

**CAPTAIN****7<sup>th</sup> (Service) BATALLION SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS****Background**

Harry was born in Northfield, Worcestershire in 1869. He was the younger son of the late Pynson Bennitt, of Pomeroy Lodge, Totnes, Devon, and Mabel Harris (nee Burland), grandson of the late Pynson Bennitt of Stourton Hall, Worcestershire, and nephew of Colonel Ward Bennitt, late 5<sup>th</sup> Lancers. He was educated at Shrewsbury School and was a school tutor in 1891. (The 1881 Census spells his name as Bennett). Harry married **Dora Charlotte Johnstone** in the Guildford District in 1907. She was born in 1877 in India, the daughter of the late Colonel W. G. C. Johnstone, Indian Staff Corps, and granddaughter of the late Major-General A. C. Lily, Indian Staff Corps. There were no children born to this marriage. Dora married Charles R. Hodgson at St. Martins. London in 1920 and died on 12 September 1963 in Weybridge, Surrey.

**Military**

He was gazetted as a Second Lieutenant in the Devon Artillery Militia, later the Devon Royal Garrison Artillery. He was seconded to the Central African Regiment on 14 September 1900 with the local rank of Lieutenant. It may be that the disturbances in West Africa during the Boer war provided opportunities for a militia officer to serve with a colonial regiment. He accompanied the expedition to the Gambia and during the operations against Fodi Kabba and was promoted to the local rank of captain in the Kings African Rifles on 18 April 1903 and served in East Africa until 1904, including operations in Somaliland and the action at Jidballeh. For this service he received the General African Medal with three clasps for Gambia, Somaliland 1902-1904 and Jidballeh. Having left the service in 1911, he joined the Special reserve of Officers, and on the outbreak of war was attached to the 7<sup>th</sup> (Service) Seaforth Highlanders. He was what became known as a 'dugout', a middle aged officer bought out of retirement to partially officer the Kitchener New Armies. He died of wounds, received on 25 September, at the Duchess of Westminster's Hospital in Le Touquet, France on 7 October 1915. He had previously been wounded on 3 July. The base hospitals were located at Etaples and consequently the largest British cemetery on the continent is located there. He was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War and Victory Medals.

**Memorial**

Harry's grave at Etaples bears the inscription 'In memory of my darling husband who died for his country.' He is commemorated at St. Michaels's Church Partridge Green and on the West Grinstead War Memorial.

**Footnote**

I have not been able to establish as to why he name ended up on the memorials as no connection to the parish has been located.