

Cheltenham & Gloucester Branch
of
The Western Front Association

Remembering one of Gloucestershire's Fallen



Sapper Elim Harris (139450)
183rd Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers

Elim Harris was born in Cinderford, in the Forest of Dean, in 1899, the son of Thomas and Sarah Harris of Church Road. After attending Double View Secondary School in the town he was employed as a collier at the local Lightmoor Colliery.

When war broke out he was an early volunteer, enlisting as Private 17468 in the Worcestershire Regiment, but transferred to 183rd Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers, as Sapper 139450, landing in France sometime after 1 January 1916.

The only surviving records of his service, ie his medal index card and entry in *Soldiers Died in the Great War*, are interesting and probably unique in that he gave his name in the Forest vernacular as 'Alem' Harris, and it is recorded as such.

Elim (or Alem) Harris was killed in action on 18 November 1917 at Ypres, aged 28 years. He was buried at Bard Cottage Cemetery, and is recorded in the CWGC cemetery register as "A. Harris". Close to him lies his Cinderford pal and comrade in arms, John James, Sapper 139451 183rd Tunnelling Company, Royal Engineers. They died together.

He is remembered on the town War Memorial at Cinderford, and in an inscription on his mother's grave memorial at Holy Trinity Churchyard, Drybrook which is in the unusual form of a British SMLE rifle slung about a cross on a stepped plinth, all carved from local stone, now sadly broken.