



Military Funeral

For the first time in many years – possibly for the first time – the village of Hankerton on Friday rendered honour to one of its “boys” who has fallen in the war and was brought back home for burial, viz. Private Smith, son of Mr. and Mrs. William Smith, of Hankerton Field Cottages. The banner of St. George floated at half-mast on the church tower, and a good number of villagers assembled in the churchyard to witness the ceremony that was performed by the vicar, the Rev. G. L. Hankey, the lesson being read by the Rev. W. Sole, rector of Crudwell. It was a source of comfort to the deceased’s family that the War Office allowed the body to be bought home for burial, but this kindness rather accentuates the slight paid to Mrs. Saye, of the village who was refused a similar request when her husband was killed, he was also dying in England.

Private T. H. Smith was the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Smith and prior to enlisting was employed by Messrs. Fraser of the Malmesbury Nurseries. He enlisted in September 1914 and was attached to the 10th Worcester Regiment. He had seen active service in France since July 1915 and was mortally wounded on July 2nd in the big advance, being brought to King George’s hospital where he died on the 10th inst.

The remains were brought to the deceased’s home and thence removed to Hankerton Churchyard on Friday afternoon on a wagonette belonging to Messrs Sampson of Charlton. The coffin, which was covered with the Union Jack, bore the inscription:

Thomas Henry Smith
10th Worcester Regiment
Died July 10th 1916
Aged 24 years.

The mourners included Mr. and Mrs. Smith (Father and Mother), Messrs. George and Ernest Smith (brothers,) Miss Minnie Smith (sister), Mrs. Williams (Crudwell) and Mrs. Smith (Charlton) aunts. Others
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present were Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Hislop, W. Batchelor (Crudwell), Sergeant. T. H. Sandy, Corpl. G. Deadman, Private W. Oliver (representing the Malmesbury Volunteer Training Corps), Private Bishop (Royal Marine Light Infantry), and Wireless Operator Bradley Bartlett R.N. of Malmesbury.

At the conclusion of the Burial Service, Patrol Leader H. Prior, Second T. Bailey (of the Malmesbury Boy Scouts) with Corporal I. Barnes of the Charlton Troop) sounded the last post.

Wreaths were sent from Rev. W. Sole, Rector of Crudwell, Mr. and Mrs. Branstone, (Hankerton Field Farm), Messrs. A. and J. Fraser (Malmesbury), Aunt and Cousins at Malmesbury, Mr. and Mrs. W. Batchelor, Hilda and Willie, Mrs. William (Crudwell), Mrs. Smith (Chedglow), Father and Mother, Brothers and Sisters and others.

Much regret was felt, particularly by members of Malmesbury V.T.C, and other in the district intimately associated with military matters, that a firing party was not permitted to attend. So soon as it was known that the funeral was taking place on Friday – to be precise on Wednesday night – representations were made to the officer in charge of the Royal Devon Guard Detachment at Somerford asking permission for a firing party to attend. The distance is only a short one and motor conveyance to and fro would have been easily secured, free of all cost but to the surprise of all concerned a note was received from the office in command refusing the request as well as that for the loan of rifles for the Malmesbury V.T.C. who in the absence of the detachment from Somerford offered to be the firing party. No reflection is cast on the officer in question but there is a feeling of indignation that our own men who fall in our country's battles should be denied military honours at their burial which are freely extended to German prisoners who chance to be buried in England.

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