



BATTERY SERGEANT MAJOR GEORGE POTTER

SERVIVE NO. 5448

190TH SIEGE BATTERY, ROYAL GARRISON ARTILLERY

DIED 29TH APRIL 1918 AGED 42

George Potter, the second son of Francis, a bricklayer, and Sarah Potter, was born in Holme in Norfolk in 1876¹. He had four brothers and one sister. In 1891, aged 15, he was working as an agricultural labourer and still living in the family home². Ten years later, aged 26, he was working as a carman in Bedford and boarding with a local family.

By 1907 George had enlisted in London³ and joined the Royal Garrison Artillery and appears to have been stationed at either Portsmouth, the Southern Division HQ or Gosport, its depot company, for in the last quarter of the year he married Louisa Gunner in the Portsmouth Registration District⁴. Louisa had been born in Chawton. In 1909 their son, Francis William was born in Gosport. Two years later again, the family were living at 64 Bradford Road, Somers Road, Southsea. From the census record it appears that another child had been born to the couple, but had not survived⁵. At some stage during the war Louisa had moved to Odiham and was living in King Street at the time of George's death.⁶

George had two service records, although he kept the same service number 5448 for both. In the 1911 census he was recorded as a Bombardier⁷. His first record gives his rank as 'Sergeant, Warrant Officer Class 2' and his second record as 'Warrant Officer Class 2'⁸ which was when he first entered a theatre of war on 16 February 1915, when he was serving in the 10th Siege Battery of the Royal Garrison Artillery. At the time of his death George was in the 19th Siege Battery.

"Siege Batteries RGA were equipped with heavy howitzers, sending large calibre high explosive shells in high trajectory, plunging fire. The usual armaments were 6 inch, 8 inch and 9.2 inch howitzers, although some had huge railway- or road-mounted 12 inch howitzers. As British artillery tactics developed, the Siege Batteries were most often employed in destroying or neutralising the enemy artillery, as well

¹ Source – 1881 Census – Holme, Norfolk, ref: Class: RG11; Piece: 1990; Folio: 53; Page: 2; GSU roll: 1341479

² Source – 1891 Census – Holme, Norfolk, ref: Class RG12; Piece: 1562; Folio: 15; Page: 1

³ Source – Holme-next-the-Sea War Memorial information

⁴ Source – England & Wales Civil /Registration Marriage Index 1837-1915; Ancestry.co.ukIn,

⁵ Source – 1911 Census – Portsmouth, ref: Class: RG14; piece: 5607; Schedule No.:235

⁶ Source – CWGC register entry for George Potter

⁷ Source – ibid

⁸ Source – Medal Cards Transcription, www.findmypast.co.uk



as putting destructive fire down on strongpoints, dumps, store, roads and railways behind enemy lines"⁹.

Exactly where on the Western Front 19th Siege Battery was stationed is unknown, but it is likely to have been near Ypres, for George is commemorated in the Brandhoek New Military Cemetery No.3, Vlamertinghe, West-Vlaanderen, Belgium. He is also remembered on the St. Mary's Church War Memorial in Holme-next-the-Sea, Norfolk.

He was awarded the Victory Medal, the British War Medal and the 1915 Star.

⁹ Source – The Long, Long Trail - <http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/>