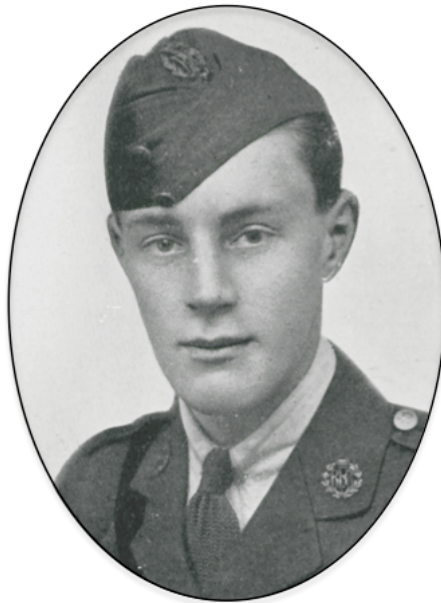


Banstead Remembers

2nd Lieutenant Leslie Mitchell

*of Rozel, Burdon Lane, Cheam
Buried at All Saints, Banstead*

*94 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps
Killed in a flying accident, aged 19
22nd December 1917*



FRIDAY 22nd DECEMBER

at All Saints Church, Banstead

11:50am: a short service of remembrance will be held

Noon: a church bell will be tolled 100 times

The churchyard flag will be raised to half mast at 7:30am and lowered at 5:30pm

Leslie is commemorated on the Belmont War Memorial and is buried at All Saints. He died when his plane crashed during a training flight in Norfolk. Please come and remember the sacrifice that our local community made 100 years ago in World War One.

*We will remember **each** one*

2nd Lieutenant Leslie Mitchell of Rozel, Burdon Lane, Belmont

Leslie James Mitchell was born in East Dulwich on 31st August 1898. He was one of six children born to James and Clara Mitchell. James was a stockbroker and the family lived at Southboro', on the Brighton Road at Belmont, and then at Heather Grange, The Drive, Belmont and later at Rozel, Burdon Lane.

Leslie was a clerk at Glanvill, Enthoven & Co., a firm of Lloyd's of London brokers. He joined the University of London Officer Training Corps shortly after his 18th birthday, in the summer of 1916, and then enlisted in the Royal Flying Corps on 14th March 1917, signing up for the duration of the war.

Leslie did his basic training at the new recruits depot at Farnborough before being posted to the 1st Officer Cadet Wing at Denham, Buckinghamshire, in April. He attended No.2 School of Military Aeronautics, Oxford, in July, where he would have received training in the principles of flight and the basic mechanics of an aeroplane. He was granted a probationary commission as a temporary 2nd lieutenant on 16th August and sent to the Central Flying School at Hendon to learn how to fly. He was examined at Cricklewood in September and successfully gained his Royal Aero Club aviator's certificate in a Beatty-Wright biplane.

His first operational posting was to 83 (Bomber) Squadron, who had just arrived at RAF Wyton, Cambridgeshire. They were equipped with FE2B and FE2D 2-seater bombers and later specialised in night bombing. They don't seem to have taken part in any sorties during Leslie's time with them but he would have gained valuable flying hours in a modern aircraft. Appointed as Flying Officer in November, he was transferred to 94 Squadron, at Harling Road, near Thetford, Norfolk, a fighter pilot training unit.

On 22nd December 1917, Leslie was taking his first solo flight in an Avro 504J (registration number B4258), a biplane fighter-trainer. While flying at 500 feet, he tried to either loop-the-loop or turn vertically. With the machine upside down, it started to nosedive towards the ground. Instead of pulling up and completing the loop, he either fell onto the joystick or tried to fight the turn and shoved the joystick forwards by mistake. At such a dangerously low altitude there was no margin for error. The plane crashed into the ground and Leslie was killed. He was 19 years old.

Leslie is buried at All Saints, Banstead, and is commemorated on the Belmont and Sutton War Memorials, on the Roll of Honour at Christ Church, Sutton, and on the Lloyd's of London War Memorial.