

WILLIAM ARTHUR MOSLEY



1st July 1916

1890-1916 Age 26

**Corporal 16/133, 16th (Service) Battalion
West Yorkshire Regiment, 1st Bradford
'Pals'.**

William was the son of Samuel Mosley and Susannah Smith, born in Bradford in June 1890. His father came from Nottingham and was the son of a lace weaver. He moved to the West Riding of Yorkshire around 1880, where he worked as a book-keeper and clerk to a wool spinning company. In 1888 he married Susannah, a shoe-maker's daughter from Bradford, and they lived in the Listerhills area of Bradford. William was the elder of two children. He started at Bradford Grammar School in 1904, in Form Fifth Modern Lower. He was fourteen, an age when many children from modest backgrounds had already left education. He left part of the way through his third year (1906-7), 'owing to business openings.' as the School Year Book explained. Mosley went into the Bradford wool industry to learn the trade; in 1911 he was a wool sorter, and in 1914 he was a wool buyer for the worsted spinning company of Mark Dawson and Son, Ltd., owner of two mills in Thornton. He also maintained an active social life. Although not in the First XV while at BGS, he will have played in house competitions. He became a playing member of Horton Rugby Football Club (later renamed Bradford RFC), and for four years he was a part-time soldier in the Bradford Territorial Force battalion, the 6th. In 1911, he was part of the detachment which went to London for the coronation of King George VI. In both activities he was in the company of other Old Bradfordians, although he had left the Territorials before 1914.

After war began, William could have headed north from his employer's city-centre office on Booth Street to Bellevue barracks in Manningham where the Territorials were based. Instead, early in September he responded to the Lord Mayor's call to form a 'Pals' battalion, and his number 133 shows him to have been an early recruit to the 16th Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment. His promotion to Corporal was probably a recognition of the fact that he had greater military experience than many of his comrades. He served with the 1st 'Pals' in Egypt in the winter of 1915-16, and then went with them to



France as part of 31st Division in March.

On the last day of June 1916, the 1st 'Pals' left their billets at Bus-les-Artois at 6.35 p.m. to make their way to the assembly trenches. On the way up they had a meal of hot bully beef at Colincamps, but they also suffered some losses from German shells. They reached their positions in Old Monk Trench, Bradford Trench and South Monk Trench at 3.20 a.m., then awaited Zero hour. As they formed the second wave of 93 Brigade's attack, at 7.30 a.m. they left their assembly trench about 100 yards behind the front. As soon as they climbed the scaling ladders they came under heavy fire from shells, machine guns and rifles. William may have been among those who crossed the British front line and passed through gaps in the barbed wire into no man's land. When the battlefield could finally be cleared in spring 1917, following the German withdrawal, his body could no longer be identified and so his name is recorded on the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing.

In 1922, William's sister Alice married Lawrence Cordingley. He was the younger brother of Robert, an Old Bradfordian who played for the same rugby club as William and was also in the Bradford Territorials before he emigrated to Canada. He also lost his life in 1916. Both families had lived on Cecil Avenue.



Acknowledgements:

William's photo is courtesy of the O.B.A. Roll of Honour. The family history was researched using Ancestry.com. For his school years, see the B.G.S. Annual Reports for 1905-1907. The Bradford Weekly Telegraph announced his death, with brief career details, on 28th July 1916 (accessed using the First World War Casualties index at the Local Studies Library, Bradford). Details of Mark Dawson and Son Ltd. are from Kelly's Directory of Bradford and Suburbs 1912. Horton/Bradford RFC's Roll of Honour was published in Yorkshire Rugby Football Union "In Memoriam" 1914-1919 (1919), consulted at the Local Studies Library, Bradford. David Raw, Bradford Pals (Pen and Sword, Barnsley 2005), chapter 10 is essential for the circumstances of Mosley's death, for which no details survive.

Robert Cordingley's biography was published 4th June 2016.

This biography was researched and composed by Nick Hooper in June and October 2016 (Nhooper1956@googlemail.com).