

Walter STOYLE

Born Dawlish, 2 June 1891,
Private 8319,

Died 13 March 1915, aged 23
Devonshire Regiment, 2nd Battalion

Walter was born on the 2nd June, 1891 at 9 King Street, Dawlish.

His birth certificate shows him as the son of Emma Louise (1875-1932), unmarried, and without a father's name.

His mother was the daughter of Thomas Stoyale (1846- 1893), a Journeyman Plasterer/builder, and Elizabeth Coombes (1843-). (Thomas Stoyale was born in Q1 1846 in Yealmpton to Robert and Hannah Stoyale. Robert was a sawyer.) The Coombes family lived in Old Town Street, Dawlish (1851 census).

Thomas and Elizabeth Stoyale married in 1869, and had four daughters and two sons.

In the 1881 census, they are shown living at 40 High Street, Dawlish with the four oldest children, Mary Elizabeth (1870-), Frederick Henry (1872-), Emma Louise (1875-1932), Eliza Ann (1879-).

In 1891 the family is at 9 King Street with one more child, Albert Percy (1885-). **Walter** was born to Emma Louise later that year.

Two years later Thomas died in the October to December quarter of 1893, at the age of 48.

Walter's mother, Emma Louise Stoyale married William Lovell (1863-1942) in January 1896, and they had four children, including William F J Lovell (1896-)(see Dawlish Gazette article, below).

The 1901 census places **Walter** as the 9 year old grandson of the widow, Elizabeth Stoyale, 63, and living with her. Elizabeth, native of Dawlish, was on Parish Relief with two children, her daughter Eliza Ann, 22, a laundry maid, and son Albert Percy, 16, and **Walter**, her grandson scholar. They were at 6 High Street, Dawlish.



A Press report, below, suggests that **Walter** enlisted in 1908. In 1911 he is in Malta at St George's Barracks with the Devonshire Regiment, 2nd Battalion.

The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette of Tuesday 23 March, 1915, reports:

"Another Dawlish Man – Pte Walter Stoyles[sic]- has given his life for his country. He was killed in the fighting on March 11th. Seven years ago he joined the 2nd Devons, and two years later went with the Regiment to India. He returned to England in September last, when he spent a short time at Dawlish. A letter from his chum, a Corporal, states that

deceased was the first man of the Company to reach the German trenches. Soon afterwards he was hit and killed instantly."

The Dawlish Gazette of Saturday 27 March, 1915, carried the following:

*We regret to have to announce that another Dawlish soldier has fallen in the service of his country at the front, viz., Pte. Walter Stoye, of the 2nd Devons. Deceased's mother, a Dawlish woman (Mrs Lovell), now resides at Bridgwater. He is a nephew of Mrs Fred Ferris** and Mrs Harry Lucas, of this town and a half-brother of Pte. W. F. J. Lovell, of the 24th Field Ambulance (Wessex Division), at the front, a member of the "Gazette" printing staff who volunteered for active service early in the war. Deceased's mother received the sad news from Corpl. C. Warren, of C Co., 2nd Devons, who writes in high appreciation of his comrade. He says:*

"I am sorry to be the bearer of bad tidings to you, but it is with the greatest sympathy that I tell you of the death of your son Walter, who was killed in action on the 11th of this month (March).

I hope it will lessen your sorrow when I tell you he died without any pain, as his end was sudden.

I thought you would like to hear the news from a comrade who was with him when he died. Your son was very popular with his chums and was one of the best men I had in my section. He did splendid work on the 10th, he being the first man in the German trench, which he cleared with bombs.

He was a brave lad and you will be proud of him, knowing that he died a soldier's death while fighting for his King and country.

I have also dropped a line to his sweetheart, as requested by him in a slip of paper I found on him and also sent back her photo. I can say no more except once more again to offer you my sincere sympathy on behalf of my section and myself."

It might be added that deceased joined the 2nd Devons seven years ago. Two years later he left with the regiment on foreign service in India and Egypt, returning to England in September last, when he spent a short time at Dawlish."

** Mary Elizabeth Stoye married Frederick Alfred Ferris in St Michael's Church, Dawlish on 9 December 1893.

In 1911 Frederick Ferris was a Postman, living with his wife at 2 Arlington Place, Old Town Street, Dawlish with a daughter, Gladys (1897-), and a son, Maurice (1902-).

Walter Stoye was serving with the **2nd Battalion, The Devonshire Regiment**.

He was a Private, service number 8319, and he is recorded in the Commonwealth War Graves entry as died France & Flanders 13 March 1915 , killed in action, aged 23.

He is listed on the Devon Roll of Honour but no date or location is shown.

Dawlish War memorial inscription: STOYLE W PTE DEVON REGT.

He is remembered on the Dawlish Boys' School Roll of Honour (kept by Dawlish Community College).

The Devon Heritage site shows him as Walter Stoyle, parents not yet known.

His memorial is at:

Le Touret Memorial, Richebourg-L'Avoue, Nord Pas de Calais, France, - panels 8 & 9.

The Le Touret Memorial commemorates over 13,400 British soldiers who were killed in this sector of the Western Front from the beginning of October 1914 to the eve of the Battle of Loos in late September 1915 and who have no known grave. Almost all of the men commemorated on the Memorial served with regular or territorial regiments from across the United Kingdom and were killed in actions that took place along a section of the front line that stretched from Estaires in the north to Grenay in the south. This part of the Western Front was the scene of some of the heaviest fighting of the first year of the war, including the battle of Neuve Chapelle (10 – 12 March 1915).

The Devonshire Regiment, 2nd Battalion won Battle Honours at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle March 10-13, 1915.

"The men, who had been without sleep since the night of the 8th-9th, were so exhausted that it was almost impossible to keep them awake. They stumbled along half asleep; the moment they halted they fell down like logs. However, the position was reached, and the battalion lay down in readiness to lead the attack. This was to have been delivered at 6.30 p.m., but was twice postponed. Advantage was taken of the delay to reconnoitre the front, with the result that a thorn hedge was discovered running parallel to the line and not 100 yards from the enemy; this, in itself a fairly impenetrable obstacle, had been very strongly wired. Colonel Travers went off to report the situation to Brigade Headquarters, leaving orders with Major Ingles that if he was not back by 1.30 a.m., the hour ordered for the attack, the troops were to go forward. 1.30 came and the C.O. was not back, so the battalion started off.

It had only gone 200 yards when a Staff officer came hurrying up from the rear to stop it. To fall back in good order and without noise was difficult, but was managed without drawing fire, and before daylight the battalion was back in its trenches, where it spent a cramped and uncomfortable day. B Company on the left, being cut off from the others by a dyke, never received the order to halt, so pressed on till quite close to the German lines; it then came under very heavy fire and had over 30 casualties before Captain Imbert-Terry could extricate it. By this time the fighting was dying down. There was clearly nothing to be gained by continuing to press. The enemy had completely recovered from his surprise, had brought up his reserves, both of men and of guns, and the British had used up their accumulation of ammunition.

It was therefore decided to consolidate the ground gained, and attempt nothing more.

References:

Free Birth Marriage & Death records

Military-genealogy.com

Refs via subscription sites:

Census records

Forces War Records

Harvey- family tree. (Ancestry.co.uk)