

Somerset Guardian

17th March, 1916

On Monday morning, Mr C J Lewin received a telegram from the War Office informing him that his second son, Lieut. Kenneth P L Lewin, 7th DCLI, had been killed in action on March 9. The deceased officer had had a distinguished career, and his future was full of the highest promise. He was born at Radstock, September 16th, 1889. From his father's school he gained a Junior County Scholarship, and proceeded to Sexey's School, Bruton. Here he won an Intermediate and afterwards a Senior County Scholarship. This, with the Open Science Exhibition which he gained at Trinity College, Cambridge, enabled him to enter the University. In 1908 he gained a First Class in the Natural Science Tripos, Part 1, and the next year became a Major Scholar of his College.



Kenneth Lewin was granted the Peter Leigh Exhibition, and a year later divided the Coutte-Trotter Studentship with the last of the Senior Wranglers. With the aid of a grant from the Balfour Fund he worked on Infusoria (micro-biological research) at Munich under Professor Hertwig. In 1911 he occupied a table at the Naples Biological Station. Several brilliant pieces of biological research were carried out by him, and he published some original papers, read before the Royal Society. After acting as assistant to the Quick Professor of Biology at Cambridge for some time, he was appointed Pronto-Zoologist at Rothamstead, which appointment he held until the outbreak of the war.

Lieut. Lewin joined the colours at the first call, gaining his commission as second lieutenant soon after. Quite recently he was recommended for promotion to first lieutenant. His brother, Captain R R Lewin was killed on September 25 last. Lieut. Lewin was present in Radstock at the funeral of his mother less than two months ago.

Lieut. Kenneth Lewin
7th Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry
Killed in Action
France and Flanders
9th March, 1916

17th March, 1916

MEETING OF ATTESTED MARRIED MEN

Practically every affected married man attended a meeting held at Midsomer Norton when Mr F Biggs presided. The Chairman, in his remarks referred to the calling up of the married groups so soon, and said it had come as a great shock and surprise to all, and in his opinion was unwarranted and certainly unjustifiable. The Derby Scheme had been nothing more than trickery and deception from beginning to end.

When they attested they were shown literature, which stated that all single men were to go before married, and then the married men, in order of age from 19 to 40, and those who did not respond would be dealt with first. Those facts were urged upon them very forcibly by the canvassers . . . The Government had found loopholes for hundreds of thousands of single shirkers to slip through by the large lists of reserved occupations, into which these cowards had gone to escape serving their King and Country.

The Government had also given the conscientious objector his opportunity to escape, and thousands had suddenly developed consciences. Was it fair or just that they should be called upon to break up their homes and leave their wives and families, while all those single shirkers were left behind, who would no doubt be earning more wages in consequence of their going and be living on the fat of the land? Was it fair that they should have to fight for such cowards and humbugs? They should like it to be thoroughly understood that the attested married men of Midsomer Norton did not for one moment wish to shirk their responsibilities but were willing to do their duty to their country, but they thought that the pledges given to them should be carried out, and that all men, married and single, should be called upon to do their share equally, one man with another, without fear or favour.

The following resolution was passed and was signed by 54 men and copies were sent to Mr Asquith, Lord Derby, and Mr J King, MP: We the undersigned married men of Midsomer Norton, who have attested under Groups 24 to 46, strongly protest against the calling up of married groups until the pledges given by Mr Asquith and Lord Derby to the married men have been fulfilled by calling up all single men first. The large list of certified occupations has afforded an asylum for many thousands who have entered these occupations for the purpose of evading their responsibilities. We join in the universal opinion that most of the single men thus excused would be better employed at this great crisis in serving their country at the front rather than in their present occupation which could be filled by women or older men.

We further strongly protest against the calling up of married men before compulsory service has been introduced for all unattested men of military age. Our attestation was obtained by statements in recruiting literature and on the advice given by canvassers that attested men

would be given many definite advantages over those who did not attest, whereas the advantage at present rests with the unattested, who jeeringly tell us that we were very foolish to have attested. Under these circumstances we earnestly appeal to you to suspend the mobilization of married men for a period and to issue a plain statement in the meantime.

* * * * *

Somerset Guardian

24th March, 1916

COMPULSORY SERVICE

Hundreds of letters are being received by the War Office from Attested men, urging the adoption of general compulsory service. There is a disposition in War Office circles in favour of the proposal and, while it is recognised that Labour may oppose it, the general belief is entertained that the country generally would receive a further compulsory scheme without much opposition.

* * * * *

LOCAL APPEALS TRIBUNAL

25th March, 1916

The first case taken was that of **Reginald Maggs**, aged 22, married, of Chapel House, High Littleton, bread deliverer, who was appealed for by Radstock Co-operative Society. Mr Gent stated that Maggs had been with the Society some 18 months.

Mr Gibson: I take it you are making every endeavour to get men over military age for work?

Mr Gent: Yes, we are. We have advertised in six or seven papers.

The Chairman: Would it not be possible for women to do this class of work? If you could get a woman to drive a horse she could carry a loaf of bread.

Mr Gent: We haven't looked at it from that point of view.

Colonel Pollard: Couldn't people come to the shop for their bread? There should be no difficulty. This man goes some 12 or 14 miles with the bread.

Mr Gibson: I take it you serve a number of isolated houses?

Mr Gent: Yes, a good number. If you can get the people into the idea of fetching their bread from the shops we shall be pleased to give up delivering. You must remember we have a very big trade. We baked 182 sacks of flour into bread last week.

The Chairman: We have been living in a very luxurious age, and customers want everything delivered to their homes, even down to a few ounces of pepper sometimes. In town very small articles costing a few pence are often delivered.

The Tribunal granted two months exemption from date.

Elsie Hilliar
Munitions worker
March, 1916

I ran away. I just ran away to be a munitions worker. I was working on the farm in those days - in skirts, mind, girls never wore anything else. Then I said, 'I can't be doing with this anymore. I'd better find some britches or trousers or something and get down to some real work'. So, I had some of my brother's britches. A girl in trousers! There was a real song and dance about that in the village - it was shocking! It was even in the papers! It really was. I'm quite serious. Whatever next?

I worked hard all day long and one day I said I'd worked hard enough here. I'm going away to work in munitions. So I packed my trunk ready to go off to work in a factory in Coventry. First I went to say goodbye to my sister who at that time was working in the hospital and she said, 'I'm going with you'. So we left at eight in the morning, went to the Labour Exchange for a pass and then off up to White and Poppy's factory in Coventry.

I was 18 when we went, and 14 stone - yes I was - couldn't get a gown big enough for me! I was 14879 and my sister 14878 - Foremistresses. I've got three rings on there but she had four 'cause she was a year older than me, so, the senior foremistress. We were working on the AT fuses - I've still got one. Made it myself. Took it out in bits and pieces as I made them. Still got it upstairs.



When we got to Coventry the snow was as high as my knees and, cor, didn't we starve during that war. All's we had was bread with a scraping of whatever we could find. Mustard! And then they put us out of work when they brought Scottish girls down to the factory. Well, I wasn't having that so I arranged for us to move to Filton in Bristol. That's me with some of the trimmers there - me next to the sewing machine. Machines haven't changed much, have they? I know I have!

I worked on the first Bristol Bomber that went up. I was on the linen covering for the wings, and things like that. When the time came for it to fly it went straight up - beautifully - and then came straight down again and crashed straight into the ground. Something wrong with the engine maybe. Whatever it was, it had crashed, and we set to to get another one ready. When that went out they found that someone had slashed through the fabric of a wing. So we had to make another wing. Oh yes, that used to happen. Sabotage.

I used to cycle home for the weekends, clean the house, and then cycle back the 20 miles to my digs the other side of Bristol. I stayed at Filton for the rest of the war and when it was over - or the next day, anyway - I cycled home to the family business. It was my 21st birthday.

* * * * *

Cpl. Clifford Jeffery
West Somerset Yeomanry
1st April, 1916

We hung around the East Coast until September 1915, and then went abroad. We went up to Liverpool and embarked on the *Olympic* - the first time she was used as a troopship. A thousand of us on board and all Yeomanry units from Scotland right down to Land's End. Different units. We went out east, to Mudros, off Greece.

We were stuck on board there in the harbour for nearly a week and when we were finally taken off we were landed at Suvla Bay - we were the first reinforcements after the Suvla Bay landing. We got there in October and stayed until Christmas, when they evacuated Suvla. Suvla'd been a good idea but badly organised. They'd got on the bay with hardly a shot bein' fired. Then they'd stopped on the coast tryin' to find water but the Turks were on the gurt high hills in front of 'em. And they took a hell of a pasting.

When we got there all we had to do were dig trenches. Didn't dare show our heads above ground or they'd pick us off. Then they started evacuating us - they'd take out three fellers and put one back. Thass how they deceived the Turks. They didn' know nothin' about it till we were off - ha! Went back to Mudros and stopped there fer a few days. Had our Christmas dinner there, and then off to Alexandria. I stopped in Alexandria fer two months I suppose - in charge of a mule depot, little Canadian mules, snotty little buggers they were, no bigger than a donkey. An, caw, weren't they contrary devils, too. Bit like me I suppose.

When we had joined up we actually signed that they could keep us one year after war broke out. When that were up you were entitled to come out if you wanned to. Well, that were more than up, and I wanned to go home cause Father were home lettin' the farm go to ruin. So they paraded 30 on us, all time-expired. We all agreed that nobody were gonna sign up - we'd have a bit of fun with the officers. First one they came to were Sgt. Milton and, ha!, he never had the guts to say no, s'nuh. I was down in the middle of the line and when they got

to me they said, 'Of course, Cpl. Jeffrey, you'll sign'. And I said, 'No Sur. I've got some duties to attend to at home. I've made up me mind. I'm goin' 'ome'. Huh, he didn' like it. 'You go home an' you'll be called up agen as a conscript.' An' I said, 'If I go home an' get called up I shan't be a conscript 'cause I've served my time an' I'm entitled to be discharged. An' if I do get called up I'll take damn good care I don't come back in the West Somerset Yeomanry!' Ha!

I come out on the fust of April. In the middle of May they brought out an Act of Parliament that all time-expired people should stay in the army. I were just in time.

* * * * *

Somerset Guardian

20th April, 1916

The first hospital train known to have passed through Midsomer Norton and Radstock travelled over the Somerset and Dorset Railway on Monday at about 2 o'clock on its way to Bath. The train was admirably fitted up.

Midsomer Norton Fair, which this year fell on Easter Tuesday, would have, under ordinary conditions, provided an attraction for many hundreds of people during the holiday, but the war and the limitation of the fair to one day by the Charter under which the fair is held, robbed the event of its importance this year. Messrs. Blinman and Miles had but few cattle to offer, and the number of horse dealers bent on business was greatly reduced. The pleasure fair has for years been one of the events of the season, but it will probably never resume its former glory when it was kept in full swing for two, three, and sometimes even four days. On Tuesday there were but a few stalls and one or two minor attractions. A large number of people turned up as usual, but found little or nothing to engage their attention.

* * * * *

Clifford Jeffery

Farmer (and former soldier)

Soon after I got 'ome from Alexandria the buggers tried to call me up again. There were a lot of tribunals an' medicals goin' on here at home. I'd go down an' there'd be three or four officials and army officers an' you had to state yer case. I was put down fer 'substitution', that-do-mean-to-say that if they took me, they'd replace me on me own farm - on my own farm! - with a bloke what waddn't fit fer the front line. Twice I had word that a bloke were actually comin' to substitute me but he never turned up. An' I never went to look fer 'im. I had 155 acres to do. I *had* tuh bide home to work, see? An' we *did* work in them days. Had Land Army girls from the camp come once - to help with the thrashin' - but they were bloody useless.



Poor devils. One girl came wi' a pair o' army boots on. They didn' even fit where they touched, an' before lunchtime her feet was like raw pieces o' beef. I sent 'er to the missus to get fitted wi' summing more suitable. They oughta 'a had more sense than send a girl out like it. She was only about 16. Some of 'em were city girls. They just couldn't cope.

Another time I 'ad orders tuh plough up ground fer corn. Twelve acres, I think. Then t'was another fifteen. Had tuh get rid o' me flock o' sheep 'cos I never 'ad nowhere for them to run. Then they told me to do another twelve, an' that were flood-land, under water half the year - an' I refused to comply. Two army officers and a civilian come up an' wanted to look over the farm. In the end one of the officers said, 'Jeffery, I congratulate you on your farming'. About a fortnight later I had a note withdrawing the order. It wen' on fer some time like that an' then I 'ad another note, sayin' 'Total Exemption'. They reckoned I was worth more bein' at home than I was in the army.

* * * * *

LOCAL APPEALS TRIBUNAL

12th May, 1916

Charles James Fry, Midsomer Norton, Farmer, aged 31, single, stated that he had two girls aged about 15 and 17, and two boys under 15 working on the farm. He himself worked 16 or 17 hours a day. - Capt. Mawer urged that the appellant's father was the tenant of the farm, and that the appellant was also a haulier and carrier. Exemption was granted for three months for him to get his crops in.

Somerset Guardian

26th May, 1916

The inception of the new Summer Time Act which came into force last Sunday morning was carried out locally with an entire absence of friction or inconvenience. It was not till the evening that one really noticed that any change had been made, and that when people found that daylight lasted till 10 o'clock at night the full effect of the change was very noticeable and much appreciated.

One curious point arose in connection with the mail train which brings the first morning mail to Radstock and the district from Bath. This train is timed to leave Bath Midland Station at 2:50am, but last Sunday morning there was no 2:50am as at 2 o'clock the hands of the clock had been pushed forward to 3 o'clock. If the train was started at 3 o'clock the Post Office authorities would have been deprived of 40 minutes time in which to get the mails ready. The railway company therefore arranged for the train to leave on this particular morning at 3 o'clock 'or as soon as the mails had been loaded'. The mail was a few minutes late but no particular difficulty was experienced and after Sunday the train left at its proper time: 2:50am.

* * * * *

LOCAL APPEALS TRIBUNAL

29th May, 1916

Grist to the Mill

Mr B C Maloney, of the Town Mills, Radstock, appealed for Clifford Grist, aged 19, single, 4 Mill Cottages, Radstock, miller's carter and second miller. It was stated that the staff had been reduced from seven to two, besides Grist. Mr Maloney said that Grist had met with an accident, being run over by a wagon and was now recovering. His was the only mill in the district. Grist was the sole carter left. Exempted until November 7. The Chairman: Grist can now go back to the mill. (Laughter)

A Colliery Clerk

The Radstock Coal Co. applied in respect of F C Moon, aged 28, married, Clandown, colliery clerk. Mr Harvey, for the company, said it was highly specialised work. An inspector from the Ministry of Munitions had paid a 'combing out' visit to the firm, and it was possible that Moon would be badged. Capt. Mawer: A Wiltshire inspector might have raked Moon out. (Laughter) On the badging question, Major Reilly said the inspectors were going round to see who could be unbadged, and the clerical staffs were the first they were taking. Appeal dismissed.

A Question of Sons

The appeal of **Walwyn Oram**, aged 22, single, milk vendor, Westfield, Radstock, was dismissed. There was an appeal by his brother, Frank Oram, aged 35, single, as cowman and carter to his father. Captain Mawer said that having two sons out of three for the army they agreed to a conditional exemption of Frank. The Father: Can I exchange the sons? (Laughter) Captain Mawer: Only in novels. (Laughter) The Tribunal adhered to the recommendation of the military to conditionally exempt the elder son, Frank.

* * * * *

Lt. Arthur Coombs

1st/4th Battalion, The Somerset Light Infantry
May, 1916

We lost a number of officers and men at Kut. And we lost more a while later at Beit Aisa, and I'll tell you who was wounded there; a chap from Midsomer Norton called Bill Withers. I am given to understand that he had two other brothers - called Pharaoh and Noah. His mother was a wonderful woman who ran the isolation hospital there. I well remember when Withers got hit. He knew it would mean him going home and he called out, 'I've got a Blighty one!' but unfortunately he was a cripple in a wheel chair for the rest of his life. The family had already lost another son fighting with the Somersets in France. After our failed attempt on Kut we'd gone back to Basra and from there went on to Shaiba where we spent most of the summer in training and building up our numbers. One of the first officers to visit us there was Allan Thatcher, from Midsomer Norton, who was out in India with the 2nd/4th Somersets.

* * * * *

Lt. Allan Thatcher

2nd/4th Somerset Light Infantry
May, 1916

Yes, they were at Shaiba when I joined them - soon after their disastrous action at Kut. I'd arrived in Bombay in January '15 and from there I'd gone down to Bangalore where we had to find detachments for different places. When war had first broken out we lived in Silva House, next door to Evelyn Waugh's family. I knew him quite well although he was younger than we were - I remember that he used to wander round the garden in a white smock when we knew him. I knew his brother Alec better than Evelyn - I was at Sherborne with him. When I left there I studied at home for my law finals. And then war was declared and I was launched into the world.

My father had been in the 1st Battalion of the Somerset Volunteers and he thought it would be a good idea if I joined the Territorials. We went up to Borden Camp on Salisbury Plain and saw Lord Strachey who was in command and who knew my father, and I was accepted. I was commissioned on 7th October, 1914, and at the beginning of December went off to India with the 2nd/4th Somersets.

My first trip was to the Andeman Islands. There was a lot of naval activity going on there at the time and I understand that the Germans were filling up boats in Batavia - which was a convict settlement - and arming them and landing them in these islands. I went on one patrol in the islands with my platoon. Went up north on a Royal Indian Marine ship to inspect the bays to see if there had been any disturbance of the sand on the beaches. That took about six days but we found nothing. Quite a pleasant trip, though. Enjoyed it.

Another thing I did while I was with the 2nd/4th was guard the Viceroy of India for 48 hours while he was staying at Government House in Bankipur. I was in charge of an Officer's Guard. Myself and 30 men. I had a tent in the garden of Government House. Dined with him both evenings. I didn't have full dress uniform so I had to send for my tail coat and waist-coat and white tie to dress up for the dinner. He gave me a silver cigarette case for that duty. Still got it. It was quite an interesting thing to do. Quite interesting. I stayed with the 1st/4th and Arthur and Co. for a year or so, and then I joined the 10th Gurkhas in October, 1917.

* * * * *

Somerset Guardian

9th June, 1916

Last week I published a note on behalf of some of the lads who were formerly in the G Company of Territorials and lived in Midsomer Norton, Radstock and the neighbourhood, asking that their friends at home might kindly supply them with some cigarettes. I then stated that the lads were having a rough time with little in the shape of comforts. This is pretty evident as the Captain of the Company - the Hon. Edward Strachey - could not write directly to the relatives of the men who fell in the action on March 8th because he only had one envelope in his possession. He used it to write to his mother, Lady Strachey, and enclosed in it, on bits of flimsy paper, messages he asked her to transmit to the relatives of the men who had served under him. I have seen some of these and they certainly seem to bear out my statement that the men are short of necessities, much less luxuries.

The total number of eggs collected by Mr. F Wilmott for the wounded soldiers and sailors up to the end of April was 19,323. In the months of March and April the number of eggs sent from Radstock was 1,945. Those contributing to this number were: Mrs Callender, Midsomer Norton, 759; Mr Pound, Peasedown, 260; Miss Long, Kilmersdon, 398 . . . The children attending Stratton-on-the-Fosse day school kindly sent the sum of £1.0s.6d towards the fund.

Pte. Harry Cockle

1st Battalion, The Somerset Light Infantry

June, 1916

Yes! We've had our rum and lime-juice,
And we gits our bully beef,
And ferro-concrete biscuits
What's busted up our teef.

We gits no eggs for breakfast,
They send us over 'shells',
And we dives into our dug out,
And gits laughed at by our pals.

Just a tiny bit of bacon,
Well, fer sport we call it 'am,
Four fighting British soldiers
And a one-pound tin of jam.

Sometimes we git some rooty -
Well, you civvies call it bread -
It ain't as light as fevvers,
And it ain't exactly lead.

But we gets it down us somehow,
And we never send it back,
Though it gets smoverred up with whiskers,
What gets rubbed off the sack.

The dust blows in our dixies,
There's dirt upon our mit,
So can you really wonder
That a soldier's full of grit?

But I ain't a'going to grumble,
Cos I'm feeling well and fit,
And I've got one consolation,
That I'm here to do my bit.

Rupert Shepherd

Schoolboy

Their rations were always pretty basic, at best. From time to time Father would send parcels out to my brothers, cake if it was possible, and chocolate when we could get it. They both smoked and sometimes he'd send a tin of 50 or sometimes less in a cardboard box. I preferred the boxes, 'cause I could pinch one before he sealed the parcel. One thing Tom always wanted was for us to send him something to wash his hands with. Grease solvent - called Gre-Solvent - in a green tin about three inches across.

* * * * *

Somerset Guardian

16th June, 1916

Mrs Albert Barnes, of Double Hill, Peasedown St. John, belongs to a family that, in the days of family enlistment, responded nobly to the call for men for the Army. A large number of her relatives are serving in the various branches of the Services, some in the Army, some in the Navy, and some in the Air Service. Mrs Barnes's immediate family, who are all serving in the Army, are her father, Henry Stent, five of her brothers, her husband and two of her brothers-in-law.

* * * * *

Pte. Francis Oakley

4th Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment

July, 1916

My brother Charles was a Sergeant with the 1st/4th Somersets in India, but instead of going with them my friends and I decided to join the Gloucesters. We'd seen them training on the beaches at Weston-super-Mare and it seemed a pleasant way to start the war. I'd really wanted to join the Yeomanry but they felt that a few pony rides did not really equip me for their purposes.

In July, 40 of us from the 4th Gloucesters went with men from other West Country regiments that were sent to reinforce the 9th Devons. They had been absolutely smashed at Mametz



Wood on July 1st, on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. In 90 minutes, out of the 775 men who went into action, 149 were killed, 55 were missing and 267 were wounded.

After being in France for about a week I found myself near Bazentin le Grand. We'd made our way out of a wood, just as dawn was breaking. We got out into the open and formed up in one long, single line and moved off. The first thing I saw was two dead Germans lying by a howitzer, and as I passed a huge black rat scarpred out from under one of them. Then we crossed a sunken road and saw chaps spread out on each side and I waved to them before I realised that they were dead. Dead men, watching me.

We wheeled round and started to dig in along a road beside a cornfield. A little further along there was an ash tree and underneath it was a dead horse. After we'd been digging away for a while my back was beginning to ache. I eased up and in that moment I got hit by shrapnel. Just a little ball it was, but it smashed away part of my jaw, and all of my front teeth.

* * * * *

LOCAL APPEALS TRIBUNAL

28th July, 1916

The Radstock Co-operative Society appealed in respect of a number of employees. The first of these was Clifford Baker, aged 29, married, bread deliverer. Captain Mawer (military representative) said he would like first of all to give some figures. There had been 59 appeals lodged in respect of the society's employees. One had been given conditional exemption, 30 temporary exemptions, 10 applications were refused, and 18 cases were outstanding.

Mr Tanner: How many do you employ?

Mr Gent, the General Manager: 180.

The Chairman: How many of these are women? - Just over 50. How many are of military age? - Most of our men are eligible. Fifty of our men have joined the colours and we are keeping their places open and making every man an allowance. Our annual turnover is £200,000 a year and we supply 6,000 households. This man is the only original deliverer left.

The Chairman: Anybody can do delivering after a little practice.

Mr Gent said they were on their beam ends for labour.

The Chairman: You would not be in such a position if women in the mining districts would do a little work and rise to the occasion. Their husbands get a lot of money and they are content to stay at home. If you could only instil a little patriotic spirit in the women to come out and help in a time of the country's need, you would not be at a loss for labour.

Mr Swift: Miners' wives work as hard as any other women.

The Chairman: Not for other people.

Mr Swift: They have their homes to attend to.

Mr Gent: No woman could do this work. I would not attempt to put a woman to work this hard district.

The case of Baker was dismissed.

Hilda Seymour Co-op Delivery Girl

I knew Cliff Baker quite well. Mother always reckoned he was from that Happy Families game - Mr Baker the Baker, you see - but I don't imagine *his* was a happy family when his appeal was rejected and he had to go off to the war. I was in service in Bristol when it all started and I remember, very early on, watching an army band march past and I saw this butcher just put down his basket and march after them - up Blackboy Hill to Durdham Down, to sign up. He was in the army. That's how they got them to go to war in the beginning.



Well, then I came home and in the paper

there were advertisements for girls to take men's jobs to let them go to war, so six of us went to the Co-op and I was on grocery deliveries. I was sixteen years old and doing a man's job, delivering with the horse and cart. You carried all your groceries and bread and draperies as well. We worked till midnight.

A man used to go out and take orders for the drapery and you delivered it. Delivered everything. And of course you had your jars of jam - might be jam this week or might be treacle - and you had to bring back each jar with a name on it for next week, and you'd fill the empty one yourself from a big barrel. The jar you did take back one week you did return the next. Course everything was rationed.

I started my round and went through several villages, into farms, along cart tracks, on out to a couple of cottages - walked from the roads and down through fields to some places - over the common, do more villages and back home. Ninety to a hundred houses before I'd done. And that was the round I did on Fridays. I stayed with the Co-op till the end of the war. Then one morning the manager told me that the man whose job I'd taken had come back without warning. So I had to go. It broke my heart to give up the horse.

RADSTOCK
Co-Operative & Industrial Society, Ltd.,

Central: **RADSTOCK**, Near **BATH**.

Departments—Grocery and Provisions, Butchery, Bakery, Confectionery, Drapery,
Boots, Ladies' and Gents' Outfitting.

Dairy-men, Farmers. Dealers in all kinds of Flours, Grain and Feeding Stuffs.
Furnishing in all its Branches.

THE BEST MARKET FOR THE BEST OF EVERYTHING.
IF NOT A MEMBER BE WISE AND JOIN.

BRANCHES :—MIDSOMER NORTON, PEASEDOWN and HIGH
LITTLETON.

On Active Service.

**OVER 50 OF OUR MEN ARE SERVING WITH
THE COLOURS.**

OTHERS WILL BE GOING FOR SERVICE SHORTLY.

We now employ over 50 Females

MEDICALLY REJECTED MEN	22
MEN OVER MILITARY AGE	20

19 Men are enjoying Temporary or Conditional Exemption
(The Majority of these being in Certified Occupations).

ALL OUR EMPLOYEES ARE PAID A SPECIAL WAR BONUS.

THE STAFF ON ACTIVE SERVICE ARE IN RECEIPT
OF WEEKLY ALLOWANCE, AND

£500 has been Paid Out.

The places of our own men are guaranteed to them
on their return.

OUR MEN HAVE DONE THEIR PART, AND DONE IT WELL.

You will help us, and serve the best
interests of the Staff by being loyal to the

Co-operative Stores.

We are Proud of our Record, and ask you to help us

KEEP THE CO-OPERATIVE FLAG FLYING.

The History of The Somerset Light Infantry 1914-1918

18th August, 1916

THE BATTLE OF DELVILLE WOOD

At 3am on the morning of the 18th August, the 6th Somersets moved to their assembly positions in Delville Wood [and] were in position by 6am. At that hour the preliminary bombardment opened with guns of all calibre pouring shell on to Leer Trench and Hop Alley . . . but so difficult was observation for the gunners that some of the 'heavies' fired short and 15 casualties were suffered by the Somersets from our own guns.

* * * * *

L/Cpl. George Taylor

6th Battalion, The Somerset Light Infantry

18th/19th August, 1916

All's we were ever doing on the Somme were goin' over the top somewhere or other. Every month it were somewhere different. And then we had the big one - when we took Delville Wood on the Somme. We got a good hidin' there, but we got up an' took the wood. We lost 53 dead and 227 wounded or missing in less than a day an' a half - an' I'll tell you who one of 'em were. Every Saturday night a chap used to come round Midsomer Norton sellin' oranges, apples, bananals and things. Shearn his name was. Well, I'd just taken four or five new men into the front line and there were Perce Shearn in a dugout and while I was there a German come up an' stuck a bayonet right drew'n. I chucked a bomb at Jerry an' ad'n.

19158 Private Percy Raglan Shearn
6th Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry
Killed in Action
France and Flanders
18th August, 1916

The History of The Somerset Light Infantry 1914-1918

THE BATTLE OF FLERS-COURCELETTE

The casualties of the 6th Battalion in this affair were truly terrible. Every officer who went over the parapet (and there were 17) had become a casualty. Three had been killed, 12 wounded and 2 were missing. In other ranks the Battalion had lost 41 killed, 203 wounded and 143 missing. It was a veritable death trap, and here the Somerset men, as they advanced, were shot down in dozens by German machine gunners firing from the north and east.

Major Sir Torquhil Matheson
3rd Battalion, The Coldstream Guards

The Coldstream Guards had an even worse time, if that's possible. Between September 10th and 17th, the Regiment lost 438 killed and 781 wounded. Then, on September 15th, reinforcements began to arrive from England, with Sammy Taylor among them.

* * * * *

Pte Sammy Taylor
3rd Battalion, The Coldstream Guards
August 1916

When we got to the Somme I were shootin' a rifle at first and one day I thought I seed somebody movin' up in a trench an' took a shot at'n - but, come to, t'were one of our machine gunners. I'm glad I never hit'n 'cos he started cussin' when he come out the trench. Uh zed, 'You bugger! Virin' at yer own men!' Caw, he didn' half cuss! But we'd not bin told he were out there - we just had'n bin told.

Soon after that happened one of our stretcher bearers got killed. Well, back in Chelsea barracks I'd passed a course in First Aid, so I were first in line fer the job. We always used to wear a red cross but Jerry never took no notice of that - they did still vire at we when we were carrying chaps out on the stretcher. They didn't worry, not one bit. But I expect our chaps were the same. One of the things we stretcher bearers had orders to do was to see none on 'em didn't doze off. A lot of soldiers useda go to sleep where they were standin' - and that were a Court Martial offence.

Terrible mess it were out there. Terrible. We were carrying wounded back all day



and all night. Blown to pieces some of the poor devils were. Our medical bloke used to say that if we found one out there we couldn't do nothin' for, to leave'n, 'cos t'were no good wastin' good lives on one that weren't gonna recover. Just tend the ones we could get back for medical help.

I were really hardened to the things I saw, but it caught up wi' me later. I remember one pair of chaps we had wi' us whose nerves had gone - they were ever so frightened. Because we were stretcher bearers the officers told I an' me mate to stay behind when we went up to the trenches to make sure these two come up. They weren't fit to fight, though - they didn't know who they were or where they were half the time. They couldn't help it, the poor beggars.

The Jerries were scared witless, too, mind. Once, in the trenches, I seen a German come an' give hisself up. We saw'n comin' with his hands up an' our chaps had orders not to shoot'n. Our officers were glad to have him fer to get information out of'n. He'd had enough of it, adn't he? I felt sorry fer'n. Only a young chap, frightened to death he looked - suh white as a maggot. I reckon he had shell shock. I felt sorry fer'n.

* * * * *

Somerset Guardian

1st September, 1916

Everyone in Radstock and the district who knows Mr C J Lewin will be heartily pleased to learn that his son, Sergt. Major Cecil Lewin, has been awarded the Military Cross. The announcement was made officially in the London Gazette on Friday night and the intelligence was received in Radstock on Saturday with unmixed pleasure. This is the first military distinction won by a Radstock man in the present war.

Sergt. Major Lewin is one of four brothers who freely and voluntarily offered their services to their country at the earliest moment. Two, alas, have made the supreme sacrifice, Captain Rex Lewin who fell while heroically leading his men in the advance on Loos, last September, and Lieut. Kenneth Lewin, who was killed by a sniper last March, within six weeks of his mother's funeral, which he came home from the front to attend. It is an open secret that had Lieut. R R Lewin survived his wounds he would have been recommended for an equal or even greater honour in recognition of his brave and gallant deed that cost him his life.

Sergt. Major Lewin received his early education at his father's school and, having won a County Scholarship, proceeded to Sexey's School, Bruton, where he remained for three years. He became a pupil teacher in Bristol, and next, having passed the examination for King's Scholarships went to Battersea Training College for Schoolmasters. At the end of his career as a student he took up an appointment in Liverpool. Here he was making his mark

as a school-master when war was declared. He at once enlisted as a private in the King's Liverpool Regiment, and was rapidly promoted. He was in France for several months, seeing a considerable amount of fighting. How he won the Military Cross is thus officially recorded in the London Gazette of August 25th: 'For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty in action. When his Captain was wounded he took command, and, though wounded in the shoulder and arm, continued to encourage his men and direct their fire until wounded a third time in the lung. He even then staggered up again and continued to control his men till he fell from exhaustion.'

Sgt. Major Cecil Lewin, MC, was very badly wounded in the performance of the gallant deed that brought him fame. He is still in hospital in Plymouth and only a few days ago another bullet was found in his shoulder.

* * * * *

Pte. Sammy Taylor

3rd Battalion, The Coldstream Guards

September, 1916

One day while we were on the Somme, me an' my mate come out fer a bit of a break from the trenches an' got on a wagon an' rode back behind the lines fer a bit. Then we come across a shop wi' a little accordion in the window. I thought to meself, I'm goin' in an' zee how much he is. So I zed, 'Excuse me'. But she didn' know what I were on about, so I zed, 'Music. In the window'. An' caught hold of'n. She soon understood when I said summat about money, an' zed it were 15 francs. That were mine!

Then we had to walk back along part of the Somme, where t'were all quiet, an' I were playin' this thing an' a few of the lads were singin' as we walked along. There were some Froggies on the other side the stream, havin' a drink an' clappin' an' dancin' while I were playin'. Oh, it did make a bit o' life, 'cos everyone were strung up with the war. They wanted a bit of summat fer to take their mind away fer a bit, dinnum?

We always got on all right with the French people. We were billeted in one village an' when we come back from the trenches we 'ad tons of tobacco - tins of the stuff - 'cos half the chaps never smoked - so we give it to the French people.

One time, two of us dug out a plot of taters fer a Frenchman's wife, 'cos he were at Verdun, fightin'. We went an' asked her if she'd like 'em dug out, cause t'were the right time then. She said she would, very much, so we went an' done it an' while we were diggin' away, this 'ere Colonel of ours, Johnny Campbell, come by on horseback an' looked across an' laughed. An' we saluted. Nice taters she had there. They don't plant taters like we do, they put 'em in like molehill shapes in the ground, so many in a little ring. We took em back up an' she were very kind - she got some fat from somewhere an' made us all some chips. That were good. The food we had when we weren't in the trenches were bully beef mostly, an' stew - had it all the time.

I remember the first time I had the rum ration. I told the officer I never liked it an' he said, 'You've got to have it, it's compulsory'. Said, 'You won't refuse after you've 'ad a drop or two'. T'were bitter cold out there in winter, and I could feel that goin' all the way down tuh warm me feet, an' I thought, no, I shan't refuse that again! You were hungry half the time out there and that rum didn't half burn going down yer belly on an empty stomach. Now, whisky I did like! My mate Georgie Slater - came from Newcastle, I think he were a barman or summit - he used to get some spirits sent out. You know, whisky and that. An' my wife used to send me out tins wi' pasties in, and he did share his whisky wi' me and I did share my pasties wi' he!

When we were in the trenches we got nothin' to eat as a rule, unless it was fresh air. There were never no grub brought up to us - the only thing we ever had out there once were Spanish onions - an' we slung they at Jerry. What we did used to carry on us were them big square biscuits what wouldn't go soft even in hot water. But thou daresn't eat'n. That were called iron rations and only for emergencies. You had to keep'n on 'ee 'cos if they did come and inspect 'ee and 'ed gone, that were field punishment - you might get tied to a gun wheel fer so long. That's the truth.

I seen two darkies get field punishment once. They'd come all the way from Singapore to fight wi' the Coldstream on the Somme. Well, one day they got a bit fed up with it all and reckoned they were the swabs of the British army. D'you know? Somebody heard what they said an' went around and reported it to an officer - the daft thing - and they chaps got this field punishment, tied to a tree with their hands tied behind 'em 'cos there were no field gun where we were. I thought to meself, well, thass a bit of all right, come all this way tuh be treated like that.

But our Commanding Officer was ever so good to we. Johnny Campbell. He were a main huntsman wi' the hounds. That's how he rallied the Coldstream over - wi' his tally-ho blowin'. He led them over like that. One time when we come out fer a break the news come through that he'd won the Victoria Cross. He were so pleased - went to a village and bought a heap of flour an' had a long jam roly-poly made fer us. That were suh hard you 'ad a job to get yer teeth in it. We had a laugh, though.

* * * * *

Major Sir Torquhil Matheson

3rd Battalion, The Coldstream Guards

John Campbell was awarded the VC for twice leading his men into action against withering enemy machine guns and rifle fire after his Battalion had been shelled to pieces - decimated. Between 1914 and 1918 the Regiment won seven Victoria Crosses, two by officers and five by other ranks - Oliver Brooks being one of them. During that same period 180 officers and 3,680 other ranks were killed in action.

Pte Sammy Taylor

3rd Battalion, The Coldstream Guards

15th September, 1916

I can always remember when our lot sent the tanks over for the first time, 'cos it were the same day as Johnny Campbell got his VC. We were in the front line when they started comin' up. There weren't very many but they were very light an' if they'd get in a big shell hole they couldn't get out of'n. We used to laugh 'cos our lot were poppin' away like the very devil when the Jerries were getting' up out of their trenches to bolt off. They couldn't make out what were comin'. There weren't much room in them tanks. Just enough fer two or dree blokes to drive'n an' work the machine guns. When we next come out of the trenches fer a bit of a rest I and my mate seed this little old tank what they'd knocked out of action. They'd took all the insides out, not fer Jerry to be able to copy it, I s'pose. Anyway, my mate and me got in there and had a good little snooze - there, that's a bit of old Somerset fer 'ee.

* * * * *

Somerset Guardian

13th October, 1916

Mr and Mrs Henry King, of Coleford, near Bath, have lost two of their sons in the present war. Both were well-built, fine men who were greatly respected and beloved by a wide circle of friends. A few years ago they had an ambition to join the Metropolitan Police Force but being slightly under the standard they enlisted in the Coldstream Guards in January 1913, hoping when they had served their time with the colours to be accepted by the metropolitan authorities. When war broke out they went on active service with their regiment. Charles King was killed in action at Soupir at the age of 21 and almost exactly two years later his brother, Sergeant Thomas King was wounded in action and died from his wounds the following day, aged 25.

9936 Pte. Charles Glazier King
3rd Battalion, The Coldstream Guards
Killed in Action
France and Flanders
16th September, 1914
Aged 21

9906 Sgt. Thomas George King
3rd Battalion, The Coldstream Guards
Killed in Action
France and Flanders
14th September, 1916
Aged 25

Pte. Alban Chivers

Royal Army Ordnance Corps

September, 1916

I'd really made up my mind that I were gonna go in the Derby Scheme an' I said to my brother, 'If I go, will you look after my boy?' - 'cos I'd got married in 1910. Well, no, he wouldn't, and me wife said that if I did go we were finished, so that were that. In the end, me brother Arthur volunteered and I never. He were in the Engineers. Got wounded. One day I got a note from him saying he was in hospital and fed up. Then he died. So I never saw Arth again. Only brother I had.

146286 Sapper A J Chivers
99th Field Coy. Royal Engineers
Died of Wounds
Salonika
19th December, 1918
Aged 26

Anyway, when my papers came I had to report to Bath and from there to Taunton and from there to Portsmouth Guildhall. When I got there it was closed, and it was raining torrents - proper empt down. Well, I found a policemen and he didn't know what I should do so I told'n to stick me in the cells for a night - but he couldn't do that 'cos I hadn't done nothin' wrong.

Then he asked if I'd had anythin' to eat and I hadn't, not since breakfast, so he took me to a small rest'rant there and said, 'Give him as much bread and butter and tea as he wants'. And he told me to stay there till he came back, and he'd pay for it. I shall always remember that, there were good chaps in the force in them days, weren't there? Good Samaritan. When he came back he'd found a place for me, some houses with no doors or windows, but it was under cover. He'd got me some blankets, too. By morning there were about a dozen in there. All just joined up.

Well, from Portsmouth they sent me back to Taunton agen. Told 'em where I'd come from and they said, 'All the buggers do come back from there'. Eventually they sent me to Red Barracks, Woolwich, and when I'd almost got there I asked a man in the carriage to let me know where to get off. He said, 'What you goin' in as?' An' I said as a fitter. 'Listen,' he said. 'Tell 'em you know nothin' about fittin' or you'll be at the Front next week, sorting out guns what've jammed.' Bloody hell! I'd 'ave bin right in the middle of it. But as luck would have it, I wasn't.

Not knowing nothin' about the army, once I got to the Guard Room I thought I'd finished, but it seems I should've reported to the office. I ended up kipping in a corridor on a stone floor an' a Sergeant says: 'Anybody want a biscuit come along wi' me'. That were biscuits to sleep on - palliases. That's the only time any of us'd ever heard 'em called that. I remember one chap say he wasn't hungry. He slept on the floor.

Well, they gave me a towel and some soap and a knife, fork and spoon and fitted us up with uniforms and after a time I wound up in the office. 'Where've you bin?' they sez. 'Out in the corridor,' I zed. Seems like they'd been waitin' for me fer three days - so I were dropped right in it from the start. Then he said, 'Right. Sez here you're a fitter'. I zed, 'I don't know nothin' about fitting'. An' he said, 'Bloody army all over. Them buggers don't know what they'm doing'. I didn't bother to put him straight.

* * * * *

Somerset Guardian

29th September, 1916

On Sunday morning people will be called upon to put their clocks back an hour, in accordance with the provisions of the Summer Time Act, 1916. The immediate effect of the alteration will be that the mornings will open with daylight nearly an hour earlier and the evenings will be shorter or darkness will set in quite one hour earlier on Sunday evening than it did on Saturday. To comply with the restrictions all lights must be shaded or windows darkened one hour earlier on Sunday evening than they have been in the past few days. So far as I can gather the evening services at the great majority of the local churches and chapels are being held on Sunday next, but those responsible must see that within a few minutes of seven o'clock no light is allowed to escape which would constitute an offence to the law of the land.

I expect the majority of the places of worship will find that the attendance at the evening service, if it is continued at the usual hour, will be much smaller now that people will have to return home through streets which are in complete darkness. A number of people have also suggested that it would be a good thing if the local shops and places of business were to agree to close at an earlier hour in the coming winter months. I find that at Midsomer Norton some movement has been made in this direction, and all the principal places of business have agreed to close earlier, commencing on Monday next. Perhaps the Radstock people will follow?

* * * * *

Miss Shukar, headmistress of Clandown Church of England School, has received a postcard from Rifleman Harry Robbins, of Clandown, who is a prisoner of war in Germany, thanking her and the children of her school for sending him a parcel of cigarettes, tobacco and a pipe, and saying that their kindness he should never forget. He also stated that he had with him a photo postcard of Miss Taylor and her class with his own little boy in it, and he thought it very nice. One of the scholars of the school - Grace Milsom, of Clandown House - has received from Pte. Leslie Jenkins of the Queen's RWS Regiment, a letter thanking her for her wishes: 'Best of luck to Tommy or Jack' was written on an egg which he says he received at breakfast in hospital where he was owing to trench fever but would soon be with his regiment in the trenches again. He enclosed his address and wished the sender the very best of luck.