

Historical Officers Report

Events of the Great War as reported in the Camden News
Cables from the European War June 1916

1st June

Colonel Churchill computed that confronting the British Army in all theatres there were only 900,000 Germans and Turks, of which infantry and artillery numbered 600,000.

It was he said unreasonable for people to expect the war to turn decisively and suddenly in our favour as the contending armies were far too evenly matched. He also informed there were too many servants at the front. In the army there were 200,000 officers, with 200,000 servants and 50,000 grooms.

It has now been discovered, that the column which suffered from the British raid at El Arish on May 18 was a German one.

Since 1914 six hundred mines have been washed up on the Swedish coast. Swedish marines have destroyed another 500.

6th June

The Returned and Services League of Australia (National) Formed

8th June

Colonel Winston Churchill said he believed that half the army's nation's strength was remaining at home and half was abroad half fight and half do not fight," he said.

A great naval battle took place in the North Sea off Jutland, Denmark on Wednesday. The British ships, on which the brunt of the fighting fell, comprised the battle-cruiser fleet and some cruisers and lighter cruisers, supported by four fast battleships. The losses among those were heavy.

The enemy sank the battle cruiser Queen Mary, Indefatigable, and Invincible, the cruisers Defence and Black Prince, and disabled the Warrior, which was towed for some time and subsequently abandoned by her crew. Admiral Sir John Jellicoe reports:—we lost eight destroyers. The Germans' lost a Dreadnought.

A battleship of the Kaiser class (10,400 tons) was blown up by destroyers, and it is believed that another Dreadnought of the Kaiser class was sunk by gunfire. Of three battle cruisers engaged, including the Lutzow (26,600 tons) and the Derfflinger (20,000 tons), one was blown up and another disabled.

Earl Kitchener's Untimely Death.

London. Wednesday, Admiral Sir John Jellicoe reports:-"Lord Kitchener and his staff were on board the cruiser Hampshire, 10,850 tons, which was either mined or torpedoed west of the Orkney Islands (north coast of Scotland), in heavy seas, on Monday evening at 8 o'clock. Observers on shore saw four boats leave the ship, but the rescue vessels only found some bodies and a capsized boat. No report has yet been received from the search party. It is estimated that the 655 persons on board the Hampshire were drowned. Lord Kitchener was on his way to Russia.

15th June

Captain Bean in his description of the Anzacs' raid on the German trenches a week back says that one officer caught a German by the scruff of the neck and threw him bodily out of the trench.

Russians continue to develop the new offensive and up to the present have taken 20,000 prisoners. Twenty seven guns and upwards of 50 machine guns have also been captured.

Twelve Survivors of the cruiser Hampshire which was mined or torpedoed west of the Orkney Islands, while conveying Lord Kitchener to Russia have been washed ashore on a raft.

22nd June

Famine and disease are said to be prevalent in Serbia. As soon as the food boats arrive the Austrians secure the consignments and resell it at 100 per cent profit.

A complete British unit has arrived at Archangel, Russia and a naval armoured motor detachment, on proceeding to the front was enthusiastically welcomed in Moscow.

Food' riots have occurred in Munich and Aix-la-Chapelle and Hiene meat curing factory at Halberstadt was destroyed by fire, the work of an incendiary Board cards are being issue

26th June Pte William C. Jackson VC at Armentieres



For his gallantry on the night of 25/26th. June, 1916, in rescuing wounded men under fire. While returning from a successful raid on the German trenches, South of Armentieres, several members of the Raiding Party were seriously wounded in NO MAN'S LAND by hostile shell fire. Private Jackson returned safely to our lines through a most intense barrage of shrapnel, H.E. and crossed Machine Gun fire, escorting a prisoner. Hearing that some of his party had been hit, Private Jackson handed his prisoner over and immediately returned into NO MAN'S LAND into the enemy's barrage and assisted in bringing in a wounded man. He then went out again, notwithstanding the fact that the hostile bombardment was more intense than ever, and with Sgt. Camden, 19th. Battalion, A.I.F., was bringing in Pte. Robinson (who was seriously wounded) when a shell exploded close by. Private Jackson's right arm was blown off above the elbow. Robinson was wounded again and Sgt. Camden knocked unconscious. As Jackson could not do anything by himself, he returned to our trenches, obtained assistance and went out again to search for his two comrades. They were however, met just outside our trenches. Private Jackson's condition was serious; but throughout he showed wonderful fortitude. His work with the Raiding Party as a Scout and also with his Battalion in the same capacity has always been of the highest order & (soon) marked with the highest Colours and bravery.

29th June

Holland is resuming, the shipment to Great Britain of considerable quantities of food including weekly shipments of 200 tons of butter and 5000 bales of bacon.

Since the outbreak of the war 86 Victoria Crosses, 130 Military Crosses, 6150 Distinguished Conduct Medals, and 1700 Military Medals; have been awarded to British men.

Operations are quiet on the whole British Front reports General Sir Douglas Haig. Five enemy ammunition Lorries near La Bassece were exploded by the British artillery.

From the Home Front

The Early Closing of Liquor Bars

Sir,—On Saturday the 10th June people of this State will vote for or against the early closing of liquor bars of every kind. I plead for 6 o'clock. It neither means teetotalism or No License as bars would remain open twelve hours a day. What moderate and reasonable man could want them open longer?

Shops are made to shut at six o'clock and why not the public houses. Why should the publican be especially favoured above the baker the butcher or the store keeper.

The vote for the Liquor Referendum will be held in the Camden School of Arts on the 10th June. The result of the Liquor Referendum in Camden listed 378 votes for 6pm closing, 1 for 7pm, 7 for 8pm, 202 for 9pm, 0 for 10pm and 1 for 11pm.

The imperial authorities have asked the Defence Department for 60 additional medical men immediately. Twenty-two have already been despatched, and steps are now being taken to secure the remainder.

Letters Home

The following extracts are from a letter sent home from Trooper Edgar G. Small, who wrote from Egypt. "We are camped within a mile or so of the ground where the battle of Tel-el-Kebir was fought in 1882. Some of the Chaps have picked up souvenirs out of the trenches consisting of old' cartridge shells, buttons, etc., and they told me some of the clothing and boots are nearly as good as when they were buried over 30 years ago. We have just had about one hundred boxes of Australian comforts distributed; I.X.L fruit, jam, sweets, coffee, cocoa, "biscuits, sardines, soap, Packets, etc and with our general rations of fresh beef, bacon rice, dates and vegetables each day we are faring real well."

Driver C. Dawson, 5th A.H.A. in his last letter home says:—'Just a few lines to let you know I am still Al in France and in the firing line. I received some letters from home on Good Friday, and to-day is Easter Day. Arthur Holdsworth is sitting beside me writing his hardest. The weather here is a bit on the cold side and terribly wet, mud and slush up to ones knees, but it is miles ahead of Egypt. We see great air fights every fine day, the air craft guns peppering away at the planes, but very seldom they hit. I have had some trips to the trenches with ammunition but this war is not as bad as it is cracked up to be. I have met a few of my old pals over here. I am sending you pennant of the boat we came from Egypt to France in she was a lovely old boat, and fast, a bit different from the Persic. I had a bit of hard luck coining from Marseilles to Le Harve one of my horses, a lovely little black mare I had all the time in Egypt, sickened and died, but I still have my old saddle horse."

Ray Herbert
Historical Officer