

COMMEMORATING THE DEATH OF
Private Thomas Alfred Smith



Who died on 13th January 1917, aged 39



Dawlish World War One Project 1914-18 / 2014-18
Funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and
Dawlish Town Council
www.dawlishww1.org.uk



Welcome to this Act of Commemoration.

Dawlish Town Council and Churches Together in Dawlish and District are commemorating the death in the service of the nation of every Dawlish person who was killed as a result of enemy action during the First World War.

Today we remember the death of Thomas Alfred Smith who volunteered for action but died on 13th January 1917 in hospital in France.

After the First World War, it was decided in Dawlish that a single town War Memorial would be erected close to the parish church, and no church would have its own War Memorial. In keeping with this decision, these Acts of Commemoration take place in the town centre churches without regard to the denomination of the person they commemorate and they are led by a minister or pastor of the host church. The same Order of Service is used at each service. When we remember men listed on the War Memorials in St. Mary's Cofton or St. George's Holcombe, the service is held in the appropriate village church.

There will be opportunity to talk to the leader of the service afterwards when light refreshments will be served. You are invited to take a reproduction of St John's Gospel which was given to every service person during the First World War.

Please join in the words which are in **heavy type**.

Churches Together in Dawlish & District
28 High Street,
Dawlish, EX7 9HP

THE ORDER OF SERVICE

Introduction

We have gathered today as part of our commemoration of those Dawlish people who were caught up in the courageous but tragic events of the First World War.

We remember those who were killed in action,
those who were maimed and those whose minds were disfigured
by conflict.
the bereaved and the lost and those who lived in darkness,
the families which were shattered,
and all who held in silence the unspeakable memories of warfare.

In particular today on the 100th anniversary of his death we remember Thomas Alfred Smith who died in France of a fever while in the service of his country.

Prayer

Almighty God, the Lord of all,
today we pause to remember with gratitude
the life and death of Thomas Alfred Smith
knowing that he was, is and always will be
known and loved by you.

We thank you for his willingness to fight for our country
even if necessary to the point of death.

And today we remember his family and friends
who grieved at his death
and whose lives were never the same.

Amen.

We hear about the life and death of Thomas Alfred Smith

Reading Romans 8:31-39

What, then, shall we say? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord

please stand

A prayer of Commemoration

We remember before God Thomas Alfred Smith

Lord, have mercy

Today we commit Thomas Alfred Smith to the love of God

We give thanks for his life, and grieve at his death

May he rest in peace

and rise In glory.

He shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;

age shall not weary him, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun and in the morning,

we will remember him.

We will remember him.

A candle may be lit or a bouquet may be placed before the pieta.

A time of silence

We remain standing

The Commitment to all those who died in the service of the nation.

Lord God, Father of all,
in thankfulness for Thomas Alfred Smith
and in his memory
we pledge ourselves
to bring comfort to the sad, the lonely and the distressed;
to bring relief to all who are in need
and to serve you and to work for peace.
Keep us ever mindful of the struggles
and achievements of former generations
and so make us grateful
now and in the days to come.
Amen

O Lord, our maker and our strength,
from whose love in Christ we can never be parted
either by death or life:
Look in mercy on those for whom we pray this day,
and grant us your protection and peace,
that we may be saved in body and soul,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

As we ask for deliverance from the forces of destruction
and for peace in our time and In our lives
we pray together:

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 daily 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,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
AMEN.

The Blessing

God grant to the living grace,
to the departed rest,
to the Church, the Queen,
the Commonwealth and all the world
peace and concord:

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.

Amen.

Thomas Alfred Smith

1877-1917

Thomas Alfred Smith was the grandson of William Smith (1803-) and Lumley Hunt Jago (1801-1873). William was a carpenter and joiner, born close by Dartmouth at Dittisham and they had two sons, Richard Egg Smith, a carpenter, and Thomas H Smith, a joiner.

Richard Egg Smith (1838-) married Louisa Alford Bell (1844-1883) in April 1863 in the Wesleyan Chapel, Totnes.

By 1881 Richard and Louisa were living in Smith Street, Dartmouth and they had six children, William John (1864-), Emma Louisa (1866-), Richard George (1869 -), Amy Alford (1872-), Mary Ann (1874-), and **Thomas Alfred (1877-1917)**. A further child, Sarah Jane, was born in 1882 and a year before the death of her mother.

The youngest four children were together with their father for the census of 1891 but from that time onwards the family appears to disintegrate and it has not been possible to identify with certainty the death of the father.

Thomas was shown as a Baker's assistant in that census.

Thomas's first military experience

Thomas enlisted at Bedford with the Bedfordshire Regiment on 5th December 1893 when he was nearly 17 but he declared his age at 18 years and 1 month. He is shown as a labourer and was 5' 8" tall, weighing 127 lbs (9 stone). He completed twelve years service on the 4th December 1905 having taken courses in Transport Duties and Butchery. He transferred to the Army Reserve from 3rd January 1906 for a period of four years.

Thomas married Hannah Bell (Lamshead) in St Gregory's Church, Dawlish on 24th August 1907. They were cousins, their respective mothers being sisters. In the following year one child was born prematurely and died.

The 1911 census show **Thomas** in the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth as a boot cleaner, married and 34 years old. His wife "Annie Smith", 28, was with her parents, John Wood Lamshead, 57, and Hannah Alford Bell Lamshead, 60, of 4 Brook Street, Dawlish. John Lamshead worked for the railway company as a labourer.

Another child to Thomas and Annie is Edith Janie Smith (1909-), shown on the 1911 Census. A further child has been recorded, born after the census, as Hannah Louisa Smith (1911-1989).

Thomas in WW1

Thomas's WW1 military record is sketchy. The Army Medals Roll index card gives no more than his regiment and number, but appears to place him in the 1st Battalion, Devonshire Regiment. There is no date given for his arrival in France.

Other references place him in the 9th (Service) Battalion, Devonshire Regiment, which was composed mainly of Kitchener's volunteers. The 9th Battalion had been engaged in the assault on Mametz Wood on 1st July and the Battle of Guillemont on 3rd September (Battles of the Somme).

A Casualty Clearing Station entry shows that he was admitted on 5th January 1917 with "Pyrexia of unknown origin", which is a fever for which there is no certain diagnosis. He died in hospital on 13th January.

A Death Grant of £4.10s.6d and a War Gratuity of £3.10s.0d were paid to his widow.

He was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal and they were sent to his widow.

Commonwealth War Graves entry: SMITH, ALFRED THOMAS Private
22145

13/01/1917 Age: 41 (*incorrect-ed*) Devonshire Regiment, 9th Bn.

Grave Ref: VII. F. 17. [Puchevillers British Cemetery](#), Somme, France

The headstone is engraved "A devoted husband and father. Greatly Missed."

He is recorded on the Devon Roll of Honour, but date of death not given.

Dawlish War memorial inscription:

SMITH T.A. PTE. DEVON REGT.

Research by R Vickery for www.dawlishww1.org.uk where further detail may be found.