

George Henry GIBBINGS

Born Q1 1886, Dawlish
Sergeant, Service No: 3854 / 7304

Died 17th June 1916, aged 30
Devonshire Regt, 1st/6th Battn

George Henry F T Gibbings was the oldest child of Henry Frank and Mary Ann Gibbings (nee Bennett) who lived in Chapel Street, Dawlish.

- Henry F Gibbings (1855-1928) was the son of William Gibbings (1811-1862), a baker, and Jane Potter Loutten (1818-1875). They were both born in North Tawton and had moved to Teignmouth ca. 1840 where all their children were born.

- Mary Ann Bennett (1859-) was the daughter of John and Sarah Bennett. John Bennett (1826-) was a farm labourer, born in Bristol, South Gloucestershire. His wife, Sarah, was born in Rockbeare and they may have lived in Welford, Glos, before moving to Dawlish ca. 1853 where all their children were born. Mary Ann Bennett was baptised at Welford on the 19th June 1859.

Henry Frank Gibbings married Mary Ann Bennett in the April - June quarter of 1877 (N.A., vol 5b, p276). In 1881 Henry F Gibbings is shown as a 'companion to a gentleman' and recorded at Oak Glen, Eastcliff, Dawlish in the household of Mary Ann Grace, 77 and her son Edwin Grace, 44, gentleman.

By 1891 Henry and Mary Ann Gibbings were settled at Chapel Street, Dawlish with Loveday.A.E. Gibbings, daughter, 10, George Henry F, son, 5, and John. B. 3, all born in Dawlish. Henry F Gibbings was a cellarman and his wife a laundress.

In 1901 **George** was 15 and working as a Yard boy on a cattle farm. The family of Henry Gibbings, 45, Mary, 42, **George**, 15, John, 13, Gertrude, 7, William, 5, Archibald, 3, and Millicam, 2, were living at Manor Row, Dawlish.

The census return for 1911 shows Mary Ann Gibbings living at 5 Regent Avenue with her sister, Louisa and five children. Since her marriage at the age of 18 she had ten children of which eight survived by 1911. It is not clear where her husband was at that time.

George's birth is shown in the March Quarter of 1886 (Newton Abbot district, Vol 5b, p116).

In January 1903 **George** enlisted at Teignmouth with the 2nd Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment.

George Henry Gibbings married Florence Batters in Devonport in Q2 1907. (Apr-Jun, Vol 5b, p701). They had no children.

By 1911 he was a Lance Corporal in barracks in Malta. The 2nd Battalion was in Cairo, Egypt when war broke out in August 1914 and it returned to England on the 1st October, leaving for France and arriving at Le Havre on 6th November 1914.

At some point he was returned home after a breakdown in his health and was then attached to the 1st/6th Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment. This was one of Kitchener's New Army battalions of volunteers that were trained before being sent into active service. In this case they were sent to India.

An extract from the *Dawlish Gazette* of 24th June 1916 records some of his early life:

"He was the eldest son of Mr and Mrs H F Gibbings of Manor Row, Dawlish. The sad news (of his death) was received by the deceased's wife at Devonport in a communication from the War Office, expressing regret and sympathy with her in her loss. Sergt. Gibbings is of course well known in Dawlish. All his young days were spent in the town. A good-natured, obliging man, a steady, trustworthy soldier, his friends were many and his enemies nil."

His service records do not exist, as far as can be established.

The following press item reveals his army experience:

Exeter and Plymouth Gazette of Friday 23 June 1916

"Mr Frank Gibbings of Manor Row, Dawlish, received news yesterday of the death of his eldest son, **Sergt. George Gibbings**. When war broke out deceased was serving in Egypt. He returned to England with the regiment and was sent to France. After a few months active service there he was invalided home in consequence of a breakdown in health.

He recovered, and subsequently went to Mesopotamia. He contracted enteric fever, and died in a Bombay hospital on June 17th. He was 30 years of age and had served in the army 13 years.

He leaves a widow, but no children. Much sympathy is expressed with the widow, the parents and members of the family."

The Death Grant of £13.14s.4d and the War Gratuity of £11.10s.0d were paid to his "Widow and sole legatee" and his rank was shown as Sergeant.

The Victory Medal and the British War Medal were sent to his widow and his rank was shown as Acting sergeant with a Regimental number 7304.

He was buried at the Kirkee Cemetery and is shown on the 1914-18 Memorial, Mumbai(Bombay), Maharashtra, India.

His eldest sister, Gertrude Maggie Gibbings, married Alfred Coker of the Royal Engineers in the Dawlish Wesley Church and was reported as a quiet wedding in the *Dawlish Gazette* of 30th September 1916.

Commonwealth War Graves entry:

GIBBINGS, George Henry Corporal 3854, 17/06/1916

Age 31 Devonshire Regiment 1st/6th Bn. Panel Face C. Kirkee 1914-1918 Memorial, India. Son of Frank Henry and Mary Gibbings, of Dawlish, Devon; husband of Florence Gibbings, of 1, Lansdowne Place, The Hoe, Plymouth.

Devon Roll of Honour - He is not included on the Devon Roll for Dawlish.

Dawlish War memorial inscription: GIBBINGS G.H. SERGT. DEVON REGT.

He is shown on the Dawlish Boys' School Roll of Honour.

Devon Heritage site info:

3854 Sergeant George Henry Gibbings of the 1st/6th Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment. Son of Frank and Mary Gibbings of Dawlish; husband of Florence Gibbings of Lansdowne Place, Plymouth. Born in Dawlish in 1886. Died 17 June 1916 aged 31.

1/6th Battalion Territorial Force, the Devonshire Regiment.

04.08.0914 Stationed at Barnstaple as part of the Wessex Division.

05.08.1914 Moved to Plymouth and then to Salisbury Plain and attached to the Devon & Cornwall Brigade.

09.10.1914 Embarked for India from Southampton arriving at Karachi 11.11.1914.

30.12.1915 Moved to Basra and joined the 36th Indian Brigade. This was formed in

Dawlish World War One Project

December 1915 in Mesopotamia. It was heavily involved in the attempts to relieve the 6th Poona Division besieged in Kut, including the attack on the Dujaila Redoubt (8 March 1916).

In May 1916 the Brigade joined the newly formed 14th Indian Division and remained with it until June 1918.

(The Long, Long Trail)

References:

Free Birth Marriage Death records

Dawlish Gazette – 24th June 1916 in Dawlish Museum

Refs via subscription sites:

Census records

Forces War Records

UK, WW1 Service Medal and Award Rolls

UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War 1914-1919

UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects 1901-1929

Exeter & Plymouth Gazette in National Newspaper Archive

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