

In Memory of
Blanche Elizabeth Garman

Women's Land Army
Died 30 June 1919 age 21.



No image
currently
available

Remembered with honour:
The Women's National Memorial Screen in York Minster
Martham War Memorial

The Story of Blanche Elizabeth Garman

Blanche Elizabeth Garman was born in Holt on 25 March 1898 to William, a railway gatekeeper, and Elizabeth Garman. The family later moved to Martham.

Blanche suffered from chlorosis, a severe form of anaemia which weakens the heart. This did not stop her from joining the Women's Land Army (WLA) to do her bit for the war effort.

Although the WLA formed in 1917, women were already working in agriculture during the war. The Women's War Agricultural Committees had been set up to organise the recruitment and training of women to work on the land so that farmers could call on them when needed. With the formation of the WLA in 1917, women were assigned to work in agriculture, forage or timber. Blanche became a tractor driver.

We do not know when Blanche joined the WLA but women continued to work in agriculture long after the war was over. The demobilisation of men took some time and the women's contribution to land work was still desperately needed to ensure food supplies for the home nation. To be given the job of tractor driver would have been an exciting opportunity for a young woman of those times; tractors had only just started to be introduced into the country to mechanise agriculture with so many horses being sent to the Front.

Tragically it was the tractor which caused Blanche's death. In June 1919 her tractor caught fire and the shock resulted in a fatal heart attack. Her weak heart would have been a contributory factor. Blanche died on 30 June 1919.



(roll-of-honour.com)



(ww1cemeteries.com)

Blanche had six brothers and sisters. Of these only war records have been found for her brother Harry (Above left). He joined the East Yorkshire Regiment and was killed at the Front on 18 June 1915. He is buried at Ypres in Belgium.

Blanche's name is on Martham's war memorial (Above right) alongside her brothers. It was added at the same time as the men's names. This was not always the case; some of the women who died in uniformed service were not acknowledged on memorials until much later and some have still to be commemorated.