

Follow Newark's trauma in The Great War as it happened 100 years ago this week

Great War Bulletin

No. 74...Newark...Monday 27 December 1915

Edited by Trevor Frecknall, author of *Newark in The Great War*

700 FAMILIES HAVE MEN SERVING..!

A TOTAL of 700 Christmas parcels were handed-out on Christmas Eve by the Mayor and Mayoress to the heads of Newark families who have a man in the Services.

The gifts honour a promise made by Mayor John Kew when the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters first marched out of town: "We will look after your families."

Each family received ½lb tea, 1lb sugar, a plum cake and a packet of sweets.

Hide 'n' seek

...AND
THERE
WILL
SOON BE
MORE

in Gallipoli

A soldier's best gift?

Sharp razor

BOMBARDIER 88154 Tom Halifax of the B 129 Howitzer Brigade, 27 Division, British EF, appealed last week to *Newark Advertiser* readers for a good razor or two and a mirror.

He explained: "It is over-cold standing in dug-out doorways on frosty mornings, shaving with a dull razor and using a biscuit tin lid as a mirror."

Tom, a farmer's son from Kneesall, will get something much better than a razor in 1917: he will be awarded the Military Medal.

'Furious rider' is cleared

BUTCHER and farmer Joseph Hallam, 54, of Ness Farm, North Muskham, appeared before Newark Magistrates accused of "furious driving" and being drunk in charge of a horse and cart. Police said he covered 3½ miles in 13 minutes after they tried to stop him on Muskham Bridge. He said the 9-year-old horse is so bad-tempered even the Army turned it down. The magistrates decided there was a doubt. Case dismissed.

WHILE the legendary escapologist Father Christmas prepared to slip down chimneys and deliver surprises, Sergeant Harold Brown treated Newark friends to details of his real-life hair-raising exploits sneaking around Gallipoli with D Company, 9th Battalion Worcestershire Regiment.

The 22-year-old grandson of the late Thomas Brown, a butcher who had a shop in Church Street for years, would have broken censorship laws if he had uttered a word to newspaper reporters. Perish the thought!

But he chatted freely to friends who, in turn, were happy to give verbatim reports to the gentlemen of the *Newark Advertiser* and *Newark Herald*, especially now that it was becoming general knowledge that the Allied forces had been whisked away from Turkey. This was his story:

"We went out at 10pm to try and discover any useful information about the enemy. We were only 80 yards from the Turks' first line trenches, and the wire in front of theirs and ours left about 50 yards to be covered.

"We had crept up to within about 15 yards of their wire when we encountered a patrol of the enemy, and just to the left they also had a large party of men digging. The enemy patrol was lying quite still, and thinking they had not seen us, I decided to try and capture them without having to shoot, which would have made our presence known to the large party close by us. I then made a half circle, intending to close in on them and capture them silently if possible.

"When however we had made the half-circle (we were on our knees by now) they suddenly opened rapid fire on us. We, of course, dropped flat at the risk of capture, and remained so until they had ceased fire for a time.

"We could hear them creeping forward to look for us or our bodies, and we started to creep backwards until we reached our lines. We then reported and the line opened fire in the direction I gave...

'An eighth of an inch nearer and the bullet would have gone through me'

"I had as narrow an escape as it would be possible to have: a bullet penetrated my great coat, tunic, jersey and shirt from left to right, and just singed the skin a little but did not even draw blood. An eighth of an inch nearer and it would have gone through my chest.

"The Commanding Officer, Adjutant and my Company officer congratulated me on penetrating so far into the enemy's quarters, also on my escape and the escape of my party, saying that had I tried to get my party back under fire, we should surely have been bowled over. It was only my giving the order to lie flat and let the enemy think we were shot that allowed us to escape. It made us pretty sick at the time, but I am pleased to have gained a little distinction, particularly on work that is considered one of the more nervy jobs."

ALTHOUGH the last day for attestation under Lord Derby's Group System closed two Wednesdays ago, the members of the Newark Division Parliamentary Recruiting Committee were still hard at work up until Christmas defining exactly how many possible recruits there still are around here.

Nobody realised so many Newark men had already volunteered to fight until Mayor Kew handed-out 700 Christmas parcels to families.

Now the idea is that a civilian body should identify the potential recruits who have not stepped forward so willingly.

They will then leave the military to enlist them as and when they are required.

CHURCH TURNS TO BATTLE

OWING to the continued presence of so large a garrison at Newark, a full-time Chaplain has been appointed to ensure the pastoral needs of the soldiers are met by the Church of England.

The appropriately named Reverend A G Battle arrived to carry out the arduous duties that have fallen on the Vicar of Newark, the Reverend Paton Hindley, since the outbreak of hostilities.

Whence Mr Battle came is lost in the mists of time. No churchman of that name appeared in the national census returns of either 1911 or 1901; and neither local newspaper went into detail. It is likely he had been serving overseas.

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WE WILL BE MERRY!

Cigarettes and tobacco for wounded

EVERY wounded soldier in the Lombard Street Red Cross Hospital, Newark, awoke on Christmas morning to a sock containing pipe, tobacco, cigarettes and a Lett's Soldier's Diary – gifts provided by the medical staff.

This was doubly generous considering many of the staff were working on a voluntary basis.

Treats from under tree at our hospital

EVERY wounded soldier in Newark General Hospital on London Road received a treat from under a tree kindly provided by Captain Walter Need and his wife Evelyn.

They lived "by private means" in Winthorpe with three of Captain Need's spinster sisters and five or six servants.

One statistic nobody reported on this painful festive season was exactly how many wounded soldiers, seamen and airmen were being treated in the growing number of Red Cross and Voluntary Aid Detachment hospitals in the district.

Perhaps it was considered such news would be bad for morale at a time when everyone was trying jolly hard to be happy.

Campers entertain themselves

THE MEN on Hawton Road Camp were entertained on Christmas afternoon by, among others, Sergeant Fred Ballinger (comic), Sapper Keatley (violin), Corporals Russell and Warrington (soloists), Sapper Madden (step dancer) and Sapper Harrier (banjo).

Again, no figures were given regarding how many Royal Engineers were still under canvas despite schools, large houses and part of the Workhouse being requisitioned.

It will be less of a laughing matter when Fred appears before Newark Magistrates next April for "being on licensed premises during prohibited hours".

"ABSENT FRIENDS" was the toast in most households on Christmas Day as Newark went through the motions of celebrating...

Even the weddings are quiet

A QUIET wedding took place at Thorpe on Thursday.

Company Quartermaster Sergeant Robert F Mayfield, 23, whose football-mad brother-in-law Corporal Charles Edgar Harrison was killed in France in October, was married to Miss Annie Bugg, niece of William and Bessie Baker of 20 Crown Street, Newark.

Mayfield is in the 8th (Service) Battalion Leicestershire Regiment.

Bride's best man in Egypt

BATHLEY Wesleyan Chapel was the venue for the Christmas Day wedding of Miss Annie E Boulton, daughter of the occupiers of part of Bathley House, to dentist Joseph Edwin Gilbert, 30, who is practicing in Bishop Auckland.

Because her older brother Arthur is with the forces in Egypt, Annie's younger sibling Frederic Wilson Boulton stepped in as the best man.

Abbott's message to men

ALL 19 employees of Abbott & Company's boiler works who are in the Forces receive a letter – along with a box of comforts – which adequately sums-up the feelings of most of those at home today:

"The directors and employees, mindful of those who have gone forth from their midst to serve actively in defence of King, of country and of humanity, ask your acceptance of the enclosed comforts as a small tribute of their warm-hearted admiration and affection. Although far away from your former associates, it will be some comfort for you to know that you are constantly in their thoughts. They know that in the difficult and dangerous tasks which lie in the performance of your duty, you will acquit yourself worthily, and they earnestly hope for your speedy and victorious return."

Well, it is Boxing Day!

No.7 Company Royal Engineers under Kilkenny-born Captain Ridley Pakenham Walsh in Lover's Lane School and the North End Wesleyan School had a jolly time tonight at a special tea in the North End Schools.

The RE's provided tea, sugar, milk and bread. The Wesley Guild added pork pies, mince pies, cakes and pastry. Mr Carle's Newark Town orchestra provided the entertainment along with Miss Dench, Francis Tote, Miss Dolphin, Mr E Connolly and the spirited Sergeant Ballinger.

Sapper Ashdown was absent from the party. He was in Liverpool, enhancing his reputation among the best of the country's middleweight boxers by stopping Harry Duncan of London in the fifth round.

It followed Ashdown winning a 12-guinea (£12.60) cup in a competition for 11-stone fighters at Stamford Bridge last August.

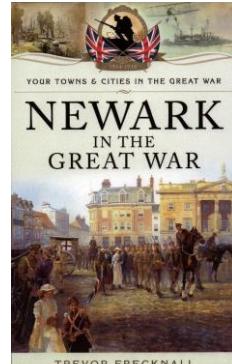
To Russia with love

THE splendid sum of £53 was raised for wounded Russian soldiers in their capital, Petrograd, by a whist drive organised by Mrs Ellen Cafferata, matriarch of the gypsum mining company, in Newark Town Hall on Thursday evening.

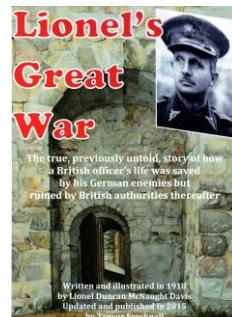
No love for the enemies

NEWARK Council resolved to have no dealings with "persons of German or Austrian nationality" ... "No contract shall be entered into by the Corporation with any firm or company whose subscribed capital is held or controlled to the extent of one-third or upwards by persons of German or Austrian nationality."

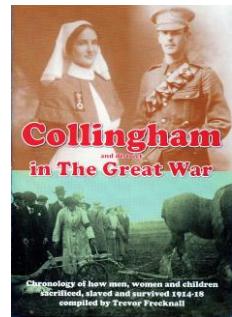
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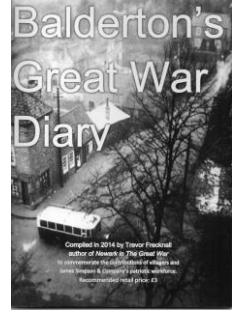
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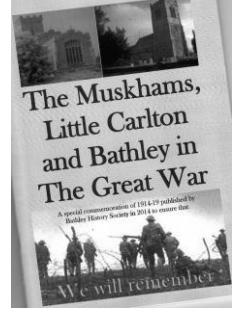
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