

ALBERT EDWARD GEORGE BUTTERFIELD



*Gunner Albert Edward George Butterfield
Dover & East Kent News – Friday, 22nd March 1918*

Rank/ Number: Gunner 169047
Regiment: "Z" 30th TM Battery, Royal Field Artillery

Albert Edward George Butterfield was born in 1896, the eldest son of Alfred and Harriet Jane Butterfield of New Brompton, Gillingham. His parents were both born in Dover and returned to the town soon after Albert was born. They had three more sons and census records for 1901 show them living in Myrtle Cottages in Whitfield. They later moved to Archers Court Cottages. His father was a dairyman and, on completing his education, Albert found employment as a cowman on a local farm.

It is not known whether Albert volunteered or was conscripted as his service record has been lost but he was eventually posted to the 30th Division, Trench Mortar Battery, Royal Field Artillery. Trench mortars were a new addition to the Army's arsenal with experimental types being introduced in December 1914 and later designs being used for the first time in the Battle of Loos in 1915. Light, medium and heavy mortars were used in both a defensive and offensive role. Most divisions had one heavy battery and three medium batteries, designated "X", "Y" and "Z".

On 1st June 1917, Albert, attached to "Z" Battery, was based at Watou in Flanders. The British Artillery was bombarding the Messine-Wytschaete Ridge in preparation for an infantry attack. Despite the trench system being badly flooded, the "Y" and "Z" batteries advanced to the front line at Zillebeke and commenced work installing the emplacements for the mortars. In the early hours of 7th June nineteen mines were detonated under the German front line. In answer to this attack the Germans shelled the British front line with high explosive and gas shells. Gunner Albert Butterfield was killed, along with the officers of both batteries and six other soldiers.

He is buried, alongside his colleagues, in the Railway Dugouts Burial Ground, near Zillebeke. The neighbouring farmstead, known to troops as Transport Farm, was used as an Advanced Dressings Station.

His younger brother Alfred John Butterfield was killed in action on 3rd May 1917, whilst serving in the Household Cavalry.



*The grave of Albert Butterfield (marked with a poppy cross)
with Transport Farm in the background*