

SLEET William Henry



Suffolk Regiment. 2nd Battalion., (Served as SMITH)

Killed in action: 22 July 1915. Age 30. ,

Service Number 12931

Son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Sleet, of Mell Rd., Tollesbury, Maldon, Essex. He was born at Harwich. He went to France 17th February 1915.

The 2nd Battalion in August 1914 was at the Curragh in Ireland as part of 14th Brigade, 5th Division. On the 30 September 1914 it was transferred to GHQ after suffering heavy casualties at Le Cateau. 25 October 1914 it was attached to 8th Brigade, 3rd Division. One of the first Divisions to move to France, the 3rd Division remained on the Western Front throughout the war. It took part in most of the major actions.

The Division was involved in Actions of Hooge. On 2nd June 1915, a severe German bombardment from 5am to noon, followed by an infantry attack from the Northeast, led to the loss of the ruins of the Chateau and Stables. At this time the position had been occupied by regiments of the 3rd Cavalry Division. During the evening, two Companies of the 1st Lincolns and one of the 4th Royal Fusiliers of 9th Brigade of the 3rd Division counterattacked and successfully recovered the Stables. At 7pm on 19th July 1915, a large mine was exploded by 175th Tunnelling Company RE, under a German trench position. The spoil from the detonation threw up a lip 15 feet high, around a crater 20 feet deep and 120 feet wide. After the firing, it was immediately occupied by two Companies of the 4th Middlesex (8th Brigade, 3rd Division). British artillery quelled all signs of German attempts to recover the crater.

William earned the 1914-5 Star, the British War Medal and the Allied Victory Medal.



Name	Unit	Rank	Regt. No.
SMITH	Suffolk Regt.	Pte.	12931
W. H. [Signature]			
Year	Month	Page	Remarks
1917	K/1/102816	229	Kem. A. 22.7.18.
1918	K/1/682	297	
Theater of War (Continents)			
(17) France			
Date of entry (month)			
17-2-18			



Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead
 Memorial Reference: Panel 21. YPRES
 (MENIN GATE) MEMORIAL, Ieper, West-
 Vlaanderen, Belgium

The Menin Gate is one of four memorials to the missing in Belgian Flanders which cover the area known as the Ypres Salient. Broadly speaking, the Salient stretched from Langemarck in the north to the northern edge in Ploegsteert Wood in the south, but it varied in area and shape throughout the war. The Salient was formed during the First Battle of Ypres in October and November 1914, when a small British Expeditionary Force succeeded in securing the town before the onset of winter, pushing the German forces

back to the Passchendaele Ridge. The Second Battle of Ypres began in April 1915 when the Germans released poison gas into the Allied lines north of Ypres. This was the first time gas had been used by either side and the violence of the attack forced an Allied withdrawal and a shortening of the line of defence. There was little more significant activity on this front until 1917, when in the Third Battle of Ypres an offensive was mounted by Commonwealth forces to divert German attention from a weakened French front further south. The initial attempt in June to dislodge the Germans from the Messines Ridge was a complete success, but the main assault north-eastward, which began at the end of July, quickly became a dogged struggle against determined opposition and the rapidly deteriorating weather. The campaign finally came to a close in November with the capture of Passchendaele. The German offensive of March 1918 met with some initial success, but was eventually checked and repulsed in a combined effort by the Allies in September. The battles of the Ypres Salient claimed many lives on both sides and it quickly became clear that the commemoration of members of the Commonwealth forces with no known grave would have to be divided between several different sites. The site of the Menin Gate was chosen because of the hundreds of thousands of men who passed through it on their way to the battlefields. It commemorates those of all Commonwealth nations (except New Zealand) who died in the Salient, in the case of United Kingdom casualties before 16 August 1917. Those United Kingdom and New Zealand servicemen who died after that date are named on the memorial at Tyne Cot, a site which marks the furthest point reached by Commonwealth forces in Belgium until nearly the end of the war. Other New Zealand casualties are commemorated on memorials at Buttes New British Cemetery and Messines Ridge British Cemetery. The YPRES (MENIN GATE) MEMORIAL now bears the names of more than 54,000 officers and men whose graves are not known. The memorial, designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield with sculpture by Sir William Reid-Dick, was unveiled by Lord Plumer in July 1927. No. of Identified Casualties: 54322

His name is not recorded on the Roll of Honour at Saint Mary's Tollesbury



Saint Mary's Tollesbury