

Henry John HARRIS,

Born Dawlish 1892, Q4
Sergeant 8677

Died 26 August 1918, France, aged 25
Devonshire Regiment, 1st Battalion, "A" Company

John Harris (1836-) was an agricultural labourer who married Margaret Cummins (1835-1881) in 1858 (GRO ref Apr-Jun, N.A., vol 5b, p 277) and they were living in Higher Dawlish Water in 1861 when the census showed them with two children:

Mary Harris	dau,	2	(1859-)	born in	Dawlish
William Harris	son,	1	(1860-)		"

In 1871 the family had grown to eight children, the additional being:

James Harris	son,	9	(1862-)		"
John Harris	son	7	(1864-)		"
Louisa Harris	dau	6	(1865-)		"
Ellen Harris	dau	4	(1867-)		"
Frances Harris	dau	2	(1869-)		"
Charles Harris	son	6 mths	(1870-)		"

Their mother, Margaret Harris, died in 1881, aged 46 (GRO ref Apr-June, N.A., vol 5b, p 75) In the census that year the father is shown as a widower, living at Dawlish Water Cottages with William, 21, and John, 17, both agricultural labourers, and Ellen, 14, Frances, 13 and Charles, 11.

John Harris(1864-) married Loveday Stoneman (1859-1939) in 1885 (GRO ref 1885, Apr-June, Newton Abbot, vol 5b, p 271). Loveday was born in North Tawton (GRO ref 1859, Okehampton, Apr-June, vol 5b, p 364) to George and Sophia Stoneman who had ten children. George also was an agricultural labourer and three of the children were employed as serge weavers and one as a wool spinner, natural occupations in a sheep farming community.

John and Loveday were living at Pill (Pitt?) Farm Cottage, in 1891 when he was working as an agricultural labourer. They had their first two children:

Edith	dau	5	(1886-)	born in	Dawlish	"
Ellen Sophia	"	1	(1890-)		"	"

By 1901 they had moved into Dawlish to 3 Queen Lane, Old Town Street, and with more children:

Henry John	son	9	(1892-1918)		Dawlish
Winifred	dau	6	(1894-1958)		"
Charles	son	4	(1897-)		"
Alice Linda	dau	1	(1900-)		"

They had one further child by 1911 when they were found at Shiverstone Cottages, Dawlish:

Frederick John	son	4	(1907-)		"
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But the census entry also records that one of their children had died by that time. Winifred Ivy Harris was to marry a sailor, Frank Brook (q.v.) in 1914 and she became a widow when he died in 1920, after the war.

Henry John Harris was baptised at St Gregory's on 20 November 1892.

Without service records, it may be assumed that **Henry John Harris** joined the Devonshire Regiment prior to the war breaking out, possibly soon after his 18th birthday in 1910, for he is among those in the regular army battalion.

Dawlish World War One Project

They were stationed in Jersey at the outbreak of the war and returned to the mainland before landing in France as part of the British Expeditionary Force. His Medal Roll index card shows that he arrived in France on 6 November 1914, thus qualifying for the eventual award of the 1914 Star. The card also shows him serving with the 2nd Battalion, to which he may have been transferred at some point. He was a Private at the outbreak of War, earning promotion to Sergeant by the time of his death.

The Devonshires fought a hard war (see their Military Story in 'Documents' here).

In the summer of 1918 they were engaged in a number of battles in Northern France, not far from the monument at Thiepval. It is not known when **Henry John Harris** was wounded, only that he died from his wounds and is buried in the war cemetery at Bagneux.

His grave carries the epitaph, requested by his father, "WHEN THY VOICE SHALL BID OUR CONFLICT CEASE CALL US O LORD TO THINE ETERNAL PEACE".

The Death Grant of £16. 5s. 6d. Was paid to his father, as was the War Gratuity of £26. 10s. od.

Henry John Harris is inscribed on the Devon Roll of Honour, but no date or place is shown. He is also among those on the Dawlish Boys' School Roll of Honour.

Dawlish War memorial inscription: HARRIS H. SERGT. DEVON REGT.

Devon Heritage site info:

HARRIS H. 8677 Sergeant Henry John Harris of "A" Company, the 1st Battalion, the Devonshire Regiment. Son of John and Loveday Harris, of Shiverstone Cottages, Dawlish Water, Dawlish. Born in Dawlish in the December Quarryter of 1892. Died 26 August 1918 aged 27 (*error, was 25-ed*)

Commonwealth War Graves entry: HARRIS, HENRY JOHN Serjeant 8677

26/08/1918 Age: 27 Devonshire Regiment, "A" Coy. 1st Bn.

Grave Ref: V. C. 8. [Bagneux British Cemetery, Gezaincourt](#), Somme, France

Son of John and Loveday Harris, of Shiverstone Cottages, Dawlish Water, Dawlish, Devon.

Last known address: Shiverstone Cottages, Dawlish Water

In addition to the 1914 Star, **Henry John Harris** was awarded the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Next of kin: Father, John Harris

References:

Baptism - Find my Past.

Free Birth, Marriage & Death refs

refs via subscription sites:

- census data

- UK, Soldiers died in the Great War

- British Army Medal Rolls index cards

- UK, Soldiers Register of Soldiers' Effects

- Ancestry family trees (4 no. incomplete)