

## Field Marshal Lord Harding of Petherton (1896-1989)

Lord Harding prepared the following autobiographical notes in instalments in 1974, which he sent to Hanna Nicholas

Born:	South Petherton, Somerset 10.2.1896
Father:	F E Harding, solicitor's clerk
Mother:	E E Harding (nee Anstice)

They were simple god-fearing people - staunch non-conformists - strict teetotallers etc. We (my three sisters and I) were strictly brought up - chapel morning and evening - Sunday school in the afternoon - on Sundays - The Bible and Bunyan's Pilgrim Progress for reading on Sunday - my father was the organist so we were in the choir - my eldest and youngest sisters were musical - my wife says I can't recognise the National Anthem but that is an exaggeration - with it all we had a very happy home.

Forebears Yeoman farmers or small tradesmen in South Somerset

Educated: "Dame" school - (Miss Daniel) - South Petherton  
Ilminster Grammar School  
Passed usual examinations  
Played cricket and football for school but without much distinction.

Entered Civil Service as boy clerk and posted to Post Office Savings Bank

Attended night school and graduated as Intermediate and finally second division clerk - all in POSB.

May 1914	Persuaded to join Territorial Army and gazetted as second lieutenant in 11th county of London regiment (Finsbury Rifles). During this period lived with Aunt (Sally) father's sister and her husband, son and daughter (Pether's) in Harlesden (London suburb)
Aug 1914	Mobilised with Territorial Army on outbreak of First World War
1914-15	Training in UK
Aug 1915	Landed Suvla Bay (Gallipoli). Wounded week later and evacuated to Egypt
Oct 1915	Rejoined unit at Anzac (Gallipoli) and there until evacuation, in command of machine gun section
1915-18	Served in Egypt, Sinai and Palestine - wounded at second battle of Gaza - awarded Military Cross. Finished the war in command 54th Divisional Machine Gun Battalion (Acting Lieutenant Colonel) Meantime had applied to and been granted regular commission in the Somerset Light Infantry (own County Regiment).
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