

Great War Bulletin

No. 33...Newark...Monday 15 March 1915

CRASH DRIVER RUSHES VICTIM TO HOSPITAL

FOUR-YEAR-OLD Edna Maria Brown was knocked down by a car in Castlegate – and then rushed to hospital by the driver who hit her.

The driver, George Penry from First Avenue, Sherwood Rise, Nottingham, then rushed back to Castlegate to pick up Edna's mother and take her to the little girl's side.

Edna's father is Quartermaster William Edward Brown, a blacksmith with the Sherwood Rangers who was landlord of the Old Castle Inn at 52 Millgate, before the War. The little girl was found to be shocked but uninjured.

Sherwoods in first attack!

THE 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters, who marched out of Newark Market Place last August, have had their first taste of action in this Great War.

They were involved in an attack last Wednesday at Neuve Chapelle, a village in the Artois region of northern France.

The action was the first set-piece attack instigated by Britain in this War.

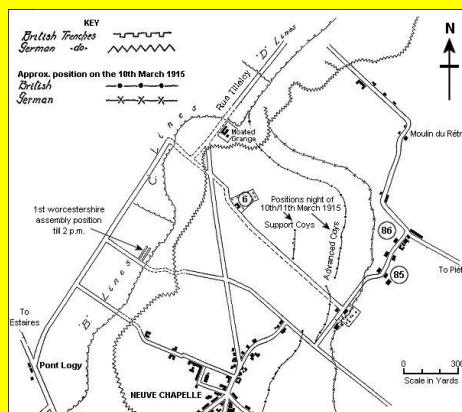
It lasted four days, during which the British Army and their Indian allies suffered 11,200 casualties. A similar number of losses were inflicted on the German Army, who also had 1,200 taken prisoner.

Newarker Charles William Combes, aged 28, suffered a head wound on Friday – but recovered in hospital quickly enough to write defiantly to his parents, George and Caroline, at 1 Charles Street:

"The Germans attacked ... and they did catch it. They fell in dozens. I do not expect they will try it again in a hurry.

"We repulsed them and took their trenches from them."

The Combes had 13



children. Twelve are still alive. Two more boys are fighting: one is a lance-corporal in Egypt; the other, George, is also with the 8th Sherwoods.

Our Territorials were temporarily attached to 2 Cavalry Division and moved to Bac-St Maur for the battle.

The true impact dribbled back to Newark as letters arrived home over the next few weeks and even months.

A century of hindsight enables us to report now:

Fought between 10-13 March 1915, the Battle of Neuve Chapelle was originally intended to comprise part of a wider Allied offensive in the Artois region.

However, delays in the arrival of relieving British troops for Ypres, owing to a redirection of effort towards Gallipoli, resulted in the attack on Neuve Chapelle going ahead as a distinct action in its own right.

Simultaneously, the French intended to capture the village at Aubers a mile to the east and to press the German defence of Lille. By achieving these aims, the French aimed to reduce the small German salient near Neuve Chapelle.

More shells were discharged in the first 35-minute bombardment than in the whole of the Boer War, a

sobering reflection on the transformation of warfare in the space of 15 years

With the employment of carefully co-ordinated attacks of often hand-to-hand fighting by British and Indian infantry, initial progress was rapid.

It took only four hours to secure the village.

Germany launched a counter-attack on 12 March.

The British nevertheless managed to hold their gains – some two kilometres of ground originally lost in October 1914.

But further progress towards Aubers – which had escaped artillery bombardment, and where the German front line wire was thus undamaged – proved impossible.

Of some 1,000 troops who attacked Aubers, none survived. The attack was consequently halted on 13 March.

Total allied casualties were 7,000 British and 4,200 Indian.

The problem was that nobody in Newark knew any of this instantly. So hundreds of families in the town and surrounding villages were left to wonder and worry about their menfolk.

Newark is invaded – by more trainees

BY SHEER coincidence, Newark was invaded on Wednesday while its Territorials were attacking in France – but there's no reason to panic!

The 3,000 incoming soldiers were members of the 32nd Infantry Brigade on a Divisional route march from their base at Belton Park near Grantham, which is to become the main training camp when the Machine Gun Corps is formed.

About 800 were billeted at Averham, Balderton, South Muskham and Kelham.

Another 100 were in the Society of the Scared Mission at Kelham.

A few more were in Kelham Brickworks and Averham School.

And more than 1,600 were scattered within Newark at Wesleyan Schools, Old Magnus Buildings, Mount, Lover's Lane, St Leonard's and Christ Church Schools, Northgate House, Kirkgate House, the Town Hall, Smith's Yard and Lover's Lane.

120 medics in Tuxford

TUXFORD on Thursday welcomed 120 soldiers of the Royal Army Medical Corps.

The intention is that they are to be billeted in large buildings around the village until May while they were trained for duties at the battlefield.

It transpires over time that the buildings range from comfortable country houses to draughty barns on out-lying farms.

Who gets to sleep where is down to the luck of the draw!

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

WORRIES AT WORKHOUSE

County skimps on surveyor

STILL IRKED at losing their surveyor to War service, members of Notts Highways Committee last week offered his replacement an annual salary of £500, a 33% decrease, arguing that all architectural work would have to be done by someone else.

Landlords turn to engineer

NEWARK and District Licensed Victuallers' Association appointed Edgar Martin George Holland, 46-year clerk in an engineering works, as secretary while the holder of the post, Colour Sergeant Charles Foster Brownlow, the assistant agent with Newark Conservative Association, was away serving with the Forces. The Association learned at its AGM that membership had increased by eight in the past year despite 15 leaving the district – mainly to enlist in the forces – or passing away.

Butcher's sailor son worries

FORMER pork butcher James Pratley Hunt of Baldertongate is surprised – and concerned – to discover that *HMS Albion*, on which his 23-year-old son Joseph Pratley Hunt is a steward, was among the British warships in the bombardment of the Dardanelles.

The last he heard from his lad, *Albion* was cruising along the African coast, they had had no winter, only sunshine, and he was "quite well".

The *Albion*, a Canopus Class battleship built at a cost of £913,545 and completed in 1901, was to serve at the Dardanelles until October, see the war through safely and be sold for scrap in 1919.

Lady Medical Officer named

FOLLOWING the death of 55-year-old Dr Frank Broadbent, Dr Catherine Love Smith is appointed Medical Officer in the Collingham district @ £36 per annum and Public Vaccinator at fees fixed by the Local Government Board. Dr Smith is already well-known to the villagers, having assisted Dr Broadbent for some time.

Second-hand cut-throats

Mother-of-five Mrs Tamar Booth of Westgate, Southwell, started to recycle second-hand cut-throat razors for the troops at the battlefield. Helped by her husband Samuel travelling round as a coal merchant and brewery agent, she had already collected 100 from Upton, Collingham and Newark, and forwarded them to the Master Cutler at Sheffield. He ground and reset them before forwarding them to the troops.

Charities benefit twice over

ENTERTAINMENT for half-day closers...

The final of the Prince of Wales Charity Cup football competition took place at the Town Ground, Muskham Road, on Thursday. The 67th Company Royal Engineers defeated the 68th Company, stationed at Newark, 7-0.

For those of a higher brow, a splendid concert of chamber music was organised by Madame d'Ascanio in the Town Hall in aid of the Mayoress's Belgian Homes Fund.

It raised £20 12s.

NEWARK Workhouse on Bowbridge Road suffered two major problems last week.

With prices rising due to the war, the Newark Board of Guardians – whose role involves feeding, dressing and housing folk unable to care for themselves – received no tenders for the supply of coal or fish at its meeting on Thursday.

Members turned down offers of £3 a ton for wheat straw and 9d per chimney to sweep the soot and leave it on the garden.

But they accepted tenders from:

Tom Burbidge, baker and pork butcher in Appletongate, for flour and bread;

Samuel Foster of Cherry Holt Lane – which will be renamed Sherwood Avenue – for groceries;

William J Stray in Middlegate for eggs;

John Saxby of Castlegate for milk;

Messrs Dickins and Company of 3 Appletongate for wines and spirits;

Smith and Company, chemist's on Bridge Street, for drugs;

Bainbridge and Company in the Market Place for draperies etc;

John Thomas Howitt and Sons for ironmongery;

Mills and Sons, 131 Baldertongate, for boots and shoes;

Henry Renshaw, 49 Appletongate, for coffins etc;

John Cook Belton, 2 Bargate, for hair cutting and shaving;

Swann and Son, 57 Bowbridge Road, for horse hire;

G W Edwards for clothing;

F Lacey for tobacco;

C E Ford and Son for motors;

Herbert Samuel Whiles, of Stodman Street, for printing;

George Butt, 2 Kelham Villas, for meat.

The Workhouse's other problem arose on Tuesday. Porter Harry Eyre, 35, announced he was joining the Royal Army Medical Corps.

The Guardians agreed to keep his post open for him but insisted that his wife Sarah Elena, who was the matron's assistant, moved out of their house (the Lodge) into the officers' quarters until his return.

The Guardians explained that this would enable the newly-appointed labour master from Leeds and his wife, who is to work as the superintendent laundress, to reside in the Lodge

Rector's son is 'poisoned'

LIEUTENANT Andrew Wentworth Ping, 24-year-old son of the Reverend Andrew Ping, Rector of Thorpe, was on Saturday reported to be in a critical condition in hospital in Boulogne after undergoing two operations for unspecified wounds suffered in action.

The good news was that the surgery was described as "successful".

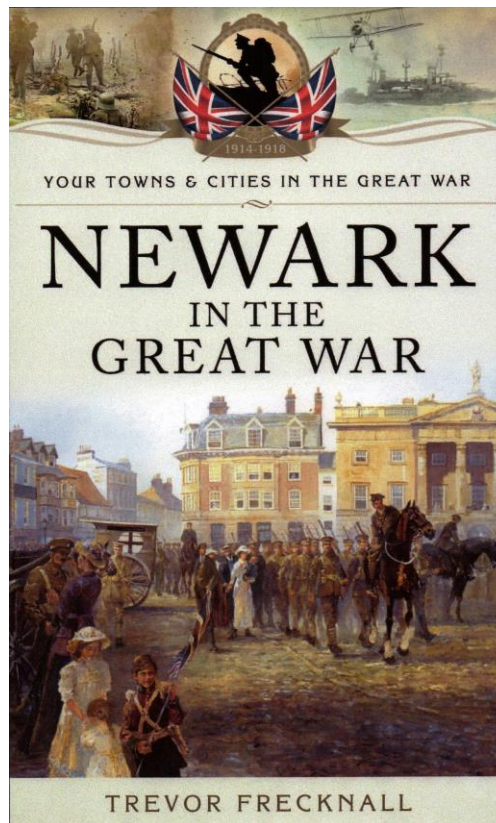
The bad – indeed, frightening – news was that he had suffered sceptic poisoning in his shrapnel wounds.

This is thought to be the first Newark heard of a complication that was to kill thousands of soldiers.

It was hoped Wentworth would soon be out of danger – and he was.

He was destined to remain in dire danger for many weeks before making a sufficient recovery for there to be much happier news of him in October 1918.

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