

The Extraordinary and the Everyday

A Year in the Life of a Rural Community, 1914-5

Newsletter No. 6: April 2015



Gas

Soldiers wearing gas masks in April 1915



The first gas masks issued were fabric bags treated with anti-gas chemicals. They were replaced later in the war by canister masks or box respirators.

Death of Private W Tapp

Private William Tapp, 8970 the 1st Battalion the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, died of wounds on 25th April.

Second Battle of Ypres 22nd April-25th May 1915

April 22nd: Poison gas was used for the first time on the Western Front when the German 4th Army attacked the French positions around Ypres. Chlorine gas from over 5,000 cylinders formed toxic green clouds that drifted towards the French lines. French and Allied troops fell back leaving Ypres almost completely surrounded. The German army failed to capitalize on this situation due to lack of reserve troops to send forward and the caution of frontline troops who were hesitant to venture too close to the gas clouds.

April 24th: on the morning of 24th the German Army release a second gas attack on the northern part of the Ypres Salient in an attempt to take St Julien. During the fighting the British army suffered in excess of 59,000 casualties, the Germans 34,000 the French 10,000. Though the German army failed to break through the Allied lines, they did manage to reduce the Ypres Salient to about three miles and therefore were able to shell the city. They also secured much of the high ground in the area.

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LOCAL NEWS AND WAR NEWS

March 6th: It was announced that Gaydon Flower Show would be cancelled owing to the war.

March 8th: Jack Mullis enrolls at Avon Dassett School.

March 10th: Meeting of Farnborough Rural District Council.

March 19th: 110th Avon Dassett Parish Council meeting in the Reading Room. Mr. H. Keyte made signatory in place of the late Mr. W. Mason.

March 29th: Annual Parish Meeting of Avon Dassett Parish Council.

April 1st : Board of Trade returns show a 12.4% drop of males in regular employment compared to January 1914.

April 9th: A Red Cross examination in First Aid was held at Avon Dassett with all candidates passing.

April 11th: Sargent Wadland, B Squadron 1/1 Warwickshire Yeomanry is posted to Egypt.

April 19th: Elizabeth Mary Wright and Violet Agnes Cooper enroll at Avon Dassett School.

April 22nd: Germans use gas to force the British and French line to fall back between Ypres and Dixmude.

ENGINE ARTIFICER S. W. MITCHELL



My Uncle Sam served in the First World War on HMS Iron Duke. This was the flagship of Admiral Jellicoe at the Battle of Jutland in 1916. Tragically, after surviving the war he developed a boil on his face and died of septicemia; he was only 23 years old. My Grandparents received a telegram stating that he was very ill and the same day received the awful news that he had died. He was taken to Constantinople to be buried. My Grandparents were sent his medals, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal and the Royal Ensign Flag which had been placed over his coffin.

Sue Harris



A little barrel which is said to have been made from the teak of the ship

