

PRIVATE A J SMITH (59061)



(Machine Gun Corps)

Private A J Smith was born in Hayton, Lancashire and enlisted in **Bury St Edmunds**. Of note, prior to serving with the Machine Gun Corps (Infantry) he served with the Norfolk Regiment (service number 26356).

At the outbreak of WWI the tactical potential of machine guns was not appreciated and it was not until October 1915 when the Machine Gun Corps was formed and included infantry. The 266th MG Company formed in Grantham as part of Lord Kitchener's 'new' Army and moved to France on 17th January 1918 and moved into the 36th Battalion MG Corps (Ulster Division) on 1 March 1918. Records state that Private Smith (59061) was serving with the 36th Battalion at the time of his death and so it is possible that he was enlisted into the 266th MG Company when it formed in Grantham. At the time of Private Smith's death, the Division were heavily involved in the German Spring Offensive of 1918 which commenced on 21st March and the Germans made great advances albeit at great cost. With the pouring in of American troops the opposition were severely weakened by June 1918, losing 1 million men between March and July.



Machine Gun Team in Ypres

For the Machine Gun Corps some 170 500 officers and men served in The Great War; 62 049 became casualties of which 12 498 were killed. The Machine Gun Corps earned the nickname the 'Suicide Club'.

Although his Medal Rolls Index Card has yet to be traced, Forces War Records show that Private A J Smith (59061) was awarded the British War Medal and Victory Medal.

Private Smith died on 6th June 1918, age yet to be verified. He is laid to rest in grave plot II. E. 32. in Ham British Military Cemetery, Muille-Villette, Somme, France.



Remembered With Honour

