

No.17443, Pte. GEORGE HARRY BUTCHER

George Harry Butcher was born in 1890, son of George and Mary Butcher, in Chilton, near Sudbury, Suffolk, (1901 Census) and had moved to Newton before 1917. George senior was a Cattleman on a farm, and consequently moved from farm to farm as work was available. In 1901 George senior is "nullworking at home" (home being near Chilton Church). George Jr. had an elder sister, Elizabeth, who was born in Sudbury.

George enlisted into the Army at Bury St. Edmunds, and served in the 11th Battalion, Suffolk Regiment. The 11th Battalion was formed in Cambridge, on 25th September 1914, by the Cambridge and Isle of Ely TF association, as part of Kitcheners 4th New Army (K4). George's active service is reckoned to have begun on the 12th May 1915. In May 1915 the Battalion was attached to the 101st Brigade, 34th Division. This Division was formed from many units that had been raised by public subscription and private projects, and was not taken over by the War Office until 15th August 1915. The Division was sent to France between 7th/15th January 1916, and served with great distinction throughout the war.

George would have taken part in the following battles, Battle of Albert (1st phase – Somme 1916), battle of Bazentin (2nd Phase – Somme 1916), battle for Poziers (3rd phase – Somme 1916), and the preparations for the battle of the Scarpe (1st phase – Arras offensive, 9th April – 15th May 1917).

It was before the battle of the Scarpe, that George was killed. The following extract is from History of the Suffolk Regiment,

"Christmas was spent in Erquingham, and towards the end of January 1917, the battalion left Bois Grenier after their prolonged stay in that neighbourhood, travelling in lorries at night to the Meteren area behind Bailleul. At the close of three weeks training they set off towards Arras, and on February 24th moved up into line south of Roclincourt, occupying the right sector of the front held by 34th Division, XVIIth Corps. The time was spent in distributing stores, carrying up ammunition, and raiding and wire-cutting, all in preparation for the forthcoming Arras offensive. On the 5th April, Major Tuck rejoined from Aldershot and resumed his appointment of Second in Command. On 8th April the 11th battalion moved into its assembly positions half a mile south-east of Rocimcourt."

George was killed on 6th April 1917, presumably during one of the raiding parties prior to the forthcoming battle.

George has no known grave, and is remembered on the Arras Memorial, bay 4.

George was entitled to the 1915 Star, The British war Medal and The Victory Medal



Arras Memorial.