

**A SCARCE VICTORIA CROSS GREAT WAR PHOTO POSTCARD PORTRAYING PRIVATE HARRY CHRISTIAN. AWARDED THE VICTORIA CROSS FOR ACTIONS AT CUINCHY**



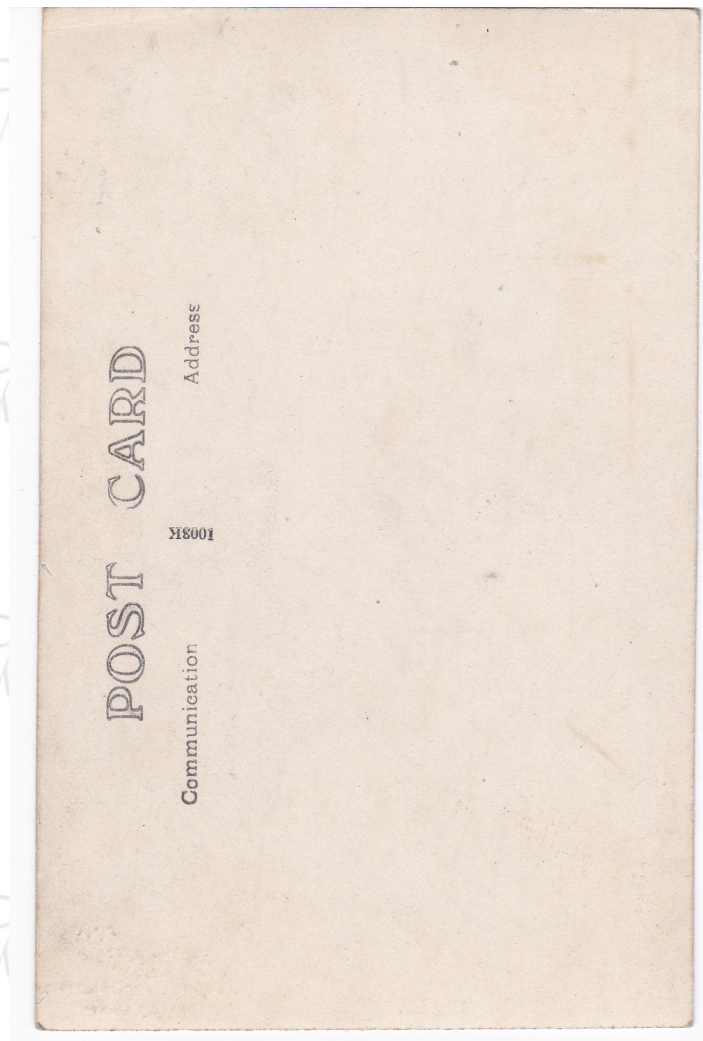
Harry Christian (1892-1974) was born at Walthwaite Farm, Pennington, near Ulverston, Lancashire on 17th January 1892. His father was William Christian, an ironstone miner. His mother was Mary Janee nee Glessal. His parents married in 1890 in Ulverston. Harry had six siblings, brothers George Henry, John Thomas, James and Walter, and sisters Maggie Ann and Martha.

Harry was educated at the National School, Ulverston. He worked on several farms including his uncle's and may also have been an iron ore miner at some stage. He enlisted with the King's Own (Special Reserve) at Lancaster on 10th November 1906 and became a Regular on 5th April 1910 and was posted to 2nd Battalion in Jersey on 7th April. His disciplinary record throughout his career was poor. In June 1910 he was charged with being drunk in barracks and was confined to barracks for four days. In August 1911 he was charged with being drunk

at Charing Cross, St Helier, fined 2/6d and confined to barracks for eight days. On 14th September, he sailed for India aboard HMT Rewa to join the 1st Battalion at Lucknow on 7th October. The Battalion moved to Calcutta in 1912.

Harry went back to the 2nd Battalion on 19th December when the 1st Battalion left for Dover. He was admitted to hospital in Calcutta with gonorrhoea between January and April 1913. The Battalion moved to Lebong, where he was again in trouble for using obscene language to an NCO on 4th July and confined to barracks for nine days. He was then charged with striking an officer on 29th November and awarded 91 days detention on 2nd January 1914 at Lucknow Detention Barracks. Unfortunately the bad behaviour continued, and on 30th April he was charged with wilful damage, using obscene language to an NCO, drunk in barracks and using threatening language to an NCO on duty. He was ordered to pay the damages, fined five shillings and awarded 14 days' detention.

He returned to England on HMT Kenilworth Castle on 16th November 1914. He was absent without leave at Winchester on Christmas Eve until apprehended by the Military Police in a drunken state. He was charged with disorderly conduct and fined 7/6d and confined to barracks for 10 days. On 12th January 1915, he was sentenced to one month in prison for striking a police officer. Soon after completing his sentence, he was posted to France with the 2nd Battalion.





Harry received a gunshot wound to the head on 22nd April and was taken to No 14 General Hospital at Wimereux and No 9 General Hospital at Rouen, before being discharged on 29th April. On 18th October 1915 at Cuinchy, Pas-de-Calais, France, Private Christian was holding a crater with five or six men in front of the Allied lines. The enemy started a fierce bombardment of the position, forcing a temporary withdrawal. When he found that three men were missing, Private Christian at once returned alone to the crater and although bombs were continually bursting actually on the edge of the crater, he found, dug out and carried one by one into safety, all the three men. Later he placed himself where he could see the bombs coming and directed his comrades when and where to seek cover.

The Battalion left for Egypt a week after his action and then on to Salonika. He contracted malaria in December 1916 and was admitted to the Canadian General Hospital. The VC was presented by King George V at Ibrox Park, Glasgow on 18th September 1917. He had to be carried to the investiture due to a recurrence of malaria. He returned to Salonika, where he failed to comply with a direct order in the field and was awarded 14 days Field Punishment No 1. When the war ended, he was stationed at Lake Doiran in Macedonia and in November was posted to Turkey.

He transferred to the Section B Army Reserve on 10th June 1919 and was discharged from the Reserve on 4th April 1922. In 1920, Harry married Ellen Simm in Whitehaven, and they lived near Egremont, though had no children. Harry became the landlord of the Park Head Inn in Egremont, for forty years. He died at West Cumberland Hospital, Cumbria on 2nd September 1974 and is buried in Egremont Cemetery. In addition to his VC, he was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal 1914-20, Victory Medal 1914-19, George VI Coronation Medal 1937 and Elizabeth II Coronation Medal 1953.

Postcard sized Approx 13.7 x 8.6 cm. The above taken from the fine vconline website:

<http://www.vconline.org.uk/harry-christian-vc/4586182365.html>

A scarce original period VC recipient VC photo postcard