

Edward Joseph BRUFORD



- Born:** 1894, Padstow, Cornwall
- Occupation:** Stone quarry labourer
- Enlisted:** Padstow: 4th August 1914 (Pre-war Territorial)
- Unit:** 134th (Cornwall) Heavy Battery (TF)
- Rank/number:** Gunner: No.321003
- Death:** Died, 27th November 1917
- Detail:** Edward died of malaria in East Africa. Disease was the big killer in this forgotten corner of the Great War. In 1917 twelve times more soldiers died of sickness than in battle. British medical care was scandalous - quinine scarce, hospitals few, hygiene poor, rations inadequate. Starving Tommies ate roots and hippo, leading to 30% rise in death rates in July 1917.
- Age at death:** 24
- Military info:** The war in East Africa was a series of battles and guerrilla actions between British and German led forces centered on their adjacent colonies. It lasted from 1914 to 1918. An initial British attack on Tanga was beaten off by the Germans, led by the brilliant Paul von Lettow Vorbeck. This officer then vanished into the bush and waged a four-year hit-and-run war aimed at diverting British forces from the Western Front. On Boxing Day 1915 the 134th (Cornwall) Heavy Battery, RGA, a Territorial unit, with 124 gunners, sailed for East Africa from Southampton, reaching Mombasa on 1st February 1916. There they collected four 5.4-inch breach-loading howitzers. The 134th then joined the invasion of German East Africa, a campaign defeated by rain, terrain, and disease. The battery fought in the Rufiji River campaign in January 1917, during which a howitzer exploded, killing a gunner. The 134th landed at Lindi in German East Africa in October, taking over two 5-inch howitzers. The 134th fought at Nyangao that same month, destroying the last of the guns salvaged from German warship *Konigsberg*. But disease was the real enemy. At any one time 80% of British troops were sick. The 'cure' could be as deadly as the disease. A patient described Zomba base hospital thus: "The wards were overflowing... mosquito nets, so small they looked more like shrouds, were propped up off the beds by sticks and bits of string, and in the sweltering atmosphere many patients were nearly suffocating." After the war the scandal was buried. East Africa cost the lives 11,189 British soldiers - one of them was Edward.
- Grave/memorial:** Edward is buried at Dar Es Salaam War Cemetery and is commemorated at St Petroc's Church, Padstow and on the Padstow War Memorial.
- Family info:** Father: Robert Bruford, born Padstow, Cornwall in 1869. Seaman. Mother: Mary Brunyee, born Padstow, Cornwall in 1873. She had 13 children, but 7 died.



This information was researched by Peter Smith, who is currently writing a book about Padstow's part in the Great War. Anyone wishing to correct errors or supply additional information can write to him at 24 Mallard Drive, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5PW. Also phone 01825 762226 or email smithpeter24@gmail.com

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