

# *Banstead Remembers*

*Corporal Albert Waters  
of 30 Lyme Regis Road*

*32<sup>nd</sup> Royal Fusiliers (East Ham)  
Served in France and Belgium  
Killed in Action, aged 33*



## FRIDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> 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

Albert Waters was foreman of the dairy that used to stand at the junction of the High Street and Sutton Lane. He was one of thirteen local men killed in the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). Please come and remember the sacrifice that our local community made in the Great War.

*We will remember **each** one*

## *Corporal Albert Waters of 30 Lyme Regis Road*

Albert Obed Waters was born at home at Bramley Cottage, Polegate, Sussex, on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1883. He was the son of Stephen, a farm servant, and Elizabeth Waters and was the youngest of four children. His mother died when he was 10 years old and he was probably sent to live with relatives. He became a grocer, working in Hove, Sussex. In 1910, he married Nellie Morton, from Waltham Abbey, in Edmonton.

They soon came to Banstead and a year later they were living at The Creamery in the High Street, a 3-roomed cottage that adjoined the dairy which used to stand on the junction of Sutton Lane and the High Street (near the bus stop in front of Forge Steading flats). Nellie was manageress of the dairy and Albert was dairyman's foreman and worked in the dairy shop. He played for Banstead Cricket Club in his spare time. Albert and Nellie soon moved to Shirley (now number 30), a 3-bedroom semi-detached villa in Lyme Regis Road, and had a son, Edric, in 1915.

At least a dozen Banstead men joined the Army under the Derby Scheme on 7<sup>th</sup> December 1915. Albert (5ft 8in tall and weighing just over 10 stones) and a neighbour and fellow cricketer, George Blunt, of 17/17a Lyme Regis Rd, were two of them. They both joined 6<sup>th</sup> (Reserve) Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers. They remained at home until the married men were called up in June 1916. After completing their training, they were posted to 32<sup>nd</sup> (East Ham) Battalion in France in October.

Albert and George were stationed in the Ypres Salient during Winter 1916-17 and they fought alongside each other at Messines in June 1917. They were together in the trenches near Klein Zillebeke, when George was killed on 5<sup>th</sup> August, during the early stages of the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele). After a few more days in the trenches, they were withdrawn to rest and train. Second Army's General Plumer was entrusted with the capture of the important Gheluvelt Plateau and the 32<sup>nd</sup> Fusiliers were to take part in the first of his attacks, on 20<sup>th</sup> September. A heavy concentration of men and guns was assembled for an attack on a narrow front. The advance was to be spearheaded by the Australians, with British X Corps securing the right flank.

The Fusiliers were with 41<sup>st</sup> Division, X Corps. At 5:40am on the 20<sup>th</sup>, they advanced from Shrewsbury Forest in support of the 10<sup>th</sup> Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment). The Fusiliers were to leapfrog them and capture Tower Trench, part of a defensive work known as the Quadrilateral, in the *Wilhelmstellung* (the third major line of defences) on Tower Hamlets Spur. The tightly-packed men of the Queen's were mown down by machine-guns after just 50 yards. The Fusiliers were hard on their heels and were soon badly shot up too, coming under fire from concrete strongpoints and Java Trench (part of the second line of German defences, the *Albrechtstellung*) and Java Drive. They fought their way from pillbox to pillbox and through Java Trench, reaching the first objective having lost 200 men. They made it to the near bank of the Bassevillebeek, in the valley beyond, where they came under severe fire from the defences in front of them, on Tower Hamlets Spur. Some men made it across the stream but the Fusiliers were too weakened to press on. They dug in by the stream and endured 2 days sheltering from snipers and machine-gunners on the spur. Albert was killed. His official death date is 19<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> September (his commemoration is on the 22<sup>nd</sup>) but he was probably killed on the 20<sup>th</sup>. He was 33.