

Banstead Remembers

WEDNESDAY 21st MARCH

A memorial service will be held at **11:50am** at All Saints Church for



*Private Frank Mitchell
of 44 Oatlands Road*

*9th Norfolk Regiment
Served in France and Belgium
Killed in Action, aged 19*

Frank Mitchell was the third of three brothers to be killed in the war. He had only been in France for a few months when the Germans launched an offensive which threatened to tip the balance of the war in their favour.

Frank's battalion were practically wiped out in the first attack.

*Private William Viney
of Banstead Asylum*

*9th Norfolk Regiment
Served in France and Belgium
Killed in Action, aged 30*



William Viney was a labourer in a munitions factory before he joined the Army. William's father worked at Banstead Asylum and William was born here but the family moved away following the death of his father. William fought in the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele) and served alongside Frank Mitchell in the 9th Norfolks. Both men were killed on the same day, in the devastating German attack of 21st March 1918.

*We will remember **each** one*

Banstead's 9th Norfolks

William John Charles Viney was born in Banstead in October 1887 and baptised at All Saints on the 30th of that month. He was the third son of George and Rebecca Viney (nee Albon). George was an engineer at Banstead Asylum and the family lived in a cottage in Freedown Lane. Following George's death, when William was young, the family moved to Rebecca's home village of Arlesey, Bedfordshire.

William grew up to become a farm labourer and after the war broke out, he worked in a munitions factory. He attested in February 1916 and was posted to the Reserve, due to his occupation, and it was another year before he was called up. He went to France in 1917 and then fought in Belgium with the 8th Norfolks in the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele).

Frank Charles Mitchell was born in Walton-on-the-Hill on 6th October 1898. He was baptised at St Andrew's, Kingswood, on 18th January 1901. Frank was the fourth of eight children born to John and Susan Mitchell and one of three brothers to be killed in the war.

The family moved to Epsom, then Ewell and Frank attended West Street School, in Ewell, before they came to Burgh Heath, to number 22 (now 44) Oatlands Road. Frank completed his education at the Wesleyan School on the Green and then became a labourer.

Frank was conscripted when he turned 18 and was called up a few months later, in March 1917. He went out to France after he turned 19 (the age at which you became eligible for service overseas) and joined the 8th Norfolks.

In February 1918, many battalions were understrength due to the fighting at Ypres the previous year and so many of them were broken up to reinforce others. The 8th Battalion of the Norfolk Regiment was split into two and the men drafted into the 7th and 9th Battalions to bring them up to strength. Both 30-year-old William and 19-year-old Frank were transferred to the 9th Battalion.

It was well known that the Germans were about to attack and the British worked on their defences, the 9th Norfolks helping to build two strongpoints at Lagnicourt, near Queant. The British learned the hour of the German attack and most troops were in place when the Germans opened up an immense bombardment on the British line, with over a million shells fired in just a few hours. The defences were smashed and fog shrouded the advancing German infantry as they tried to slip through the British line. The Norfolks held their ground against the first wave but a second attack drove them back. When the Germans broke into the reserve line, the 9th Norfolks counterattacked and pushed them out. The attackers switched their attention to the flanks but despite being almost entirely cut off, the 9th Norfolks and the rest of their brigade fought on all day held on until dark, when they withdrew to a new defensive line. The Brigade suffered 85% casualties that day, including William and Frank.