

# Great War Bulletin

No. 42...Newark...Monday 17 May 1915

## HIGH PRAISE FOR NEWARK'S GALLANT SHERWOODS

FORMER office clerk W E Chappell, now Colour Sergeant of B Company, 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters 'somewhere in Belgium', wrote to Ernest Edis, secretary at Ransome's rapidly growing factory,

of the heroics of Newark lads:

"The last time we were in the trenches my Platoon lost seven killed, six of whom marched out from Newark with us in August last, so we are left to mourn the loss of some very old comrades.

"Newark can be proud of those who own her as their native town, for they are all fine fellows.

"The General Commanding our Division personally came to see the Battalion a few days ago and in the course of his remarks especially mentioned our Company for the way in which it had carried out its work. So you will see we are getting quite a good name out here.

"We are getting pretty used to the trenches now, but shell fire takes some getting used to; and as for trench mortars, the least said the better, for they aren't half hot.

"I am proud to hear that I am the first of the [Ransome's] staff to come out to the front, but hope I shall not be the last, for there seems to be room for still more men to come before this great struggle can be brought to a satisfactory conclusion. I am glad to hear that business is still good and hope it will continue to be so. I am writing this letter in my latest new billet, which is part of an old stable with plenty of straw to lie on."

*Continued on next page*

# 1 bullet kills 2

POLICE CONSTABLE THOMAS CUPID ROSE of Newark Borough Police Force discovered on Tuesday that his 23-year-old son Albert, a Rifleman in the King's Royal Rifles, had been killed by the same bullet that also killed a corporal.

It happened after the pair had been sent to repair a trench that had been broken-in by shell fire.

Albert had already experienced one narrow escape: he had been blown into the air by a shell and almost buried alive, but managed to crawl to safety despite his back being so badly injured that he spent weeks in hospital.

But news of his death arrives with his former head teacher, Samuel Ashbourne Hildage at Barnby Road County School, in a letter from Sergeant A W Wilson of the super-patriotic Barnbygate family: "Many thanks for parcel. I am very sorry to inform you that one of your old

boys, Rifleman Rose, was killed in action on the 29<sup>th</sup> ult. He was with me the same afternoon and read your letter. I had given him some of the cigarettes the day before. He said he was writing to you. It is sad news and a great blow to his parents, to whom I have sent a few lines.

"I am writing this letter in the trenches; in fact, the trench that Rose was killed in ... I was on patrol duty when I received the news that he and a corporal had been killed –

## CONFECTIONER FALLS TO SNIPER

THE WEDNESDAY morning post brought devastating news to widow Sophia Elizabeth Kirk, aged 46, who runs a confectionery shop at 15 Appletongate.

Her second son, 19-year-old Herbert was killed four days earlier.

Lieutenant Colonel Fowler, commanding the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters 'somewhere in Belgium' wrote:

"He was shot in the trenches this morning by the Germans as he was firing over the parapet. It is a terrible loss for you and his family, and I can assure you how we all feel for you."

Herbert worked for Oldham's confectioners from leaving the Wesleyan School until enlisting.

## Farmer loses son

ON THE same morning, Ossington was stunned to learn that one of its farming sons was killed at Neuve Chapelle on 12 March.

Private 9121 Walter Fox, son of the tenants of Hopbine Farm, Clement and Mary Williamson Fox, and the husband of Mary, was 31. He perished while fighting with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters and is remembered on Le Touret Memorial.

## CODDINGTON HERO SHOT, PARALYSED

LANCE-CORPORAL ALBERT HENTON of Coddington languishes paralysed in a Nottingham hospital after being shot through the neck.

He was wounded at 7.30am on Easter Monday and had to lie in his trench until 10pm when it was deemed safe enough for his comrades to move him to a dressing station.

Albert had been one of the brave band from the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment earlier in the War who captured six German guns that were shipped to London and displayed as trophies at the War Office, though it transpired that more than 400 of his comrades were either killed or wounded in the action.

"We had a pretty tough time on the Marne, too," he added, "but I escaped till the bullet came through my neck and tore many of the muscles." The wound had healed well and he hoped that, as his voice had come back, the use of his arms and legs might also return.

Albert would be discharged on 20 September 1915 and, aged 27, faced an uncertain future.

## Newark district hit by labour shortage

THE SHORTAGE of Newark area men offering themselves for work at the May hirings is very pronounced.

The weekend that has just passed is traditionally when farmers come to town to take on men to work through to the harvesting season. But there is not one-tenth of the applicants there have been in previous years.

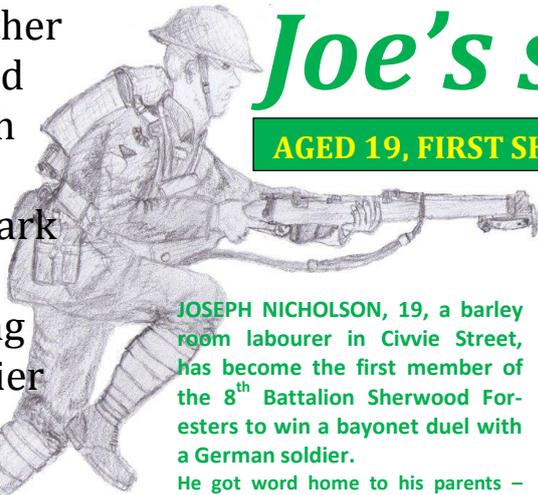
Indeed, there were more farmers than servants in evidence – and those seeking work were able to obtain high wages.

Youths are demanding £9 to £18, horsemen £20 to £30, wagoners up to £30, girls out first time £6 to £8, while those experienced and willing to milk have managed to obtain £10 to £18.

All of this is, of course, brought about by the number of casual labourers who have answered the patriotic call and enlisted in the Armed Forces.

And the recruiters moved among the farmers to such effect that about 40 males joined the Third 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters currently being raised, but only seven signed-up with the Regular Army.

Another proud notch for Newark as young Terrier wins life and death duel



# Joe's slice of history

AGED 19, FIRST SHERWOOD FORESTER TO BAYONET A GERMAN

**JOSEPH NICHOLSON, 19, a barley room labourer in Civvie Street, has become the first member of the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Sherwood Foresters to win a bayonet duel with a German soldier.**

He got word home to his parents – bricklayer's labourer William and Eleanor at 19 Tenter Buildings, Newark, yesterday.

He wrote: "I am in good health and all right except for a very small wound in the shoulder. My officer and myself

were out in front of our trenches patrolling when we were surprised by a group of Germans. The officer shot two and wounded one.

*"A German struck me in the shoulder but it was only small and did not matter a deal as I managed to kill him.*

*"Dear parents I am all right now so don't be alarmed if you see my name in the papers shortly. It will be about this small affair, so don't worry...*

*"I am sorry to say old Walter's son has been killed."*

The officer involved, Lieutenant J S Oates, son of the Second 8<sup>th</sup> Sherwoods' CO Colonel William Coape

Oates, also wrote to the Nicholsons, confirming Joseph "has the distinction of getting the first bayonet wound in the Battalion."

Lieutenant Oates added: "On this and on other occasions he has behaved very well, and his name has gone in for mention ... He has had the satisfaction of sticking a German."

Veterans of The Great War tended to play down the impact of the bayonet. Many reckoned it was used primarily for toasting bread and opening cans, to scrape mud off uniforms, to keep a trench brazier ablaze – or even to assist in the preparation of latrines.

## Dady is badly hurt

NOT SUCH good news of Quartermaster Sergeant Charles Dady. He has been wounded in the head – though he makes light of it in a letter that arrived on Friday at his parents' home in Baldertongate.

He says he was hit by a shell and did not come round for about two hours.

He was congratulating himself on getting off so lightly when another shell exploded, smothering him again.

He reckons he escaped with a few scratches and a terrible shaking-up. But a friend with him in hospital writes to say he is badly wounded.

## Cycling 'spy' shot

LIEUTENANT ARTHUR HAMILTON, commander of a platoon of the North Midlands Cycle Corps hunting down snipers, sent a telegram to his father, the Reverend Francis Robert Abingdon Hamilton, the 58-year-old Rector of Claypole:

**"Stopped bullet, left thigh. Not serious."**

He was in the Red Cross Hospital at Rouen. The family was well accustomed to serving the country: the Reverend Hamilton was born in India while his father was serving in Madras.

## Anguished appeal

THE FAMILY of Private 3796 Archie Walsh of the 1<sup>st</sup> Coldstream Guards appeal in the local papers for news of him.

His wife Sarah Ann and 10-year-old daughter Winifred Ivy at 10 Cross Street, have done their best to discover what happened to him in the mayhem of the first few weeks' fighting and believe him to be in the Prisoner of War camp at Schneidermuhl (later renamed Pila) near Berlin.

Should any of his comrades be able to secure any definite information, 32-year-old Mrs Walsh would be delighted to hear from them.

Many weeks were to elapse before she discovered that Archie had died as long ago as 29 October 1914.

His sacrifice is recorded on the Ypres (Menin Bridge) Memorial.

## Hero Hector

**WILLIAM HECTOR MATHERS RIDLEY'S rapid rise from the ranks of the Sherwoods reads more like a chapter from a fictional adventure than a chronicle of facts.**

The son of Mrs Elizabeth Charlotte Wilson Ridley of Millgate, Newark, he was a champion swimmer while working at his uncle's company, Mather and Company; and his mechanical training stood him in good stead when he enlisted.

He was at the Battle of the Aisne but his chance came in the fighting round Lille, where the Sherwood Foresters were surrounded by some 80,000 Bavarian troops who had arrived with awesome rapidity from Antwerp during the night.

The Sherwoods' commanding officer asked for a volunteer to take a message to the general officer commanding, acquainting him with the seriousness of the situation.

Young Ridley volunteered and successfully carried the message through enemy lines.

The reply was that the Sherwoods – vastly out-numbered though they were – must hang on at all costs.

**On the return journey Hector had a very narrow escape. The back wheel of the bicycle he was riding was shattered by a shell but in the meantime he had dived into a ditch nearby and was not hurt.**

Hector's heroism did not go unnoticed by his superiors. He was promoted from Lance Corporal to Company Sergeant Major and on 8 April was raised to commissioned rank.

His Uncle John Mather has received several interesting souvenirs from Hector the Hero.

One is a German rifle grenade which pitched near the trench he was in but failed to explode and was later secured during the hours of darkness.

Another is a small book belonging to a German musketeer who – Hector reports somewhat diplomatically – "has finished his part in this or any other war."

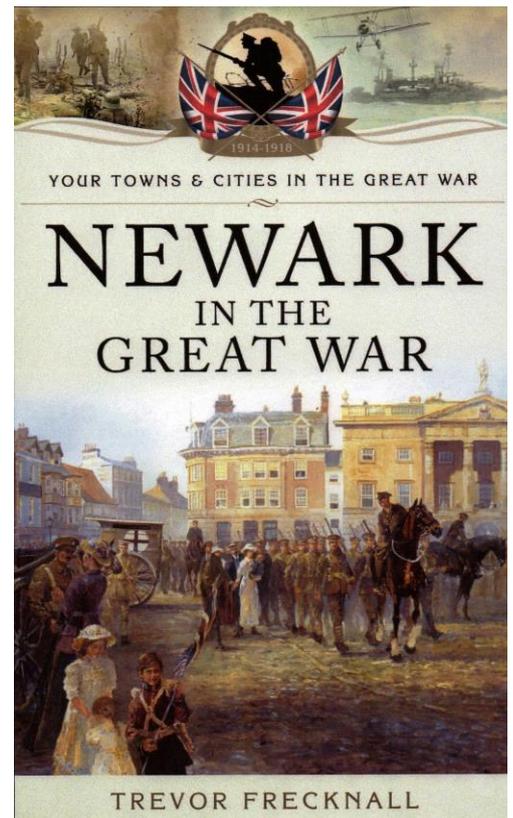
## One bullet – two killed

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both shot by the same bullet ... It was not a matter of mistake. Both were killed doing their duty."

They are remembered on the the Ypres (Menin Gate) Memorial. Albert's youngest brother, Thomas will be killed in August 1917; and his middle brother, Arthur Edward, a Corporal in the KOYLI, will be badly wounded before the War is over.

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