

PHILIP LESLIE IBBETSON



29th September 1918

1891-1918 Aged 27

Sergeant 2643, 5th Battery 2nd Brigade Australian Field Artillery.

Philip was the eldest child of Joseph Ibbetson and his wife Caroline Todd who married in Bingley in 1889. Joe's father William Ibbetson owned a large lithographic printing firm in Bradford. His three sons followed him into the trade, although only the eldest inherited the company. Joseph ran his own firm with premises on Cheapside in Bradford. Philip was their eldest son, born in Bradford on 19th May 1891. He went to Bradford Grammar School aged twelve in 1903. There is a record for him for one year in the Junior School when he came near the bottom in all subjects. He was at Sedbergh School in 1907-8 before he returned to live with his parents and brother and sister at 73 Moorhead Lane, Shipley. Unlike his younger brother Thomas, Philip had no interest in following their father into printing. In 1911 he was listed as a farmer's pupil and in November the same year he took passage from Liverpool to Australia. He is found in 1913 as a 'station hand', that is working on a sheep or cattle farm in the northern outback of Queensland at Green Hills, Muttaborra.

When war broke out Philip was quick to volunteer to fight. He made a journey of 600 miles to Brisbane where he enlisted as a Driver in the Divisional Ammunition Column. He arrived in the Middle East at the end of April 1915 and he served at Gallipoli until the evacuation. Back in Egypt in March 1916 he relinquished his post as driver and became a gunner. He went to France with the 1st Australian Division. Philip served on the Somme with 3rd then with 21st Australian Field Artillery Brigades before he was transferred to 5th Battery, 2nd F.A. Brigade in January 1917. On 29th July near Ypres he was wounded in the shoulder by a shell-splinter while firing the preliminary bombardment for the Third Battle of Ypres. He rejoined his battery from hospital after seven weeks and was promoted to Sergeant in late September, a rank he held until his death. In October he enjoyed a three-week furlough to England, returning at the end of the month only to be



gassed twice. The second incident was serious enough for Philip to be hospitalized in England for several months.

Philip returned to his unit once more at the end of May 1918 south-west of Ypres. At the start of August his brigade moved in secrecy to Villers-Brettoneux on the eve of the Battle of Amiens. From then until his death it was in action in the drive eastwards to Peronne and then the Hindenburg Line. He was killed in action on 29th September while firing a barrage in support of American troops who were attacking Bellicourt. The 2nd F.A.B. War Diary describes the German counter-barrage as 'very weak'. However, the account prepared by O.C. 5th Battery reports that Philip was working his gun 'during heavy enemy shelling' of his position. It stated 'an enemy shell burst close to where Sgt. Ibbetson was standing one piece of which passed through the brain, causing immediate death.' He was buried in Roisel Communal Cemetery. His brother Thomas, who served as a Captain in the Royal Field Artillery and won the M.C., was able to attend his brother's funeral. He survived the war.

Old Bradfordians—'We will remember them'



Acknowledgements:

Ibbetson'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 Bradfordian* recorded his school years as 1903-6, however he is named only in the Annual Report for 1903-4. For his time at Sedbergh School, see <<http://pilgrimage.sedberghschool.org/?s=Ibbetson>>, accessed 26.9.2018. This reports that Philip sold his farm to enlist in 1914, although this seems difficult to reconcile with the records that he was a 'station hand' (Australian electoral rolls 1913) and a 'Stockman' (Australian Service Records, Attestation paper, Ancestry.com). It also reports that he refused a commission, and that his final rank was Sergeant-Major, stated also by the *Bradford Weekly Telegraph* 11.10.1918. His service record and C.W.G.C. do not support this, recording his rank as sergeant. <<http://www.shipleyww1.org.uk/People%20Ibbetson,%20Philip%20Leslie.html>>, accessed 26.9.2018 records him as Second Lieutenant, which is an error. The 2nd Australian Field Artillery Battery War Diary for the date of Philip's death is <<https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/awm-media/collection/RCDIG1015037/large/5247155.JPG>>.

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