Garfield CURTIS

Gunner 69726, 113th Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery Died May 28th 1918, aged 21

Memorial in Franvillers Communal Cemetery Extension, Franvillers, France

Garfield Curtis was born in 1898 at St Martins Parish, Looe. He was the son of Richard Curtis, who became the local coastguard in Port Isaac in the years immediately before war broke out. In the 1911 census Richard (38) and his wife Lily (39) were living in the Coastguard Station at Par with Garfield (13) and his sister Gladys, also 13 and presumably his twin.

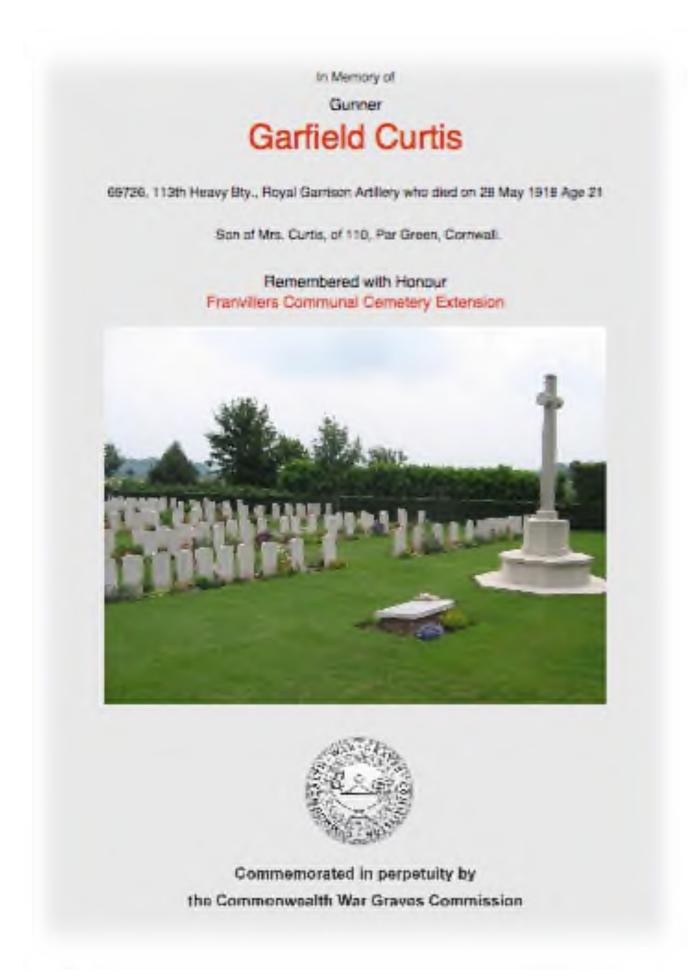
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Garfield enlisted at Fort Brockhurst in Gosport and was in the 113th Heavy Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery. The Heavy Batteries were mainly equipped with 60 pounder (5 inch) guns, and were most often employed in destroying or neutralising the enemy artillery, as well as putting destructive fire down on strongpoints, dumps, store, roads and railways behind enemy lines. As such, they were prime targets for the German artillery's retaliation.

Garfield was killed on May 28th1918 and is buried in in the Franvillers Communal Cemetery Extension about five miles north east of Amiens on the Somme, close to where he was killed. An idea of the activity in this part of the line in late May can be obtained from the war diaries of the 43rd Australian Infantry Battalion, who were on the front line a few miles south of Franvillers, at Bois l'Abbe a mile west of Villers Bretonneux.



Australian Troops near Villers Bretonneux enjoying a quiet moment May 1918





60 pounder guns of the Heavy Battery along a dusty road in Northern France

Their war diary shows the period May 21st to 24th was very quiet, although our artillery was very active each night. On May 25th 6,000 mustard gas shells fell on their section of the line between 8pm and11pm, and between 3am and 6am the following morning 9000 mustard gas shells fell. Casualties from the gas continued up to May 27th, totalling four officers and 200 other ranks.

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