

# *Banstead Remembers*

*Private Gilbert Burrington. M.M.*

*of 315 Reigate Road, Nork*

*102<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force  
Killed near Courcellette, aged 37*



## MONDAY 21<sup>st</sup> NOVEMBER

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

Gilbert was a Somerset man who emigrated to Canada. His widow came to live in Nork after the war and the vicar of St Paul's kindly added Gilbert's name to the war memorial plaque in the church. Please come and remember the sacrifice that was made during the war.

*We will remember **each** one*

## *Private Gilbert Burrington, M.M. of 315 Reigate Road, Nork*

Gilbert Burrington was born in Bridgwater, Somerset, on 13<sup>th</sup> June 1879. He was the second son of Gilbert and Amelia Burrington and was one of at least seven children.

Young Gilbert attended King's School, in Gloucester, and then became a clerk working at a bacon factory in Gillingham, Dorset, where he lodged at a grocer-drapers shop in Queen Street. Gilbert's younger brother, Harley, emigrated to Canada in 1902 and Gilbert and two other brothers soon followed him to Red Deer County, Alberta.

Gilbert's father died in 1908 and his mother moved to Pembrokeshire. On a trip home, Gilbert married Marianne Harries, at Granston, Pembrokeshire, in December 1913. They left for Canada aboard the *SS Alaunia* in March 1914 and settled in Hazelton, British Columbia, where Gilbert worked as a Deputy Game Warden.

When the British Empire declared war in August 1914, many Canadians volunteered to serve and they started to arrive on the Western Front in Autumn 1914 and fought with distinction during the Second Battle of Ypres in the Spring of 1915. All of the Burrington brothers served in the War and Gilbert's younger brother, Harley, was amongst the first contingent of Canadian volunteers. Gilbert and Marianne had a son, Gilbert John Harries, on 18<sup>th</sup> July 1915 but their joy was shortlived as only a week later Harley died after having been shot in the spine at Festubert. He was 31.

Gilbert, 5ft 10in tall with a fair complexion, light brown hair and grey eyes, enlisted in the Army at the port of Prince Rupert, British Columbia, on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1916. He joined the 102<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Force. They arrived in France on 12<sup>th</sup> August and went straight into "*horrible*" trenches in the Ypres Salient.

In October, they headed south to Picardy, the region through which the Somme flowed. Battle had been raging here for three months and the Allies had suffered heavy losses and only advanced a few thousand yards. The Canadians had captured Courcellette and it was in trenches near there that the 102<sup>nd</sup> first found themselves.

On 21<sup>st</sup> November 1916, Gilbert was struck by a shell and killed "*instantaneously*", the Battalion's only casualty that day. He was 37 years old.

Gilbert was posthumously awarded the Military Medal in January 1917. He is commemorated on the Vimy Memorial, the war memorial in St Paul's, Nork, on a memorial plaque at Tregwynt Manor, Pembrokeshire, on the family grave in Bridgwater, in the Anglican Church at Pine Lake, Alberta and he has an entry in De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour and in the Canadian Book of Remembrance.

*Marianne moved to Harbur (now 315), Reigate Road, Nork, in the 1920s. When the Vicar of St Paul's was gathering names for the church's Second World War memorial, he kindly allowed Marianne to add Gilbert's name so that his name would be close to her.*