

# Great War Bulletin

No. 24...Newark...Monday 11 January 1915

## CRUELTY BY DUTCH NEUTRALS

Under-fed babies die...

Fleeing families denied rooms

### Major Thorpe goes to War

MAJOR John S Thorpe of Coddington Hall was in France having responded to an urgent message to rejoin his old regiment, the Scots Guards.

The gallant Major will be killed in the Battle of the Somme on 15 September 1916.

# Eakring is latest Belgian refuge

A FAMILY of Belgian refugees is settling into a cottage at Eakring donated by Lord Savile, the Lord of the Manor who is based at Rufford Abbey, and furnished by the villagers.

Monsieur and Madame Verbuck and their three children fled in terror from Mechlin on 15 August into the Netherlands.

To their initial disbelief and endless horror, they swiftly came to realise that the majority of Dutch locals.

This was perhaps a legacy of the Boer War in South Africa that had pitched Dutch settlers against the British Army at the turn of the century.

By and large, the Dutch civilians were more sympathetic to the Germans and left the refugees who had fled over the Belgian border to sleep on straw outdoors even when the winter grew biting cold.

They were fed basically on beans with a Sunday treat of a small quantity of potato soup.

Infants were fed on watered-down milk with the tragic result that many died.

Not surprisingly few Belgian families harboured any inclination to settle, even though Dutch politicians continue to profess their neutrality.

With thousands flocking to flee across the English Channel, the Verbuck family had to wait with increasing desperation until 22 December.

Then they managed to get on a boat to Tilbury, whence they were taken to Alexandra Palace in north London, a massive building that resembled a fairy castle and was being used as a clearing house to help refugees out of their nightmare.

Their delight and thankfulness at being introduced into a comfortable home with plenty of good food was most touching and extremely gratifying to the members of the Eakring community.

Led by the Parish Council chairman George E Pyle, the villagers were now busy settling-in their distressed guests.

# INVASION IS INEVITABLE

THE THREAT of a German invasion reaching Newark grows by the day.

Sir John McCraith, chairman of the Nottingham Watch Committee – which is responsible for all aspects of civil defence – talked openly about the dreaded prospect last week.

He predicted that Newark would be inundated by refugees when – rather than if – Lincolnshire was invaded by the same ruthless regime that has shamefully shown no mercy to the civilian populations of Belgium and France.

He announced: "In the event of invasion the population of Lincolnshire have been ordered to come into Nottingham.

"Certain roads have been barred to them which the military will want to use.

"So our duty may be – and although it may seem far away now, we must be prepared for it – to receive ten or twenty thousand or a hundred thousand Lincolnshire people for whom we will have to make provision.

"We must be prepared for this!"

Meanwhile the size of the Newark Volunteer

'Newark  
must prepare  
for 100,000  
Lincolnshire  
refugees'

Reserve – mainly comprising old soldiers preparing to defend against an invasion – was growing so swiftly that they decided to start a Signalling Section commanded by Mr J A Hoyles.

Mr H W Strange took command of the Recruiting Section.

And Newark Tradesmen's Association abandoned plans for their annual ball this year because of the War.

But they went ahead with a whist drive to raise funds for the Belgian refugees living in the town and moving into an ever-increasing number of villages in the district.



# OLD MAGNUSIAN'S SON COMMANDS CRUISER FORCE

OLD MAGNUSIAN'S son Rear-Admiral Dudley Rawson Stratford de Chair, Commander of Cruiser Force B, has become the first British seaman to choose a merchant ship (the *Alsatian*) to be his flagship.

The high-ranking sea-dog is the son of Old Magnusian Dudley Raikes de Chair (born 1842), who was in the Magnus Army Class under the Reverend Herbert Plater.

Born on 30 August 1864 at Lennoxville, in Quebec, Canada, he is now embarking on the highlight of his long naval career.

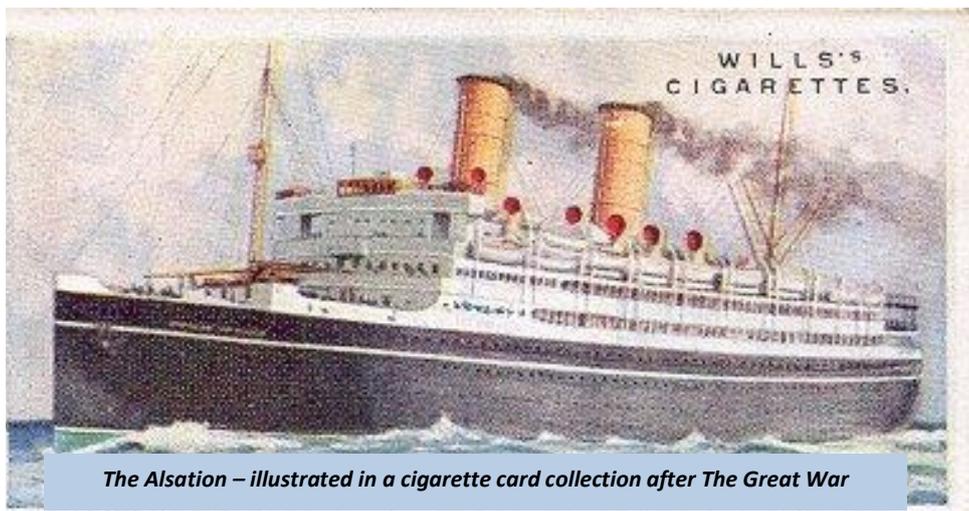
As Rear-Admiral commanding the tenth cruiser squadron, he will be: **responsible** for the effective North Sea blockade of Germany;

**appointed** Knight of the British Empire in 1916 for his successes in the North Sea;

**promoted** Vice-Admiral in September 1916 and take over the third battle squadron.

But all will turn sensationally sour in 1917. He will criticise the Government's decision to dismiss Lord Jellicoe as Commander of the Grand Fleet and refuse a post on the Board of Admiralty.

As punishment, de Chair will be relieved of his command and placed on half-pay. It was not the first setback of his life in the navy. In 1882 his six-week captivity by Arabi Pasha earned embarrassing headlines in England. But he was promoted commander in 1897, captain in 1902. On 21 April 1903 he married Enid Struben at Torwood, Devon.



*The Alsatian – illustrated in a cigarette card collection after The Great War*

In July 1918 de Chair will take command of coastguard and reserves and in 1920 accept promotion to Admiral. He will preside over the inter-allied commission on enemy warships in 1921-23.

De Chair will become governor of New South Wales from 1923-30, strenuously opposing attempts to modernise domestic politics. Survived by his wife, two sons and daughter, he will die in Brighton on 17 August 1958.

The 'Navy War' website records a century later that the *Alsatian* survived countless crossings over the North Atlantic during The Great War to become *Empress of France* for the Canadian Pacific line.

## Villages' 16 VAD nurses are ready

SIXTEEN members of the Carlton-on-Trent Voluntary Aid Detachment of the British Red Cross Society were presented with 'First Aid' and 'Home Nursing' certificates last Monday.

They had obtained the qualifications through the kind assistance of Dr Arthur Grove Naylor, whose home and surgery was a couple of hundred yards up the Great North Road towards Sutton-on-Trent. The ladies were under their Commandant, Mrs Florence Clementina Laurie of Carlton-on-Trent Hall.

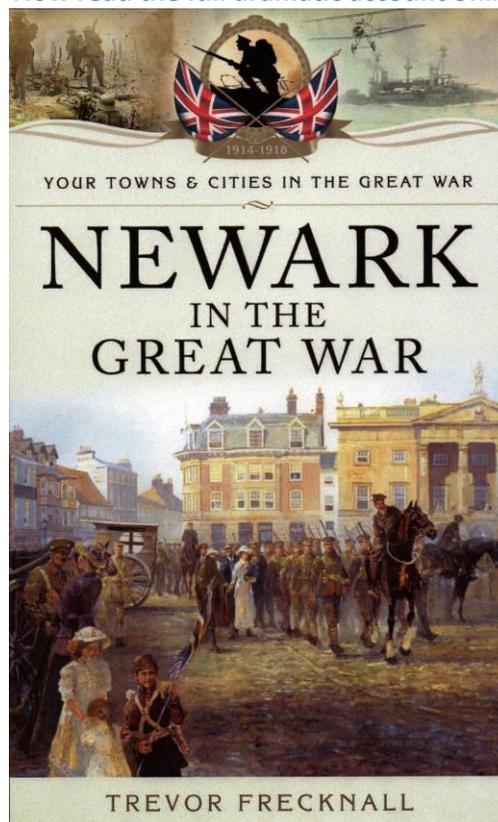
## Southwell acts on fatal road danger

ADDRESSING a gathering in the nave of Southwell Minster yesterday, the Archdeacon of Newark alluded to a recent fatality in Queen Street, Southwell.

A 22-year-old nanny named Ada Larman had been killed in a collision with a skidding motor car. The baby she was tending was mercifully thrown clear, and escaped without injury.

The Archdeacon urged his listeners to do all in their power to see that steps were taken to deal with such a narrow thoroughfare in the town centre.

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