

Great War Bulletin

No. 101 ... Newark ... Monday 3 July 1916

LIFE-SAVING GALLIPOLI DASH

ONE of the gentlemen's outfitters shop assistants in Ernest Randall's imposing shop in Imperial Buildings, has fallen so "dangerously ill" after the Gallipoli campaign that he is being rushed from the Persian Gulf to India for further treatment. The problem is, in the letter that gave them this worrying news, Private Reg Peet's parents Henry and Etty in Barnbygate were not told what the third of their eight offspring is suffering from.

James Reginald Peet, born in Newark on 6 February 1896, will not only recover from his ordeal with the Seaforth Highlanders; he will live until the late summer of 1983, passing away in Newton Abbot, Devon.

Deaths on the Somme

ONLY two days after the most catastrophic day in British military history, Newarkeers today began to learn of the deaths of loved ones who had been manning the front line trenches beside the River Somme in France.

Harry and Agnes Johnson of 48 Warburton Street were stunned by the way they heard of the death in action of their 21-year-old son, Mountna.

There was no official confirmation from the War Office, but they received two letters of sympathy, one from his Captain and the other from Sergeant Ernest Marshall, a Newarker in the same Platoon.

Mountna, an apprentice joiner pre-War, has been involved in most of the 8th Battalion Sherwood Forrester's' scraps in the last 12 months, especially the Hohenzollern Redoubt.

He celebrated his 21st birthday in the trenches on 12 June – and was killed by a shell 13 days later.

Sergeant Marshall wrote as comfortingly as he could: "Being a Newark man myself, I thought it my duty to let you know how deeply we feel the loss you have sustained, but he died without the slightest pain, a shell bursting quite near him, and a piece passing through his heart.

"He died immediately. I saw him just previously to being buried in a pretty cemetery quite close behind the firing line, where he is now laid beside many of

'Worst day' in history of British Army

his own comrades who have also fell fighting for right and justice in this great struggle, and he is now resting by the side of a large number of Newark men who have sacrificed their lives during this last week in a great fight the 8th Battalion are still engaged in..."

A large number of Newark men...

That sent a chill through the town!

Mountna's final resting place is the Military Cemetery at Fonquevillers, a village about 18km south-west of Arras.

As for Sergeant Marshall, he will survive the horror of the Somme and the subsequent rigours to be registered as an absent voter from Wood Street in 1918.

Lance Corporal Alma Adolphus Grant, 20, is another local victim.

His parents, accountant Joshua and Mary Alma, who have reared six children, received a letter at 14 Charles Street from the obviously busy pen of Captain J W Turner:

"It is with the greatest regret ... He never knew what fear was and always did what was asked of him with a smile ... We shall all miss him very much indeed. He was killed instantaneously by shell fire three days ago."

Alma came from an Army family. His grandfather, the late Sergeant-Major Henry Dawson, was for many years instructor of the Bedford Volunteers, having fought at Inkerman, Sebastopol and Alma during the Crimean War.

Two uncles are retired soldiers; another plus a cousin are serving in France while Alma's second brother, Gunner H D Grant, has been serving in India for 12 years.

Alma was educated at the Mount School, was apprenticed at Ransome's, was in the Parish Church choir, got his early training in the Parish Church Company of the Church Lads' Brigade – and during the roller skating fad a few years ago became the Nottinghamshire champion.

He was also secretary of Newark Harriers before joining the Second Line of the 8th Battalion Sherwood Foresters, took part in all their runs, and won their Christmas Day 6½ mile race in 1914.

Alma will be remembered at Fonquevillers and never forgotten by, among others, a devastated sweetheart and a dedicated nephew, Chris Grant, who will lead many pilgrimages to the battlefields and memorials of The Great War for the next two – or three – generations.

Meanwhile, as word spreads of the deaths of Mountna and Alma, many Newark families wonder who the over-worked postmen will be forced to call on next...

Newark's population killed in one day

THE Battle of the Somme began last Saturday. The losses were the heaviest ever suffered by the British Army: 19,240 men killed in one day; over 40,000 more wounded.

One of the first men to be called was Sergeant-Major Charles William Cant of Coddington – three months after his wedding to Alice Maud Musgrove.

He was 30 and had endured a traumatic life. He and his younger siblings Annie and Walter were under 10 when their parents died. They were reared by their widowed grandmother, Sarah Reynolds, a charwoman.

He went to Coddington National School, went on to

work at Quibell's glue works in Newark and, when War began, enlisted in the 2nd Battalion Yorkshire Regiment. It will be October before his death is reported back home. He is remembered at the Dantzig Alley British Cemetery in Mametz, a village 8km east of Albert. The cemetery was named after the first German trench taken during the great Somme offensive.

Help our hospital treat the wounded

NEWARK Hospital, which is financed by donations in this era three decades (before the establishment of the National Health Service), is treating wounded soldiers and in need of urgent assistance, says the Mayor.

Respite for patients

WITH their well-known benevolence, the Mayor and Mayoress entertain wounded soldiers from the General Hospital on London Road and the Rest Home in Lombard Street. A number of games are heartily entered into, and all the splendid fellows have a most enjoyable time.

Vicar's son hurt again

THE VICAR of Newark, Canon Paton Hindley, heard by telegram on Saturday that his son Noel had been wounded for a third time. The Lieutenant had been hit in the face and neck by shrapnel.

RE's celebrate

THE Royal Engineers at the Barracks 'christened' their new Warrant Officers' and Non-Commissioned Officers' Mess by staging a smoking concert in aid of men from the ranks who have received commissions for good work in the trenches. They are Lieutenants Maisey and Sharpe, Second Lieutenants Burton, Buckley, Hogan, Haywood, Lovick, Lockwood, Martin, Redmore and Taylor.

Diphtheria death

NEWARK Rural District Council was informed at its monthly meeting last week there had been one death as a result of diphtheria in the last month, but only six cases of measles, a welcome reduction on the outbreak that afflicted 76 – mainly youngsters – in May.

Mayor and Busy Bees

A massive sale of work and garden party in the grounds of Evydene, the residence of the Mayor and Mayoress, W E and Mrs Knight, raises £58 10s 9d for the Newark Busy Bee Society of which Mrs Knight is president and her daughter Edith the secretary.

Elston heroes home

THE VILLAGE of Elston was honoured last week by the appearance on leave from "somewhere in France" of two of its brave lads, Private Cyril Megson, who joined the Sherwood Foresters 16 months earlier, and Grenadier Guards Sergeant Arthur Spowage.

Arthur is destined to bring the village pride and heartache in 1918...

Royal win for pig

PIG BREEDER Charles Simpson of Charnwood, Caythorpe near Lowdham, took first prize and the championship for Lincolnshire curly-coated boars at the Royal Show.

Have the heroic Foresters had a secret mission?

OUR local heroes were mentioned in the House of Commons, but we suspect that censorship might be keeping the full story from us.

Sir John David Rees, the MP for Nottingham East (who will sensationally die in a fall from a train as it passes through Chesterfield in June, 1922), asked the Under Secretary of State for War whether he had any official information regarding a raid made in the week ending 10 June by a small party of the Sherwood Foresters, whether they penetrated the enemy trenches and killed large numbers of the occupants, and whether he could make any statement on the subject?

Mr Harold Tennant replied: "I tremble to think what my position would be if any large number of Members showed equal assiduity.

"Raids are a frequent occurrence, and the name of the regiment is mentioned only when, in the opinion of the military authorities in France, this can be done without unfairness to other units and without prejudice to the interests of the operations."

Mr Tennant then rather spoilt the intrigue by adding: "The War Office has no information regarding any particular raid carried out by the Sherwood Foresters on the date in question."

Hohenzollern glory revealed to the public

THE PUBLIC learned officially last week exactly how men of the Sherwood Foresters and Lincolnshire Regiment covered themselves in glory at the Hohenzollern Redoubt during the Battle of Loos in Belgium last September and October.

The Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence decreed in its analytical report that the most important episode of the battle was the North Midland Division's attempt on Hohenzollern.

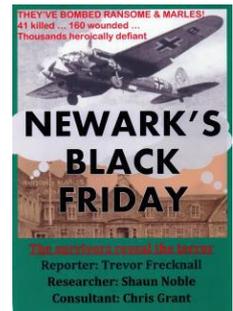
The Lincoln and Leicester Brigades launched a bayonet charge straight up the heavily-defended hill, aiming for 'Fosse Trench' with the aim to send bombing parties along entrenchments called 'Little Willie', 'North Face' and 'South Face'.

They turned thousands of Germans out of their defences but were halted by machine gun fire just short of 'Fosse Trench'. Desperate fighting and bombing (grenade throwing) went on for hours.

The 7th and 8th Sherwoods joined in and "played a leading part in the bombing encounters which went on all night. About 4am on the 14th a fine effort by the 8th Sherwoods dislodged from the eastern corner of the Redoubt a party of Germans who had established themselves there. This success was most timely as at the moment the Germans were pressing hard, advancing across the open and bombing along the communications trenches.

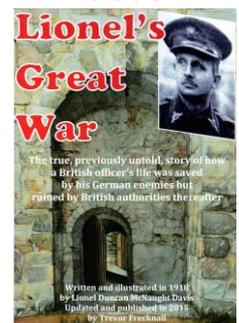
But the situation was re-established and a little later the Sherwoods took over the defence of the Redoubt from the Lincolns and Leicesters, holding it with much difficulty until the night of 14-15 October, when they were relieved by the 2nd Guards Brigade. By this time the Redoubt had been wired by the 1st North Midland Field Coy RE, and the position made fairly secure. In the middle of the relief, the enemy made another counter-attack in force, their last serious effort as it turned out; but, though they reached the wire, the steady fire of the 5th and 6th Sherwoods was too much for them, and the attack was repulsed with heavy loss. "The recovery of the Hohenzollern may be taken as the final act in the great battle which had begun on 25 September."

OUT NOW:

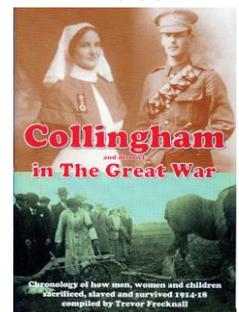


New book to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Ransome and Marles' bombing in World War II. £9.99 from WHSmith, Market Place, and Osborne Stationers, Kirkgate, Newark. *****

Great War books still available include...



£10.50



£9.99

from WH Smith, Newark Market Place