Private Frederick Goldsmith, age 34

Outposts of Empire, Tanzania, 1917

Outside of Europe and the Middle East, other areas of the world were suffering the effects of World War One. In Africa, the British attempted to take German East Africa. The East Africa Campaign enjoyed variable success.

The British were commanded by Jan Smuts, a Cambridge educated Afrikaaner who fought against the British in the Boer War, and who later became Prime Minister of South Africa (and the only man to sign the peace treaties of both WW1 and WW2). The aim of Lettow-Vorbeck, the German commander (who was cut off and could entertain no hope of a decisive victory) was purely to keep as many British forces diverted for as long as possible. This was only partially successful, in removing additional Allied manpower from the European Theatre after 1916. While some shipping was diverted to the African theatre, it was not enough to inflict significant difficulties on the Allied fleets.

In one capacity or another nearly 400,000 Allied men and 600,000 African bearers participated in the East Africa campaign. Recent estimates record approximately 22,000 British casualties in the East African campaign, of whom 11,189 died. By 1917 approximately 95,000 porters had died.

A [Colonial Office](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonial_Office) official wrote that the East African campaign had not become a scandal only "...because the people who suffered most were the carriers - and after all, who cares about native carriers?"

One of those casualties was Private Frederick Goldsmith. His service record shows that he was born in Leigh, Kent. He may have grown up in Killicks Bank, Leigh with his parents Frederick and Emma Goldsmith. By 1901 he was lodging with the Neal family in London Road, Hildenborough. He is listed then as a domestic groom.

He enlisted in Tonbridge with the Royal Army Service Corps, 631st Motor Transport Company. This was to form the Ammunition Column of 38th Brigade, RGA, who needed motorised transport to move their heavy guns and howitzers in East Africa where they were based.

Frederick died on 5th November 1917, aged 34, at the No.3 East African Stationary Hospital in Dar-es-Salaam. He was one of many who succumbed to Blackwater Fever, a complication which arises after chronic exposure to malaria, prevalent in Africa and south east Asia. He is buried at the Dar-es-Salaam War Cemetery, Tanzania.

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