

MARYPORT TOWN COUNCIL

**EDWARD  
BENN SMITH**

Centenary Commemoration  
Of Victoria Cross Award



SGT. E. SMITH, V.C., D.C.M., 1/5 BN. LANCASHIRE FUSILIERS.

WEDNESDAY 22ND AUGUST 2018

## History

**Edward Benn ('Ned') Smith VC, DCM** (10 November 1898 – 12 January 1940) was an English recipient of the Victoria Cross, the highest and most prestigious award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces.

**Born:** 10 November 1898 Maryport, Cumberland

**Died:** 12 January 1940, (aged 41), Bucquoy, France

**Buried:** Beuvry Communal Cemetery Extension

**Allegiance:** United Kingdom

**Service / Branch:** British Army

**Years of Service:** 1918–1938, 1939–1940

**Rank:** Lieutenant

**Unit:** Lancashire Fusiliers

**Battles/Wars:** World War I & World War II

**Awards:** Victoria Cross &  
Distinguished Conduct Medal

**World War 1:** He is unusual in having gained both the DCM and VC, and in quick succession, during the Hundred Days Offensive.

## **Distinguished Conduct Medal**

On 10 August 1918, then a Corporal with the 1/5th Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers, he was leading a daylight patrol near Hébuterne in the Somme Area of France to examine points in the German lines where information was required. As the patrol was about to retire, Ned Smith saw a party of around 40 Germans about to take up outpost duty. Despite being heavily outnumbered by the German soldiers, Corporal Smith led his small party of men and engaged the enemy, breaking up the German party and causing severe casualties. As well as receiving the Distinguished Conduct Medal for this action, Ned Smith was promoted to the rank of Lance Sergeant.

## **Victoria Cross**

Only 11 days later, during the period 21/23 August 1918, east of Serre, France, Lance-Sergeant Smith while in command of a platoon, personally took a machine-gun post at The Lozenge (Hill 140), rushing the garrison with his rifle and bayonet. The enemy, on seeing him coming, scattered to throw hand grenades at him, but heedless of all danger and almost without halting in his rush, this NCO shot at least six of them.

Later, seeing another platoon needing assistance, he led his men to them, took command and captured the objective. During an enemy counter-attack the following day he led a section forward and restored a portion of the line.

According to the London Gazette Supplement of 18 October 1918:

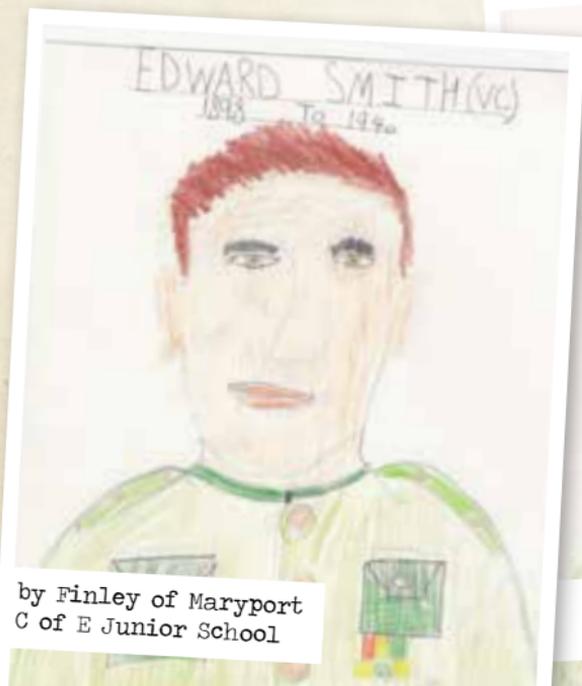
*"His personal bravery, skill and initiative were outstanding, and his conduct throughout an inspiring example to all. According to "The Whitehaven News", when he returned to his home town of Maryport after the Great War in 1919, he was greeted by a cheering crowd of 6,000 people, equivalent to the town's total population at the time. Another local newspaper described Ned Smith in the following terms:*

*"Sergeant Smith is not only a VC but looks it. He is a British soldier every inch of him. He is an A1 man from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. .... He has not only won the VC but he has a chest on which to display it."*

He continued serving, from 1918–38, in China, Malaya and Ireland, before retiring with an Army pension having attained the rank of Regimental Sergeant Major. He then joined the Corps of Commissionaires in London for about a year.

In 1921, he attended a Garden Party held at Buckingham Palace by King George V of England for Victoria Cross holders, as the youngest recipient present. He never married.

As war loomed in summer 1939, he re-enlisted with his former Regiment, the Lancashire Fusiliers and was among the first contingent of the British Expeditionary Force to sail for France. He was a Lieutenant and quartermaster when he died in France from a gunshot wound in the head on 12 January 1940, five months before the start of the Battle of France in May. Smith is buried at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery of Beuvry Communal Cemetery Extension.



by Finley of Maryport  
C of E Junior School



by Sebb Clauge of  
Maryport C of E Junior School

## Commemoration & Stone Unveiling Ceremony Core Party

- Relatives of Ned Smith
- Councillor P Kendall Chairman of Maryport Town Council
- Councillor C Tindall
- Duke of Lancaster's Regiment
- Lancaster Fusiliers Representatives
- Standard Bearers

## Members and Guests

- British Legion Representatives
- Councillor John Crouch, Mayor of Allerdale
- Sue Hayman MP
- Armed Forces Representatives
- Armed Forces Veterans
- Councillor Carni McCarron Holmes, Allerdale Armed Forces Champion
- Maryport Town Council Members
- Churches Together
- Pupil Representatives from Maryport Infant & Junior Schools
- Maryport Army Cadets
- Maryport Sea Cadets
- Ms Nicola Woolley, Maryport Schools Partnership Co-ordinator

## Order of Ceremony

- 11.30:** Dignitaries to gather at Maryport Town Hall
- 12.00:** Dignitaries march to the ceremonial site
- 12.15:** Councillor Peter Kendall:  
Ned Smith & his connection to Maryport
- 12.20:** Poems read by Veterans, John Slater  
& Julie Lythall, & Army & Sea Cadets
- 12.30:** Readings from Maryport School Children
- 12.35:** Ned Smith Relatives response
- 12.40:** Blessing: Reverend Canon Mary Day
- 12.45:** Citation Reading & Presentation:  
Lancaster Fusiliers
- 12.50:** Bugler: Last Post
- 12.55:** Memorial Stone Unveiling
- 12.56:** Flimby Band: National Anthem
- 13.00:** Wreath Laying
- 13.15:** Guests invited to Golden Lion  
for light refreshments

## The Soldier

*Rupert Brooke (January 1915)*

If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her ways to roam;  
A body of England's, breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less  
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;  
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;  
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,  
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.



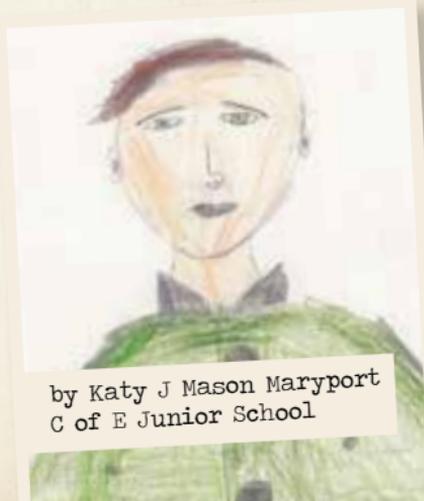
# In Flanders Fields

*John McCrae (May 1915)*

In Flanders fields the poppies blow  
Between the crosses, row on row,  
That mark our place; and in the sky  
The larks, still bravely singing, fly  
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,  
Loved and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch; be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.



by Katy J Mason Maryport  
C of E Junior School

## For all we have and are

*Rudyard Kipling (September 1914)*

FOR ALL we have and are,  
For all our children's fate,  
Stand up and take the war.  
The Hun is at the gate!  
Our world has passed away,  
In wantonness o'erthrown.  
There is nothing left to-day  
But steel and fire and stone!

Though all we knew depart,  
The old Commandments stand:-  
"In courage keep your heart,  
In strength lift up your hand."

Once more we hear the word  
That sickened earth of old: -  
"No law except the Sword  
Unsheathed and uncontrolled."  
Once more it knits mankind,  
Once more the nations go  
To meet and break and bind  
A crazed and driven foe.

Comfort, content, delight,  
The ages' slow-bought gain,  
They shrivelled in a night.  
Only ourselves remain  
To face the naked days  
In silent fortitude,  
Through perils and dismays  
Renewed and re-renewed.

Though all we made depart,  
The old Commandments stand:-  
"In patience keep your heart,  
In strength lift up your hand."

No easy hope or lies  
Shall bring us to our goal,  
But iron sacrifice  
Of body, will, and soul.  
There is but one task for all -  
One life for each to give.  
What stands if Freedom fall?  
Who dies if England live?



## Keep Faith

*Margaret Rowntree (nee Fish) (1916)*

Keep faith with us, the men who died  
To save a people's soul from shame  
Across the country, far and wide  
Our poppies blaze a trail of flame,  
Red as the blood we shed for you  
In lands across an alien foam  
That you may keep a nation's due  
To live in freedom, here at home  
Keep faith with us, the common men  
Who left the ways our fathers trod  
Took up the sword & walked again  
Where men were face to face with God.  
His holy aid helped us to die  
O you that follow ask that aid  
That you may keep the liberty  
That makes a people unafraid  
Keep faith, we ask no other price  
We fought that wars should have an end  
There is no greater sacrifice  
Than that a man die for his friend.  
You were our friends, we died for you  
Live then to glorify our death  
That a bewildered world may know  
The peace that dwelt in Nazareth.

## Brave Ned Smith by Ellie

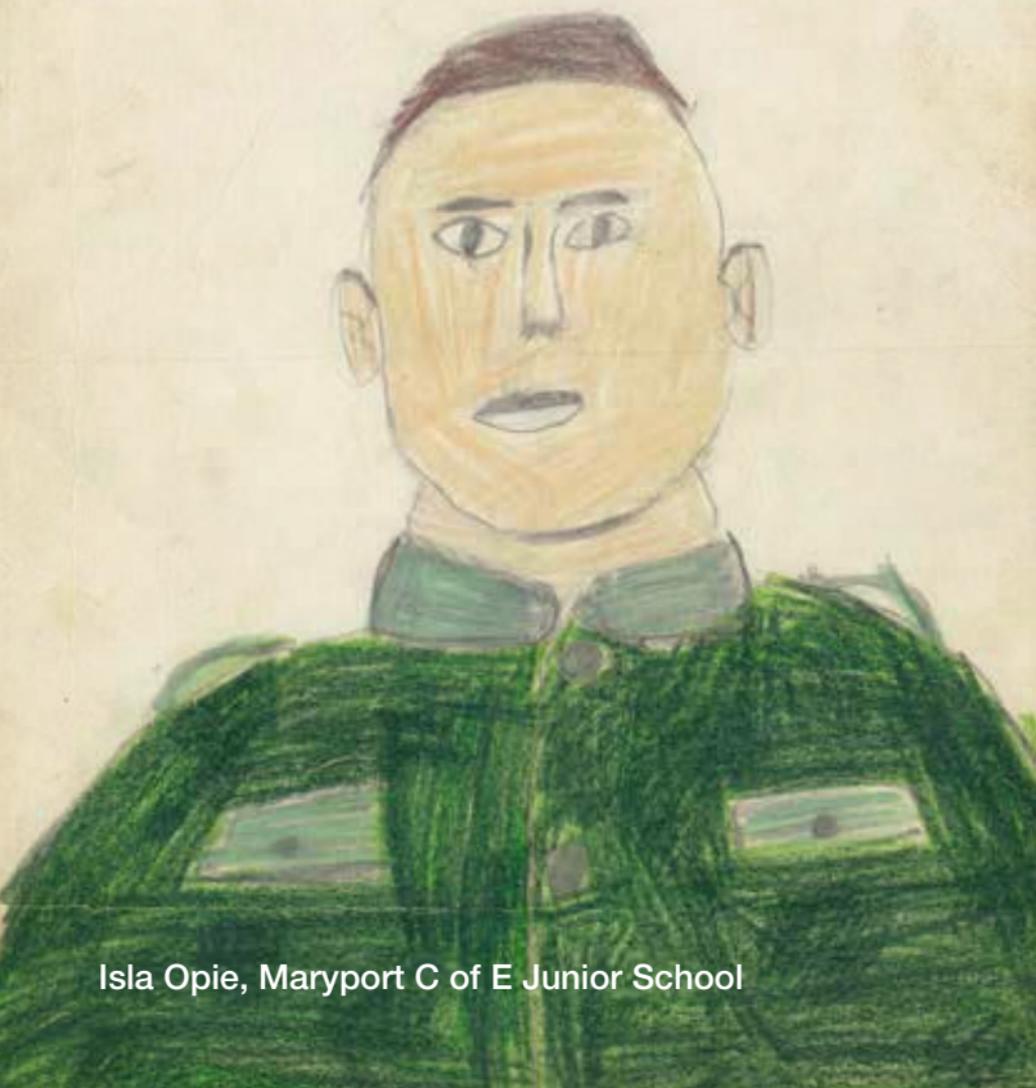
In Maryport in 1898  
Edward Benn Smith  
was known as Ned.  
He lived in the North  
Quay in Maryport.  
After he left  
School he became  
a collier.  
Just after the  
War <sup>started</sup> Ned became  
a soldier.



In August on the  
10th 1918 he was in  
France when he  
defeated a large  
group of Germans  
with only a  
little group of  
men.  
He received a  
metal for being  
really brave.

After the war he  
left the Army but  
when WW2 started  
he joined again.  
Unfortunately Ned  
died and never  
came home. He is  
buried in the Bewley  
Communal Cemetery  
Extension in France.  
What a fearless man  
Ned was!

Ned Smith



Isla Opie, Maryport C of E Junior School

# Edward Smith (VC)

10<sup>th</sup> November 1898 - 12<sup>th</sup> January 1940

Ever lasting life

Died at 41

World War I and II hero

Awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry

Remembered for his bravery

Distinguished Conduct Medal recipient

Sergeant Smith was his name

Maryport was his home town

In his honour we will keep his name alive

The enemy stood no chance against him

He later promoted to Lieutenant



Remembrance poppy

Kathryn Jenkins, Maryport C of E Junior School

Blessing

Reverend Canon Mary Day

## Citation

### **Special Order Of Day**

**By Major General A. Solly-Flood Cmg Dso,  
Commanding 42nd (East Lancs) Division | 10.10.18**

### **HONOURS & REWARDS: VICTORIA CROSS**

His majesty The King has been graciously pleased to approve of the award of the VICTORIA CROSS to the undermentioned NCO: No. 51396 Sergeant Edward Smith, DCM, 1/5th Lancashire Fusiliers 'For conspicuous gallantry, leadership and personal example during an attack on the 21st August and subsequent operations on the 22nd and 23rd August 1918, east of Serre. This NCO while in command of a platoon personally took a MG post, rushing the garrison with his rifle and bayonet. The enemy on seeing him advance scattered to throw hand grenades at him. Regardless of all danger, and almost without halting his rush on the post, this NCO shot at least six of the enemy, killing them. Having done this he ordered his men to follow him, and mopped up two more machine gun posts, again himself personally killing and capturing some of the garrison. A little later, seeing another platoon requiring assistance he led his men to them, took command of the situation, capturing the objective, once again personally killing many of the enemy. During the enemy counter attack on the 22nd August, he led a section forward and regained the line where it had been penetrated on his platoon front. This NCO's personal example of bravery, skill and initiative, is worthy of the highest praise and reward. His conduct throughout exemplified magnificent courage and skill with his weapons, in addition displayed marked tactical ability and command. All men around him were greatly inspired by his leadership and example.'

*(Signed) Lt. Colonel Reginald Slaughter AA & QMG 42ND DIVISION*