



William John Saunders (Q2 1893 – 5 November 1918)

William was the son of John and Sarah Saunders (nee Oakley) who married in Staines in 1893. Both John and Sarah were born in Hertfordshire and John was employed as a General Labourer. They had 7 children and 6 survived infancy. William was the

eldest, born in 1893. He had a brother Percy, born just over a year later in 1895 followed by four sisters Edith Louisa (1898), Sarah (1901), Gertrude (1905) and finally Mary Caroline in 1911. All the children were born in Sunbury. In 1901 the family were living in School Alley, Green Street, Sunbury but by 1911 they had moved to Cemetery Lane, Sunbury. William was aged 20 and he and his brother Percy were both working as Labourers.

Brother Percy enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corps in October 1915 at Hounslow. He served as a Private and was trained as a Cook. He undertook duties at the 43rd General Hospital in Salonica, finally returning to England in the spring of 1919 when he was de-mobbed.



War Memorial to the Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment), Holborn, London
©IWM Q42399

William enlisted into the Army in Kingston and became a Private in the 4th Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment). Early in 1918 he married Mary Emily Woolford in Brentford.

In the last few days of October 1918 William's battalion was involved in a major advance on the Western Front in France. On 24-26th they progressed through Ruesnes and although the enemy had withdrawn, they met with much hostile machine gun fire and gas shelling. By the time his Regiment was relieved on 27th they had sustained 133 casualties including more than 100 wounded. After a brief respite, William's regiment was in the field again on 31st October and were ordered to move to Quiévy on 3rd November and on 4th there was a major enemy attack on the British and French Fronts. William died of his wounds on 5 November 1918 which could have been sustained in either



Sunbury War Memorial, Green Street, Sunbury

of these two engagements. This was just 6 days before the end of the war. He was age 26 and had only been married a few months.

He is commemorated at the Bois-Guillaume Communal Cemetery in France. He is also remembered on the Sunbury War Memorial in Green Street, Sunbury, near where his parents lived. His wife Mary also lost her only brother a few months earlier in June 1918. He was Frederick Harry Leonard Woolford who is also on the Isleworth War Memorial.