

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

# Great War Bulletin

No. 39...Newark...Monday 26 April 1915

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

## NEWARK LOSES FIRST 'TERRIER'

NEWS arrived last Tuesday of the first death at the front of a Newark Territorial.

William Richard Copley, 21-year-old son of Mrs Hannah Copley of 39 William Street, grew up through the Church Lads' Brigade, the Scouts and the Churchman's Club; and enlisted last September in the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters and was killed on 13 April.

### LOCAL BOYS IN TRENCHES AGREE...

#### First, face 2 miles of cross-fire

RETired farmer Joseph Gardner at Willows Farm, North Muskham, received a spirited letter from a former village boy, joiner's son Langstroth G Brown, 29 and a Private in No.1 Company Princess Pat's Canadian Light Infantry:

"It is like hell let loose at times. We have to walk some four miles, two of which are under a cross-fire, before we get to our trenches.

"You walk along with 120 rounds of ammunition, rations to last 48 hours and, of course, we have an emergency ration which we can't touch until ordered by our officers.

"You have to keep 'tail' of your man in front as it is dark...

"All the time the Germans are firing and sending up flares which light up the whole ground. You stand still until it has died out and then move on a few yards.

"Up go some more and men slip and slide in the mud until they are not fit to be seen.

"At last you get there, thanking God you have done so without being hit as it is a little safer in the trenches than going to them. The first night I

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## It's Hell!

THE MAYOR of Newark receives an amazing begging letter from Surgeon Captain Harry Stallard, who is treating the local lads of the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters now they are facing the German foe in the front line trenches:

"At my dressing station I have to attend to the wounded by the light of two or three candles.

"The wounded can only be brought out of the trenches at night.

"Could you get me for the dressing station two Axol hurricane acetylene lamps with, say, four spare burners, two for each lamp, a spare cleaner and, say, 7lbs of calcium carbide for the same.

"I do not think that the total cost of the lot would be more than £2.

*"The possession of these would be a great boon to me and, incidentally, to the poor wounded fellows of our Battalion."*

"I should like to add that the men of this Battalion are simply splendid and I am proud to be their medical officer.

"Life in the trenches is very strenuous but the men are always cheery and bright."

Captain Stallard – a former Mayor of Newark who is still a member of the Borough Council – went on to urge more townsmen to volunteer to serve their country in this hour of desperate need.

#### Operating by light of candles

He wrote: "I only wish the people of Newark could see them; they would be proud of them, and we should have more recruits.

"The scene of devastation here is appalling and it is, to my mind, exceedingly necessary for every young man to try and realise to some slight extent what would take place in England if the Germans once affected a landing, and then we should have no shirkers.

"Finally, the surgical haversacks which the people of Newark so kindly provided for my stretcher-bearers, have already proved of great value, and the bearers have been able to do good work with them.

*"The lesson I have learnt out here, Mr Mayor, is – send us more men, and yet more men!"*

## FINCHAM TWIN BACK FROM DEAD

PROOF that even the darkest cloud sometimes has a silver lining arrived in Newark on Wednesday – in the shape of a letter that, to all intents and purposes, brought a Newark soldier back from the dead!

Retired groom John Fincham, aged 76, and his wife Sarah of 6 Hospital Cottages, one of Newark's alms houses, feared the worst when an official letter arrived in the evening mail.

They had already been informed that their son John of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters was shot through the heart

and killed on 11 March.

Now they feared for one of their other two sons who are in the forces.

So imagine their emotions when they opened the envelope and read confirmation that ... John is not dead after all.

There's no doubting the veracity of this missive, either: it was written by 29-year-old John himself! Moreover John will survive to appear in the Newark-on-Trent list of absent voters drawn-up in three years' time.

#### Now our Sherwoods are gassed

MORE BAD news is about to arrive about our local Territorials. The Second Battle of Ypres began on Thursday. Germans started to use poison gas; some drifted into the 1/8th Sherwoods' trenches.

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# MORE LOCALS KILLED

MRS KATE BIGGS, aged 41, wife of a bricklayer's labourer of 45 Albert Street received a letter from the Wesleyan Chaplain, the Reverend A Stanley Bishop, notifying her of the death of her only son, Private Harry Trickett, aged 21:

"I greatly regret to have to confirm the wire which the War Office has no doubt sent you."

No War Office wire had arrived.

"2712 Pte H Trickett, 1<sup>st</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> Sherwoods, was killed in action yesterday (20 April) and today he was laid to rest in a cemetery behind a castle where lie many of his comrades..."

"The spot is at present under fire but when I am allowed I will send you the exact position.

"Meanwhile his comrades send you their deepest sympathy."

But only two days before Harry's death, he had written to his Mum:

*"We have about finished our rest and are going for the Allemands... We had one or two Newark lads wounded last week but I can't tell you who they are ... God be with you till we meet again."*

## Mother loses her only son

Harry had gone to Christ Church Elementary School and the Baptist Sunday School, subsequently joining the Young Men's Bible Class at Charles Street Wesleyan Mission.

He was apprenticed at Bradley's foundry as a moulder and had been in the Sherwood Foresters for precisely six months and one day.

Mrs Biggs will live to the age of 76, and pass away in 1950.

Harry is remembered a century on among 1,131 comrades in the Kemmel Chateau Military Cemetery, a short distance south of Ypres, Belgium.

FARMER'S WIFE Mrs Fanny Seward of Bennington Fields between Long Bennington and Cotham, received intimation from the War Office on Friday that her 27-year-old brother, Fred, had died of wounds inflicted by a sniper in France.

The confirmation arrived a week after she received a letter from Lieutenant William A W Crellin of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters:

"Dear Madam -

"Whilst censoring the letters this afternoon, I noticed a field postcard addressed to you by Corporal Sentance, who belongs to my Company.

*"I very much regret that I have to inform you that he was hit in the head by a German sniper at about 12.30pm today.*

"It is a very nasty wound and he is still unconscious (4pm).

"His wound has been properly dressed by the doctor and everything has been done to make him as comfortable as possible.

"I am very much afraid that he has not much chance of pulling through, though we all sincerely hope he will, as he is such a fine

## Brother killed by sniper

fellow and an excellent soldier who has never known what fear is.

"We could well do with many more like him. No work was too hard or too dangerous for him."

Despite all the loving care of the nurses in the Field Hospital, Corporal 9827 Sentance died on 31 March.

A century later, he is among 2,145 comrades remembered in the Cite Bonjean Military Cemetery, Armentieres, a town on the Belgian frontier less than 10 miles from Lille that had been a battle scene since October.

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went, we had seven wounded in our regiment (going in) and four more coming out.

"While we were in the trenches we got the order to fix bayonets. My mate fixed his but, in firing, it fell off and we had to leave it there.

"The corporal of the next trench was hit while putting up sandbags in front of the trench. The bullet hit him in the side, exploding a cartridge and driving one of the clips into his side.

"He came in saying, 'Well, I've got it, boys.' He started to take off his equipment. We helped him with his tunic. He then asked for a cigarette, smoked it, and died in less than an hour.

"Another fellow was hit in the centre of his forehead."

Evidently censorship has yet to reach the Canadian trenches.

## Sherwoods need another Battalion

INSTRUCTIONS were received in the county on Saturday to raise another Battalion of Sherwood Foresters, to be known as the 16<sup>th</sup>.

This will complete eight similar units raised since the War started; and the minimum height for recruits is 5ft 3in.

The result of householders' returns show that 4,078 men have been called up, 3,269 responded, 1,168 were accepted and 2,101 were rejected. The statistics speak volumes about the worrying state of health of men who are poorly fed, badly housed and over-worked in the factories and fields.

*"Yesterday, another huge need for recruits arose in the Middle East, where the local men of the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry are headed.*

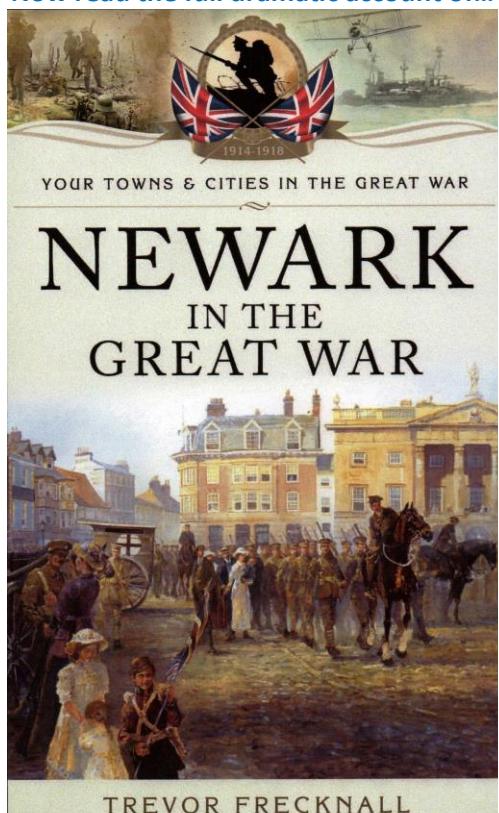
The Allies landed at Gallipoli: 70,000 British, Commonwealth and French troops instantly came under heavy fire from the well-entrenched Turkish Army in the mountains above. On 'Y' Beach alone, 1,200 of a force of 1,500 men were casualties.

Simultaneously the Vicar of Newark, Canon Paton Hindley, conducted a drum-head service for the 2<sup>nd</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters at Luton and was "much impressed by the splendid appearance of the men and their physical fitness".

All the indications are that they will be in action somewhere in the near future.

A large gathering of the Newark Company of the British Legion of Volunteers and their friends met in the Beaumont Hall on Thursday evening for a smoking concert and took the opportunity to present an inscribed gold watch to Lieutenant and Adjutant George Renwick in appreciation of his services in the drilling of the Corps when it was first formed.

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