

Banstead Remembers

*Gunner Dr. Robert Vaughan
Medical Officer at Banstead Asylum*

*3rd Division Ammunition Column
Died of his wounds, aged 32
23rd May 1917*



TUESDAY 23rd MAY

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

Dr. Robert Vaughan served with the Royal Army Medical Corps and as a surgeon with the Red Cross in France, Salonica (northern Greece) and Macedonia. After returning to England in 1916, he enlisted in the Royal Field Artillery and was killed near Tilloy shortly after the Battle of Arras.

*We will remember **each** one*

Gunner Dr. Robert Vaughan Medical Officer at Banstead Asylum

Robert William Walter Vaughan was born on 13th February 1885 in Rhuddlan, Flintshire, Wales, and baptised at his local church, St Mary's, on 11th March. His father was the Vicar of Rhuddlan and the family lived in the vicarage.

Young Robert boarded at Rossall School, near Fleetwood, Lancashire between 1898 and 1902, leaving school when he was 17 years old, and went on to Liverpool University. He then studied medicine at University College London Medical School, where he was awarded the Gold Medal for Pharmacology and Materia Medica.

After being licensed and gaining his Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery degrees, Robert became House Surgeon at Cardiff Infirmary before moving east to Surrey. He joined the staff at Banstead Asylum as 5th Assistant Medical Officer in July 1910 and probably lived in the staff accommodation blocks at the hospital. He joined the nearby Banstead Downs Golf Club, where several of the medical staff played.

When war broke out, Robert joined the Royal Army Medical Corps on a temporary commission and soon found himself in France. He did not remain with the R.A.M.C. for long as he relinquished his lieutenancy at the end of 1914 to volunteer in a hospital near Verdun, where the French were fighting a bloody and protracted battle.

In Autumn 1915, Robert offered his services to the Red Cross and joined the Anglo-French Serbian Relief Expedition that sailed to Salonika (Thessaloniki), in northern Greece. Serbia were our allies and they were being invaded by the Central Powers. Their army retreated south, towards Greece, and Allied soldiers were landed to form a defensive position that the Serbs could fall back to. Robert went north, where he treated refugees fleeing the Bulgarian advance. His Red Cross unit stayed on to tend to civilians as the Allied troops retreated but they soon had to fall back too and Robert found himself back where he had first landed. He returned to England.

Robert rejoined the Army in the summer of 1916. He gave up surgery for gunnery and joined the Royal Field Artillery as a gunner. After several months in England, he went back out to France to serve with the ammunition column for 3rd Division. The ammunition column was responsible for keeping the division's guns supplied with shells. Although he held a lowly rank for a man who was once an officer, it was only intended to be temporary and he was soon recommended for a commission.

3rd Division were training behind the lines but their guns were still in action, loaned to 37th Division, on 22nd May 1917. One of 3rd D.A.C.'s sections was near Tilloy that day when Robert was mortally wounded, probably by an artillery shell. He died at Tilloy on the following day. He was 32 years old.

Dr. Robert Vaughan is buried in Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun, Pas de Calais.