

# WILLIAM MORGAN



23rd July 1918

1882-1918 Aged 35

## Second Lieutenant, 62nd Battalion Machine Gun Corps.

William was the last of three brothers to enlist and his service overseas was the shortest, yet he was the only one to lose his life. He was born in Shipley on 10th September 1882, the eldest child of William Morgan and Emma Elizabeth (née Hocking). They married in Emma's home town of Redruth, Cornwall, whence William senior, from south Wales, had moved when he was young. William and his brother George became clerks to a Redruth solicitor, then in the early 1870s they set up in practice in Shipley. William junior was the eldest of four children, three boys all of whom went to Bradford Grammar School, and a girl. William moved from Salt's School to Bradford Grammar in 1896, around his fourteenth birthday. In his three years at the school he was in the middle of his form for most subjects, except for Natural Science in which he came near the top. William left in 1899 to join his father's business. By 1914 he was a partner with his father and brother Owen in the firm of Samuel Wright, Morgan and Company, and manager of the Shipley office. Owen and William were stalwarts of the Shipley Parish Company of the Church Lads Brigade, William serving as Captain.

When Britain went to war at the start of August 1914, William's brothers joined the forces well before he did. George, the youngest, was already a Territorial in the Yorkshire Dragoons, and when his enlistment expired he re-enlisted in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and served at Salonika. Owen joined the Bradford Pals as a private but was rapidly promoted to Lieutenant in the same battalion. He was wounded in June 1916, and so was fortunate to miss the disastrous and costly 1st July attack. He was discharged in November 1916 as no longer fit for military service. William, however, did not join up until the end of 1915. He attested under the Derby Scheme that he was willing to fight when called upon and his mobilisation came the following May. He served firstly in the Army Cyclists' Corps as a private. He was then commissioned into the Bradford Pals on 25th March 1917, serving at home as acting adjutant until he was transferred to the Machine Gun Corps early in 1918.



On his arrival in France William Morgan was posted to 62nd Battalion MGC, part of 2nd West Riding (62nd) Division. His arrival with three other officers was recorded in the War Diary for 5th May, when he was assigned to 'B' Company. Other than firing harassing barrages at night, the machine-guns saw no significant action until the middle of July when 62nd Division was transferred rapidly southwards to the Marne to join an attack by French 5th Army near Reims. Assuming that Morgan was still with 'B' Company, it is disappointing that the War Diary records only that it was already near the jumping off line and so was not attached to either of the two brigades carrying out the attack at 8 a.m. on the morning of 20th July. The attack was organized hastily and artillery support was inadequate. The attackers came under German fire before zero hour. It was perhaps this that accounted for the wounds Morgan received, or the heavy hostile shelling endured over the next two days. He must have been evacuated to a hospital near Epernay for he was buried there when he died from his wounds on 23rd July. His corpse lay in the French National Cemetery until nearly half a century later the Commonwealth burials were removed to a British cemetery near Boulogne (Terlinchtun, Wimille).

Old Bradfordians—'We will remember them'



### Acknowledgements:

William's photo is from the School memorial book courtesy of the OBA and BGS. I used Ancestry.co.uk to research the family. For William's years at BGS, the *Yearbook* for 1897 to 1899 recorded his form positions. The *Shipley Times & Gazette* reported the war service of the three brothers in two articles, 16th June 1916 and 31st July 1918 (accessed using Findmypast.co.uk). I have not yet seen William's Officer's Service Record TNA WO 339/79660. The 62nd Battalion MGC War Diary is WO95/3077/3, accessed using Ancestry.co.uk. The documents relating to William's burial and re-interment are available through the CWGC website. The *Bradfordian* does not list William's service and death, although his brothers' service was noted.

This biography was researched and composed by Nick Hooper in April 2020. For further information, contact Nhooper1956@googlemail.com, or see <<http://www.bradfordgrammar.com/former-pupils/bradford-grammar-school-in-ww1/>>.