

PHILIP SLICER MUFF



21st September 1918

1891-1918 Aged 26

**Gunner 232915, 'C' Battery, 82nd Brigade
Royal Field Artillery.**

Philip Muff's family were for much of the nineteenth century farmers in East Bierley, between Cleckheaton and Bradford. There is no discernible connection with the family remembered for the Bradford department store of Brown, Muff & Co., one branch of which changed their name to Maufe when they moved to Ilkley. Philip was the grandson of Archimedes Muff, in 1861 a farmer of forty acres, who in 1882 committed suicide by throwing himself down a mine shaft. His son Charles inherited the farm, and a year later married Mary Mirfield from Tong. They had four children, a daughter followed by three sons, of whom Philip was the last born. During the 1890s Charles went into business as a wool merchant as well as farming. After he left school Philip joined his father in the business, while the two elder brothers went into business together as wool and waste merchants. In 1911 the three sons lived with their parents at Lower Park House Farm on Hunsworth Lane. All three went to Bradford Grammar School, although not at the same time. Philip started in the Junior School in 1899 around his tenth birthday and left when he was fifteen in 1905. He was an average student whose best result was coming third in History in his last year. He then worked for his father as a wool buyer at the company's premises on Grattan Road, Bradford.

When the war began none of the three Muff brothers volunteered although all were single and of military age, and many of the Bradford wool men with whom they consorted did join up. Philip was the only brother to serve in the armed forces. He was conscripted in April 1917 when he was twenty-seven. He served with the Royal Field Artillery and his first posting was to a battery which was sent to the Italian Front in November 1917. He returned to France in April 1918 and was posted to 'C' Battery, 82nd Brigade, part of the artillery of 18th (Eastern)



Division. 'C' Battery had been severely handled on 21st March at the start of the German Spring Offensive and Muff must have joined as a replacement. The battery was equipped with 18-pounder field guns which provide close support to the infantry, and was thus sited fairly close to the front line.

82nd Brigade R.F.A. was continuously in action from 1st August until 4th November, firstly in the Battle of Amiens, and then fighting across the old Somme battlefield towards the Hindenburg Line. On the morning of 19th September 'C' Battery was in position in a valley south-west of Ronsoy covering an attack towards Lempire. Six of its guncrews were killed, probably by enemy counter-battery fire, and Gunner Philip Muff was injured. He was taken to a Casualty Clearing Station at La Chapelle near Peronne where on 21st September he died and was buried.

Old Bradfordians—'We will remember them'



Acknowledgements:

Philip's photo is from the School memorial book courtesy of the O.B.A. and B.G.S. The family was researched using Ancestry.com. The Coroner's inquest notes for Archimedes Muff are transcribed there. Philip has an entry in De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour, although it gives his birth year wrongly as 1891. His years at B.G.S. are recorded in the Annual Reports for 1900-1905 (September 1899-July 1905—*The Bradfordian* records 1900-1906). For the Muff family enterprises, *Kelly's Directory of Bradford 1912*.

For 'C' Battery 82nd Brigade R.F.A., see <<http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/army/regiments-and-corps/the-royal-artillery-in-the-first-world-war/batteries-and-brigades-of-the-royal-field-artillery/lxxxii-lxxxiii-lxxxiv-and-lxxxv-howitzer-brigades-18th-divisional-artillery/>> accessed 18.9.2018. The Brigade War Diary WO 95/2024/3 was downloaded from T.N.A. The memoir *Pushed and the Return* Push, (William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh and London; 1909) by G.H.F. Nichols, gives a lively account of the brigade's experiences in 1918; although mainly from the H.Q. perspective, it makes valuable comments on the nature of the fighting and morale in 1918. It is available in reprint, and may also be read online at <<http://www.loyalbooks.com/download/text/Pushed-and-the-Return-Push-by-Nichols.txt>>. The position of the battery was plotted from the War Diary on trench map 62C N.E. (21 February 1918) available at <<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/#zoom=14&lat=49.9737&lon=3.1778&layers=101465290&b=1>>. The 19 September casualties were calculated from a casualty search using <<https://www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead.aspx>>.

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