

Great War Bulletin

No. 76...Newark...Monday 10 January 1916

Mother of seven's grief

MOTHER-OF-SEVEN Mary Renshaw of Farndon last Tuesday received a War Office postcard confirming the worst: her 20-year-old son, Private John William Renshaw of the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters, is dead.

He was reported missing several weeks ago and, no matter how she tried, she could not find anything more about him. She spent Christmas wondering whether he had been taken prisoner, by some miracle, and was still alive.

Now the missive merely tells her that John was killed in action on 15 October.

This means that he is just another victim of the attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt, which succeeded despite great losses suffered by the North Midlands regiments. He is reunited with comrades on the Loos Memorial.

Father of five was killed on Christmas Eve

MOTHER-OF-FIVE Mrs Louisa Lunn, 44, discovered on Wednesday that she was widowed on Christmas Eve.

The news arrived in a telegram from the War Office to her at their dark, damp and cramped two-up, two-down terraced home in Taylor's Yard, off Millgate, Newark.

Her husband, 35-year-old John Lunn had given up his job as a barley carrier for Branston's the maltsters on 2 November 1914 to join the Army.

As a married man with so many children depending on his meagre wage, he would not have been forced to enlist: only single men of 39 and under were expected to go and fight for King and country.

But John "felt he had to go," Louisa explained.

The last of his frequent letters home arrived on 23 December, when he assured her he was all right and expected to be going into the trenches within 24 hours.

This suggests that he died within hours of joining the firing line.

Now their children Clement, 17; Jack, 11; Maggie, 9; William, 8; and Betsy, 6, are totally unprovided for – and Louisa was already taking in lodgers to make ends meet.

Private Lunn of the Sherwood Foresters is yet another Newarker whose name is honoured on the Loos Memorial.

Louisa was obviously made of stern stuff: she never married again, experienced the Second World War, survived to the age of 80, and finally passed away in 1951.

BRAVE BECHER'S LEGACY

MISS GERTRUDE CHOLERTON received a letter last Wednesday from Sergeant William Thomas Murden, one of the many Southwell lace workers at the Front, thanking her for Christmas gifts.

It proved that Major John Pickard Becher continued to assist the men who served under him in the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters even after he was mortally wounded last October.

For it transpires that quite some time ago, she obtained the permission of Mrs Becher to sell copies of a photograph of Major Becher after he was decorated with the Distinguished Service Order.

Sales went so well that she was able to purchase 200 pork pies and 12,000 cigarettes, which were despatched to the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters in time to become Christmas gifts in the trenches.

Memorial service fills Southwell Minster

THE NAVE of Southwell Minster was filled to capacity last Tuesday afternoon for a memorial service for three of its bravest: Major John Pickard Becher DSO, Sergeant Arthur Sheppard DCM and Corporal Robert Townsend.

Among the mourners were 50 wounded men, currently being cared for at Belton House near Grantham, who served under Major Becher. This was another indication of how the local men of the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters are suffering.

In addition to the Bishop, Dr Hoskyns, the robed clergy present were the Archdeacon of Newark, the Venerable Hacking; Vicar of Newark, Canon Paton

Hindley; Canon Ferris of Gonalston; Canon Glaister, Chancellor of the Cathedral; Canon McKee of Farnfield; Reverend J R Thomas, curate; Reverend H B Lee, Bishop's Chaplain; while other clergy were the Reverend H K Warrand (Westhorpe Hall), Reverend J S Wright (Minster School headmaster), Reverend J Cyril Walker (Rector of Averham), Reverend E G Selwyn (Bishop's son-in-law), Reverend C B Collinson (Laxton) and Reverend F W G Wintour (Upton).

In his address, the Bishop said the faithfulness of the Territorials sprang from the work of officers and men

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

Memorial service

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who had sacrificed their leisure and their money, forsaken amusements and submitted to discipline, trained both mind and body, and were so ready for hard camp life and then for the trenches, and then for the sacrifice of life itself...

Referring to the fact that Major Becher's funeral was taking place simultaneously in France, he added: "We are at one with that brave mother and that young wife who this very day are laying to rest the body of the son and husband who had won the affection of every soldier in the regiment and every citizen of this place."

Incredibly, only now do we discover that when the night-time attack on the Hohenzollern Redoubt was ordered, Major Becher not only led his men's bayonet charge from the front. He also strapped a light to his back so that his men would be better able to follow him over the pitted terrain.

It meant that he was an illuminated target for the entrenched Germans.

Bishop Hoskyns praised it as "a noble deed; but he fell.

"All honour to him and his two young brothers-in-law (the Handfords) and many another; the noble band near to each other then, and so near to each other now with Christ."

Major wounded

MAJOR SAMUEL QUIBELL, of one of Newark's wealthiest families, writes home to his parents, Oliver and Elizabeth at Shalem Lodge, London Road, that he has been wounded. He was hit in the jaw by an explosive shell fragment that cut his neck while helping two wounded officers to a dressing station. But he expects to be back at the Front in a week.

Vicar's gallant son

MAJOR (temporary Lieutenant-Colonel) J H Bailey of the Shropshire Light Infantry has been mentioned in despatches for a third time. He is the son of the late vicar of East Stoke, the Reverend A W Bailey and Mrs Bailey. In 2013, there will appear on <http://www.ebay.com> a "Fine note of appreciation regarding the gallant and distinguished services in the Field in 1915 by Major J.H. Bailey of the Shropshire Light Infantry being mentioned by Sir John Dench, sent from the War Office on behalf of King George V and with a facsimile signature of the then Secretary of State for War Winston Churchill. Remains of paper clips to the right hand side. Size: 22 x 18cm approx." It will be dated 3 March 1919 and priced at US \$192.

VC hero's will

IT WAS announced today that Lieutenant-Colonel Sir John Peniston Milbanke, 10th Baronet, VC, left a fortune of £41,370 2s 6d in his will. He was killed in action in Gallipoli on 21 August.

GALLIPOLI:

Evacuation...deaths...poetry

THE WAR OFFICE Press Bureau announced at 9.40pm yesterday: "General Sir Charles Monro reports that the complete evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula has now been successfully carried out."

The news that Allied troops were no longer hopelessly pinned-down by the Turkish Army entrenched above them was especially poignant to one Newark family. Railway signalman Jesse and Florence Wright at 1 Barnby Crossing discovered last Friday that their 17-year-old son Reginald, the oldest of their eight children, had been killed in action on 19 December.

Reg, a Post Office telegram deliverer before he followed his father into the railway service, was determined to enlist as soon as the War began even though he was under-age.

Private 1619 Wright of the 4th Battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding) Territorial Regiment is remembered in the Talana Farm Cemetery, Ypres. His devastated mum had already lost a brother in the conflict.

Corporal John Darnell, 26, serving with the 53rd Field Butchery, Army Service Corps, turned to verse to explained to relatives in Newark his Dardanelles experience: "During December the Turks heavily bombarded the Peninsula from the Asiatic Coast. The chief source of trouble was a big gun, known to all as 'Asiatic Annie'. After a particular heavy day, I describe what happened near myself...

*One bright December day when we were all blithe and gay
'Asiatic Annie' started on the ramp
And I'll try and tell to you, of things that happened true,
As we made a hurried exit from the camp.*

*It looked to me quite clear, a destroyer standing near,
Was what the gunner really tried to hit
But the shell, it didn't reach, and it landed on the beach
While the damage that it caused was quite a bit.*

*It exploded with a bang, then while the echoes rang,
Another one came quickly on its track.
So not wanting to get hit, I took cover for a bit
Then to my dug-out I promptly doubled back.*

*And then that awful Turk set about his dirty work.
He knew for us he'd got the proper range.
Although he couldn't reach the boat, he simply buttoned up his coat
Then he set about us properly for a change.*

*Your YMCA tent, it got severely bent.
Another wrecked the RND canteen*

*While others in galore found the Army Surplus Corps
And we called them names, both forcible and mean.*

*As we lay upon the ground, an order passed around
That we had better find a safer place.
Again outside we had to go and in less than half a mo
We had started for the cliffs – and what a race!*

*We stumbled and we fell; we wished the Turks in ... well!
I really thought we never should get there
But we got there safe at last, scrambled over pretty fast
Then for all the Turks in Asia didn't care.*

*And since that eventful day, many times we've gone that way.
Sometimes we've gone in the dead of night.*

*For the bloke behind that gun, he can spot you on the run
And his bark is bad, so let alone his bite*

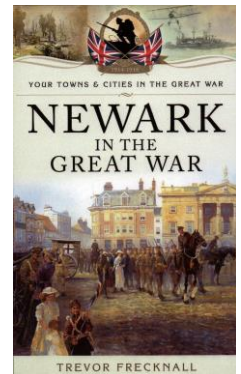
*But some day there's no doubt that it will get a clout
From a battleship or monitor, we know
And the sooner that it does, better then t'will be for us
As we really are fed up of running so.*

Simpson's worker is killed

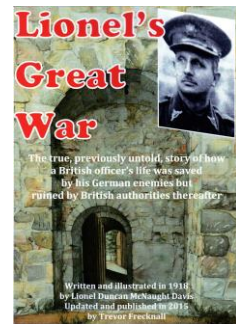
NEWS REACHED James Simpson's Lowfield Works on Thursday that another of their workmen has been killed in action.

Private Jim Middleton, who lodged with Mr and Mrs Chatterton at 7 Grove Street, New Balderton, died in the 6th Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment's trenches at Suvla in the Dardanelles on 11 December.

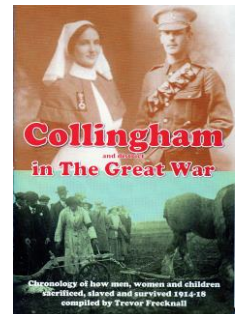
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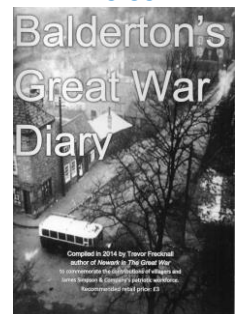
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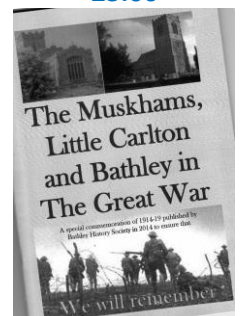
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