

Banstead Remembers
Sergeant William Farley
of 11 Mint Cottages

13th Royal Fusiliers
Served in France and Belgium
Died of Wounds, aged 25



SATURDAY 13th OCTOBER

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

William Farley was a gardener who joined the Army at the start of the war. He fought in the Battle of the Somme in 1916 and at Arras in 1917. He was mortally wounded as his battalion tried to exploit a breach in the Hindenburg Line defences between Cambrai and St Quentin.

*We will remember **each** one*

The Hundred Days: Day 67

William Farley, of 11 Mint Cottages

William Farley was born in Banstead in late 1892 and was baptised at All Saints on 29th January 1893. He was the son of Frederick and Emily Farley (nee Parsons).

His father was a farm labourer who was born in Burgh Heath and grew up in Banstead and his mother was from Chevening, in Kent. After marrying in 1890, they made their home at 11 Mint Cottages, Mint Road. William was their second son, one of six children. He grew up to become a gardener.

William joined the Army at Westminster in August 1914 and was posted to the newly-formed 13th (Service) Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers in September. While they were training that autumn, he married Grace Finch near Walsingham, Norfolk.

The 13th Royal Fusiliers went to France in July 1915 and fought in the Battle of the Somme in 1916 and at Arras in 1917. William was wounded and evacuated home for treatment but rejoined his battalion in time to fight on the old Somme battlefield at the close of the German offensive in March 1918.

On 8th August, Day 1 of the Hundred Days, the Allies took the first step to victory with the Battle of Amiens, advancing to clear the area around the vital railway hub of Amiens in a surprise attack. William was some 15 miles north of the battlefield but activity was stepped up all along the British line that day and his battalion sent out a contact patrol to carry out an attack scheme. Amiens was a great success and cleared the way for an offensive on the Somme.

After a pause of a few days, the Allies began a series of attacks, one every few days, constantly shifting the point of focus, probing for a weak spot. William's battalion advanced their line, captured trenches and pushed out patrols, checking to see whether the Germans were retiring. They were. The Germans were forced back through the old Somme battlefield and all five British armies were advancing by early September, pursuing them back to the strong fortifications of the Hindenburg Line. During the pursuit, William was awarded the Military Medal for singlehandedly capturing a machinegun and its crew of two.

On 26th September, a general offensive began and spread between the Meuse and the Channel coast over the next few days. The Hindenburg Line was breached between Cambrai and St Quentin and William's battalion was sent in to fight their way beyond the third line of defences on 8th October. They came under machinegun fire as they advanced and were held up due to nearby fighting but reached their objective and fought on again the next day, meeting "*a certain amount of resistance*" from a machinegun and two artillery batteries. William was wounded once more, probably on the 8th-9th. This time it would prove fatal and he died a few days later. He was 25.