

l'Acte de Dédicace

Almighty God, by whose grace your servant
Harold fought the good fight,
kept the faith and finished the race;
we give thanks for the example of his life of service
and the peace in which he rests.
We rededicate this grave in which his mortal remains
repose, in the name of Jesus our Lord,
who died and is alive and reigns with you,
now and for ever.

All **Amen**

Let us remember Harold and Ralph and all those who
died in the Great War, whose memories we treasure.

The Exhortation

L'Exhortation

Read by Captain Alexander Gale
The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards

They shall grow not 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.

All **We will remember them.**

The Last Post

Sonnerie aux Morts

Played by Lance Corporal Colin Streetin
5th Battalion The Rifles

The Silence

Flowers of the Forest

Played by Lance Corporal Christopher Macdonell
The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards

The Reveille

Kohima Epitaph

L'Épitaphe de Kohima

Read by Captain Alexander Gale
The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards

When you go home tell them of us and say:
'For your tomorrow, we gave our today.'

Laying of Wreaths

Dépôts des Gerbes

Prayer

Prière

We give you thanks, O God, for Harold and Ralph; for the memories we treasure as a lasting legacy of their service and dedication. We pray for their loved ones and all who remember them this day.

Almighty God, through Christ you have given us the hope of glorious resurrection, so that although death comes to us all, yet we rejoice in the promise of eternal life; for to your faithful people life is changed, not taken away, and when our mortal flesh is laid aside, an everlasting dwelling place is made ready for us in heaven.

Grant us, therefore, that we may humbly and faithfully serve you in this mortal life and at last bring us to your everlasting Kingdom which you have promised to those who love and serve you.

All **Amen.**

The Collect of The North Staffordshire Regiment

Récitation du North Staffordshire Regiment

Read by Second Lieutenant Richard Langley

1st Battalion The Mercian Regiment

Almighty God, whose manifold works fill the earth and the great and wide sea also, hear the voice of thy servants, The North Staffordshire Regiment, when we call unto thee from the ends of the earth and out of the deep, and deliver us out of all our distress, that we may praise thee for thy goodness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Prière du Seigneur

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our dally bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.**

The Blessing

Séparation et Dernière Bénédiction

May the infinite and glorious Trinity,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
direct our life in good works,
and after our journey through this world,
grant us eternal rest with the saints.

All **Amen.**

Amazing Grace

Played by Lance Corporal Christopher Macdonell
The Royal Scots Dragoon Guards





The Ministry of Defence, through the Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre, is responsible for the research, identification and burial of all British casualties worldwide.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for the graves, memorials, records and memory of the 1.7 million Commonwealth servicemen and women who died during the two World Wars.

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