

SAM MOULSON



4th September 1918

1896-1918 Aged 22

Second Lieutenant 10th (Service) Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment.

Sam Moulson was born in the Girlington district of Bradford on 28th August 1896. He spent his whole life, up to the time he joined the Army, living at 77 Ingleby Street where his parents were in business as grocers and beer retailers. Sam's father, another Sam, married Ellen Whitbread in 1880. At the time the elder Sam was a stone mason, but by 1887 he had become a grocer. They had six children, of which Sam junior was the youngest. He attended Whetley Lane Council School until he was eleven. He must have been a clever boy for in 1911 he won a place at Bradford Grammar School in 3rd Classical Lower. Although his father died in 1910, Sam's mother had elder sons and daughters to assist her in the business and he was able to continue his studies until July 1912. He repeated his year in 5th Classical, coming near the top in most subjects this second time round. After school he worked as a 'clerk', also described as a 'storeman', although who for is not known.

Sam attested for military service in late October 1915, two months after he was nineteen. He was called up only a week later (under Lord Derby's 'Group Scheme') and was posted to Woolwich, to the Army Ordnance Corps whose job was the maintenance and repair of armaments and munitions. He went to France on 1st March 1916, but only eighteen days later he was invalided home suffering from Bronchitis. He would spend a further year in Britain. He was promoted to Lance-Corporal in July 1916, and it is clear that Sam wanted to get to the front as he applied for a commission. He stated that he wished to join the infantry, preferably the West Yorkshire Regiment where he stood a chance of serving with his school-mates. He joined the 12th Officer Cadet Battalion at Newmarket on 1st December and was discharged to his commission on 27th March 1917. His request to serve in the West Yorkshire Regiment was granted, however he did not get to the front until he joined 10th Battalion on 5th April 1918 as part of a draft of 180 Officers and



men to make good casualties suffered during the German Spring Offensive.

A little over a fortnight later Sam was shot through his right hand while taking part in an unsuccessful counter-attack on German positions at Mesnil on the edge of the old Somme battlefield. His wound required him to be sent to the Devizes War Hospital until he was passed fit in late July. When he rejoined 10/West Yorks is not recorded in the battalion's War Diary, however he was with it for 17th Division's assault on the German positions on Thiepval Ridge. The attack, part of the Second Battle of the Somme, commenced on 24th August. In four days the battalion advanced over ground it had taken the British 4 1/2 months to capture in 1916, and in the process it captured 450 Germans and thirty-two machine guns. After two days out of the line it returned to the attack on 1st September and helped capture two villages over the next two days. Sam Moulson was killed on the night of 4th September in what the War Diary described as 'fruitless attempts to push forward' in the face of enemy machine-gun fire. He was initially buried in the ominously-named 'West Yorkshire Cemetery' at nearby Equancourt. In 1920 the graves were concentrated into Lebucquiere Communal Extension Cemetery several miles from where he fell.



Acknowledgements:

Sam Moulson'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. While Sam's short life is easy to trace, his father's career is more difficult because the censuses record two Sam Moulsons in Bradford in the 1870s-80s, one a pork butcher and the other a stone mason. My review of the evidence satisfies me that Sam was the son of Sam the stone mason. Although he too was listed as a Butcher in the Post Office Directory 1891 at 77 Ingleby Street, in the Census of the same year he was described as a grocer at the same address. In 1901 he was president of the Off-Licence Holders (*Bradford Daily Telegraph* 30.8.1901). For Sam junior's B.G.S. career, see the *Annual Reports* 1908-9 to 1912.

His Officer Personal Record includes his original Attestation and casualty reports— see T.N.A. WO-339-79783. He is named in the 10/West Yorks War Diary, T.N.A. 2004/1, 5.8.1918, 22.8.1918 and 4.9.1918 (accessed through Ancestry.com). The writing is very faint and the reproduction is inadequate for several folios, particularly 383 which records Sam's death, so I supplemented this with Everard Wyrall, *The West Yorkshire Regiment in the War 1914-1918, Vol. 2* (London, Bodley Head, n.d., Naval & Military Press reprint), 313-322, (The Battle of Albert and the Battle of Bapaume). The trench map is 57C SE 22.9.1918, square P.32 (accessed through National Library of Scotland). Sam's elder brother Leonard, who had been a Territorial since 1903, went to France 20.7.1915. He survived.

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