

Frank Samuel DART

Born Dawlish, 1893
Private 268222

Died Moorlands Hospital, Manchester 19th December 1917
Devonshire Regiment, 1st/6th Battalion (Territorials)

Frank Samuel Dart was the youngest child of a well known fishmonger and the grand-son of a Dawlish farm worker, Robert Dart.

Robert Dart (1830-1910) married Anna Windeatt in 1850 (GRO ref Newton Abbot, 1850 Oct-Dec, Vol 10, p 240). Robert was born in Dawlish and his wife came from a Teignmouth family. Robert and Anna Dart had eight children and lived for many years in Park Row, Dawlish. Their children were:

John Dart	1851-1909	born Dawlish	father of Frank Samuel
Robert Dart	1853-	"	
William Dart	1855-	"	
Ann Maria Dart	1857-	"	a.k.a. Hannah
Ellen Dart	1861- 1863	"	
Henry Dart	1865- 1877	"	
Frederick James Dart	1868-	"	
Emily Louisa Dart	1872-	"	

Birth dates are taken from General Record Office references in www.freebmd.org.uk and a detailed family tree (Ancestry.co.uk - 'Joanne Matten').

John Dart married Mary Jane Woodrow (1854-1918) in the St Thomas district in 1871 (GRO ref St Thomas, Apr-June 1871, vol 5b, p 80).

Mary Jane Woodrow was the daughter of William and Anna Woodrow of Dawlish. William was a naval pensioner and Mary Jane was born in East Stonehouse (now Plymouth).

John Dart was a well known fishmonger/ fish merchant in Dawlish.

John and Mary Jane Dart's children are listed in the census entries and Ancestry as:

Henry James Woodrow	1869-	born to Mary Jane Woodrow, father unknown
Ellen Dart	1872- 1873	
William John Dart	1875- 1876	
Ned Dart	ca 1875	born Dawlish
Frederick John Dart	1876-1929	"

He married Helena Maude Woollacott in Barnstaple Apr-Jun 1895. He was a ticket collector for the Great Western Railway and she was a fish merchant (1911 census). They had two daughters, Kathie (1902-) and Florence (1906-) that appear on the 1911 census. There had been two other children of which one had died.

Alice (Maud) Dart	1877-	born Dawlish
Emily Anna Maria Dart	1878-	
John Dart	1880-	"

He married Mary Jane West in April 1904 and he was a Petty Officer, R.N. in 1911 and they had John William Dart (1907-), Frank Samuel Dart (1909-) and Phyllis May Dart (1910-), born in Kingsteignton.

William Dart	1882-	born Dawlish
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Percy (Edward?) Dart	1884- 1915	"
Elizabeth (Lizzy) Dart	1886-	"
Frank Samuel Dart	1893-1917	"

They lived at 2 Shapter's Court in 1881 and at 26 Brunswick Place in 1891.

The census return for 1911 shows that after the death of John Dart on 29 October 1909 (GRO ref Newton Abbot, 1909, Oct-Dec, vol 5b, p 66) his widow, Mary Jane, was living at Brunswick Place, Dawlish with her son Frederick John and his family. It also records that Mary Jane Dart and the late John had eleven children of which five had died before the 1911 census. John Dart is shown in Probate records as a fish dealer and he left £1,133 – 15s – 6d which was a sizeable sum in 1909.

The census of 1911 also shows **Frank Samuel Dart**, 18, boarding with Martha Smith in Coventry where he was an apprentice engine fitter (motor cars). Other engine fitters were also boarding there.

We know that **Frank Samuel Dart** enlisted at Plymouth and that may have been soon after the outbreak of war.

The 1st/6th Battalion of the Devonshire Regiment was part of the Territorial Force and on outbreak of war was stationed at Barnstaple as part of the Wessex Division. It was then 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.

The British needed the oil in Mesopotamia for the Royal Navy so that it could replace its coal-fired vessels. When war broke out in 1914 the Germans, who had previously been partners in the enterprise, turned into the enemy, so control of these oil supplies became one of Britain's primary goals. Under the guise of protecting India's borders with Mesopotamia, an expeditionary force arrived in November 1914 with the aim of taking possession of the towns of Basra, Baghdad and Mosul, the capitals of the provinces bearing the same names. At about the same time, Kuwait became a British protectorate after negotiations instigated by Winston Churchill.

30.12.1915 the Devonshires moved to Basra and joined the 36th Indian Brigade.

12.05.1916 Joined the 14th Indian Division which engaged in various actions as part of The Mesopotamian campaign including;

Advance to the Hai and capture of the Khudaira Bend, Capture of the Hai Salient, Capture of Sannaiyat, Second Battle of Kut, Passage of the Tigris, Fall of Baghdad (1917), Passage of the 'Adhaim, Action of the Shatt al Adhaim, Second action of Jabal Hamrin, Third action of Jabal Hamrin.

Once British interests in the oilfields had been secured, it was decided to consolidate our position by moving along the river banks to Baghdad which ultimately fell in 1917 but not without bloodshed. The Germans tried to foster a Jihad or holy war against the British forces and Turkey itself offered strong resistance to these incursions into its Empire.

Sept 1917 Moved to Amara to defend the Lines of Communication of the Tigris Defences.

31.10.1918 the Devonshire battalion ended the war in Mesopotamia, Basra.

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The British Force was composed of the Indian Army (which at that time included a number of British Regular and Territorial units) and was totally unprepared for the kind of guerrilla warfare which it ultimately faced in Mesopotamia. It was poorly-equipped and under-trained and caught out by a nightmare logistical scenario. As if that wasn't enough, there were flies, mosquitoes, constant high temperatures and humidity. Sickness and disease spread out of control through the camps and the death rate rose to the point where units simply did not have enough officers and men to continue fighting.

It is not clear how or when **Private Frank Samuel Dart** was taken ill or wounded and brought back to Britain. The press reports show that he had "a long and painful illness" and had been treated at Moorlands Hospital, Manchester. He died there and was brought home to Dawlish for burial in the cemetery.

Reference to the funeral report in the Dawlish Gazette of 29th December 1917 (see in Documents) shows the chief mourners as "Mr J F Dart (brother)(presumably reversed initials for Frederick John Dart), Mr J Dart, R.N. (brother), Mr R Dart (uncle), Mr F Dart (uncle), Mr R Dart, junr, (nephew) (possibly Robert Frederick S Dart, son of Frederick John, born Exeter, March Q 1901)"; Also "In affectionate remembrance, from his broken-hearted sweetheart, Eva."

The UK, Army Register of Soldiers' Effects has a slightly unusual distribution of Death Grant to seven beneficiaries, each receiving £7. 3s. 8d. (Mother- Mary, Brothers Fred, John, Sisters, Alice, Elizabeth, Helen June and nephew, Frank Knight . *Against the line for Elizabeth it records "At the request of brother William for the benefit of Nephew Harry"*).

The War Gratuity was also split in seven shares, 5/7 going to Brother Fred and 1/7 each to Chas M Scott and Sis-in-law Helena.

He was awarded the Victory Medal and the British War Medal.

F.S.Dart is recorded on the Devon Roll of Honour and the Dawlish Boys' School Roll of Honour.

Dawlish War memorial inscription: DART F.S. PTE. DEVON REGT.

Devon Heritage site info:

268222 Private Frank Samuel Dart of the 1st/6th Battalion, The Devonshire Regiment. Son of John and Mary Dart of Brunswick Place, Dawlish. Born in Dawlish in the December Quarter of 1893. Died 19 December 1917, aged 24.

<http://www.devonheritage.org/Nonplace/DevonReg/TheDevonsinMesopotamia-1917.htm>

Commonwealth War Graves entry: DART, FRANK SAMUEL Private 268222
19/12/1917 Devonshire Regiment, 1st/6th Bn. Grave Ref: 2128. [Dawlish Cemetery](#)

Last known address: 41 Cope Street, Coventry

Next of kin: Mother, Mary Jane Dart

References:

free birth, marriage, death refs

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extracts from the Dawlish Gazette (see, in Documents on website)

The Devon regiment in Mesopotamia

refs via subscription website:

- census records

- UK, Army register of Soldiers' Effects

- UK, Soldiers died in the Great War

- Probate records

- Ancestry family tree 'Joanne Matten'