

# *Banstead Remembers*

*Corporal G.M. Wigglesworth  
of 55 Ferndale Road*

*6<sup>th</sup> Northamptonshire Regiment  
Served in France  
Killed in Action, aged 35*



**WEDNESDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> 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

Montague Wigglesworth was an A.A. Cycle Patrol Inspector and served on the Home Front with a cyclist battalion for nearly four years before going to France in the crisis during the German offensive of 1918. He was killed near Meaulte in the Hundred Days advance to victory.

*We will remember **each** one*

## *Corporal Montague Wigglesworth of 55 Ferndale Road*

Gill Montague Wigglesworth was born in Lee, in southeast London, in the summer of 1883. He was known by his middle name, Montague, and was one of five children born to Gill and Matilda Wigglesworth (nee Bright). The family moved to Sutton in about 1890 and lived in an apartment above the stables of a mansion, Woningworth, where Gill senior worked as a coachman. They later lived at several other addresses in Sutton's New Town area.

Montague became a postman when he left school. After working in Carshalton, he probably came to work out of the sub-post office at Burgh Heath, and boarded with the Pyes at 6 Broomfield Cottages, on the Brighton Road. He married their daughter, Annie, at All Saints on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1904. They made their home in Beddington and went on to have a son, Archer, and a daughter, Ethel, who was known as "Girlie".

Sadly, Montague and Annie's marriage soured after Montague lost his job and he became violent. They split up and their case went to court but they made a fresh start in Grantham, Lincolnshire, when Montague became an Inspector of Cycle Patrols for the Automobile Association. Moves to St Neots and then Gloucester followed.

When war broke out, the A.A. encouraged their cycle scouts to join up and many of them joined the 8<sup>th</sup> (Cyclist) Battalion of the Essex Regiment together in August 1914. The inspectors, such as Montague, became NCOs. They guarded the East Coast and acted as observers to warn of approaching Zeppelins and bombers. With Montague away, Annie and the children came back to Banstead, living in Ferndale Road, and she worked in Pushman's shop on the corner of Shrubland and Ferndale Roads.

Drafts of men from the 8<sup>th</sup> Essex were periodically sent overseas but Montague remained on the Home Front for nearly four years, being one of a small nucleus of NCOs that stayed behind to train up batches of new recruits to the Battalion. When the German *Kaiserslacht* offensive inflicted devastating casualties on Fifth Army in March 1918, thousands of men on coastal defence duties were sent to France as reinforcements and Montague found himself at Amiens with the Northamptonshire Regiment in mid-April. They spent four months holding the line on the River Ancre.

The Germans' last throw of the dice came in July, with an attempt to reach Paris that left them exhausted and demoralised following Allied counterattacks. On 8<sup>th</sup> August, the Allies struck back and landed the first blow of the Hundred Days advance to victory, in the Battle of Amiens. Battles now came thick and fast, one every few days.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> August, the 6<sup>th</sup> Northhamptons forced their way across the River Ancre, south of Albert, and then advanced up the valley of L'Fosse, past Meaulte, heading towards the old Somme battlefield of 1916. Montague was killed that day. He was 35.