

FREDERICK A SMITH

Frederick Augustus Smith was born in 1888 in Partney. He was baptised in St Nicholas Church on 26th August 1888.

In 1891 he was living with his family at Partney Grange. His father John was an agricultural labourer. By 1901 his mother Lucy was widowed and working as a charwoman.

Fred married Mabel Ellerby in 1909. The night of the 1911 Census, 2nd April, found Fred, his wife Mabel and their 1 year old daughter Phyllis, visiting the Ellerby family in Woodhall Spa.

During the First World War Frederick served as a sergeant with the Army Veterinary Corps. During the First World War thousands of horses, mules, camels, donkeys and oxen served with British forces. They were used to carry supplies and ammunition, transport the wounded and pull guns. Cavalry regiments also used thousands of horses. The trenches and barbed wire defences of the Western Front proved inhospitable to cavalry so large-scale operations were rarely carried out after 1914. In the Middle East and Africa, where the war was more mobile, the cavalry played a more important part. Thousands of animals were killed or wounded, while others succumbed to fatigue and disease. While the Army Veterinary Corps tried to save as many as possible, thousands had to be destroyed.

A lot of the men in the Army Veterinary Corps were farm workers, ostlers, blacksmiths, slaughterhouse workers, and others used to dealing with animals. There would only be a few vets per unit, just like a medical officer and his crew in a regular service battalion.

Frederick's two brothers, George Henry Smith and Reginald Thomas Smith also served in the conflict.

He married Mabel Ellerby in 1909. Their son Ronald Frederick was baptised on 25th July 1920 in St Nicholas Church. Frederick was working as a 'Hotel Boots' in the High Street, Spilsby.