

Walter Smith (Service No. 2115) was born in Harmondsworth in 1895. His mother Hannah (nee King b. 1864) was born in Oxfordshire. Hannah's father, John King, died leaving his wife Ellen with eight children, the youngest being only a year old. By 1891 this large family had moved towards London, probably in search of work. Their home was now in Berkshire Villas, Bristow Road, near Hounslow. Hannah was a lace maker, a skill that her mother Ellen had taught her. Brother Charles was a carman, and sister Margaret was working as a soap packer. In 1894 Hannah married Walter Smith (a general labourer) and the following year a future soldier of Isleworth - Walter (Jr) was born. Walter was baptised on 15th July 1895. The family's address was **Heath Row Harmondsworth**. By 1911 Hannah and Walter had set up home at 25 Hanworth Road. Walter (Jr) was now 15 and working for Mr Platt as a Grocery Assistant and his 14 year old brother Albert, was an Errand Boy. Their Grandmother Ellen King (75), was living with the family, as well as a labouring lodger.



Walter's Army Service Records survived the fire that resulted from the German bombing of the War Office Army repository in September 1940. We know, therefore, that Walter joined the Army Territorial Force on 9th June 1913. He was called up in Aug. 1914 joining 1/8th Battalion Middlesex Regiment. After a medical exam at Sittingbourne on Aug 27th his battalion was despatched to Gibraltar to replace a unit of the regular army. The battalion stayed until February 1915, returned home and was quickly mobilised for war on 9th March - landing in France at Havre. It appears that Walter's first experience of warfare was at The Second Battle of Ypres where Walter's service notes record that he was gassed on 24 and 25th May 1915. Initially he was admitted to a Field Ambulance Post, then a Casualty Clearing Station. Later in the week he was admitted to a convalescent camp. In 1915 Walter's Battalion also fought at The Battle of Aubers and Bois Grenier and the diversionary attack at Gommecourt. Walter was 'killed in action' on 11th September 1916 at the Battle of the Somme.

An article in the Middlesex Chronicle of 30th September 1916 records 'His Officers bear testimony to the young warrior's worth "Private Smith was greatly liked by all the officers and men of his company, and it must be a consolation for you to know that he lived and died a true British Soldier" – Gunner Albert Smith, the fallen man's brother is at the Front in the Royal Artillery.'

Walter's body was not recovered immediately, but later found at map ref. 57c.T.26.b.90.95. He was identified by his discs and his watch. By 1915 all soldiers wore two discs, one red and one green, both carrying identical information. When a body was found, the finder took the red tag to be recorded. Anyone subsequently finding the body would know that the death had been reported.

Walter's CWG Commission record suggests that his body may well have been buried in an isolated cemetery and was later exhumed and reburied in the London Cemetery, Extension, High Wood, Longueval. Grave Ref. 9. 5. 19. Walter was 21 years old and was also commemorated in All Saints Church, Isleworth.



"We often think of the days gone by, When we were all together, A shadow o'er our lives is cast, Our loved ones gone forever."