

THE WAR DIARY OF DAVID BERNARD HARFORD

AS TRANSCRIBED FROM THE ORIGINAL

BY HIS MOTHER SUSAN ANN HARFORD¹

This is a copy of Diary of my
Late Son in the Battle field
of France who died of wounds
on the 31st of March, 1919, aged 30,
years and five months,
copied by his sorrowing mother
Mrs. S. A. Harford.
Berri South Australia,
22nd 11th trader Transport.
February 13th 1916 Sailed from
Fremantle Western Australia
weather fine. 5 o'clock whale
sighted on port Bow.
9 p.m. 14th Feb Weather very rough
gale sprung up early this morn.
and increasing in strength as I close
this note. 9.30 15th Feb. Weather very
rough with a following sea.
occasional big seas breaking on bow
but our huge vessel driven by -

Private D. B. Harford.
51st Battalion. late 28th Battalion.

This is a copy of the Diary of Private D.B. Harford No. 3844, 51st Battalion, late 28th who died of wounds in France 1917, March 31st aged 30 years and 5 months. His mother hand copied it from his original and handed the diary to the War Memorial in Canberra where it can be viewed.

¹ Initial draft produced by Marion Argus of Albany W.A.



No 3844 Private David Bernard Harford
51st Battalion A.I.F

SAILING FROM FREMANTLE-----EGYPT

Five o'clock Feb 13th 1916, noon Sailed from Fremantle Western Australia. Weather fine. Whale sighted on port bow.

Feb 14th 9pm Weather very rough. Gale sprung up early this morning and increasing in strength as I close this note.

Feb 15th 9-30 Weather very rough with a following sea, occasional big seas breaking on board but our huge vessel driven by engines with the power of many hundred horses and its way through the big green and white crested waves with irresistible masterfulness.

Feb 15th 1pm During the night storm reached its climax. Big waves broke on board at 8am completely wrecking latrine (toilets) in which were eight men, killing one on the spot and seriously injuring another. Another six men injured, one with a broken leg another with broken arm. Others escaped with bruises and scratches. Wind changed at 11 am flattening the heavy seas.

Feb 17th Weather very calm, sea like painted ocean on a stage. Injured man died at 7am, buried at sea at 3pm. Seen ocean mirage at 5am which looked like an island with trees growing on them. On the side of the island nearest us was what appeared to be a lagoon of still water surrounded by a high circular reef with a few stunted trees growing on them. 9pm weather fine.

CEYLON

19th, 20th, 21st ditto. 22nd arrived at Columbo, Ceylon at 11pm and anchored outside.

Feb 23rd 6 am. Steamed into harbour.

Feb 24th Allowed ashore. Plenty of niggers, nice place but beer not good. Plenty of fruit, bananas and pineapples etc but very hot climate.

Feb 25th Route march ashore. Very hot day.

Feb 26th 2pm Sailed from Columbo bound for Suez.

Feb 27th 11pm Lighthouse sighted on starboard bow

Feb 28th am Big range of mountains about 25 miles inland (India)

March 4th 3 pm Shoal of 8 whales passed just in front of prow of ship just missed one big fellow. Noon... shoal of dolphins. Passes a group of islands named the twelve apostles. Lighthouse on most easterly island, nothing but barren rock which looks like granite.

Mar 5th Passed big two funnelled vessel going in opposite direction to us, passed so close to us that we could speak to one another.

Mar 6th Inspection of rifles, kits etc.

Mar 7th 2 pm Steamer sighted far away on the north eastern horizon.

Mar 8th Arrived at Suez at 8 am.

SUEZ

Mar 9th Disembarkation delayed. At 2 pm aeroplane flew over our vessel.

Mar 10th Still aboard.

Mar 11th Disembarked.

Mar 12th Sunday church parade early morning, rest of the day to ourselves. Visited pyramids in afternoon and carved my name on top of biggest pyramid in soft limestone. Threw stone over pyramid with a sling.

Mar 14th Route march (475 ft) Visited Mary's well which is dated back to Abraham's time. Had a drink there and filled water bottles. Passed through avenue of Australian eucalyptus trees on our way home, they take splendidly to the soil and climate of Egypt.

Mar 15th Skirmishing drill.

April 2nd Entrained, bound for Suez. 5pm arrived at Siphon, Suez Canal---awful place, nothing but desert everywhere. Nothing but sand and dust as far as the eye can see. Impossible to keep rifles and equipment clean. When wind blows all the desert seems to be in the air.

April 3rd All old 9th, 28th Battalion reinforcements been transferred to 51st battalion.

Apr 30th Fatigue party of 36 men for working ferry on canal where pontoon bridge is thrown open to admit vessels to pass along. Hours long (12 hour shift) Tucker poor and work hard, trouble on ferry owing to long hours and broken sleep and hard work. Things looked decidedly ugly for a while. At end of shift we paraded before commanding officer and got things fixed up a bit. We have splendid view of passing shipping, big ocean liners, pleasure yachts and torpedo destroyers suggestive of power and speed and deadliness in every line of their long black sinister looking hulls with an occasional cruiser pass before us like a panorama about every hour of the day

May 4th Visited old battalion ground at Siphon (big black beetle)

May 13th Part 51st battalion about 80 men including myself sent to Tel-el-kebir, about 50 miles up the railway line toward Cairo owing to battalion being over strength.

May 20th Visited old battlefield of Tel-e-Kabir where Lord Wolsey and his men crushed the Arabs in 1882. Plenty of human bones lying about. The old trenches are in perfect state of preservation

May 24th Spy shot at Light Horse camp at Tel-el-Kabir

June 5th 11.30 pm entrained for Alexandria.

June 6th 8.30am Arrived in Alexandria and embarked for England on the 18000 ton liner Fransconia.

ENGLAND

June 7th Sailed for England. Two six inch guns on board for destroying submarines.

June 10th Innoculation for cholera.

June 11th Funeral for death of private soldier from spinal meningitis. We are compelled to wear lifebelts all day and sleep with them under our pillows at night as enemy submarines are known to be in the Mediterranean, we are escorted by two destroyers. We are travelling at 19 knots but the destroyers keep ahead of us with the greatest ease and seem to play with us as they keep zig zagging across our course.

2pm Algerian coast about 30 miles away on our port bow.

June 12th 10 pm Arrived at Gibraltar, moonlight night with moon on first quarter. Nothing to be seen but half a dozen big searchlights flashing over the water. In the background are thousands of little twinkling lights, the lights of the garrison town. Behind the town is the vague outline of The Rock of Gibraltar against the skyline. Later (midnight) resumed our voyage entering the Atlantic Ocean.

June 14th 2pm Fired six inch gun at a barrel floating in the water a quarter of a mile away, sinking it. I was below at the time doing some washing and thought we had struck a mine. There was considerable excitement all over the ship for a while.

June 15th Arrived Plymouth harbour. England pretty place with high cliffs crowned with green grass and trees. Later at 9am we have disembarked on lighters. Been landed and am now in train rushing onward towards Salisbury plains, our destination 200 miles away.

Later—noon, the countryside we are passing through is very pretty with high green hedges and fields and homes nestling in the green valley amid trees with a lazy curl of smoke coming from the chimneys. Country hilly. Mayor and Mayoress of Exeter, last town we passed through, gave each soldier a currant roll with a welcome card on behalf of themselves and the city of Exeter.

Later 8.30pm arrived at Amesbury siding. We now have a four mile hike before us to the camp. Later-10.30pm arrived in camp, allotted hut but have to go supper less to bed. The huts are built for warmth with their wool lining and a little stove in the middle of each hut as this is a cold climate. It is summer here now and is as cold as our winter in Western Australia. I don't know how we will get on if we have to spend the winter in this part of the world.

July 1st Went to see Stonehenge, old Druid temple. Built in the year 1700, as you look at it you marvel how the huge blocks of stone were positioned.

July 22nd Departure from Rollestone camp Salisbury Plain for Waterloo station. Long midnight walk 5 miles to station where we took the train for London. (80 miles from Salisbury).

Later-11am arrived Waterloo Station one hour spell waiting for troop train.

Later 1pm took troop train for Folkstone, 2 ½ hours for refreshments where we're to embark for France.

FRANCE

5.45 pm Embarked for France, every man wearing lifebelts. Later arrived at Bologne, two miles march to camp.

July 23rd 9.30 am. Took train for base 18 miles, Country very pretty, orchards everywhere. Later 2pm. Comfortably installed in tents with 11 others.

July 24th (Sunday) Church parade.

July 26th Introduction to the Bullring, a kind of amphitheatre about four miles from camp, where we undergo all kinds of training and tests, including the gas chamber which we call "the chamber of horrors". We look like devils with our gas helmets on, no wonder the Germans run away from us. At the foot of a long hill about a mile from camp on a board nailed to a tree bearing the legend, Malingerers Rest. There is not a man in the camp who is game enough to fall out for a spell there on the return journey from the Bull Ring.

We will not be kept long as reinforcements are badly wanted at the firing line. This is the final training camp before being sent into the trenches. From here we can hear the thunder of the distant guns.

August 1st Rifle shooting.

Aug 10th Went on early morning sick parade. Later 10am sent into isolation Hospital with the mumps.

Later (noon) have got to remain in bed for 8 days which is a nuisance as I am quite well bar a fair size swelling on either side of my neck. Plenty of mates with me, we play cards in bed on a box placed between two beds. The Red Cross nurses are very kind, our diet is light consisting of bread and broth. Egg, custard, fruit, cocoa, tea or coffee.

Sept 1st Discharged from hospital, later interviewed by Battalion doctor, reported fit for duty. Later 3pm, back to lines, all my old mates gone to firing line. I have to go through the Bull Ring training again. Infernal nuisance.

BELGIUM

Sept 24th Entrained for firing line at 3am. Off to the trenches at last.

I don't know whether to be glad or sorry. Regained Battalion at Aglinsjarot Village, Belgium. At billet about six mile from firing line. We will not go into trenches for a fortnight, I hear. I am back with my old mates again.

October 1st Sentenced to three days imprisonment in drill punishment compound for being caught out after tatts, 9pm.

Later 2pm entry into compound. Wet afternoon, playing cards in tent. There are 13 of us in here.

Oct 5th Fatigue work of various sorts, digging drains, round cookhouse tents etc with armed guard over us.

Oct 7th Back to Battalion.

Oct 6th Early morning preparing to leave for trenches. Later 2pm entry into trenches. Later-9pm Machine gun activity and a bit of night sniping.

Oct 9th Sniping all day long. **Have been picked for permanent company sniper.**

Oct 10th Huns bombarding our trenches with trench mortars. Bombardment lasted half hour , damage to trenches considerable but there were no casualties. This is the Yver (Ypres?) front that we are fighting in Belguim.

Oct 14th 3 to 4pm Bombarding our trenches with shrapnel from long range. Fairly quiet during the day at 6 o'clock this morning I shot a Hun or observer at 400 yards. I happened to spot him with a pair of field glasses with his head and shoulders above the parapet (foolish fellow) my loophole was well hidden, a plate of steel or iron, I am not certain which, about three quarters of a inch thick let into the parapet; with a hole just big enough to put the rifle through. There was a big bush of giant nettles growing round the loophole which added to its invisibility. Took careful but quick aim and pulled the trigger. He spread his arms out and fell backwards throwing his glasses into the air as he fell. When I saw him fall a queer thrill shot through me; it was a different feeling to that which I had when I shot my first kangaroo when I was a boy. For an instant I felt sick and faint but the feeling soon passed and I was my normal self again and looking for more shots which I did not get that day. I have a sniper rifle with telescopic sights and plenty of ammunition. I have the range of all likely places around here.

We fire at anything whenever we think a sniper may be concealed. If there is a burst of fire from the enemy we turn our machine gun fire on his parapet. The Lewis gun is a splendid invention

(an Australian invention), a very light and handy compared with the cumbersome Maxim or Vickers with its awkward tripod. You aim the Lewis gun on your shoulder like a rifle.

Later—night sentry duty, alone with my thoughts **I have just begun to notice that there are very few of my old mates of the old 28th that I came over with from Western Australia left in the Battalion now, they have all been killed or wounded in the great push on the Somme.** At my right elbow and every dozen yards or so is an empty box generally an ammunition box let into the wall of the trench and filled with bombs to be ready in case of an enemy attack. Every now and then one side or the other will send what is called a star shell but what is really a rocket and is fired from a big pistol. They go up about 200 feet and burst liberating a great white star which lights up the landscape in the immediate vicinity like day. They burn sometimes until they reach the ground and are generally fired at one angle so as to fall over the enemy trench and show whether he has any working parties out repairing their barbed wire entanglements or digging laps.

As I stand here keeping lookout and thinking away to the west I see the flashes of the big guns like sheet lightning on the horizon, while the sound of the shots come to my ears like the faint rumble of distant thunder. There is a battle in progress in some distant part of the line. Suddenly as I stand here waiting to be relieved, my ears are filled with intermittent crack of rifle fire and the sharp shots of our machine gun fire, for this is what we call quiet times.

The Blue & White Diamond

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Chapter VIII

Withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line

'Later – night sentry alone with my thoughts. I have just begun to realise that there are very few of my old mates of the old 9th/28th that I came over from West Australia with left in the Battalion now, they have all been killed or wounded in the great push on the Somme.' Private D.B. Harford Died of wounds 31.3.1917.

The Blue and White Diamond. The History of the 28th Battalion A.I.F. 1915-1919 by Neville Browning

Oct 13th Huns bombarded our trench for a quarter of an hour with their trench mortars at 4am without doing much damage, most shells falling above the parapet and making plenty of noise and a hole in the earth but that is all there is. One kind of trench mortar shell which behaves in a queer way if fired up at a high angle and comes tumbling down out of the sky turning over-end like a big german sausage dropped from a Zeppelin aeroplane. The projectile weighs about 60 pounds and they do a bit of damage if they burst in the trench. We have nicknamed the "sausages" By the way we are issued a ration of rum in the front line every evening.

Oct 14th 8am Quiet, just a bit of sniping.

1pm enemy sent trench mortar shells over.

Later 5pm terrific bombardment by enemy batteries. As bombardment increases in intensity we retire into our own dugouts, not that they afford much protection from flying splinters. We lie flat on the floor of our dugout and listen to the awful bombardment which is rapidly merging into a continuous roar. The ground trembles beneath me and the air is charged with the acrid reek of high explosive fumes.

In all this overcharged horror there comes as by a merciful dispensation of nature a certain insensibility to all the fears, quite simple thoughts pass through one's mind "so it is all to end here". Here in this dark mildewed hole in the earth, I am to go out. I look around me at my dark rat-hole, the sides and roof of which are lined with sandbags which by the way are not filled with sand but clay; and the brown-black soil of the country. The tower lights are green with mildew and the upper ones near sun and air are sprouting grass. Halfway up in the corner a cluster of poison mushrooms or toadstools peer down at me, the centre ones a little taller than the rest, seems to nod at me as sways and trembles to the concussions from the terrible bombardment.

One simply notes these simple things, fear of death having left one and one prays only that least it may prove one well placed shell, a crash of thunder and a lightening flash to hurl us through the dark gates into eternity. Only let it not be crippling and yet life; it is like nothing as so much as a world ending in earthquake the whole trembles until one is almost hurled upward and one wonders whether that last light explosive was a gas shell, how one's comrades are faring, whether any of us will be alive when the bombardment eases. Suddenly there is a concussion that seems to shake the breath out of my body; a big shell has burst very near.

Already a man feels in his innermost self halfway to the other world, hopeless but without fear. Hark; is the bombing really getting less violent or is it only a fancy; it is not fancy it is reality. Overhead is a new note the scream of shells passing over us on their way to the enemy batteries, one is astonished still to be living and one hopes one may be alive not only to night but also tomorrow, a month hence, yes even till the troops go home.

Then we creep out and take stock of the damage and set to work to assist the wounded and remove the dead. Everywhere can be heard "stretcher bearer at the double." After which we set to work to repair our wrecked trench. A heart breaking task far into the night we labour, still our machine gunners endeavour to keep down the enemy fire and at last our efforts are crowned with success.

We post sentries and lie down anywhere to get an hour or two sleep. In four hours time I am called to take part as sentry. There is a bit of night sniping going on and I take part in it.

Oct 17th Moved back into reserves trenches for a spell. D company taking our place in the front lines.

Oct 18th Nothing much doing, enemy sent over a few shrapnel during forenoon. "quiet stand to" every four hours for an hour and a guard now and then is all the work we do now.

Oct 19th Heavy frost last night, it is very cold at night in our damp dugouts; without a fire we are not even allowed a light at night.

Oct 20th Heavy rain last night. Roof of dugout let the water in, everything wet through.

Oct 21st Bombardment by enemy. Armoured train during night four men killed in Engineers (near lines) and one man killed and six wounded in front lines.

For King and Cobbers

51st Battalion A.I.F.

Foreword

Life on the Somme...

'...A terrific bombardment by enemy batteries. As it increases we retire into our dugouts not that they afford much protection as they are shallow and the roof is thin but they are some protection from flying splinters. We lie flat on the floor of our dugouts, most of which are only built for one man, and listen to the awful bombardment, which is rapidly merging into a continuous roar. The ground trembles beneath me, and the air is charged with the acrid reek of high explosive fumes. In all this overcharged horror there comes, as by a merciful dispensation of nature a certain insensibility to all fears, quite simple thoughts pass through one's mind, so it is to end here: here in this mildewed hole in the earth. I am to go out. I look around me at my damp rat-hole, the sides and roof of which are lined with sand bags...the lower bags are green with mildew and the upper ones up near the sun and air are sprouting grass. Halfway up in the corner a cluster of poison mushrooms or toadstools peer down at me. The centre one, a little taller than the rest seems to nod at me as it sways and trembles to the concussions...one simply notes these things, fear of death having left one, and one prays that at least IT may prove one well placed shell.

A crash of thunder and a lightning flash, to thrust us through the dark gates into eternity. Only let it not be crippling and yet life...one wonders whether that last light explosive was a gas-shell and how one's comrades are faring, whether ANY of us will be alive when the bombardment ceases. Suddenly there is a concussion that seems to shake the breath out of my body. A big shell has burst very near. Already a man feels in his inmost self halfway to the other world, hopeless but without fear. Hark! Is the bombardment really getting less violent or is it only fancy? It is not fancy? It is reality overhead. The scream of shells, our shells, passing over us on their way to the enemy's batteries. One is astonished still to be living, and then hopes one may be alive not only tonight but also tomorrow, a month hence, yes, even till the troops go home. And then we creep out and take stock of the damage and set to work to assist the wounded and remove the dead. Everywhere can be heard the cry 'Stretcher bearers at the double.' After which we set to work to repair our wrecked trench. A heart-breaking task. Far into the night we labour...at last...we post sentries and lie down to get an hour or two's sleep. In four hours time...there is a bit of night sniping going on and I take part in it.'

Private David Bernard Harford. 51st Battalion
Died of wounds, March 31st 1917. Aged 31

For King and Cobbers. The History of the 51st Battalion A.I.F. 1916-1919 by Neville Browning

Oct 22nd Front line trenches caving in places owing to wet weather. This afternoon some of us were sent to repair them. We had to wear gumboots as it was up to our knees in mud and slush

in places. I have been nominated to go to sniping school at Mont des Bats and have to be ready at noon today.

Later- departure for school at Mont de Bats five mile march to Brigade headquarters to catch motor transport with 15 others.

Later- 4pm arrived at school. We have been allotted a warm barn to sleep in with plenty of straw on the floor. It is a bit of a change from the cold wet trenches.

Oct 31st passed test. Leaving at 2pm to rejoin battalion.

Later- delayed at town of Abbeysville, are to remain here for a day or two. We are having a good time, this is a big town with two cathedrals, very old.

Nov 5th we are to have a few days spell here and then make for the Somme in marches; a distance of ----kilometers?

Nov 7th first days march, roads muddy.

SOMME

Nov 15th arrived at temporary base at Somme; at demolished village of Longueval.

Nov 16th Plenty of enemy shells both shrapnel and-----?

Note for diary. Poperinge village----- miles from billet, every wayside house has a coffee stall where you can get fresh coffee which is ground while you wait.

Nov 18th Bombardment of enemy aeroplane at height 8000 feet right at our billet. Nose caps of shrapnel shell fell from sky and went through roof and floor of huts, right through a spot where a man sleeps at night.

Nov 22nd German aeroplane brought down from 3000 ft. It fell sides down for a while then dived headlong to earth. The bombs on board blowing fragments into the air. It fell about 600 yards from where we were working; one of our machines came down a minute later, but the two men on board were only wounded; one having his leg broken in the fall. The German machine attempted to bomb us but was prevented by our own aircraft; three of which instantly attacked him with machine gun fire, bringing him down after a fight that lasted about ten minutes. It was a terrible sight to see the machine falling from such a height.

Nov 29th One of our battle planes in fire above Devils wood about 1000 ft up, Aviator looking for a place to land when our machine dived ---I thought he was done for, but he landed safely on open patch green grass outside the wood, about three quarters of a mile from our dugouts. The men were only slightly burned. One being wounded in the arm by an enemy shrapnel bullet.

Nov 30th moved up to supports 1 mile from front lines, have been in reserve till now. Our work now consists of night fatigues to the front trenches; taking food and drink to the men holding the line and digging laps and communication trenches at night all the time under enemy's artillery fire.

Dec 1st moved into firing line. During afternoon enemy shell fire very heavy. About four o'clock, one of our machine gunners and his assistant was killed by shrapnel shell which burst just above the parapet wall of the trench.

Dec 22nd moved out of firing line, our place being taken by the twelfth battalion. We were shelled by shrapnel coming out through the communication trenches but suffered no casualties.

Later- after a five mile march we took the train for Vignacourt; a French village about 34 miles from the firing line where we arrived at 8 o'clock in the morning. We are not due for the trenches again until early in January and are to spend Christmas at this village. Our work now entails route marches, rifle shooting and sham fighting.

Dec 25th Christmas Day

6pm . We spent a very enjoyable day and had a very good spread at dinner, including champagne which is cheap here being only four shillings a bottle. The expenses for the day amounted to only two francs per man.

Dec 26th Boxing Day 8pm. We had some sports during the day, foot races & high jumping.

Jan 1st 1917. During the evenings of the 29th & 30th and 31st Dec we had a bit of boxing which was held in the village hall. Men from all the battalions took part in it. It drew very large crowds, the whole Australian Army seemed to be there and you had to book a seat an hour before to get in at all. There was some very good boxing and some severe punishment given and taken.

Jan 4th commenced the return march to the trenches.

Jan 7th Sunday, resting at village of Fricourt about ten miles from firing lines.

Jan 8th 3pm. Arrived at temporary base, Longueval where we are to begin duties as reserve battalion for a month, after which we are to move into supports and from there into the firing line.

Jan 12th there is a very heavy bombardment in progress to the west. It is rumoured that the French are going to attack tonight, the concussion of the bombardment is shaking our hut like a leaf.

Feb 25th back in billets at Flers, about 15 miles behind the firing line. After doing six weeks fatigue work at temporary base about four miles from firing line, carrying timber and material for the trench construction, we were eight days in the firing line. On our last night we made a raid on the enemy which failed, we being driven back by heavy machine gun fire. We were only a small party of about 40 men which made the raid. The weather has been frightfully cold all the time we were at-----? And in the firing line so cold that I could not take my hands out of my sheepskin mitts to make an entry in my diary.

Feb 28th 8pm , we had sports today which turned out very well, there were foot races and tug-of-war which was contested by the 51st battalion and 20th battalions. The 51st won the tug-of-war. The last event of the day was a wrestling match on horseback in which Officers of the 50th, 51st battalions challenged the rest of the battalions, in this event the men won! The chief prize being carried off by one of our sergeants.

March 6th we are out for some time, the ordinary routine now is sham fighting, route marches and rifle drill, occasionally we have a bit of rifle shooting.

Mar 21st 9.30 pm departure for the firing line once more. The Huns are falling back and we are following up.

Later- 2.30pm, arrived at Fricourt where we are to spend the night. Fricourt is a fair sized village which has been shelled out of existence.

Mar 22nd 8.30am we fall in full marching order and continue our march at one o'clock. Quarter of a mile ahead of us on all the towns and villages the Huns have evacuated they have even cut

down the fruit trees and there is some fine orchards in some of the villages we have passed through they have poisoned the wells.

Mar 23rd 9pm we are in an open field on the crest of a rise within a half mile of the Germans. Entrenching as fast as we can dig.

Mar 24th 6 a.m. We have finished our trench which is now four feet six in depth and now have nothing to do but sit and await events. A drizzling rain has begun to fall and we have not the slightest shelter from the rain.

Later-9pm We have been relieved and gone back to the village, half a mile away and dug ourselves in a high bank alongside a road where we are to spend the night and have a good nights' sleep. Tomorrow evening we are to take the village just ahead of us where the German's are entrenched.

Mar 25th Noon, I am making this entry at a sort of temporary hospital where I have been sent with trench feet which I developed yesterday while we were sitting in cramped up in the cold wet trench unable to move for fear of being shelled.

Later-2.30, our hospital is situated just behind a hedge where we have a concealed battery and we are right in the line of fire from the German guns, even as I write shells are screaming and bursting around and at any moment one might hit this ramble shackle building fair and square; just now some engineers were getting some water from a well nearby when it blew up killing four of them and wounding three others. It was another of Fritz's favourite tricks of sowing mines in unexpected places-----

David Harford died of wounds on the 31st March 1917, this was his last entry in his diary which gives us an insight into the way it was during those dreadful times. His diary has been quoted many times by many writers, one being a West Australian writer of "The Blue & White Diamond" (a colour patch the soldiers wore on their uniforms.)



Map showing towns of the Battle of the Somme