



Photos contributed

Gravesite of Curtis Lee Smith and his wife, Mary Smith

# The World War I story of Cpl. Curtis Lee Smith

BY NORMA ECKARD  
SPECIAL TO THE BEACON

Curtis Lee Smith was born and raised in Brunswick County. A family tree is located in FamilySearch. On Sept. 11, 1916, Curtis enlisted in the North Carolina National Guard. In November, he was promoted to private first class.

In 1917 when the United States joined the war, Pfc. Smith was assigned to Company G, 119th Infantry, 30th "Old Hickory" Division. After arriving in France in August 1918, Curtis was promoted to corporal.

Cpl. Smith was not injured during the Hindenburg assault or the push afterward that wounded both Pfc. Albert Williams and 1st Sgt. Van Mintz. But his gallantry Oct. 10, 1918, earned him a Silver Star with this citation:

*By direction of the President, under the provisions of the act of Congress approved July 9, 1918 (Bul. No. 43, W.D., 1918), Corporal Curtis L. Smith (ASN: 1315927), United States Army, is cited by the Commanding General, American Expeditionary Forces, for gallantry in action and a silver star may be placed upon the ribbon of the Victory Medals awarded him. Corporal Smith distinguished himself by gallantry in action while serving with Company G, 119th Infantry Regiment, 30th Division, American Expeditionary Forces, in action near St. Souplet, France, 10 October 1918, in alone going forward and operating his machine gun, after the rest of his squad had become casualties.*

After the war, he returned to Brunswick County, married and began raising a family. Some time after 1940, he relocated to Archdale, in Randolph County.

Curtis Lee Smith passed away Sept. 7, 1982, almost two years after his wife. He is buried in Floral Garden Memorial Park

in High Point. His flat marker includes "U.S. Army Hero, WWI."

Cpl. Curtis Lee Smith was one of three known soldiers from Brunswick County to be awarded medals for their service in World War I. We now know the resting places for all of them.

If you would like to help us honor Brunswick County World War I veterans, go to [caswellriflerange.com](http://caswellriflerange.com) or email [ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com](mailto:ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com). Three hundred fifty Brunswick County World War I veterans have been honored to date.

A monument will be placed at the site of the rifle range in Caswell Beach Veterans' Day 2018 in honor of the men and women from Brunswick County who served their country. A book, "To All Those Who Served in World War I from Brunswick County, N.C.," is to be published during 2019 containing all 724 names, as well as a historical overview of the 1918 World War I Rifle Range Target Pit Storage Room.

We would like the public to review the names of the following Brunswick County men who died during World War I to make certain they have not forgotten anyone that may have perished or missed someone while researching names that should be on this list.

Killed in action: Pvts. 1st Class Walter S. Brock and Erastus I. Nelson, Pvts. Harvey T. Chadwick, Jimmie Griffin and Harry L. Pigott, Cpl. Herbert B. Ward

Died of wounds: Pvts. William C. Hewett and Benjamin B. Smith

Died of Disease: Pvts. William F. Brooks, Carl J. Danford, Manning Hall, Claudie H. McCall, Elijah Milliken, Kendrick W. Outlaw, Cecil S. Pierce, Samuel C. Swain, Guy E. Watson, David Williams and Fred Wilson, Pvt. 1st Class John W. Carlisle, David L. Doshier (cook), Seaman James C. Edwards, Sgt. Robert



The Silver Star medal awarded to Cpl. Curtis Lee Smith

G. Farmer

Before the monument is engraved, they need the public to help verify the list. If you see a discrepancy or know a name to be added, email [ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com](mailto:ftcaswellriflerange@gmail.com).

The rifle range memorial and monument dedication will be held on Veterans' Day, Sunday, Nov. 11, at 11 a.m. at the site in Caswell Beach.

*Norma Eckard of Caswell Beach is president of Friends of Fort Caswell Rifle Range Inc.*