



Henry Thomas James Harris died at sea in one of the most tragic and shocking incidents of WW1. On the cold morning of 17th November 1915 the hospital ship HMS Anglia left France for England and hit a mine port side. She immediately began to list. The seriously injured soldiers and nurses in the front two wards on the vessel were either killed immediately or were plunged into freezing cold waters and had no chance to escape. HMS Ure, the SS Lusitania (not the liner) and HMS Hazard all rallied to her aid. Eye witnesses record that the Anglia's bow was so low, her stern was now completely out of the water with the propellers still rotating. The Lusitania launched two smaller boats which were heroically driven under the propellers allowing 40 survivors to jump down onto them. Meanwhile the Ure bravely steered over the sunken bow to retrieve other patients. The Anglia sunk 20 minutes after she had been hit. **Henry (39) went down with the ship. He had been hospitalized in Boulogne suffering from a hernia and had elected to have the operation back in England.** Over 150 people died that day. (Shockingly, as the two survivor boats pulled alongside their mother ship, the Lusitania hit a mine, rolled over and sunk). Henry had already served 12 years with the 1st Battalion Cameron Highlanders (1892-1904). He had taken part in the Nile Expedition in 1898, was at the Battle of Khartoum and had fought in the Battle of Johannesburg Diamond Hill in 1900.

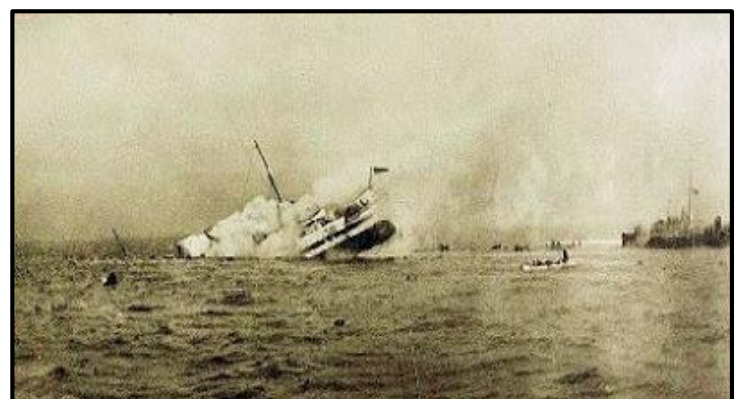
In 1911, Henry was living at 10 South Street and working as a labourer. He married Ethel Cranfield in 1912 and they lived at 17 Queen's Terrace. Their son Henry John Harris was born in Oct. 1913.

Surprisingly, Henry T J had attested for a second time in Hounslow on 30th June 1913. He joined the 8th Battalion (Duke of Cambridge's Own) Middx Regiment Reg. No TF/2142. He was on manoeuvres when war was declared in Aug 1914 and went to France on March 8th 1915 as a Transport Sergeant.

The Middlesex Chronicle obituary tells us that Henry was 'keenly devoted to his military profession and possessed the qualities of alertness and diligence which are the characteristics of a good soldier'. Henry was the first born son (b1876) of Henry and Elizabeth Harris and the family lived at 2 South Street where his father was a 'General Dealer'. By 1891 Henry Senior was working as a County Court Bailiff and the family had grown. Henry had one sister Ada, and five brothers - Alfred, Walter, Arthur, and years later Edward and William. In 1901, Father Henry was a furniture builder, assisted by his son Walter. By 1911 just the two youngest boys remained in the family home where they also assisted their 'builder' father at the Mart, Twickenham Road. In 1916 Ethel Harris was living at 177 Linkfield Road.



Anglia with her bow underwater.
Both pictures Illustrated London News Jan'16



Final Plunge
Courtesy of Epsom & Ewell Explorer

In March 2017 the wreckage of the HMHS Anglia was declared an official war grave, making it illegal to remove or disturb any human remains at the wreck site. She lies in about 30 metres of water. (Kent Online). He is also remembered on the memorial at St John's Church, and was commemorated at All Saints, too- both in Isleworth.