

HAVERHILL CASUALTIES NORMANDY

JUNE 1944

Dennis Reginald Smith

Trooper, 14262311

Royal Armoured Corps,

HQ Sqn. 13th/18th Royal Hussars

Place of Birth: Haverhill

Killed in Action: 18th July 1944

Cemetery: Ranville War Cemetery, Normandy, France



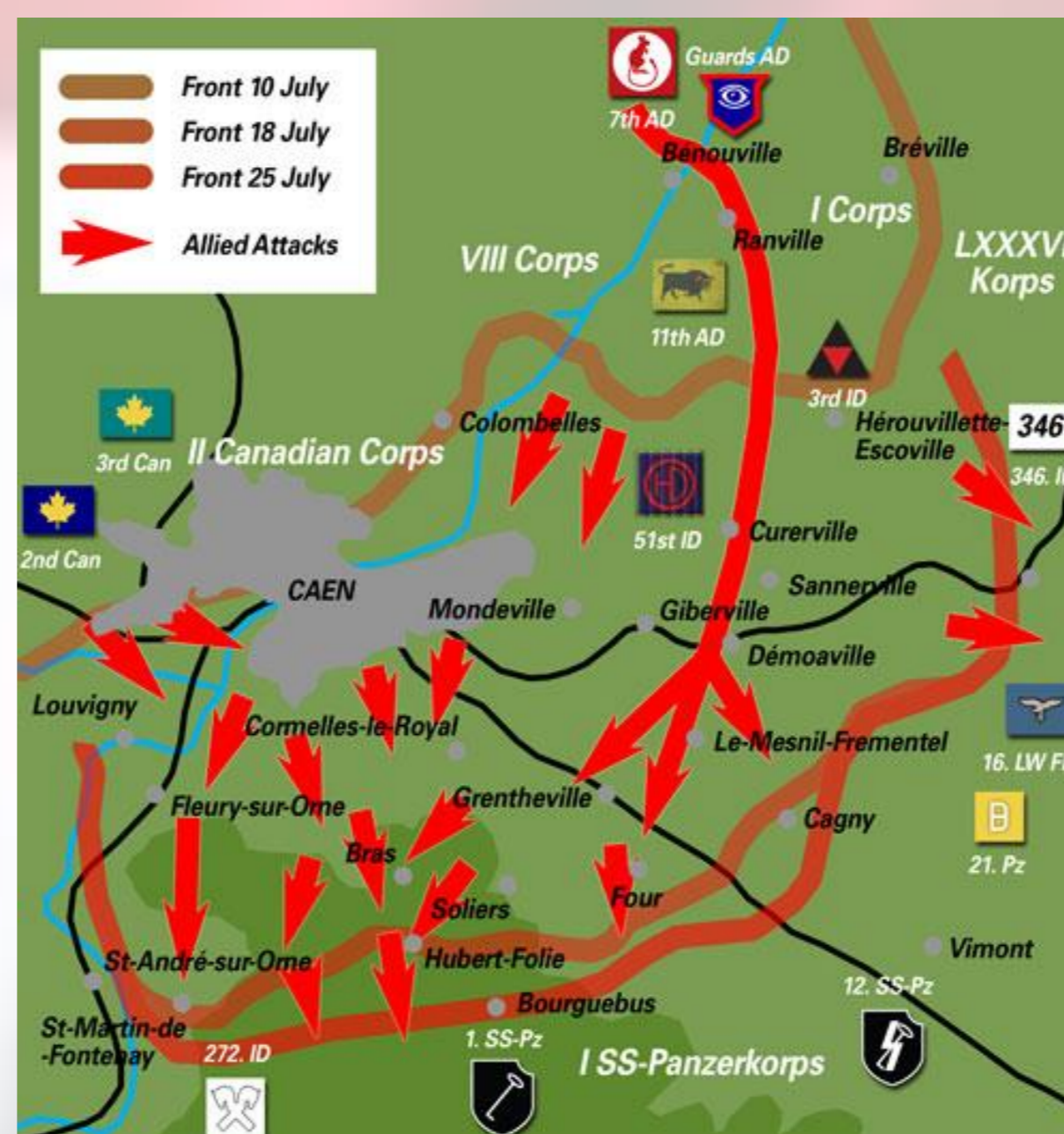
Dennis Reginald Smith was born in Haverhill, Suffolk in 1923, the youngest of the three children of tailor Stanley Ernest and Florence Lilian Smith formerly Rash. Sadly, his mother died in 1935 when he was barely 12. His father was remarried the following year to Rhoda (also Smith).

Stanley and Rhoda set up home in a house they named Stanrho. It still carries this name today and is located in Wratting Road.



Prior to joining the Army, Dennis was, according to the Echo published on 5 August 1944, a useful member of the Home Guard in Haverhill. As soon as he was old enough he enlisted as a Trooper with the RAC, HQ Sqn. 13th/18th Royal Hussars.

During the first four days of June the HQ Sqn were in Gosport finishing the waterproofing of tanks and loading them onto crafts in Portsmouth harbour prior to heading for the Normandy coast.



Following the Normandy landings the 13th/18th Royal Hussars were involved in Operation Goodwood. The 18th July 1944 witnessed the beginning of the biggest battle to involve British armour. The aim was to capture land to the east and south of Caen. While the 23rd Hussars were dealing with resistance in Le Prieure, to the east of Herouvillette, Dennis was killed in action.

Sherman tanks of the 13th-18th Hussars, at Gosport on 1st June.



The Echo of 5 August 1944 reported 'It will be learned with regret that Mr & Mrs S Smith, ... received official intimation that their youngest son, Trooper Dennis Smith, Queen Mary's Own Hussars, was killed in action whilst serving with the RAC in Normandy on July 18th. A subsequent letter has been received from a comrade who states he was with him when he died, with the only consoling news in the sad affair being that Dennis suffered no pain...He was within a month of his 21st birthday.'



Dennis was buried in Ranville War Cemetery.

His first grave marker was replaced with a Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone which bears the inscription chosen by the family:

'WE LOVED HIM DEARLY BUT GOD LOVED HIM MORE.'

