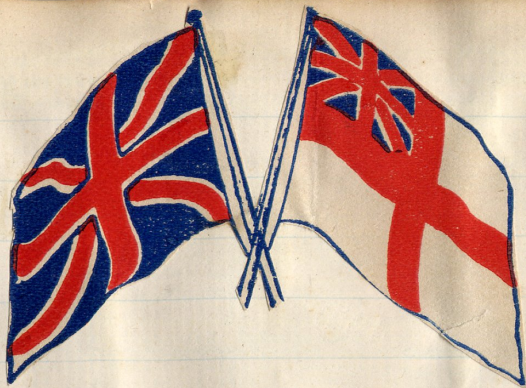




UNION JACK

Pirton's First World War
from a Scrapbook provided by Rodney Marshall



1ST HERTS. REGIMENT AT THE FRONT.

Some of the No. 4 Company taken at the front. No. 4 was formed from the old "E" (Royston and Letchworth) and "G" (Hitchin and Stevenage) Companies.

SPY IN HAYSTACK.

Experience of 1st Herts.

Shot just missed Pirton Man.

Col.-Sergt. Hardy, "G" Company 1st Herts., who lives in Whinbush-road, Hitchin, has been invalided home from the Front suffering from frost-bite in the feet.

He arrived in England just over a week ago, landing at Southampton after a 24 hours' voyage on the "Agadir" from Boulogne. He was then taken to Devonport Military Hospital, where he received splendid attention. He was met in London by his wife, and arrived home a few days ago.

Col.-Sergt. Hardy has made good progress, and is keen on going out again, "because," says the brave non-com., "every man who is physically fit is wanted out at the Front." He will have to report himself at headquarters, Hertford, in about a fortnight's time.

In conversation with him one gathers that he has been proud to have served in this grave crisis, though he is fully conscious of the big undertaking the Allies have to drive the Germans out of Belgium.

He speaks in high terms of the Commanding Officer of the Herts. Regt., and of the other officers, and says the regiment have stuck the work well.

The 1st Herts. up to Christmas Eve had been in the trenches in all ten times. Generally, the soldiers, he says, are in the trenches for one day, when they are relieved by the reserves from the "dug outs."

The "dug outs" are also trenches, but lie back from the firing line trenches. The latter trenches are only about eighteen inches wide, and each trench takes three men in its deepest part, generally about six feet deep, which is connected with the next trench by a passage trench four feet deep. The "dug out," where the reserves wait for their turn to go into the firing line, are roomy places, and groups of men can get inside each. "Still," said the Col.-Sergt., "the dug-outs are within the danger zone of the shells, which are fired five miles off, so that we have to keep hidden as much as possible during the day-time."

Several thrilling incidents were recounted.

The most exciting concerned two German spies.

"As the 1st Herts. were marching to the trenches on one occasion," said Mr. Hardy, a "bullet whizzed about three inches past my face, and it actually went through the wooden shaft alongside the barrel of the man in front—Pte. Baines, of Pirton, I think he comes from. The next day other shots were fired about the same spot, and a search was made, with the result that two German spies were found inside a haystack near the roadway. They were equipped with a field telephone connected with the heavy German battery five miles away (where the 'Jack Johnsons' had been coming from). The spies also had food for several weeks with them. They were found by the Guards with whom the Herts. are associated at the Front. These Guards—the 4th Brigade, 2nd Division, under Sir John Douglas Haig—have caught thirty German spies in the district where the 1st Herts. have been in the trenches."

These spies do a lot of mischief, according to Col.-Sergt. Hardy. On several occasions the town of Ypres has been shelled just at the moment when English and French troops have been passing through—probably the work of spies. Spies have also been found at the top of church towers.

On one occasion the Germans had got wind of some troops being in a wood, but they were hood-winked in time, though the wood was shelled heavily. The 1st Herts. had received orders to take shelter in the wood, but, needless to say, they sought another place just in time.

Much of the firing by the 1st Herts. has been done just inside the Belgium border. The English troops take charge of a firing line about five miles in extent. The German trenches are within 100 yards—in some places much nearer. The 1st Herts. have not been in a bayonet charge, but on one occasion they were 48 hours in the trench firing line at one stretch. On the Monday before Christmas Day the 1st Herts. did a forced march at night of eighteen miles, when they were quartered at the same place as the Gurkhas and Bengal Lancers, 3,000 strong.

Even with his feet bad, Col.-Sergt. Hardy was not going to be left behind, and went with the regiment on this march. He had to "give in" at the end of the journey, where, on Christmas Eve, the 1st Herts. were ordered for the trenches again three miles away. He, with other sick and wounded, some Indians among them, went to a hospital in the north of France, whence he left by train for Boulogne—a 14 hours' journey.

Owing to the tricks of the spies it is only safe to move to and from the trenches in the dark, and the order to leave the trenches is passed along in whispers.

On one occasion after leaving the firing trenches the "G" Company were found to be three men short. A search proved unavailing, but when they were relieved by the French the three men were found asleep in the trench, tired out with the long spell of work. The three men ran a lot of risk in rejoining their regiment owing to the presence of German snipers, who, with the spies, are the best shots the Germans have.

In one trench which had been captured by the English, the 1st Herts. men found a wounded German who had been lying there four days with a broken leg. He was attended to by Sergt. Langford, of the "G" Company.

Another occasion a trench which had been lost and recaptured contained a German with a pair of boots belonging to the English troops round, his neck—evidently a case of making use of the injured to replace their worn-out boots.

Col.-Sergt. Hardy says the Allies can now more than hold their own as regards big guns, those of the British troops being splendid. He reckons the Germans are losing three or four times the number of men that the Allies are.

He says the aeroplanes are kept busy on both sides. When the Germans detect a number of men they drop a fire-ball, which gives the range to the German batteries five miles away, and in about ten minutes shells are being thrown. This, of course, is done by the British batteries as well, against the Germans, so that each side is very chary about moving during the day.

PTe. A. ABBISS KILLED.

FATAL SHELL IN RESERVE TRENCHES.

It is with painful regret that we announce the death in action of Pte. Alfred Abbiss, Canadian Regt., eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. F. Abbiss, of Pirton, which took place instantaneously from a bursting shell, on March 29.

The sad news was verified in a letter received by the parents on Tuesday last, from the military authorities.

The deceased, who was 28 years of age last November, was a kind-hearted young man, and was a good son to his parents. He had been in Canada eight years last June, being engaged in various callings; for one period on the land. He lived in New Westminster, British Columbia, and enlisted in that country in February, 1915. Previous to that he had been home from Canada on three occasions, and since arriving in England with the Canadian Regt., in June, 1915, had been home once from the camp. He went with his battalion to France in August last year. He regularly wrote home, the last letter arriving a week before the sad tidings came. The deceased was single.

Details of the gallant soldier's death are given in the following letter from a chaplain in the trenches:—

"April 2. Dear Mrs. Abbiss,—I regret very much to have to inform you of the death of your son, Pte. A. Abbiss, of the Canadian Regt. He was killed by a shell, which burst quite close to him on the road beside their billet, where they were in reserve. It will be a little comfort to you to know that he was instantly killed, and did not suffer. We buried him that evening in the battalion cemetery, on the slope of Hill 63, near Plug-street Wood, in the presence of his comrades. Before we left there a cross was erected, so that the grave will remain permanently marked. The cemetery is fenced, and will be permanently maintained by the Government. If you so desire, I can apply to the Grave Regulation Commission for a photograph of the grave, which they will send you when they can get it taken. I know you will find pride in the thought that your boy made the supreme sacrifice for our nation's sake, and trust you will find comfort in the love of our Heavenly Father, who careth for us. May He bless you and give you strength in your hour of trial.—Yours sincerely, Louis W. Moffit, chaplain.

Pte. A. E. Purser, also of the Canadian Regt., a close chum of the deceased, also wrote to deceased's sister, Rose. He says:—

"I know it will be a hard blow to your mother, so I write to you. All I can say to comfort you, is that Alfred met a painless end. I have a few of his things, which I will send to you at the first opportunity, as I know that they were obtained for that purpose. I know the writing of this will cause you sorrow. Alfred was respected by all that knew him, and I for one will miss the best friend I ever had."

Another son, Tom, is also in the Canadian Regt., joining up at New Westminster, British Columbia, in June, 1915. He went to Canada three years last March, and came to England with his regiment last November, having been home to Pirton three times from Shorn-cliff.

Buried by a "Black Maria."

[Letter written from Bruges by Wilfred Jesse Vine, Royal Marine Light Infantry, to his father at Henlow, Beds.]

I hope you get this letter. I am sending it by refugees leaving Antwerp for Ostend and England.

It was a sad plight we were in at Antwerp. I think we have lost about 200 killed and wounded, in fact it is a marvel that any of us are alive to tell the tale.

We all had to retire—a twenty-eight mile march in the dead of night. There were about 20,000 Belgian soldiers and hundreds of families, in fact thousands, also the Naval Brigade. The city on fire was a sight I shall never forget.

Our company sergeant-major was knocked over by a shell right over me, and at the same time we lost three other sergeants in less than five minutes.

We were forced to retire from four successive trenches in four days. That is undoubtedly the worst we shall see, at least I hope so. We could not get near their guns. We all had many narrow escapes.

I fancy there were a lot of our men who were unable to keep up in the march, and were taken prisoners, but that I can't say. We lost practically all our provisions and kits, in fact everything except what we had on. I have not had a wash for a week or taken off my boots for a fortnight.

Our mails were blown up by shells. Shells were falling around us from Sunday last. Two men, one from Knebworth named Clements, were lying flat downwards when we heard a Black Maria coming. The men were afterwards dug out standing upright, uninjured except shaken.

* * * * *

PIRTON.

TWO FAMILIES IN BEREAVEMENT.—On Sunday, the Vicar before commencing his sermon referred in sympathetic terms to the two cases of sudden bereavement which had just taken place in connection with the parish. One was the sudden death at the Front, of Sergt. Frank Cannon, whose family had been residing at West Mill for some time; and the other was the unexpected fatal illness, lasting only two days, of Mrs. Frank Baines. At the end of the evening service, on Sunday, "The Dead March" was played by the organist, Mr. H. J. Stapleton, while the choir and congregation remained standing as a mark of sympathy. The Church Council passed a unanimous resolution of condolence, at their meeting on Feb. 23rd, which was forwarded to the family on the following morning.

Soldiers' Letters to Pirton.

Pirton people are always interested in the doings of their gallant sons at the Front. Mr. T. Franklin has received several more letters of thanks for the gifts sent by Pirton people, which are much appreciated.

Pte. J. Titmuss, "D" Co. 2nd Beds., writing on December 22nd, says he is getting on well, and hopes all the Pirton boys at the Front are likewise. He adds:—"I have not seen any of them since I have been out here. I have been in the trenches a good many times." Describing the rough weather and the mud and slush in the trenches, he adds quite chirpily: "But we keep on sailing on. As we marched from the trenches the other day we could see the houses that had been blown to pieces by shell fire. Never seen such sights in my life. The big guns rattle out like thunder. I don't think it will last much longer. We are about 300 yards from the German trenches. We get plenty of food out here." He concludes with a happy New Year to all at Pirton.

Pte. S. Smith, 1st Herts., "G" Co. after returning thanks for the blankets, writes:—"We live in hopes of being home in England soon after Christmas, as we all think the war will be over very soon. But there is one thing I should like, and that is ~~has~~ one shot at the Kaiser," and with that he concludes with the compliments of the season.

Sergt. A. P. Langford (Hitchin), "G" Co. 1st Herts., sends the cheerful message to Pirton: "You will be pleased to know that the Pirton boys are all well and doing their bit well. Their experiences will be very interesting to all when they get home. Things are very quiet here—a little village in the north of France—but we expect to move shortly. We have been packed up for the last three days, but nothing has happened up to the present (date of the letter is December 16). He concludes with seasonable wishes for his friends.

Letter from Pirton Territorial

Writing to a friend, Pte. H. Smith, of the G Co. Herts. Territorials, of Pirton, asks to be remembered to friends, as he cannot write to them all. Alluding to a friend from Pirton, also at the Front, he jokingly says that that friend is anxious that his sweetheart "should keep the rice handy for the wedding, as we shall soon be home to get married, when we will have a jolly good time—so cheer up, for we are not dead yet."

The letter was received on Friday morning last, dated from France.

Pirton Soldiers' Letters.

Pte. A. Walker, "G" Company 1st Herts., writing under date January 4th, says they are all alive and kicking and in the best of health. "We can all think ourselves lucky," he adds, "to be in good health after being in so much mud and water for eight days."

Speaking of Christmas, he says quite cheerily. "We were happy all the time, and had a good sing-song to keep the Germans in good spirits, for they could easily hear us, as their trenches were only twenty yards away in one place. But the Germans were careful not to show their heads for us to get a shot at them."

The writer, on behalf of the Pirton boys, returns thanks, through Mr. Franklin, for the presents sent out.

Pte. S. G. Roberts, "G" Company 1st Herts., in his letter describes the twenty-mile march which he and the other 1st Herts. had to get to the trenches. The first night they were billeted in a town, and the following day, after another short march, they slept in a barn. On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day we were trench digging, and on Boxing Day we went in the trenches and stayed there till January 2. On New Year's Eve we could hear the Germans singing, as we were only about 200 yards from their trenches. Thank God we have got through it once again. You will be pleased to know that all the Pirton chaps are quite well, and that we have got some more lead left for the Germans."

Pte. S. Smith, "G" Co. 1st Herts., writing on Jan. 14 to Mr. Franklin, says they were all safe and sound. He describes the muddy condition of the trenches in which they had to stand for twelve hours, but quite pluckily makes light of the experience, as they had good fires to go to afterwards, at which they dried their clothing. "When we were in the trenches," he adds, "we started singing, and the Germans heard us, and they had the cheek to get on the top of their trenches and waved their hats to us, but we soon made them get lower by putting a few bullets into them. They were only two hundred yards from us. We are expecting to go in the trenches very soon, but in a different place. We enjoyed ourselves on Christmas Day as well as we could expect, but live in hopes of having a better one next time. The Herts. have been lucky up to the present, and hope to remain lucky enough to get home safe. We are still merry, and we all keep in good heart."

1st HERTS. AGAIN IN ACTION.—Colour-Sergt.-Major Langford, "G" Company, 1st Herts, has written home to Hitchin, stating that during the past fortnight they have been in the trenches, and experienced a pretty hot time. Fifteen of the Herts. were wounded, but he had heard of no serious case. Last Saturday (March 13th) they were going back into the trenches again for forty-eight hours.

THE 1st HERTS. AND THE BRICKSTACKS.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL CROFT RECALLS SEVERE FIGHTING.

The following is a copy of the farewell orders by Brigadier-General Croft, C.M.G., on relinquishing the command of the 1st Herts. Regiment:—

"In being appointed to the command of an Infantry Brigade it is my regrettable duty to bid farewell to my comrades of the 1st Battalion of the Hertfordshire Regiment, which I have had the honour to command for 12 months of active service.

"When I assumed command of the Battalion it was in my opinion the best Territorial Battalion in the Army.

"I asked you then to aim at a very high standard, and such was the loyal response that I believe that I leave it one of the finest fighting regiments in the whole forces of the British Empire.

"Your freedom from crime, your pride in your corps and soldierly bearing, your smartness on parade and off, the general tone of healthy manliness, your devotion to duty, and your gallantry in action have won for you a great place in the history of the days of our country's need.

"From the time when you were plunged into the concluding stages of the first great defence of Ypres to your first open fighting when you supported the 3rd Coldstream and 1st Irish Guards at the capture of the Brickstacks you were put to a test as young troops, which proved your mettle. Since then you attacked with gallantry, and won ground at Festubert, holding your new line, which you dug in one night, against the violent shell-fire the next day, and for some 12 months have held one of the most trying parts of the whole Allied front, and experienced very numerous intense bombardments, including the occasion when you assisted the K.R.R. to repel the attack on the Quarries, and the trying experiences of co-operation on the left of the battle of Loos.

"It may be said that you have never failed, and although many a sacred spot is enriched by your glorious dead there has never been any sign of your spirit breaking, and you have gone on from strength to strength.

"I shall always look back with intense pride and gratitude on the days of our comradeship, and I pray that Heaven may spare you all to return victorious to your homes.

(Signed) HENRY PAGE CROFT,
"Brigadier-General."

North Herts and the War.

Earl Cavan praises 1st Herts.

GUARDS PROUD OF THEM.

The popular master of the Herts. Hounds, Earl Cavan, has written to Mr. J. Flack, High-street, Stevenage, Herts. Yeomanry, the following letter. The day his lordship wrote the letter (Jan. 10) the Herts. Regiment were about to take up their position in the front firing-line:—

Headquarters of the 4th Guards Brigade, British Expeditionary Force, France, Sunday, Jan. 10.—We are flooded here, and the men in the advanced trenches have a very bad time. We relieve them at dark and before daylight, and send them back into billets, where we have drying rooms all ready, and lots of straw. There they strip, get a hot drink, and dry their clothes. It is a rare job keeping the rifles working at all. I write in the midst of a big bombardment of the enemy's trenches in order to help the division on our right. We gained about 150 yards to-day—a big thing in this war and on this ground. 'Please tell everybody you see that the Herts. Territorials are doing very well. I am proud to have them in my brigade. They are just going up to the front line as I write. Lord Hampden is a first-rate C.O.—With all good wishes, yours truly, CAVAN.

PIRTON'S FIRST RECRUIT.

PTE. J. FRENCH KILLED IN ACTION

We are sorry to record the death in action of Pte. Joseph French, Beds. Regiment, only son of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. French, Little Green, Pilton. The War Office intimation, received early this week, stated that he was killed on Sept. 4. Pte. French, who was 27 years of age, worked for Mr. Franklin, farmer, before enlisting. He was, as a matter of fact, the first to answer the country's call as a recruit, enlisting on Sept. 1, 1914. He went to France in May last year. A short time ago his name appeared among the wounded, and as the family received no intimation from the War Office, Miss French, his sister, wrote, receiving a reply that the wound was only slight, and he had returned to duty. He regularly wrote home, his letters being always in a cheerful and plucky vein. The last time he wrote was a field card received on Aug. 26. He was home on leave last April, and he was then in good spirits, and keen on his soldier duties.

LILLEY.

GRAVE NEWS OF PTE. HERBERT CLARK, 2nd BEDFORDS.—News has been received in letters from the Front that indicate grave fears for the safety of Pte. Herbert Clark, 2nd Bedfords, whose wife and ten children live in a cottage opposite Lilley Church. Early this week Mrs. Clark had received no official information that he was killed or wounded, but owing to the private information received Miss Cundal, of Lilley, wrote on her behalf to the War Office, and a reply was received that the War Office had no information then. This in itself would cause no anxiety, as recent operations in Flanders have caused the various battalions and their officers to be very busy on account of the advance made. Miss Toyer, however, kindly interested herself in the matter, and sent a letter with a prepaid reply cablegram to the Commanding Officer of the 2nd Bedfords at the Front. This letter was dispatched on Saturday, and Mrs. Clark at the time of writing was awaiting a reply. The curious thing about the matter, and one which affords hope, is that on Wednesday, October 6, Mrs. Clark received a field card from her husband saying he was quite well. The card was dated Sept. 30, but it was not posted in France till October 2, so that the question is what occurred to him after Sept. 30. A letter from an Offley soldier, received on October 7, states that he was killed, and a Pirton soldier in the 1st Herts. also wrote home saying, "Poor Tricky Clark, I am very sorry to say, has gone under." This letter was dated from the Front on Oct. 6, and was received in Pirton on the 8th. Again, another Pirton soldier, who is in the 2nd Bedfords, has also written corroborating the sad intelligence. One of these adds, "Tricky Clark was one of my best chums." Pte. Clark worked at White Hill Farm for Mr. Allingham. He served through the Boer war without a scratch, and finished his time with the Regulars. He re-enlisted in October last year, and went to the Front the following month. While he has been at the Front he regularly wrote to his wife twice weekly, but his letters have been looked for in vain for the past fortnight or so. He was an experienced soldier, and in action had always a thought for others. He has related incidents where he has gone to the rescue of wounded soldiers, helping to carry two men through a river on one occasion, while up to his arm-pits in water. On another occasion, in recent fighting, after the British had flattened out German trenches, he and his comrades were going over the dead-strewn German trenches when a wounded German appealed for help. Pte. Clark was the good Samaritan, and dragged him to the British trenches, where he was attended to, conveying thanks in his looks for the kind action. Up to yesterday (Wednesday) afternoon no reply had been received from the Commanding Officer to the letter sent by Miss Toyer, asking for information about Pte. Clark. His age is 39.

PIRTON.

FOUR SOLDIER SONS.—There are now four sons in khaki of the late Mr. and Mrs. Walker, of the Great Green—Pte. Frederick Walker, 11th Hussars; Sidney, Artillery; Herbert, 1st Herts.; and Arthur, 1st Herts. The last to join is Sidney, whose wife and three children, at present at Knebworth, are going to remove to Pirton. He was a cowman on Lord Lytton's estate. Besides these sons there are two daughters, both married—Mrs. C. Baines, and Mrs. Joseph Davies, Great Green. Pirton is showing up well in the patriotic families of the country.

NEWS FROM THE FRONT.—Letters have been received from Pte. Arthur Walker, 1st Herts., and Pte. Buckett, 2nd Bedfords, both of whom mention that a friend at Lilley had been killed. Pte. Walker states in a letter received last week, that they had been through two great battles, which he described as nothing less than hell. He adds that they had been in the firing-line for thirty-six days, with only one day out. The Pirton boys, he states, came through all right.

PIRTON SOLDIER WITH FRACTURED JAW.—Pte. Jesse Titmuss, of the 2nd Bedfords, only son of Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Titmuss, of the Great Green, informed his mother in a letter she received recently, that he had arrived at Southampton. Since then a Red Cross postcard has been received, saying he was at the Clearing Hospital at Eastleigh, Hants., but he was expected to be moved again. He is suffering from gunshot wounds in the face, which fractured his jaw, and he received the wound apparently about three weeks ago.

HONOUR FOR THE DEAD.—A memorial service was held at St. Mary's Church on Sunday evening, Nov. 7th, for those who have fallen during the war. The following are the names of the Henlow men that were read out by the Vicar:—Pte. Edwin John Bywaters, Naval Stoker William Thos. Page, Pte. Archer Sidney Fisher, Pte. Wm. Flack Brandram, Pte. Edward Vine, R.N.V.R., Pte. Wilfred Field, Pte. Wilfred Vine, Lce-Corpl. Horace John Taylor, Pte. John Turner, Pte. Wilfred Jesse Vine, R.N.V.R.

HEAD WOUNDS IN THE WAR.—Pte. Frederick Jarvis, Bedfordshire Regiment, whose home is at Andrew's Cottages, Pirtton, has recently been severely wounded in the head while in action in France. His family received the intimation from the War Office last Saturday, but unofficial news had been received in a comrades' letter from the Front the previous Monday. Pte. Jarvis, who formerly worked for Mr. Frank Burton, enlisted last April and went to the Front last October.

PRIVATE. FRANK HANDSCOMBE KILLED IN ACTION.—The following letter from Sergt. W. H. Austin, received by Mr. Geo. Handscombe, on Tuesday, conveyed the sad news that his son, Pte. Frank Handscombe, Beds. Regiment, had been killed on July 11th:—"I very deeply regret to have to inform you of the sad death of your son Frank, who was killed on the morning of July 11th. He did not suffer any pain, as death was instantaneous. I was his platoon sergeant, and thought it my duty to write to you. He was a good soldier and always did his duty, and I was sorry to lose him, as he was liked by all. I might mention that myself and two of my men buried him, and we put a cross over his grave with his name upon it. Must now close, offering you my very deepest sympathy. I beg to remain, yours sincerely, W. H. Austin, Sergt." Private Frank Handscombe, who was 22 years of age and a promising young man, went over to France about two months ago. His was a fine, sensitive nature, and his influence with the children in the Wesleyan Sunday School, where he was teacher and secretary, was great. He frequently mentioned the Sunday school and the work in his letters from the Front. Much sympathy is expressed in the village for the parents, who have two other sons in khaki—one, Pte. Joseph Handscombe, arriving in France on July 11th.

Mons Star.—Yes, as the soldier served in France prior to November 23, 1914, he would, had he survived, have been entitled to the 1914 ("Mons") Star; his next-of-kin will now receive it. The issue of the Star will, however, not take place for some time yet; when it does begin the next-of-kin should communicate with the officer in charge Records Bedfordshire Regiment, Warley, Essex, in the event of any delay in the receipt of the Star.



**PIRTTON'S
STRETCHER-
BEARER
MEDALLIST.**

Private Charles Furr, Beds. Regiment, whose wife and three children live at Holwell-cottages, Pirtton, has been awarded the Military Medal for courageous stretcher-bearing work under shell fire. He is the first Pirtton soldier to receive this distinction.

PTE. SIDNEY COX AWARDED MEDAL.—Pte. Sidney Cox, Beds. Regiment, a native of Hitchin, but who has for some years lived with his grandmother at 47, Green-lane, Letchworth, has been awarded the Military Medal for a conspicuous act of bravery and life-saving. Pte. Cox enlisted in August, 1914, and was soon in the thick of the fighting, going out to the Front one year and eight months ago. He is 22 years of age. The deed which has won him fame was the digging out, unaided, of seventeen men buried in a mine explosion, and through his heroism fourteen were saved alive. He himself was wounded, and has for some time been in hospital, latterly at Felixstowe, from whence he hopes soon to visit his home on leave. Letchworth is proud of this hero.

IN HOSPITAL.—Sydney Cox, of 47, Green-lane, who enlisted in the Beds. Regt., in August, 1914, has been wounded and is now in hospital at Felixstowe. Cox, who had been at the Front over a year and a half, was recently connected with a mine explosion, which buried a number of his comrades, who he helped to extricate. Cox is twenty-two years of age and has been awarded a medal.

Burial of Pte. Joseph Walker.

BODY RECOVERED FROM THE SEA.

Readers will recall the sad death of Pte. Joseph Walker, of the Bedfordshire Regt., son of Mr. and Mrs. S. Walker, Chapel Place, Olfley. He was returning to England in the hospital ship "Anglia," about November last, and perished with many other brave lads when that ship was torpedoed in such a brutal fashion.

On Jan. 11th last, about two months after the ship was sunk, his body was washed ashore in Holland, and he was identified by the disc round his neck.

Captain H. M. Gosling, of Wellbury, took an interest in the sad event, and communicated with the deceased's family.

The deceased was given an impressive funeral, and in the magazine, "Land and Water," of Jan. 27th, there appeared a picture of the burial scene, from a drawing by the distinguished war artist, Louis Raemaekers.

At the time, the following report of the funeral appeared in the Amsterdam "Telegraaf":—

"The burial will take place at once; the clergyman is only waiting for the Vice-Consul who has just arrived by train from Flushing." So spoke to me the policeman at West Capelle.

I walked past West Capelle's big light house—past the church tower of which the church itself had disappeared, and I stood before the chapel in the churchyard. Through the open door I saw on a bier the white wooden coffin in which rested the body of Pte. Joseph Walker, an English soldier of the Bedfordshire Regiment, regimental number, 16,092.

On Sept. 9, 1914, Joseph Walker enlisted for the duration of the war; on Jan. 11, 1916, the sea bore his dead body to the dyke at West Capelle. Usually a body washed ashore in this neighbourhood is buried at the foot of the dunes, without coffin, without ceremony. But not this time. This afternoon at 1 p.m., while the north-west wind whistled over Walcheren, the English soldier was buried in the churchyard of West Capelle. Behind the walls of the tower where we sought protection from the gale the Burial Service was read.

First the Vice-Consul in the name of England spread the British Flag over him who for England had sacrificed his young life. Four men of West Capelle carried the coffin outside and placed it at the foot of the tower, that old grey giant, which has witnessed so much world's woe, here opposite the sea. The Reverend Mr. Fraser, the English clergyman at Kortryk, himself an exile, said we were gathered to pay the last homage to a Briton who had died for his country. It was a simple, but touching ceremony.

"Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down." Thus spoke the voice of the minister and the wind carried his words, and the wind played with the flag of England, the flag that flies all over the seas, in Flanders, in France, in the Balkans, in Egypt, as the symbol of threatened freedom—the flag whose folds here covered a fallen warrior. Deeply were we moved, when the clergyman in his prayer asked for a "message of comfort to his home."

Who, tell me, oh silent field,
Who lies buried here? Here?

Yes, who is Walker, No. 16092, Pte. Joseph Walker, Bedfordshire Regiment? Who, in loving thoughts, thinks of him with hope even now when we, strangers to them, stand near to him in death? Where is his home? We know it not, but in our inmost hearts we pray for a "message of comfort and consolation" for his people.

And in the roaring storm we went our way. There was he carried, the soldier come to rest, and the flag fluttered in the wind and wrapped itself round that son of England. Then the coffin sank into the ground and the hearts of us, the departing witnesses, were sore. Earth fell on it, and the preacher said: "Earth to earth, dust to dust."

Thanks for Pirton Gifts.

The splendid gifts of Cardigan jackets sent by Pirton people, through Mr. T. Franklin on behalf of the special constables, to the Pirton boys serving with the colours, are greatly appreciated.

Writing from Oakley Park, Eye, Suffolk, headquarters, D Squadron, J. Stapleton, says his regiment are going abroad any time now, fifty going this week to join the Leicesters, who are in action now, and "our men are filling up the gaps." The writer waits on officers, and is kept busy at his duty, which he enjoys.

Pte. Parsell, writing from Hertford, is pleased the Pirton soldiers are not forgotten. "I am very happy and comfortable and getting on well," he writes, wishing all a happy Christmas.

FROM THE TRENCHES.

Pte. S. G. Roberts, 1st Herts., G Company, is on active service. He writes—"I am getting on all right out here. It's awfully cold here, with snow and frost. Being in the trenches it seems as cold again. We are having a rest now for a few days, and we want it. We are all tired and want sleep. What with the rattle of the big guns and having to keep awake it soon begins to play on us. I am pleased to say I have not got hit up to the present. It seems as if everyone must get hit, with the shells bursting over our heads the whole time. Only one or two have been hit in G Company, but some of the other Companies have lost several men. I think we have lost about a hundred, what with killed, sick, etc. We have seen some sights since we have been out here, what with towns and villages that have been destroyed and people being turned out of their houses. We shall all be glad when it is over."

PIRTON.

NEWS OF LOCAL SOLDIERS. — Three brothers during the past week have been home on leave together—Corporal C and Corporal F. Wilshire and Private Arthur Wilshire. The first-named, of the Middlesex, was on hospital leave from wounds, while Frederick, unfortunately, is home minus one leg, and is awaiting discharge. The other brother, Arthur, with the Bedfords, has also been wounded. A fourth brother, Bert, is at the Front. Three thus wore the wounded stripes.—Corporal Chas. Walker (acting sergeant) R.E.'s. has got his discharge from the Army owing to rheumatic fever. He wears the silver badge for services rendered. He has been in France six months. His brother, Pioneer William Walker, R.E.'s., has been on sick leave—the first after 17 months in France. Another brother, Sergeant Geo. Walker, R.G.A., has rejoined his regiment after being at a base hospital wounded in the leg.—Phillip Walker, of the Canadians, son of Mr. A. Walker, has also been home on leave, as also have been Mrs. Dawson's son from Codicote hospital (after being wounded a third time), and Private Charlie Titmuss, who is making good progress from wounds.

DEATH OF PIRTON'S OLDEST INHABITANT.

The death occurred on Sunday, Sept. 24th, of Mrs. Sarah Goldsmith, of Little Green, Pirton, after a short illness. The deceased lady was a remarkable character, for notwithstanding her great age—she was 93 years old last January—she was a familiar figure in the village, and was a regular worshipper at the Baptist Chapel until a few months ago.

Born on January 12th, 1823, Mrs. Goldsmith was married young. She retained, by her wonderful memory, stories of the momentous happenings in her youth, and would often recall the hardships of the "forties." She was left a widow 21 years ago. Although she was the mother of fourteen children, only four—two sons and two daughters—survive her. She leaves forty-one grandchildren, sixty-one great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Goldsmith was a member of a family noted for longevity. Her father—James Handscombe—died in 1869 at a ripe age. At his death the late Rev. R. L. Loughborough, first sole vicar of Pirton, penned the following verses to his memory:—

He's gone! a poor, but honest man,
Worn out with age and toil;
With work and weariness he strove,
But death he could not foil.

The ceaseless worker with his scythe,
Hath been and cut him down,
He's gone! and left his cross behind,
Yes. Gone to wear a crown.

He spent a life of useful toil,
And such a life is good;
Unlike the hero of the sword,
Who wades to fame through blood.

I knew him twenty years, and more,
But never heard or known
That he had done a deed of shame
That he need blush to own.

But he with care and toil is done,
For he hath run his span;
And we can write upon his grave
"Here lies an honest man!"

Her mother, Mary Handscombe, reached the age of 90 years, and she is still survived by three sisters and a brother, all of whom have been in receipt of the old age pension since the Act came into force. The funeral is to take place on Thursday, 28th inst., at Pirton Churchyard.

Pte. J. F. Parcell Killed.

BACK WITH REGIMENT A FEW
HOURS.

TWO OTHER PIRTON MEN
WOUNDED BY SAME SHELL.

A TRIO OF HERTS. TERRIERS.

When the Herts. Regiment went to the Front in November, 1914, there were nine Pirton lads in the Hitchin Co.

Seven of these went to the Front with the first draft. Most of them have received the noble scars of battle, the last two to be wounded being Ptes. George Roberts and Arthur Walker.

But the first Pirton lad in the Herts. Regiment to make the great sacrifice of giving his life for his country is Private John Frederick Parcell, Herts. Regiment, only son of Mr. and Mrs. John Parcell, of Great Green, Pirton. The brave lad was only 18½ years of age, so that it will be realised at once that the sacrifice in this case is of the most poignant. The greatest sorrow has been expressed for his parents, whose recollections of a kind-hearted son, full of patriotic pride for his country, will be associated, we hope, with a realisation that the villagers' esteem and feel proud of the noble sacrifice he has early made for his country.

The news of the sad loss was conveyed in a letter from a chum, in the same company as deceased, that was received last Saturday, stating that the shell explosion that killed Pte. Parcell wounded two other Pirton men in the same Company, namely, Pte. Geo. Roberts and Pte. Arthur Walker, who were among the first seven Pirton Terriers to go out.



THE LATE PTE. J. F. PARCELL,
Hertfordshire Regt., of Pirton.

Pte. Parcell, however, was not among this first seven. He joined the Herts. Territorials in February, 1914, before he was sixteen years of age. He was in camp just before the outbreak of war. Owing to his youth he did not go to France till July, 1915. He was a good son, with earnestness of manner and well-meaning motives. He did his work thoroughly, and his painstaking ways won the admiration of those who knew him well. He formerly worked at Messrs. Timothy White's chemist's shop at Hitchin, where his services were highly appreciated.

Last Sunday the Vicar made a touching reference to his death from the pulpit, and it is probable that some day next week a memorial service will be held at the Parish Church.

The letter conveying the sad news was written by Pte. E. Goldsmith, of Pirton, at the request of Compl. H. Smith, also of Pirton, both of whom are in the Herts. Regiment.

The letter, dated Sept. 11, proceeds:—

"Dear Mrs. Parcell.—I now commence the most regrettable duty I have had since my stay in France—to inform you that John was killed by a shell up here yesterday afternoon (Sunday). It may be small consolation to you to know that his death was practically instantaneous. I was only about twenty yards from him at the time when the shell burst. I can assure you he suffered no pain. He had been back with the Regiment only a few hours when it happened. (Deceased had just left hospital where he had been suffering from illness). He was very cheerful, having seen Fred Baines and Arthur Odell, in the Royal Sussex, and Geo. Thompson, in the A.S.C. Arthur Walker and Geo. Roberts (two who were wounded by the same shell) are no doubt well on the way to Blighty. Arthur, I am afraid, was rather more serious than George. We have just been out of the trenches to the burial of the dead. It was most touching to us, being such close comrades. I can only say that his loss will be felt very keenly not only in our section, but in the platoon."

The writer mentions that only two of the first lot from Pirton are now left unwounded. He adds: "We sympathise with you in your great bereavement. I am writing this for Harry, as he is still affected by the shock."

The writer adds that with any luck at all he may be home on leave within a month or so when, if spared, he would bring for Mrs. Parcell one or two little articles that were in her son's kit.

Pte. Parcell was home on leave last February.

THE TWO WOUNDED MEN

Pte. Arthur Walker, Herts. Regiment, who was wounded by the same shell, is the youngest of four sons of the late Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Walker, all of whom are in the Army. He is married, and his wife lives near the Baptist Chapel, Great Green.

Pte. Goldsmith, in his letter, describes the wounds as being in the left arm and hand.

Another letter has also been received from the Rev. E. J. Welsber, chaplain of the hospital in France, who writes:—"Sept. 11.—Dear Mrs. Walker.—Your husband was brought in wounded yesterday, and he thinks you might worry until you hear, so he has asked me to write and so relieve your mind. He asks me to say there is no need to worry, that he is doing quite well, and hopes soon to be on the way to the base of England. Of course he is feeling bad, but as far as we can see there is nothing serious, so we trust that all will be well. I will let you know as soon as I know how he is progressing, and I hope that he will soon be well enough to travel, and that you will have the pleasure and joy of seeing him, as he longs to get home. He sends his best love to you all, and I pray that the Heavenly

Father may be with you, blessing and helping you."

Of the four brothers, two are still in England, one at Tring and the other at Aldershot. The brother Fred, in the 11th Hussars, is at the Front, but the last heard of him was some months ago, when he was in hospital suffering from a serious accident through his horse.

Pte. A. Walker went to the Front in November, 1914.

PTE. GEO. ROBERTS.

The other wounded Terrier, Pte. Geo. Roberts, is in King George's Hospital, Stamford-street, London, E.C.

He is the only son of Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Roberts, Little Green, Pirton.

In the letter Pte. Goldsmith says Pte. Roberts was slightly wounded near the ear by a bit of shell, which dropped very close to where he was standing. The writer then describes what happened to the other two, but adds that he did not know what would be done to the wounded "as when he left the trenches everything was in a state of confusion."

On Monday morning Mrs Roberts heard that her boy was in hospital at London.

This is the second time Pte. Roberts has been wounded, the previous time being in May, 1915, when his injuries were to his head and leg.

PTE. A. WALKER DIES FROM WOUNDS.

In another column we refer to three Pirton Terriers, one of whom was killed and the other two wounded, by a shell explosion while in action.

Since the account was written another of the trio, we are sorry to learn, has passed away—Pte. A. Walker, Herts. Regiment, whose wife lives near the Baptist Chapel, Great Green.

We were informed yesterday that he died on Sept. 18, from gun-shot wounds in the shoulder, head and wrist.

According to the letter from the Chaplain, published elsewhere, he was wounded on Sept. 10.

FINISHED HIS TIME.—Pte. Herbert Walker, of the 1st Herts., has returned to Pirton, having completed his service of 12½ years with the Colours. From the Militia he joined the Herts. at the outbreak of war, and has had a long spell at the Front. He was with the transport section, and on more than one occasion has been in supreme danger through bursting shells, but he was always fortunate in escaping serious wounds, though the horses he has had charge of have been killed. On another occasion he fell into a hidden ditch, with the horses on top of him, but again he escaped injury. He has suffered, however, from bad feet, and has been in hospital in France several months. He is a son of the late Mr. and Mrs. G. Walker, of the Great Green, and has three other brothers in the Army, two of whom are at the Front.

PIRTON.

A memorial service takes place at Pirton Church to-night (Thursday) at 8 p.m. for parishioners who have fallen during the present war. These include Ptes. John Parcell, Arthur Walker, Sergt. Cannon (West Mill farm), Frank Hanscombe, and A. Abbiss.

MAY 2, 1918.

PIRTON DISTRICT.

A PRIVATE WHO WON THE D.C.M.

PRIVATE H. CHAMBERLAIN KILLED IN BATTLE.
STALKED SIX SNIPERS.

We share the deep regret of Pirton residents in the death in action, probably on or about April 23, of Private Henry George Chamberlain (39), Suffolk Regiment, who had won the proud distinction, rarely awarded to privates, of the D.C.M.

The deceased's valour which earned this coveted honour was a daring single-handed enterprise about last February, when Private Chamberlain, as the "London Gazette" announced, "entirely on his own initiative went in search of a sniper, found three in a shell-hole, killed them, and returned with Very lights and a trench lamp. He afterwards accounted for three more snipers, lying out for hours in 'No Man's Land' stalking them. He also entered a German pill-box and killed twelve more Germans single-handed."

This brave lad's achievement is the pride of Pirton's war traditions, being the highest honour accorded a village resident. He was brought up from a baby by his aunt, Mrs. Gazeley, of Andrew's-cottages. He formerly worked for Mr. James Walker, Little Green farm, and joined up three years ago last June, having been in France over two and a half years. During one action he was badly ruptured, and was rendered unconscious, returning to England early in 1917. He went back to France in July last.

Private Chamberlain was 39 years of age. The Chaplain of the Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, where Private Chamberlain died, writing on April 23, says he was admitted with a severe wound in the head, fracturing the skull. He was partly conscious, and died shortly after being brought in. He buried him in the cemetery near by with a number of other brave comrades. "We have been having a dreadful time," concludes the writer, with sympathetic expressions.

We intend giving a photograph of this brave soldier next week.

THREE MEN MISSING.

This week information has also been received that three Pirton soldiers are missing—C. Titmuss, Bertram Wilson, and Charles Wilshere.

ANOTHER SOLDIER WOUNDED.

It is also reported that Arthur Odell, of Holwell-cottages, has been wounded in the back.

GUNNER ALBERT REYNOLDS KILLED.

Feelings of acute sorrow are felt for Mrs. Albert Reynolds, of Windlesham, Surrey, in the loss of her husband, Gunner Albert Reynolds (34), R.G.A., son of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Reynolds, of 3, Wesley-cottages, Pirton, who died on August 9, from wounds received in action in France the previous day. While lying wounded in hospital in France he seemed to realise that his end was near, for he wrote to his wife that "it would be her loss and his gain." The late Gunner Reynolds was a kind and considerate son and nothing was too much trouble for him if it meant a kindly action to others. For several years he was a gamekeeper at Shillington Manor for Mr. Payne, and it was from the house staff there that he found his wife who was cook at the Manor. Gunner Reynolds had also been keeper on an estate in Yorkshire, and before joining up was keeper and stock-keeper on a large estate at Windlesham. He enlisted in the Army in 1916, and went to France in January the following year. The following July he had an accident while following his military duties in France, and was entered in hospital at Leeds with a fractured ankle. There he remained till November, when he was sent to Ireland, breaking his journey for what proved his last visit to Pirton. From Ireland he went to Winchester and thence, in April last, to France, taking part in the gallant actions to stem the German onslaught, which he safely survived, only to fall in the big British offensive in August. The late Gunner Reynolds made friends wherever he went. While in hospital at Leeds he became an adept at making articles for disposal at local Red Cross sales, and was quickly a favourite with the local ladies for his readiness and cheerfulness to help in any way he could.

The whole of Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds' six surviving sons have served in the Army, as already stated in our columns. Two have made the great sacrifice. The last to join up, Jacob Reynolds, is on home service. He was formerly ostler at the Sun hotel, Hitchin, and driver of Hitchin Fire Brigade. He has a wife and six children. One of the other married sons, Will, is still serving, and has a wife and five children—not three as previously stated. This gallant family may well be proud of its record.

We hope to give a photograph of Gunner Reynolds next week.

The Late Private Walter Reynolds.

The *NORTH HERTS.* *MAIL* last week, recorded the death in action on December 2 (or 3) of Private Walter Reynolds (23) Herts. Regiment (attached Glosters), youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Reynolds, 3, Wesley-cottages, Pirton. We are able this week to give details as to how the sad event occurred. According to a sympathetic letter from the Rev. J. Panton, Wesleyan chaplain, Private Reynolds was killed through the explosion of a dump of ammunition near which he and others were resting on their way to the front line. "Death was instantaneous," adds the Chaplain, "I read the burial service over the spot where he and others were killed and their remains interred. As chaplain I want to say how deeply his loss is regretted by all who knew him. He attended my services constantly, and we have worshipped together in many strange places. May our Heavenly Father comfort you."



C. F. Hamilton, his commanding officer, in sending the painful news, adds: "These men are all so splendid out here and you have every reason to be proud of them, but it is hardest of all for you at home, as the men themselves say. You must try and keep a brave heart as he would wish and a bright hope for the future. God bless and comfort you."

Private Reynolds had a fine, upright character, his consideration and kindness being a comfort to those dear to him. He helped his father in the small-holding work. He joined the Hitchin Territorials before the war, and went to France May 24, 1918. He was home on his last leave October 28, so that his sacrifice in the noble cause came very soon after what proved his farewell to friends at home. A circumstance that adds grief to the affair is that Mrs. Reynolds, his mother, has been—and still is—an invalid for several years.

Few families can show a better record of war service. There are four other sons in the Army—Private William, King's Shropshire Light Infantry, an officer's servant in France, with wife and three children living at Edenbridge (Kent); Driver Albert, R.G.A., been in hospital with crushed ankle through a horse trampling on him—he has just returned to Ireland, wife and one child at Windlesham (Surrey); Driver Harry, R.H.A., been badly gassed in France and now returned to his regiment in Yorkshire, married; and Private George, Suffolk Regiment, who has not been to the Front, but is helping his father at home. We may add that Harry and George are twins. In addition, the married daughter's husband, Private Percy Dear, Herts. Regiment, wounded in the right wrist on July 31, 1917, is now at Crowborough.

PIRTON DISTRICT.

THE LATE CORPORAL A. TITMUSS.



Corporal Albert Titmuss (32), R.F.A., whose death in action took place on or about Oct. 31. His battery was getting the guns in action when a shell exploded near the battery. They got Corpl. Titmuss to a place of safety, but he expired before he was got to the dressing station. Sergt. Gay writes: "We respected him as a brave and fearless man. He had not been long with us in the battery, but we found him a true and honest comrade, respected by all the N.C.O.'s and men in the battery." Corporal Titmuss enlisted on August 16, 1915, and went to France the following May. He only left England on his last home leave on October 7. He worked at the G.N. station at Finsbury Park. He was a son of the late Mr. and Mrs. George Titmuss, Church-walk, Pirton, and his wife lives with her mother at Little Green, Pirton.

Letter to Pirton.

Gunner G. Walker, Royal Garrison Artillery, has written to the Vicar of Pirton stating he is well. He is stationed on an island off the coast of Ireland guarding the harbour mouth. After making a few inquiries about his wife and family, he says "a soldier must do his duty, and do it well." He adds that he is getting on well with his work as a soldier, having passed a test in position finding, which means more pay for him. It is a cheerful letter, and shows that when satisfied that family matters are all right the British soldier is made of the right metal.

PIRTON.

Gunner Geo. Walker received a warm welcome by his friends on his short visit home from the north of Ireland, where he is sight ranging on one of the coast batteries. He looked well and fit. It was fine to hear him describe the technical details of range finding, and also cheering to hear that his section had come off A1 in a firing contest with the Regulars there. We wish all Pirton boys a safe and glorious return home.

Seven Men Wounded.

PIRTON DISTRICT.

The opening of the German offensive on March 21 will be remembered for the gallantry of Pirtion soldiers, no fewer than six of whom were wounded in the Hun onslaught.

PRIVATE CHARLES FURR, M.M.

Private Charles Furr, M.M., Beds. Regiment, a stretcher-bearer, is in Trouville Hospital, France; bullet wound left shoulder, severe. His wife and three children live at Holwell-cottages. He formerly worked as a navvy at Letchworth, and the last job he was employed on was Mr. Lance Wright's new house at Hitchin. He went to France in June, 1915. He was wounded about March 20.

RIFLEMAN JACK PIERCE.

Rifleman Jack Pierce, second son of Mrs. George Pierce, Holwell-cottages, is in East Leigh Hospital, Hants., writing that he is "slightly wounded." He was 19 last Christmas, going to France on January 10 last. He used to work at Messrs. Innes' Sons and King, Hitchin. The eldest brother Charles, was killed about December, 1916.

PRIVATE SIDNEY OLNEY.

A letter from the Infantry Record Officer, Island Bridge, Dublin, states that Private Sidney Olney, Royal Irish Fusiliers, second son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Olney, Andrew's-cottages, was wounded in Egypt on March 10. The nature of the wounds is not stated. Miss Pollard wrote for further information, but received a reply that they had cabled and got no further news. Private Olney, who used to work for Mr. Franklin, went to France in June, 1915, being wounded in the arm the following month. After leave he went to Salonika and was then transferred to Egypt. Another son, Joseph Frank, is in India with the R.F.A.

PRIVATE E. REYNOLDS.

Writing from the 26th General Hospital, Etaples, France, Private Frederick Reynolds, Lances, and Yorks. Regiment, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Reynolds, Handscombe-cottages, Burge End, says he was wounded on the 21st. The official report says, "gunshot, shoulder and knee, severe." He was formerly a footman in private service in Scotland. Another brother, Arthur, is with the transports in Wiltshire.

PRIVATE ARTHUR WALKER.

Great sorrow is felt for Private Arthur Walker, Liverpool Regiment, youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. James Walker, Little Green Farm, who has had a leg amputated as a result of wounds in France on March 22, when he received gun-shot wound in leg and thigh. Mrs. Walker has written for further information. He is in the 4th General Hospital, France, and the nurse has written to say he is quite comfortable since the operation. Private Walker has been in France eight months. He and another brother, Herbert James, who is in the Beds. Yeomanry in Egypt, both helped on the farm, the work now being undertaken by the other son remaining, Mr. Walker, the father, being an invalid. Private Arthur enlisted in the Beds. Yeomanry but was transferred to the Liverpool Regiment. We hope good news will be forthcoming of the gallant soldier.

RIFLEMAN BERTIE DAWSON.

"Gun-shot, chest penetrated, seriously," is the official designation of the battle wounds on March 21 in France, sustained by Rifleman Bertie Dawson, King's Royal Rifles, third son of Mrs. Dawson, and the late Mr. E. Dawson 2, Holly-cottages, Little Green. Rifleman Dawson was apprenticed with Mr. Cain, coachbuilder, Hitchin. He joined up at 18 and is now 19. He is in hospital at Birmingham. Another son, Charlie, is convalescent in the Maples Hospital, Hitchin, from wounds in the arms and leg received with the R.E.'s in France last July. Mrs. Dawson lost one son, Reginald, from illness, while working in a T.N.T. factory.

PRIVATE TED GOLDSMITH.

We also hear that Private Ted Goldsmith, youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. W. Goldsmith, Little Green, has been wounded in the leg. This is the second son to be wounded.

Pirtion Village Hero.

D.C.M. FOR KILLING HUN SNIPERS.

This photograph is of the late Private Henry George Chamberlain (39), Suffolk Regiment, of Pirtion, who had won the Distinguished Conduct Medal.



The deceased's valour which earned this coveted honour was a daring single-handed enterprise about last February, when Private Chamberlain, as the "London Gazette" announced, "entirely on his own initiative went in search of a sniper, found three in a shell-hole, killed them, and returned with Very lights and a trench lamp. He afterwards accounted for three more snipers, lying out for hours in 'No Man's Land' stalking them. He also entered a German pill-box and killed twelve more Germans single-handed."

Private Chamberlain was brought up from a baby by his aunt, Mrs. Gazeley, of Andrew's-cottages. He formerly worked for Mr. James Walker, Little Green farm, and joined up three years ago last June, having been in France over two and a half years.

Pirton's First D.C.M.

The gallant boys of Pirton are surely adding to the military glory of the village.

The latest distinction to be won is the D.C.M. for 20655 Private Henry George Chamberlain, Suffolk Regiment, who was brought up by his aunt, Mrs. Gazeley, of Andrews-cottages, Pirton.

The official award says: "The General Officer Commanding — Brigade sends you hearty congratulations on winning the D.C.M. for your very gallant conduct at Zonnebeke. You earned it well by your splendid pluck.—R. M. Stevenson, Staff Captain. November 3, 1917."

Private Chamberlain, who is 38, joined up in June, 1915, and went to France in May the following year. Last January he was in hospital in England, suffering from an injury sustained in action. He formerly worked for Mr. J. Walker, farmer, Pirton.

KILLED SIX SNIPERS.

D.C.M. for Man Who Stalked
Enemy in No Man's Land.

FEIGNED DEATH IN VAIN.

Many stirring stories of the glorious valour of our "Tommys," which has won the D.C.M., are told in last night's supplement of the *London Gazette*.

One of the greatest heroes is Private H. G. Chamberlain, Suffolk Regiment (Hitchin).

Entirely on his own initiative he went in search of a sniper, found three in a shell hole, killed them all, and returned with Very lights and a trench lamp.

He afterwards accounted for three more snipers, lying out for hours in No Man's Land and stalking them

Pirton Soldier and the Sniper.

The London Press has recounted the stirring story of valour performed by Private H. G. Chamberlain, D.C.M., Suffolk Regiment, of Pirton. Entirely on his own initiative he went in search of a German sniper, and found three in a shell hole. He killed them and returned with the very lights and a trench lamp. He afterwards accounted for three more snipers. He was further instrumental in the capture of a "pill-box" containing twelve Huns, who had been overlooked by the front line troops. He also bayoneted several Germans who feigned death.

PTE. A. R. JENKINS KILLED.—The sorrow of many has been evoked at the death in action of a fine soldier Private Alfred Raymond Jenkins, Grenadier Guards, son of Mrs. Jenkins, Brampton Cottage, Brampton Park-rd., Hitchin. Pte. Jenkins was 21 years of age and single. He was employed on the railway, and left there in June, 1915, in order to join the Guards. As a railway employee he would not necessarily have had to join up, but he was anxious to do so, and he gave a week's notice and joined. He stood 6ft. 1½in. high. He went out to France last June, and always wrote home cheerfully. Recently he asked his relatives to send him some Christmas pudding this year, saying there was nothing like asking in time. His last letter home, dated September 6, stated that he was resting in a barn with about twenty others for a few days after being in the trenches, and expected to go back to the trenches shortly. Pte. F. Adams, Grenadier Guards, writing to his wife, Mrs. Adams, of West-alley, High-street, Hitchin, states he had heard "that poor old Ray Jenkins was killed on the night of Saturday, Sept. 16," and had seen a postcard that came from up the line, sent by one of his old chums, who was close to him when it happened. Another of Mrs. Jenkins' sons is in the Royal Engineers at Chatham, and there are younger sons.



THE LATE PTE. A. ABBISS,
Canadian Regiment, of Pirton. This gallant soldier was killed in the reserve trenches on March 29. He is the first Pirton soldier to be killed in action.

THE PEOPLE, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1916.
A WELL-EARNED REST BEHIND THE FIRING LINE



Topical.]

TIRED OUT!

[Official Photograph.

"DAVIDSON OF THE GUNNERS."

PALMAM QUI MERUIT FERAT.

Of Battery "L" of the R.H.A.

I'll tell you the story another day,
But written in gold on the scroll of fame,
Read Davidson of the Gunners' name.

In charge of Battery one, one, nine,
Shrapnel raked by a German line,
Whose guns were hidden, where none could place,
"I'll die or locate them," writ on his face.

His Battery masked by a churchyard wall,
Twelve lyddite shells through the wrecked church
fall.

The tottering steeple alone points high,
"Seems certain death, but I can but try."

So Davidson goes, with a telephone wire,
And climbs that tottering rocking spire,
Clever with glass, he locates each gun,
And wires to his men, and they smash each one.

For seven long hours, midst shrapnel shell,
He stays on that spire, till the dark eve fell.
Then down, with the telephone wire in hand,
Back to his gallant Gunner band.

Safe and sound, when a searchlight flies,
Illuming the murk of the dark'ning skies.
A sniper fires, and alas! alas!
Through Davidson's neck did that bullet pass.

In at the spine, through his mouth it flew,
And what does the gallant Gunner do?
Instructs his men how to baulk the foe,
Then turns to the hospital tent to go.

With soldierly march and lifted head,
"Plug this hole that they've drilled"—T was all
he said.

And the 14th Brigade are proud of his fame,
And swear by Gunner Davidson's name.

H. W. LATHOM.

December 15th, 1914.

BRITISH ARTILLERY'S
SPLENDID WORK.

SIR DOUGLAS HAIG'S "DEEP
APPRECIATION."

Sir Douglas Haig has issued the following Special Order of the Day:—

I wish to convey to all ranks of the Royal Regiment of Artillery my deep appreciation of the splendid service rendered by them in all stages of the Somme and Lys battles since the opening of the enemy's attack.

The difficult conditions imposed by a defensive fight against greatly superior numbers have been faced with the same skill, courage and devotion to duty which characterised the work of all branches of the artillery throughout the offensive battles of 1917.

With less constant and loyal co-operation on the part of both field, heavy, and siege batteries, the great bravery and determination of the infantry could scarcely have availed to hold up the enemy's advance. The infantry are the first to admit the inestimable value of the artillery support, so readily given them on all occasions.

The knowledge possessed by each arm, doubly confirmed by the severe tests already passed through successfully, that it can rely with absolute confidence upon the most whole-hearted and self-sacrificing co-operation of the other, is the greatest possible assurance that all further assaults of the enemy will be met and defeated.