

Great War Bulletin

No. 28...Newark...Monday 8 February 1915

Distinguished Conduct Medal to ex-Mount boy

NEWS reached Newark over the weekend that former Mount Schoolboy John Wilson has been awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his bravery on the Western Front.

John, born 1888 in Burnley, had been reared in Albert Street, educated at the Mount and taken an apprenticeship with James Simpson and Company at the Lowfield Works while his father, William (born 1848, Fleetwood) took a job as foreman boat builder on the Trent, which had become increasingly busy after it became navigable by larger barges at the turn of the century.

The family had returned to Lancashire – to 17 Star Street in the Broughton area of Salford – before John went to War as Sapper 19541 in the 5th Field Company Royal Engineers.

His citation appeared in the *London Gazette* supplement (page 581) on 16 January 1915:

For gallant conduct on 11th November, in bringing an urgent message over very dangerous ground, under heavy rifle and machine-gun fire, and subsequently performing a similarly dangerous duty.

But news has only now reached his old headmaster, Herbert Speight, who does not allow his own Yorkshire upbringing to diminish his admiration of this young Lancastrian's deeds.

And there are plenty at home in Star Street to bask in John's bravery – his father, who has retired from building ships; his mother Eliza Ann (born 1849, Manchester); and his sisters Eliza Margaret (born 1876) and Leonora (born 1879).

ZEPPELIN ALERT..!

ALTHOUGH it is hoped that the emergency will never arrive, Newark's Local Emergency Committee announced on Thursday a plan to deal with any air raids similar to the Zeppelin bombardments of Yarmouth and King's Lynn.

It has arranged to receive telephone and telegram warnings from other towns of imminent attacks.

This information will instantly be transmitted to townspeople by means of the Fire Bell being clanged at 30-second intervals.

On this alarm inhabitants should, if it is night time, turn off their gas jets and make for their cellars.

The Gas Company will cut off the gas at the Works within five minutes of the alarm.

If there are audiences at the houses of entertainment, they are advised to make their way quietly and without panic to their homes.

The public are warned against congregating in the

Newark reveals plans to cope with air raids

streets which, if it is night time, will of course be plunged into darkness.

The provision of candles by householders will be a wise precaution.

Special Constables will be instructed to assemble at several points in case of emergency.

RE trainee saves friend in Trent

SAPPER ALBERT TOLWORTHY, an 18-year-old native of Ealing in London, became the hero of Newark's trainee Royal Engineers tonight – by diving into the River Trent to rescue a comrade.

Sapper Hurst was in imminent danger of drowning.

The drama unfolded while men are dismantling a pontoon bridge on a treacherous part of the river near Muskham Bridge in darkness.

A section of the bridge swung free, knocking Hurst into the swift-flowing current.

Instantly realising that Hurst could not swim, Tolworthy dived in fully clothed and hauled him to a spot where colleagues were able to drag him from the water.

Then Tolworthy had to run three miles back to his quarters in his dripping clothes – and received the "hearty congratulations" of his commander, Major Brunner.

To tragically emphasise the danger of such exercises, seven Royal Engineers will be drowned in an accident involving a pontoon bridge at Gainsborough only twelve days later.

ABSENTEES ARRESTED

FOUR absentees from the Army appeared at Newark Borough Police Court today – and were remanded to await an escort.

None was local. One was from the West Yorkshire Regiment and the other three from the 11th Battalion Manchester Regiment based in Nottingham.

NO MILITARY TO MOURN WALT

THE FUNERAL took place in Newark on Wednesday of Private Walter Holwell, aged 33, the second son among the eight children of John and Sarah Holwell of 182 Barnbygate, Newark.

But he could not be buried with the military bearings he deserved.

For the 8th Reserve Battalion Sherwood Foresters is

in Luton and many of the Royal Engineers have also left town, having completed their initial training.

So there was no bugle band available.

Walter, who had worked at James Simpson's, joined the 1st Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment within three weeks of the War

starting and had been at the front since Guy Fawkes Day.

He succumbed in Ampthill Hospital, Bedfordshire, on 31 January after being injured when he fell during a bayonet charge at La Bassée, which is at the southern end of the front line (with Armentières in the north and Aubers

Ridge, Festubert, Fromelles, Givenchy, Neuve Chapelle and Richebourg in between.

Walter was invalided home with his injuries plus frost-bitten feet, later contracted pneumonia, and sadly never recovered.

But, then, lots of local lads will never recover from the rigours and battles around Neuve Chapelle.

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

Newark sailor's thrilling letter

WILLIAM WADE, 33-year-old yeoman of signals on *HMS Kent*, finally got word through to his wife at home in Side Road, Beacon Hill, Newark, of the great naval victory in the numbingly icy waters off the Falkland Islands last December:

"I was going off watch to get my breakfast about 5 past 8 last Tuesday, the signal was made, 'Enemy in sight. *Kent* weigh anchor'.

"We went out and watched the Fleet while the other ships got underway and then chased them. Our two big ships, the *Invincible* and *Inflexible*, took on the two big German ships, the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* [the cornerstones of the Germans' East Asian Squadron], and they left the other three to the *Kent*, *Cornwall* and *Glasgow*.

"We had the time of our lives watching the big ships fighting but we soon lost sight of them as they were steaming much faster than we were.

"The *Glasgow* started fighting her ship about 3 o' clock and we started ours just after.

"I got on watch again at 4 o' clock at night. I have

I played a hose over two Marines who were horribly burnt

often said I should like to go into action while in the Navy, and I have had my wish, but I can't say I particularly like it.

"In fact I will go one better and say I don't like it at all, although if we had to go into action again tomorrow, I would go eagerly enough.

"It was one continual crash, bang and groans from the wounded and cheers from the lads all jumbled up together, with a few choice expressions as to the Kaiser and all his disciples.

"Anyhow, we got into action with the *Nurnberg*, a German cruiser and sank her at 7.26...

"We had no one killed outright but six have since died of wounds and one or

two others of the wounded are very bad.

"Mostly all our killed or wounded are Marines although one Able Seaman was struck down while standing close to me; he died the same night.

"I played a hose over two Marines, who were horribly burnt and have since died, and I didn't go much on it, I can tell you...

"We went and tried to save as many Germans as possible from the *Nurnberg* but we only picked up 12 as the weather was bitterly cold and the sea was rather rough.

"We only had seven alive out of those when we got into the harbour as the cold weather had polished them off.

"We might, perhaps, have saved more as there were anything between 30 and 40 men clinging to wreckage, but both our sea boats were broken in with shells.

"It was awful to hear their cries as they floated by the ship; everyone did his best to save more but it was impossible."

Ten British sailors died during the battle; 2,200 German sailors were lost; no British ships were badly damaged; the German fleet was destroyed. The Germans stop raiding ships transporting commerce to Britain. Victory also gave Britain an immeasurable morale boost.

Generosity of dead hero's grieving Dad

THE amazing thoughtfulness of old soldier John McNaught-Davis became apparent last Tuesday.

Corporal John Hugh Brewster from 14 Parliament Street, Newark, wrote from Plymouth on behalf of "the Newark boys" in the 3rd Battalion Sherwood Foresters to thank John – known to all as Sergeant-Major McNaught-Davis of the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry – for sending his late son Jim's gloves and football to them.

John Brewster was destined to end the war as Acting-Sergeant in the Army Service Corps.

John McNaught-Davis, the former manager of the Ram Hotel, Castle-gate, Newark, and his wife would spend most of the rest of the War deeply concerned for another son.

Captain Lionel Duncan McNaught-Davis of the Lincolnshire Regiment would be shot on his first day in action, saved by the Germans, spend over three years in captivity – but then denied a War pension because he had not seen enough active service ... Read all about him in a book in September!

DEATH, DESTRUCTION NEWS TO BALDERTON

NOTIFICATION reached Balderton last week that Private Harry Healed had met his death on 2 January – 17 months after he went to France with the original British Expeditionary Force.

Harry's father John had been born in Balderton in 1871. But his work as a farm cowman meant he and his wife Sarah never stayed in one parish for very long. They are currently in Redmile, south Notts.

Another Balderton soldier reveals trenches are waist deep in water.

Charles Graves, a machine gunner in the Lincolnshire Regiment, writes to his parents at Cross Lane Farm: "We are digging some new ones but the water comes in as fast as we dig. Our artillery is giving the Germans a terrible time, blowing up their trenches and sometimes blowing men into the air."

Recorder sworn-in

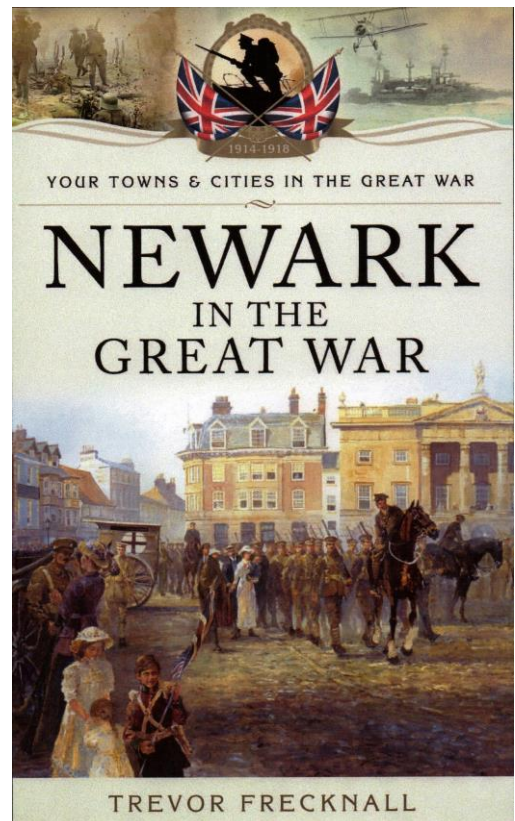
THE new Recorder of Newark, Mr Paul Sandilands, attended his first Quarter Sessions on Monday accompanied by Mayor John Kew, former Mayor William Knight, forward-thinking hosiery manufacturer William Mumby and Surgeon Captain Harry Stallard, who would soon be off to War with the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters.

Vicar introduced

THE new Vicar of St Leonard's, the Reverend Walter Frederick Harden was introduced to his parishioners on Wednesday evening.

He had exchanged livings with the Reverend William James Betson, who had moved to Barrow in Furness in Cumberland.

Now read the full dramatic account of...



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