

Banstead Remembers

*Private Tom Douse
of 6 Canons Lane, Burgh Heath*

*15th Hampshire Regiment
Served in France, Belgium and Italy
Killed in Action, aged 29*



TUESDAY 4th SEPTEMBER

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

Tom Douse was a butcher from Winchester who came to live and work in Burgh Heath. He served with the Hampshire Yeomanry and the Hampshire Regiment and was killed near Vierstraat in the Hundred Days advance to victory. Please come and remember the sacrifice our community made.

*We will remember **each** one*

The Hundred Days: Day 28

Tom Douse of 6 Canons Lane, Burgh Heath

Clifford Thomas "Tom" Douse was born in Winchester on 5th July 1889. He was the son of William and Sara Ann Douse (nee Allen) and was one of ten children.

Tom's father was a labourer and his mother was a laundress. The family lived at 55 Wales Street, Winnall, Winchester, and later at 26 Wardean Terrace, Colson Road. Tom attended St John's National School and became a butcher's boy when he left school. He continued to live with his parents for several more years as he learned his trade and then came up to Burgh Heath sometime between 1911 and 1915 to work as a butcher. Burgh Heath had two butcher's shops at the time and he would have worked for either Mr Beall, on the Brighton Road, or for Mr Birch, on the Green.

Tom moved into 6 Canons Lane with a Winchester girl, Lily Russell, and they had a son, Ernest, in September 1915. They were married three months later, on 29th December, at All Saints, Banstead. Tom had probably already enlisted under the Derby Scheme by then and was perhaps expecting his call-up in the near future.

He was mobilized in late May 1916 and served on the Home Front with the 3/1st Hampshire Yeomanry (Carabiniers). The Yeomanry were the mounted arm of the Territorial Force but most yeomen ended up fighting dismounted. Tom was sent to France to join the 1/1st Hampshire Yeomanry around the turn of the year 1916-1917.

After a few months, they were absorbed into the 15th Hampshire Regiment to fight as infantry and served in Italy during the winter of 1917-1918, returning to the Western Front during the German offensive of March 1918. They were straight into action and took part in the fighting retreat to Amiens before being sent north to Flanders.

Once the German offensive of July had been stopped, it was time for the Allies to strike back. On 8th August, Day 1 of the Hundred Days, the Allies took the first step to victory with the Battle of Amiens. They then began a series of attacks, one every few days, constantly shifting the point of focus, probing for a weak spot.

4th September was Day 28. The Germans had been forced back to their old trenches on the Somme and were under attack there, the front had been extended north to Arras and a hole punched through the Drocourt-Queant Line and the Americans were fighting to regain ground south of Ypres. The 15th Hampshires and their brigade were to continue the advance made by the Americans near Vierstraat and Wytshaete.

All was chaos on the ground as the Americans weren't where they were expected to be, there were pockets of Germans all over the place and the Hampshires couldn't reach their planned assembly positions. The advance began at 5:30am on the 4th. The first obstacle was a railway line with machinegun nests lined along its banks. The British barrage was dropping behind the railway and the machineguns cut the 15th Hampshires to pieces, inflicting 323 casualties. Tom was among the dead. He was 29.