

Banstead Remembers

Gunner Edward Lee

of Winkworth Cottages, High Street

*114 Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery
Served in France and Belgium
Died of Wounds, aged 34*



FRIDAY 29th DECEMBER

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

Edward Lee was a labourer and carman who lived in Winkworth Cottages, on Banstead High Street. He was a former gunner who re-enlisted when war broke out and served on the Western Front for over three years before being fatally wounded when his battery was shelled.

Please come and remember the sacrifice made in the Great War.

*We will remember **each** one*

Gunner Edward Lee *Winkworth Cottages, High Street*

Edward "Ted" Lee was born on 28th October 1883. He was the son of William, a carman, and Ellen Lee (nee Lynch) and was one of at least nine children. The Lees lived in Woodmansterne when Ted was a young boy and then came to live at Apsley Cottages (probably No.1) in Park Road, Banstead, when Ted was about 7 or 8 years old. They left the village soon afterwards and moved back to Woodmansterne.

Ted grew up to become a farm labourer but enlisted in the Royal Marines in his late teens. He soon changed his mind and bought himself out of his contract and joined the Royal Garrison Artillery instead on 3rd September 1901. As the name suggests, the R.G.A. were primarily garrison troops who manned the guns in the network of coastal defences in the U.K. and around the Empire. After completing his training, Ted served at Sheerness for a year and then went out to Gibraltar and Malta with 99 Company, to garrison the fortifications there, before returning to England to see out the last few months of his service at Weymouth.

Ted returned to civilian life as a labourer and a carman in 1909. He married Bessie Lock, a Banstead girl from Garratts Lane, at St. Peter's, Woodmansterne, on 25th March 1911 and they made their home at 1 Court Haw Cottages, in Woodmansterne, where a daughter, Ellen, was born. They soon moved to Belmont, where a son, Edward, arrived and then moved once again, to Coulsdon, where another son, William, was born. Sadly, both William and Edward were lost to tuberculosis within weeks of each other in early 1914. The Lees came back to Banstead to live in Winkworth Cottages. The paid of semi-detached 300-year-old cottages used to stand just back from the High Street, halfway between Bolters Lane and Wilmot Way. If they were still standing today, they would be behind the Coral betting shop.

Three weeks after war broke out in August 1914, Ted enlisted the Royal Garrison Artillery once more. The R.G.A. had the biggest and most powerful guns and were urgently needed on the Western Front instead of in the coastal forts. Hundreds of new batteries were raised during the war and hundreds of thousands of men served with the R.G.A., manning their heavy howitzers and field guns. Ted served in a base detail for a month before being posted to one of the first new batteries, 114 Heavy Battery. They were equipped with 4.7-inch coastal defence guns converted for use on a carriage. They sailed to France on 3rd October and reached the front midway through the Battle of La Bassee, firing their first shots of the war on 27th October. They fought on the Western Front throughout the war, with hardly a break.

On 28th December 1917, Ted's battery were stationed near Villers-Faucon. They were shelled most of the day and one man was wounded; it was Ted. He was evacuated to 5th Casualty Clearing Station, at Tincourt, but died the next day. Ted was 34 years old. He is buried in Tincourt New British Cemetery.