

Banstead Remembers

Sub-Lieutenant Harry Maitland of Banstead Hall

*Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve
Died in Canada, aged 19
17th March 1918*



SATURDAY 17th MARCH

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

Harry trained as a pilot but joined the RNVR after a heart condition curtailed his flying career. Posted to Canada on vital cargo inspection work, he fell ill and died. Please come and remember the sacrifice that our local community made 100 years ago in World War One.

*We will remember **each** one*

Sub-Lieutenant Harry Maitland of Banstead Hall

Henry Jervois Ruault Maitland, known as Harry, was born at Banstead Hall on 3rd April 1898 and was baptised at All Saints on 7th May.

He was the son of Edward and Mary Maitland, who had established a preparatory school in Banstead Hall, which used to stand where the flats in Dunnymans Road are now, in 1889. Young Harry attended his parents' school before going to Harrow in 1912. He left shortly before war broke out and returned to Banstead Hall.

Harry joined the Royal Naval Air Service in April 1916 and received a probationary commission as a flight sub-lieutenant in July of that year. He underwent basic training at Crystal Palace and was taught to fly at RNAS Chingford, in Essex. He would have gone on to defend his country against Zeppelin bombing raids or serve with a fighter squadron and fight in the skies over the trenches in France but, following an accident, it was discovered that he had a heart condition and his flying career was at an end almost as soon as it had begun.

He transferred to the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve in February 1917 and joined the Trade Division as a sub-lieutenant. He was sent to Naval Control in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, the chief departure point for merchant shipping crossing the North Atlantic between America and Britain.

Both sides were trying to starve each other out: German U-Boats were sinking all shipping in a danger zone around Britain and in return the British were using their surface fleet and minefields to blockade Germany. Harry worked in the Examination Service, inspecting the vessels of neutral countries, verifying their documents and checking their cargo to prevent the smuggling of contraband through the blockade.

In February 1918, Harry fell dangerously ill with scarlet fever. A slight improvement came in early March but the infection spread to his lungs and he developed pneumonia. Harry died at Halifax on 17th March 1918. He was 19 years old.

Harry is buried in St John's cemetery, Halifax. He is commemorated on a plaque in All Saints, on the Garton Memorial in the churchyard, on the panels in the Lady Chapel, All Saints, and on the lost memorial panels at Banstead Hall but not on the Banstead Village War Memorial. Harry was awarded the British War Medal.

About 40 boys aged 8-13 were educated at any one time at Banstead Hall and hundreds would have passed through the Hall and off to the leading public schools of the day. Most would become officers during the war. The school, which closed in the 1930s, had memorial panels which hung in the chapel to commemorate the school's war dead. 31 old boys, including Harry, gave their lives in the war and are named on them. At least one of the domestic staff, Albert Wright, of Pound Road, was also killed. The school has long since been demolished and the whereabouts of the memorial panels is not known.