**Rifleman John Smith**

 15th Btn Royal Irish Rifles, 107th Brigade, 36th Division

(Young Citizens) Disbanded February 1918.

Rifleman John Smith enlisted in the 15th Btn Royal Irish Rifles which served in the 107th Brigade of the 36th Ulster Division he was taken prisoner and returned home after cessation of hostilities. At that time his brother Albert was also killed whilst on active service.

John Smith was born around 1897 in Maze, Lisburn and he was a son of John and Elizabeth (Lizzie) Smith (nee Haddock, sometimes Haddick) who later lived at 20 Lonsdale Street in Belfast and then at 94 Hamilton Road in Bangor.

John Smith worked as a master boot-maker and he and Lizzie had at least 10 children.

Edith b 1893/94 and Albert b 1895/96 in Partick, Lanarkshire.

John b 17 July 1897 Maze, Lisburn.

Elizabeth (Lizzie) b 19 Nov 1899 at 22 Duncrue St, Belfast,

Lucinda b 26 Jun 1902.

Sarah b 9 Jun 1902, and

Etheline b 27 Jul 1906 at 2 Melrose St, Belfast.

George b 10 Aug 1908 at 22 Antrim Road, Belfast.

Edward b 9 Oct 1911 at Lonsdale St. Belfast.

Allan b 3 Apr 1914 at 94 Hamilton Road, Bangor.

John Smith was proprietor of the Belfast and Glasgow Boot Repairing Company and prior to the outbreak of the Great War, His son Albert was working as an apprentice boot-maker with his father and his son John was still attending school.

John’s father John died on the 16th November 1919 and his mother on Elizabeth on 13th May 1939.

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**Campaign Medals:**

[**Victory Medal**](https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/medals/victory-medal)

With the information in Albert Smith's record, it is likely that they were entitled to the Victory medal, also called the Inter Allied Victory Medal. This medal was awarded to all who received the 1914 Star or 1914-15 Star and, with certain exceptions, to those who received the British War Medal. It was never awarded alone. These three medals were sometimes irreverently referred to as Pip, Squeak and Wilfred.

Eligibility for this award consisted of having been mobilised, fighting, having served in any of the theatres of operations, or at sea, between midnight 4th/5th August, 1914, and midnight, 11th/12th November, 1918. Women who served in any of the various military organisations in a theatre of operations were also eligible.
Buy Medals



[**British War Medal**](https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/medals/british-war-medal)
With the information in Albert Smith's record, it is likely that they were entitled to the British War Medal for service in World War One. This British Empire campaign medal was issued for services between 5th August 1914 and 11th November 1918.

The medal was automatically awarded in the event of death on active service before the completion of this period.
Buy Medals

15th Btn, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 107th Brigade, 36th Division

On 3 September 1914, just short of a month after Britain had declared war and after much discussion regarding what amounted to a political ‘truce’ with regard to domestic matters, Sir Edward Carson (one of the great political leaders opposing Home Rule for Ireland) made an appeal at the meeting of the Ulster Unionist Council in Belfast, urging the men of the Ulster Volunteer Force to come forward for service in the defence of the British Empire. Despite the fact that many Ulstermen had made their own decisions and had already enlisted, an entire formation known as the Ulster Division was soon raised – and all of its infantry units were based on existing units of the UVF. Thirteen battalions were raised for the three Irish regiments based in Ulster: the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, the Royal Irish Fusiliers and the Royal Irish Rifles.

***1914***
August: formed in Ireland as the Ulster Division, with Brigades numbered 1,2 and 3. On 28 August 1914, the Division and its Brigades adopted the titles shown on this page.

***1915***
July: the Division moved to Seaford on the Sussex coast of England. Lord Kitchener inspected the Division there on 27 July 1915, and later remarked to Carson “your Division of Ulstermen is the finest I have yet seen”. Another inspection took place, by King George V, on 30 September. On 3-6 October: the Division moved to France, although the artillery remained in England until November. The Ulster Division initially concentrated in the area around Flesselles, some ten miles north of Arras. Gradually, men were sent in groups for familiarisation with trench warfare conditions, and were attached to the regular army 4th Division for the purpose in the (at this time) quiet are north of the River Ancre near Albert. On 21 October the Division was moved away from the fighting area towards Abbeville, where it spent most of the winter of 1915-16 continuing training. One of the Brigades was attached to 4th Division for several weeks at this time and the artillery finally rejoined.

***1916***
The whole Division finally took over a complete section of the front line on 7 February, between the River Ancre and the Mailly-Maillet to Serre road. Division HQ was at Acheux. In the first week of March, the Division extended its front, the 109th Brigade taking over the sector south of the Ancre, known by the name of Thiepval Wood. The Division remained in the Wesrern Friont in France and Flanders throughout the rest of the war and took part in the following engagements. The Battle of Albert\* in which the Division attacked at the Schwaben Redoubt near Thiepval overwhich the Division fought on 1st July 1916. The Division was relieved on 2 July, having suffered 5104 casualties of who approximately 2069 died.
1917

The Battle of Messines, in which the Division captured Wytschaete
The Battle of Langemarck.
The Cambrai Operations, including the capture of Bourlon Wood

***1918***
The Division was substantially reorganised in February 1918.
The Battle of St Quentin

The Actions at the Somme Crossings
The Battle of Rosieres
The Battle of Messines
The Battle of Bailleul
The First Battle of Kemmel RidgeThe Battle of Ypres
The Battle of Courtrai
The action of Ooteghem

On 11 November the Division was at Mouscron, north east of Tourcoing. It remained there throughout the period of demobilisation. It ceased to exist on 29 June 1919.

The Great War cost 36th (Ulster) Division 32186 men killed, wounded or missing.