

Great War Bulletin

No.61...Newark...Monday 27 September 1915

FINES THREAT TO VILLAGES

NEWARK Board of Guardians, who house the district's destitute in the Bowbridge Road Workhouse, were shocked to discover at their meeting last Tuesday that they were owed £1,423 10s by various parishes: Balderton £558, Barnby £31, Besthorpe £31, North Clifton £58 10s, South Clifton £31, Girton £81 10s, Langford £38 10s, South Scarle £26, Spalford £9 10s, Thorney £40, Broughton £83, Fenton £16 10s, Fulbeck £132 10s, Hougham £216 10s, Sedgebrook £9 10s, Stapleford £31 10s.

The Mayor described it as "a most serious business". The Guardians agreed that if all debts were not paid by the October meeting, summonses would be taken out. All villages paid-up – and explained they had been so busy striving to persuade men to volunteer to fight, they had forgotten to pay this annual debt.

MEDAL MEN!

THE BISHOP of Southwell, Dr Hoskyns, hosted a large gathering last Monday evening in the Garden Court of his Manor to pass a resolution of congratulations and appreciation to Major John Becher, Sergeant Arthur Sheppard and Lance Corporal Harold Tyne, who heaped glory on the parish with their bravery on the Western Front.

Those present were Dr and Mrs Hoskyns, Miss Hoskyns, W N and Mrs Hickling, Mrs Becher, Mrs J P Becher, the Reverends J Wright, J Windley, J R Thomas, T A Lee, E A

Coghill, J R Collins and Baptist Minister E B Shepherd, Captain Starkey MP, A Salt and J H Kirkby (chairman and vice-chairman, Southwell Parish Council), Mr and Mrs L N Barrow, Dr and Mrs F J D Willoughby, N A Metcalfe, T Foster, A Larrington, W Dowse, a number of wounded soldiers from the Red Cross Hospital on The Burgage – and two of the men who had earned medals, Lance Sergeant Sheppard DCM and Lance Corporal Tyne DCM.

The Bishop handed wrist watches to each hero on behalf of the grateful town.

But the guest list indicated that there was no room for the proud, but poorer-class, parents of young Harold and Arthur.

As if on cue, the *London Gazette* had printed the official citations of the deeds of Southwell's three brave men.

It confirmed that 36-year-old Captain (Temporary Major) Becher had become the first Territorial officer

in the Sherwood Foresters to be awarded the DSO. It was for conspicuous gallantry and good service on several occasions.

On 24 April 1915 at Kemmel, when part of his trench was blown-in, he organised the defence of the breach under heavy fire, and personally assisted in repairing the parapet and digging out buried men. On 15 June at Kemmel, when part of his trench was blown in by mines, shells and trench mortars, he displayed great gallantry and coolness in reorganising the defence.

On 30 July and on subsequent days at Ypres, he displayed great coolness, cheerfulness and resource under trying circumstances when in temporary command of his Battalion."

Major Becher is, of course, a descendant of the Reverend John Thomas Becher, who founded the Southwell Workhouse in 1824 and whose ideas on the treatment of paupers influenced the New Poor Law of 1834.

In his own right, the gallant Major has followed his father into the legal profession and is a partner in the Newark law firm of Larken & Co; has been clerk to the Newark County Magistrates for four years; was agent at the last General Election for Captain Starkey, the successful Conservative candidate; and is married to a daughter of the Honourable Mrs Mary Emily Handford of Elmfield House, Southwell.

Lance Sergeant Arthur Sheppard, 25, a lace worker pre-war, led a

bombing party on his own initiative under heavy bomb and rifle fire against the attacking enemy.

Having thrown all his grenades, he went back and brought up a fresh supply; and later, having lost five men, he brought up a reinforcement.

Lance Corporal Harold Tyne, a 20-year-old grocery boy, picked up several unexploded German grenades when his own failed to explode and threw them, killing several of the enemy. Later he held his trench with great coolness and bravery under heavy bomb and machine gun fire until reinforced, performing a similar action the following day.

What the citation did not say was that the German machine gun fire killed all eight of Harold's comrades, leaving him to defend the trench alone.

He threw bomb after bomb at the advancing enemy and, after his supply was finished, he picked up the Germans' unexploded bombs and threw them back at them.

Running from one end of the trench to the other, despite tripping over the bodies of his comrades, he managed to keep the enemy at bay until help arrived.



From left: John Becher, Arthur Sheppard and Harold Tyne

Bishop hosts celebration of S'well heroes

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

DARDANELLES:

LETTERS began to arrive home on Saturday, spelling out some of the horrors in the Dardanelles.

Arthur Harold Chambers, 22, a Corporal in the 9th Battalion Sherwood Foresters who aims to be a teacher if he

gets back home to Jews Lane, off Westgate, Southwell, wrote to his parents, Arthur, a lay clerk at Southwell Minster, and

Elizabeth, who has had nine children, of an attack on 21 August:

"It was awful to see the dead and wounded lying about in front of the trenches.

"Our doctor was a hero, going out under the hottest fire to the wounded, always helpful and cheerful, never resting and always regardless of self: Lieutenant Carr of the RAMC deserves the VC if anyone does.

"Our battalion is holding the line on the slope of a high ridge, the soil on which is only about two inches deep and underneath is solid rock. To entrench this is an arduous task, six inches per night being rapid progress. Of course, the front is sand-bagged but snipers pick out all the low parts.

"We have suffered very heavily in our Division. Numbers of men are down with dysentery and I've had slight attacks. It is a very lowering disease. The smells and flies are responsible ... I never realised what a lovely spot Southwell was until I saw Gallipoli."

Sergeant Gabbitas, who worked for the Devon Brewery and on the railways before joining the 9th Sherwoods, wrote to brewer's labourer John Townsend who lives at 28 Barnbygate, Newark:

"It's like hell. When we come out of the trenches we go on the

Details of the debacle

hillside or near the coast, but there is a continuous rain of shrapnel and high explosive shells all the day through. We have to lay like rats all day; can't move.

"I have pulled through up to now, but don't know how..."

"After we landed, we entrenched ourselves and started our advance next day, and we were not long before we knew because they picked us off a bit.

"All our leaders got knocked out and we finished with about six officers and a couple of Companies, but we had to hold our own. We got entrenched again and could not advance any more until the next Saturday; but they kept us on the move.

"On about the 21st we had to advance again and the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry advanced with us, but they soon had some laid low. It was their christening under fire and I bet they knew it. I have not come across them any more..."

"We came out of that squabble with three officers and 380 men, and we cannot do any more until we get reinforcements, which have arrived.

"I am ready for home any day now. We are having to live on very short rations – biscuits and bully beef ... I can't write any more. We are just going to try our chance again." Brave medic George D'Rastrik Carr would have to wait until 1916 to be honoured for his outstanding bravery.

Shunter blamed for Newark train fatality

AN INQUEST in Newark Town Hall on the eight-year-old girl who died in Newark's worst train crash ever heard that horse shunter James Whittington, 23, who lives with his widowed mum at 47 Whitfield Street, should have made sure no trucks had slipped from a siding onto the main line in the minutes before the express train arrived.

Coroner Footitt commented that Whittington would have it on his conscience for the remainder of his days that the child died because he took it for granted instead of going to check that the trucks did not over-hang the main line. The *Advertiser* headline summed-up the tragic episode: 'Shunter reprimanded but not severely.'

Eagle teenager disappears in German shelling

WILLIAM WOODEND, head gamekeeper for Charles Constable Curtis at Eagle Hall, and his wife Jane discovered last week that their second son Anthony is presumed dead. 'Nattie', as he was fondly known, was 19. He worked for the Midland Railway Company at Collingham before joining the King's Royal Rifles last November, and was posted missing last month.

Now Mr Curtis's sparky 21-year-old daughter, Mrs Marjorie Elspeth Sutton-Nelthorpe, has been trying to find out more – and has received a letter dated 5 September from Nattie's commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel William D Villiers-Stuart: "I am afraid there is little hope of his being alive, although as no one can vouch for his death, we have to return him as 'missing'. The circumstances were as follow. In the recent fighting about Hooge where this Battalion suffered severely, Rifleman Woodend was in a bomb post with five other riflemen. A heavy shell came and killed one rifleman and buried three others, amongst whom was Woodend. A party worked hard to dig the poor fellows out, but the Germans shelled the place furiously and the rescue party, after suffering heavy loss, had to desist. Rifleman Woodend was never seen again." Rifleman S/6536 Woodend is remembered at the Menin Gate Memorial: his date of death is given as 9 August 1915.

Father-of-7 succumbs to wounds

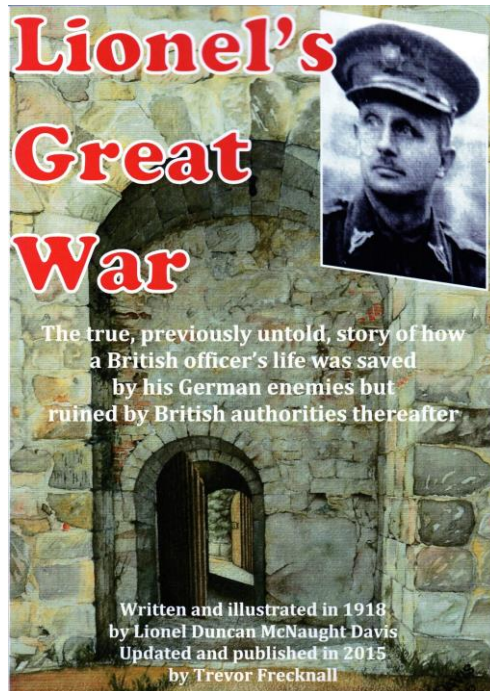
MOTHER-OF-SEVEN Mary Ann Marshall, 35, at 54 Bowbridge Road received the telegram she has been dreading last Friday.

Her husband Bill has lost his three-week struggle for life – leaving her to bring up children aged from 16 years to a 4-month-old he never saw. Aged 37, he was a painter for 20 years before enlisting in the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters 10 months ago.

He suffered severe shrapnel wounds in the head and neck last month but doctors at the Australian Hospital, Wimereux, 5km north of Boulogne, were confident he would recover.

A fortnight later, however, the chaplain, the Reverend R A Gibbs, gave the bad news: "He was delighted with your letter and photograph of the baby. I am afraid there is practically no hope of his recovering ... I think you ought to know as the fate might come at any time." Private 3383 William Thomas Marshall is remembered at the Wimereux Cemetery.

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