

QUEEN'S SOUTH AFRICA 1899 TO A CAPTAIN IN THE WEST RIDING REGIMENT WHO WAS WOUNDED IN ACTION AT BOTH KLIP KRAAL AND DE WET'S DEFEAT AT BOTHAVILLE IN 1900. THREE TIMES M.I.D. IN 1901, THE LAST AWARDED THE BREVET OF MAJOR AND TO COMMAND OF THE 16TH MOUNTED INFANTRY, HE DIED OF DISEASE IN OCTOBER THAT YEAR



QUEEN'S SOUTH AFRICA 1899-1902, 5 CLASPS, RELIEF OF KIMBERLEY, PAARDEBERG, DRIEFONTEIN, JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA 1901 'CAPT. O. HARRIS. W. RIDING. RGT.'

M.I.D. London Gazette 8 February 1901.

M.I.D. London Gazette 10 September 1901. (Mounted Infantry)

Brevet Major. London Gazette 27 September 1901. (15th Mounted Infantry)

Owen Harris was born in November 1863, and was the son of Francis Harris, M.D., of 24 Cavendish Square, London and the Grange, Lamberhurst. Harris was educated at Winchester, and was initially commissioned into the 3rd Battalion, Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment. He transferred to the West Riding Regiment in January 1884, and advanced to Captain in February 1890. Harris served as adjutant of volunteers, February 1892 - February 1898. Captain Harris arrived with the 1st Battalion at the Cape on 21 January 1900, the battalion forming part of the 13th Brigade under Major General O E Knox, 6th Division under Lieutenant General Kelly-Kenny. The whole division distinguished themselves in the advance from Modder River to Bloemfontein. Captain Harris was wounded in action at Klip Kraal, 16 February 1900, during the Relief of Kimberley, where the battalion lost 1 man

killed, 2 officers and 27 men wounded. His wounds cannot have been too severe as two days latter he took part in the battle of Paardeberg, the battalion suffering heavy casualties of 1 officer and 22 men killed, and 2 officers and 104 men wounded.



It seems likely Harris was given command of the battalions mounted infantry company some time after its arrival in South Africa, for although he was certainly serving with the 8th Mounted Infantry when wounded for a second time at the battle at Bothaville (Doornkraal), 6 November 1900, he was not a member of the company when it landed in the Cape a short time before the action at Klip Kraal and therefore served with his regiment at this battle.

The Mounted Infantry battle at Bothaville a rare defeat of Christiaan de Wet's Commando. Here, Harris and the 8th formed part of the Le Gallais's mounted force, consisting the 5th, 7th, 8th Mounted Infantry, Imperial Yeomanry, Royal Horse Artillery, and Australians. See:

<http://samilitaryhistory.org/vol166rs.html>

See also '*The Oxfordshire Light Infantry in South Africa: A Narrative of the Boer War*' pg 171-86, which contains a chapter on the battalions Mounted Infantry Companies (also part of 8th Mounted Infantry) actions at Botherville including several participants accounts. Additionally this book has a good deal of accounts of the Mounted Infantry's other service from its formation. A copy of this book on CD is included with the research

On 22 February 1901, Captain Harris was given command of the 16th Battalion Mounted Infantry (with the local rank of Major) but by September when awarded the Brevet of Major, he was serving with the 15th Battalion Mounted Infantry. He contracted enteric fever shortly after and Major Harris died of enteric fever and pneumonia, 9 October 1901.



Condition, retaining rod between 4th and 5th clasps, small ek, good very fine. Includes '*The Oxfordshire Light Infantry in South Africa: A Narrative of the Boer War*' on CD