

Banstead Remembers

*Major Harry Arthur
of Well House*

*64 Battery, Royal Field Artillery
Killed near Ovillers, aged 36
10th August 1916*



WEDNESDAY 10th AUGUST

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

Harry is one of nearly 20 Banstead and Burgh Heath men to lose their life in the Battle of the Somme. Please come and remember the sacrifice that our local community made 100 years ago in World War One.

*We will remember **each** one*

Major Harry Arthur Well House

Henry Bartle Compton Arthur – known as Harry to his family - was born in Kensington on 14th October 1879. He was the youngest of seven children born to John Raynor Arthur and the Hon. Aileen Spring Rice.

Harry attended Wixenford School, Winchester College and New College, Oxford. He took his degree early due to the outbreak of the Second Boer War and was recommended for a commission in the Royal Field Artillery by the Vice-Chancellor of New College. He joined 46 Battery at Rawalpindi as a 2nd lieutenant in 1900.

Harry spent most of his pre-war Army career in India. He had a brief stint at home in 1907-08, when he was attached to the Royal Horse Artillery and probably attended Staff College at Camberley, and then returned to the subcontinent where he was promoted to captain in 1911.

While he was away, his mother (by then a widow) moved to Well House. The house used to stand at the eastern end of the High Street, where Well House flats are now, behind the War Memorial. Harry never lived at Well House but he did stay there on at least one occasion and he regularly wrote to his mother and sister there.

When war broke out, Harry's Brigade were attached to the 3rd (Lahore) Division and they were sent to France in the autumn of 1914 with the Indian Expeditionary Force. They arrived at Marseilles on 7th November 1914 and marched north.

Harry was soon promoted to major and given command of 64 Battery. They provided close fire support for the troops of the Lahore Division. Their guns were sited near the front line and were often shelled by the Germans. They fought at Neuve Chapelle, the 2nd Battle of Ypres (after which Harry wrote "*I'm afraid I can't say we were sorry when we came out of action*"), Givenchy and Festubert. He was wounded at least twice.

The Lahore Division left for Mesopotamia but Harry's Brigade remained in France, serving with the Canadians and were later attached to the 4th Australian Division.

They missed the first few weeks of the Battle of the Somme, arriving at Sausage Valley (between Ovillers and La Boisselle) on 9th August 1916. The next day, shells struck the Battery. One of Harry's subalterns was hit by a shell and mortally wounded. Harry was tending to him as another shell found 64 Battery. Harry was killed. He was 36.

Harry was awarded the British War Medal, the Victory Medal and the 1914 Star and was mentioned in Dispatches twice.

He is buried at Gordon Dump Cemetery at Ovillers and is commemorated on the Banstead War Memorial, the Garton Memorial in All Saints' churchyard, on the wooden panels in the Lady Chapel in All Saints' and in Winchester College's War Cloister.