

# *Banstead Remembers*

*Private Sidney Reygate*

*of 2 Sutton Lane*

*49<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force*

*Served in France and Belgium*

*Killed in Action, aged 32*



## MONDAY 30<sup>th</sup> 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

Sidney Reygate was a butcher from Sutton Lane who emigrated to Canada and volunteered to fight in the Canadian Expeditionary Force. He was killed in the Second Battle of Passchendaele. Please come and remember the sacrifice that our local community made in the Great War.

*We will remember **each** one*

## *Private Sidney Reygate of 2 Sutton Lane*

George Sidney Lee Reygate was born on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1885 and baptised at All Saints on 29<sup>th</sup> March of that year. He was the son of George and Emily Reygate, of Yewlands Cottages, Park Road. They moved to 2 Sutton Lane (now the site of 25-34 Forge Steading), at the end of the High Street, when Sidney was a toddler. He became a butcher when he left school, probably working at the butcher's which used to stand on the junction of Sutton Lane and the High Street.

In the years leading up to the war, 1 in 20 Britons emigrated, mostly to dominions such as Australia and Canada. On 5<sup>th</sup> April 1904, Sidney sailed for a new life in Canada, describing himself as a farmer. Land was available on the plains of Alberta and he soon had a homestead near Calgary. He came back to England after several years and stayed for six months in 1913 but then returned to Canada, where he worked as an engine cleaner in Kootenay, British Columbia.

Sidney (5ft 3½in, blue eyes, dark hair, dark complexion) enlisted in the Canadian Infantry at Calgary, Alberta, on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1915 and joined the Alberta Regiment.

He went to France in August 1916 and it was probably at that point that he was transferred to the 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion (Edmonton Regiment). They fought on the Somme in Summer 1916 and at Vimy Ridge in April 1917. Summer 1917 was spent in the Arras/Lens area, when the Canadians took Hill 70. The first 3 weeks of October were spent training and then they entrained for Belgium. They arrived at Ypres at 2:30pm on 23<sup>rd</sup> October and marched to Wieltje. Their first job was to lay bath mats on a track! They carried ammunition for the machine-guns, worked for the artillery and for the Royal Engineers and carried wounded men for a field ambulance.

The Canadians were to spearhead a series of attacks on the ruins of Passchendaele. On 26<sup>th</sup> October, the first day of the Second Battle of Passchendaele, they gained a foothold on the Bellevue Spur, west of the village, and on the evening of 28<sup>th</sup> October, Sidney's battalion moved into the front line astride the s'Gravenstafel-Bellevue road on the Spur, ready to launch the next attack two days later. Two minutes before Zero Hour, 5:50am on the 30<sup>th</sup>, a barrage opened up on their right and they came under machine-gun and rifle fire from pillboxes and rifle pits, causing serious casualties before they had even begun their advance. Scant protection was afforded by a "very light" rolling barrage and they lost most men of the front right company and many of the front left immediately on leaving the jumping off line. A German barrage dropped within two minutes, catching the support company as they moved off. The men advanced along the spur in short rushes but the German strongpoints proved to be "formidable" obstacles and their attack was soon brought to a halt. They had advanced 500 yards but not yet gained their intermediate objective. It was decided not to press on. The battalion sustained over 400 casualties. Sidney was killed in action. He was 32. Sidney is commemorated on the Menin Gate at Ypres.