

369 Sgt. Harold Henry Ewart 40th Infantry Battalion, 3rd Division, 10th Brigade AIF

Harold Henry Ewart, had just celebrated his 24th birthday when he enlisted for service with the 40th Battalion at Claremont in Southern Tasmania on 26th January 1916.

He was born at White Kangaroo River near Colebrook in the southern midlands and his next of kin was his father John Ewart of Buckland. On his attestation papers Harold was described as being, single, a labourer, black haired, and 5' 9¼" in height.

Harold left Hobart on 1st July 1916 on the HMAT Berrima to sail to Southampton, disembarking on the 22nd of August and from there on to France on the 23rd November of the same year, just in time to experience one of Europe's terrible winters.

The Battalion disembarked at Le Harve and spent a few days in Bailleul in billets before marching to the allied occupied city of Armentieres. Early in December the battalion occupied the front line trenches south of the Lys, the weather was extremely cold and wet and the trenches were in a very bad state.

Harold was promoted from Private to Lance-Corporal during this time.

The Battalion was relieved of its duties for a few days but were back in the trenches for Christmas Day 1916.

An unsuccessful raid on enemy trenches on Jan 9th 1917 saw Harold wounded in action and shell shocked. Throughout the entire month of January he was treated for shell shock firstly from a Field Ambulance Company through to a Casualty Clearing Station before being diagnosed on the 24th of January with concussion and shell shock, he rejoined his battalion on the 31st of January. During October he was wounded once again, this time suffering gun shot wounds to the left hand, right thigh and legs, during action in the third battle of Ypres.

Harold was transferred to England and admitted to Coombe Lodge, Great Warley, Essex for rehabilitation. It is interesting to note that when he lived at Prossers Forest near Launceston later in life, he called their home "Coombe Lodge".

In January of 1918 he left Southampton for action in France again, this time at Rouelles. The Battalion were engaged on Hill 63 until March 21st when the German offensive was opened and they were moved in the direction of Flanders, being diverted to the Somme en route.

During April and May Harold was promoted twice, firstly to Corporal and then to Sergeant. During June the Battalion was placed in support positions in and around the town of Villers-Bretonneux which at the time was being heavily shelled by the enemy every night.

Harold's record of service during 1918 show him to be in and out of hospital quite a lot, sometimes for up to a fortnight at a time. His health had deteriorated and would never again be the fit healthy young man he had been before the war.



Harold returned to Australia on the "Runic" which departed England on the 20th December 1919 and he was discharged on the 30th May 1921.

For his service Harold was awarded two service medals (as shown overleaf) they being the British War Medal & the Victory Medal. Harold was also recommended for a "Mention In Dispatches" late in the War but it wasn't carried through with.



In 1923 he married Adie Cooper with whom he had two children, Margaret and Harry.

It seems from all accounts Harold was a very reserved man who chose to keep to himself. He laboured all his life, farming and wood cutting to make a living to support his family. He was for some years an active Freemason, and the

photograph shown on the right seemingly portrays a more worldly gent than the quiet reserved hard-working bushman.

Harold and his family moved north in 1931 and settled at "Coombe Lodge" at Prossers Forest. A fairly impressive name for what was just a rough timber building placed in the middle of nowhere, no neighbours in sight and just rough tracks for access to and from Launceston.

Harold operated a trucking business in and around Prossers Forest in 1935 (refer Examiner newspaper 5th August 1935). The Examiner published a photograph of Harold and his truck loaded with wood and covered in snow during a trip to Launceston. Margaret and Harry were standing by the running boards.

This truck (a 1926 Chev flat tray) is now in the possession of John Read. It was in a very sorry state, but John is showing that with patience it can be restored.



Harold and Adie moved to Evandale and then to Bakers Beach to a property called "Brentwood". Harold died on 11th April 1957 at Devon House Hospital in Latrobe at the age of 66 and is buried with his wife Adie at St George's Church of England Cemetery, Newground, North-West Tasmania.

A fire destroyed the family home and most of Ada's and Harold's possessions in the early 1960s, however Harold's medals survived and are now with his grandson Peter Blyth.

Family Information & photographs kindly supplied by Harold's granddaughter, Kerrie Blyth of Devonport

