

## **Albert Edwin SMITH**

**Born:** 1893, Dorset

**Parents:** Frederick John Smith and Emma Eliza Baggott

**Last known address:** Horsebridge Hill, Northwood

**Last known occupation:** Composer

**Service number:** 99616

**Regiment:** 231<sup>st</sup> Field Company, Royal Engineers

### **Service history summary:**

- enlisted: Newport
- transfer: 1916
- rank: Sapper
- decorations: British War Medal and Victory Medal,

**Died:** 25<sup>th</sup> July 1917

**Age:** 24

**Buried:** [Fins New British Cemetery, Sorel-Le-Grand](#)

**Family/descendents:** Albert Edwin Smith was the youngest surviving child of Frederick John Smith and Emma Eliza Baggott, both from Essex where they married in 1884. Frederick was an assistant prison warder at the time of Albert's birth and the family moved around during his time in the Prison Service. His daughter, Cecilia, was born in London as was Sydney, his eldest son. By 1891 the family was in Portland in Dorset, where Albert was born, on April 24<sup>th</sup> 1893. According to the 1911 Census, Emma had six children, of whom only these three survived.

Brother: Sydney (c1890).

Sister: Cecilia (c1886)

Wife: Dorothy Bush (1893)

Son: Horace Edgar (1916)

**Northwood/Gurnard connection:** the family moved to Parkhurst sometime between 1901 and 1911 and lived at 4, West Cottages at the prison, and were neighbours of Albert Percival Webb (*qv*). By this time Frederick was a Principal Warder, Cecilia a dressmaker, Albert a compositor at Yelfs in Newport and Sydney appears to have left home. According to a report in the *Isle of Wight County Press* on August 4<sup>th</sup>, Albert was a chorister at St Thomas' Church in Newport. He must have gone to secondary school in Sandown as he is listed on the memorial there. By 1915 Albert was a prison warder at Parkhurst when he married Dorothy Ethel Bush on April 8<sup>th</sup> in the Register Office. Their son, Horace Edgar, was born on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1916. According to the *County Press* report of August 4<sup>th</sup>, there was a second child but no record has been found.

Distressing news has been received that Sapper Albert Edwin Smith, R.E., aged 24, has been killed in action on the Western front. Deceased was the son of Principal Warder and Mrs. Smith, of Parkhurst,

and leaves a young widow and two little children, for whom, as well as for the parents and other relatives, much sympathy is felt. Deceased was a temporary warder at Parkhurst Prison before joining up in the Island Company of Engineers. In July of last year he was wounded, and on returning to duty was transferred to another company of Royal Engineers. He was formerly employed at Messrs. Yelf's printing works and was a chorister at St Thomas's church, Newport.

His widow, Dorothy, married Albert Edward Stubbs in Northwood Church on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1920. Her new husband was also in the army as Albert Smith's CWGC record gives her address, under her new name, as the married quarters in Alma Barracks at Blackdown in Surrey. There are no records of Albert's brother and sister marrying on the Island or of any deaths, so presumably the family eventually moved back to the mainland.

**War record:** Albert's service record has not survived but he enlisted in the Island Company of Engineers in Newport sometime after his marriage. He was wounded in July 1916 and on returning to duty he was transferred to the 231<sup>st</sup> Field Company, which was part of the 40<sup>th</sup> Division. This had been formed between September and December 1915. The Division went to France in early June 1916 and served on the Western Front for the rest of the war. They took part in the Battle of the Somme in 1916 and various operations in 1917, when Albert died of his wounds on July 25th. He was buried in the New British Cemetery at Fins, near Cambrai. His must have been one of the earliest burials here as this part of the cemetery was only begun in July 1917.