

MAURICE EDGAR SMITH



15th January 1918

1882-1918 Aged 36

Acting Sergeant, Army Pay Corps.

Maurice Smith enlisted on 9th November 1914, spending the next three years in military service at home in the UK, where he died of illness on 15th January 1918.

Maurice was born in Bradford on 12th February 1882. His father Arthur had come from Spofforth and found work in Bradford's textile industry, progressing from a wool warehouseman to a buyer and seller of wool. In 1875 he married Rhoda Mogford, who with her brother and sister moved to West Yorkshire from Devon. Arthur and Rhoda had five children, of whom Maurice was the fourth and their second son. While his elder brother William was apprenticed to the wool trade and followed in his father's footsteps, Arthur went to Bradford Grammar School when he was eleven. In addition to the usual academic subjects, he studied book keeping and shorthand in the three years he was at the school. He then went on to become a bank clerk. Although in 1911 Maurice is found working as a pattern cutter for a worsted merchant, by the outbreak of war in 1914 he was once again a bank clerk.

Edgar was in his thirty-third year when the great War began, living at home with his parents and two sisters. For a man of sedentary occupation and a settled life who wished to do 'his bit' for his country, active service can not have been an attractive prospect. However, there was a way he could serve his country by using his skills. In November 1914 he volunteered in York for the Army Pay Corps. Nothing is known of his war-time service, other than that he did not serve overseas. At the end of 1917 he seems to have been stationed in north Kent, at the large naval base of Chatham. He was taken ill with an acute respiratory illness which had first been observed during an epidemic among British soldiers the previous winter. The fatality rate was high. Maurice was taken to Fort Pitt Military Hospital with a diagnosis of purulent bronchitis. After one month he died of heart failure.



His family did not exercise the option, at their expense, to bring his body home to Bradford. He was buried in Fort Pitt Military Cemetery.



Acknowledgements:

Maurice Smith's photo is from the School memorial book courtesy of the O.B.A. and B.G.S. The family was researched using Ancestry.co.uk. Rhoda Mogford worked as a dressmaker when she moved to West Yorkshire; her brother Mark and brother-in-law James Waygood worked as wool sorters—perhaps this was how she came into contact with Arthur Smith. Maurice's years at B.G.S. are recorded in the Annual Reports for 1893-6. Bradford Roll of Honour records Smith's enlistment.

For his cause of death, entered on the death certificate, see Shanks et al. 'Relationship between "purulent bronchitis" in military populations in Europe prior to 1918 and the 1918–1919 influenza pandemic.' *Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses* 6 (4), 235–239, presented at the October 2011 meeting of the Infectious Disease Society of America in Boston MA as poster 1123, <<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1750-2659.2011.00309.x>> accessed 2.1.2020.

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