

JOSEPH PARKINSON LEGGOTT



16th August 1917

1880-1917 Aged 37

**Temporary Lieutenant, Royal Field Artillery
14th Brigade Ammunition Column.**

Joseph Leggott's name is not on the war memorial, even though the school was aware of his enlistment and his death which were both recorded in *The Bradfordian*. His grandfather James and great-grandfather Thomas were cabinet makers, originally from Lincolnshire, who moved to Bradford by way of Rothwell. By 1871 James's eldest son Henry was a partner in a general and furnishing ironmongers on Market Street. He would later become managing director and employed his two younger brothers William and Robert as clerks, until in 1881 they went into business as brass founders with premises in Little Germany, and later in Manchester and London. In 1874 Henry married Elizabeth Smith, daughter of a Bradford timber merchant. They had five children, two daughters followed by three sons of whom Joseph was the second born on 3rd December 1880. Henry's business prospered and he moved with his family to Hipperholme, near Halifax, where he served as President of the Conservative Club. His two elder sons attended Bradford Grammar School in the 1890s. George Henry won a Classical Scholarship to Jesus College, Oxford (1897), while Joseph was a pupil from 1893-1896 on the Modern side of the School. He left aged fifteen to become an apprentice to his father, and he also served for three years with the Yorkshire Dragoons Yeomanry (volunteer cavalry).

However, all was not well with the family and the firm of Henry Leggott and Co. Limited. Elizabeth does not appear to have lived with Henry at Hipperholme, and in 1901 she lived in Frizinghall with their youngest son Arthur and described herself as a widow. Henry's firm became insolvent and ceased trading in 1904. He died in Harrogate in 1907. Joseph went to work for the Carron Ironworks in Scotland for several years, before moving to London where he worked for an engineering business. He was a well built man with a height of six feet, and he played rugby first for the West of Scotland, while in London he represented the Wasps Rugby Club. When war broke out he was on business in Belgium and he returned on the last boat to depart from Ostend. According to the newspaper report of his death, there being no vacancy for him in the



Yorkshire Dragoons he joined a London volunteer cavalry regiment, the King Edward's Horse. His attestation papers show that he crossed London from Bayswater to Alexandria Palace on 12th August 1914. He was aged thirty-three years and five months. However, he served for only forty-one days before he was discharged 'in consequence of his being unwilling to become an efficient soldier', in the words of the Adjutant. Undeterred by this setback, at the end of September Joseph applied for a commission in a regular cavalry regiment, with no mention of why he had left the King Edward's Horse. On 10th November he was appointed temporary Lieutenant in the Royal Artillery, and the following April he was promoted to temporary Captain. However, he remained on home service for much of the next two years. In February 1917 he was posted as a Lieutenant from the Base near Boulogne to the Headquarters staff of 14th Brigade Royal Field Artillery, which had recently been made an Army brigade. At the start of April he was transferred to the Ammunition column, which was charged with taking shells to the gun positions in the field.

Despite the fact that the British Army was heavily engaged throughout 1917, and his recent arrival in France, on 12th July Joseph was granted home leave. A day later he was in Edinburgh, where he married Miss Jenny Weir Clark, the daughter of a J.P. and a manufacturing chemist (deceased). His sister Edith was a witness. After his leave was extended to a fortnight, he returned to his unit near Bethune in France in late July. On 15th August the Canadian Corps, part of British First Army, launched an attack near Loos to capture Hill 70 and draw German reserves away from the British offensive at Ypres. Joseph was seriously wounded by shellfire and was taken to 7th Casualty Clearing Station at Noeux-les-Mines where he died the next day. His name is not known to be recorded on any memorial in Britain. His younger brother Arthur joined the 1st Bradford Pals in 1914 and subsequently served with the Northumberland Fusiliers. He died of illness in St. Luke's War Hospital, Bradford in October 1918.



Acknowledgements:

The Leggott name is recorded in the censuses as Leggatt, Leggitt and Legott. Once this is understood it becomes fairly straightforward to trace the family history, apart from Elizabeth and Arthur who I could not find in the 1891 census. For Joseph's school record, I used the B.G.S. Annual Reports for 1894, 1895, 1896 and 1897 (George Henry). *The Bradfordian* is not available in the archives for these years. I am very grateful to Tricia Platts for sharing with me information about W. and R. Leggott of Silens Works, East Parade, Bradford. For Henry Leggott and Co. Ltd., there are references in the Post Office Directory 1887-8, and I used findmypast.co.uk to search for references to Henry in the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, *Leeds Mercury* and *Bradford Observer*. Henry was described as M.D. 'of the late firm' in 1902, and as a partner with Stephen Darnbrough when the business failed in December 1904.

The *Yorkshire Observer* reported Joseph's enlistment in the King Edward's Horse on 17th November 1914, followed by *The Bradfordian* in its March 1915 issue. His attestation can be found under Pension Record on Ancestry.com. His Officer's Personal Record in The National Archives is WO 339-12409. His promotions were published in the London Gazette 9th November 1914, 9th April 1915. Obituaries recording his employment and service were published by the *Yorkshire Post*, 22nd August 1917 and *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 23rd August 1917 (findmypast.co.uk). For his marriage to Jenny Clark and Scottish census records I used www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk.

Arthur Smith Leggott's death was reported in the *Yorkshire Post* 8th October 1918, Soldiers Died in the Great War and the Register of Soldiers Effects (both from Ancestry.com). Neither brother is recorded in the Bradford Roll of Honour. For the grave of Elizabeth and Arthur in Nab Wood cemetery, <<https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=176934439&ref=acom>>.

For the Battle of Hill 70, I used <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Hill_70> accessed 7-7-2017. I have not been able to find the War Diary for 14th Brigade R.F.A. or the Ammunition Column—in May 1916 Brigade ACs disappeared when they were merged into Divisional ACs (<<http://www.1914-1918.net/whatartbrig.htm>> accessed 7-7-2017); however, as 14th Brigade became an Army Artillery Brigade in January 1917 it was no longer attached to a division. I made the connection with the assault on Hill 70, which lies between Loos and Lens, as Leggott's burial place also contains more than 50 Canadians killed on 15-28th August. While he was the only man from 14th Brigade R.F.A. buried there who was killed on 15-16th, there are 5 burials from 88th Battery, 14th Brigade, dated 21st August.

This biography was researched and composed by Nick Hooper (Nhooper1956@googlemail.com) in August 2017.

