

CANTERBURY IN WORLD WAR I

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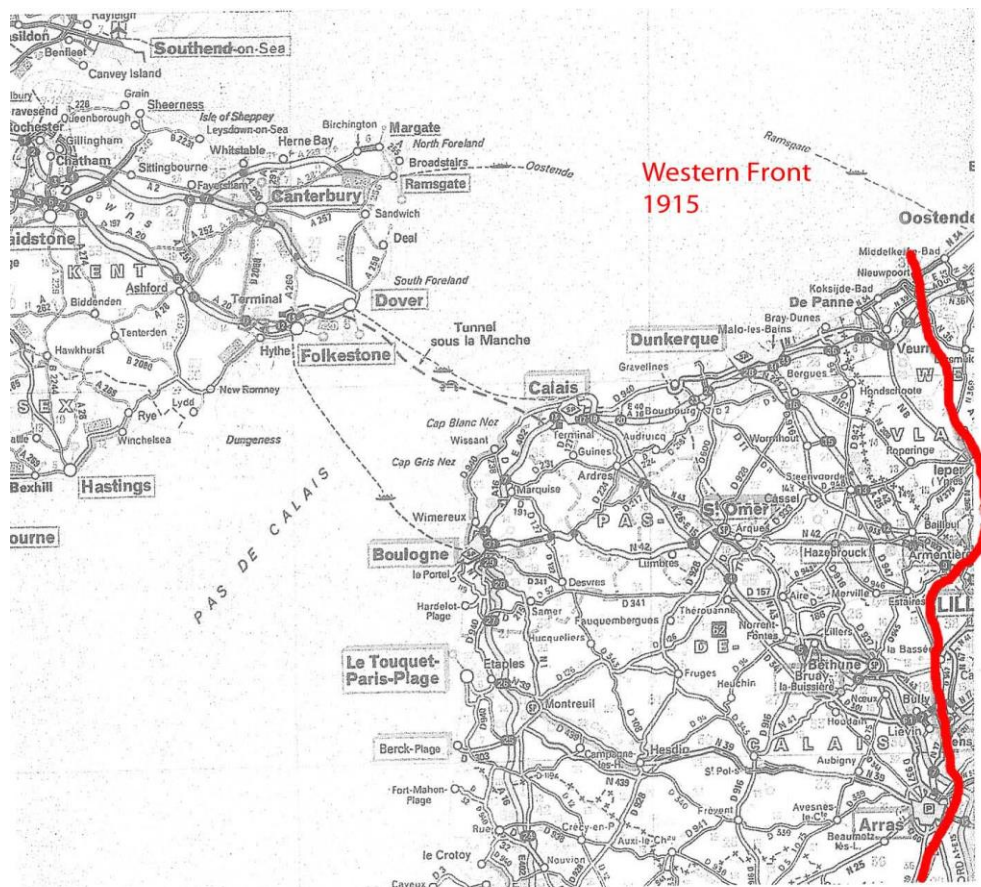
1 June 2013

Summary

The notes upon which the following outline is based were assembled as input to the Exhibition of Canterbury history from 1600 to the present day, held 16 November to 19 December 2012 in the Sidney Cooper Gallery, Canterbury. Roman numerals in bold relate to the Bibliographic sources listed in the Annex.

INTRODUCTION

The strategic importance of Kent in the World War 1 is shown by a map of Kent and the Western Front, the almost static position of the battle line in a predominantly land war. Kent is the closest English county to the front and its ports were engaged in the huge scale transport of men, horses, armaments and materials and, then, the wounded to and from the front for more than 4 years. Kent was so close to the front that the noise of artillery barrages could be heard as far away as Sevenoaks.



1 Map of Kent and Western Front

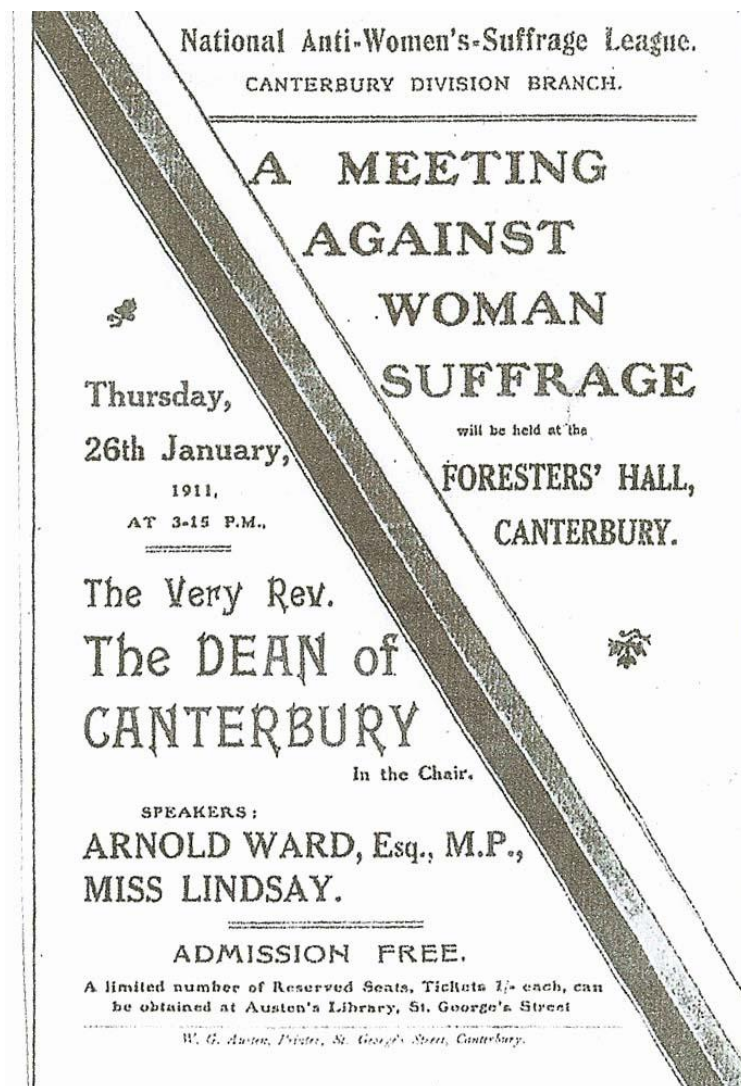
Although about 20 miles inland, Canterbury was the ancient East Kent hub, since Roman occupation (or earlier), of land routes to London and beyond. It was an army garrison town from 1794 (3. p6) and by 1860 was served by two railways leading to, what were to become in The Great War, the “front-line” channel ports. But, despite its strategic position, Canterbury, unlike Dover, Ramsgate and Folkestone, was not attacked from the air during this war. Canterbury also had an ancient connection to the English establishment with the prime and oldest (since 597AD) cathedral in the English church, and a population as long ago as 1086 of over 5000 (5. p140). By 1918 its population was 24628 (1. 2/2/18).



2 Taxis at the Westgate

Canterbury was, at the start of the war, “a quaint market town” (4. p18), “an old fashioned city, about 50 years behind the times” (3. p8). “The upper echelons of the Church as well as a great many ladies of independent means created a formidable social elite... a lady seeking paid employment was socially unacceptable” (3. p8) “Canterbury’s menfolk strongly disapproved of the suffragette movement” (3. p9)

Note: Although these two commentators (Refs 3 & 4) do not provide evidence for their characterisation of Canterbury, other sources suggest the City’s traditional mindset. They are the book “Women of Kent” by Laura Probert, a study of Women’s’ suffrage in East Kent and a piece in the Kentish Gazette and Canterbury Press on 1/8/1914. A quick look through Women of Kent suggests that the middle-class led suffrage movement was more active in the coastal towns than in Canterbury and there is evidence that the Archbishop at the time, Randall Davidson, was unwilling to support the cause (8.) and that the Dean of Canterbury, Henry Wace, chaired an anti-suffrage meeting in the City on 26/1/1911 (3. p9 & 4. p48).



3 Anti-suffragette poster

On 1/8/1914 an unnamed Kentish Gazette columnist wrote:

“TRADE UNIONS AND THE EDUCATED WOMAN.

THE VALUE OF COMBINATION – IS SNOBBERY THE OBSTACLE?

During the last two or three years trade unionism has spread rapidly among women of the poorer classes and there can be no question that immense good has thereby been achieved.... To many – perhaps the majority – cultured women there is no attraction in trade unionism....the obstacle.. is snobbery (which) is highly developed in the educated woman worker, the teacher, the widely experienced business woman, the hospital nurse. It is because she feels that by joining a trade union she will place herself on an equal footing with workers on a lower social scale that the educated woman stands aloof from the most important movement of many years. Sheer snobbery and nothing else!” “ There is a thriving trade union for men and women in journalism”

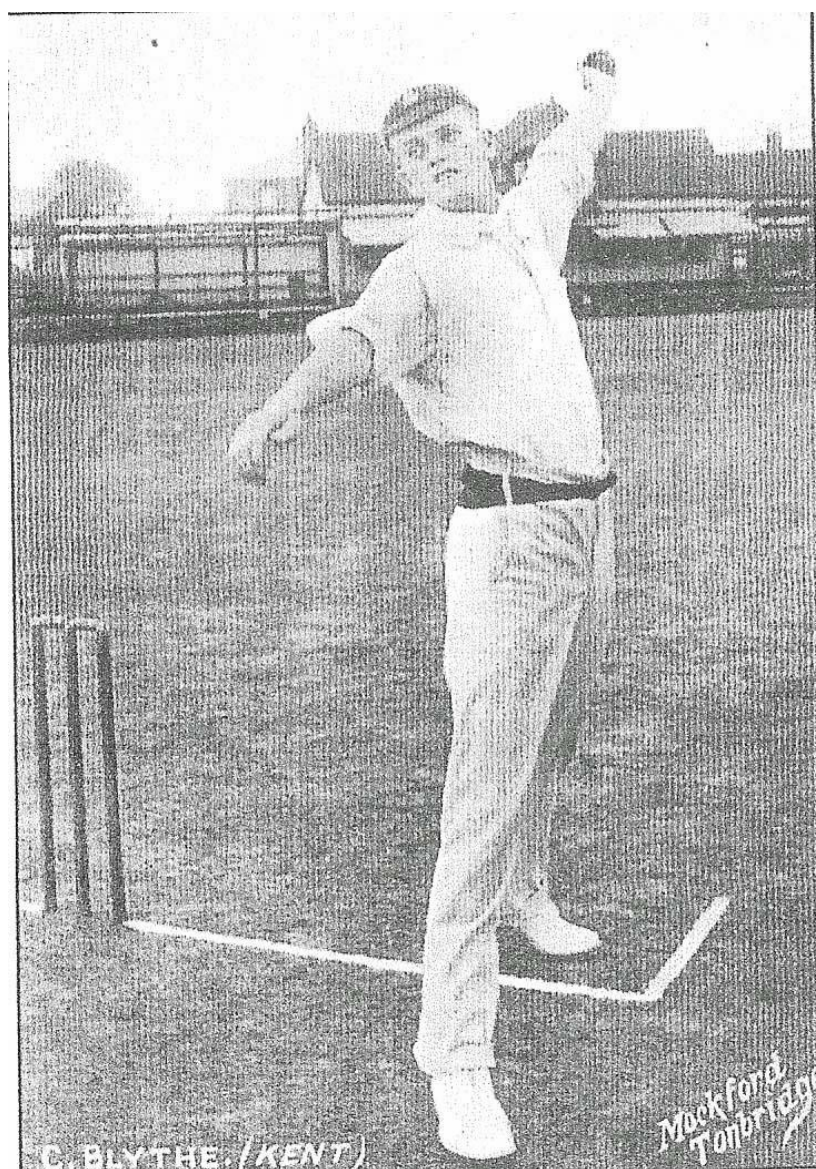
Coincidentally, war broke out the day after the start of perhaps Canterbury’s major social event of the year, the Cricket Festival. This piece about it in the Gazette 1/8/1914 illustrates both the prevailing confidence and class consciousness.

"CRICKET NOTES: NEXT WEEK'S FESTIVAL AT CANTERBURY

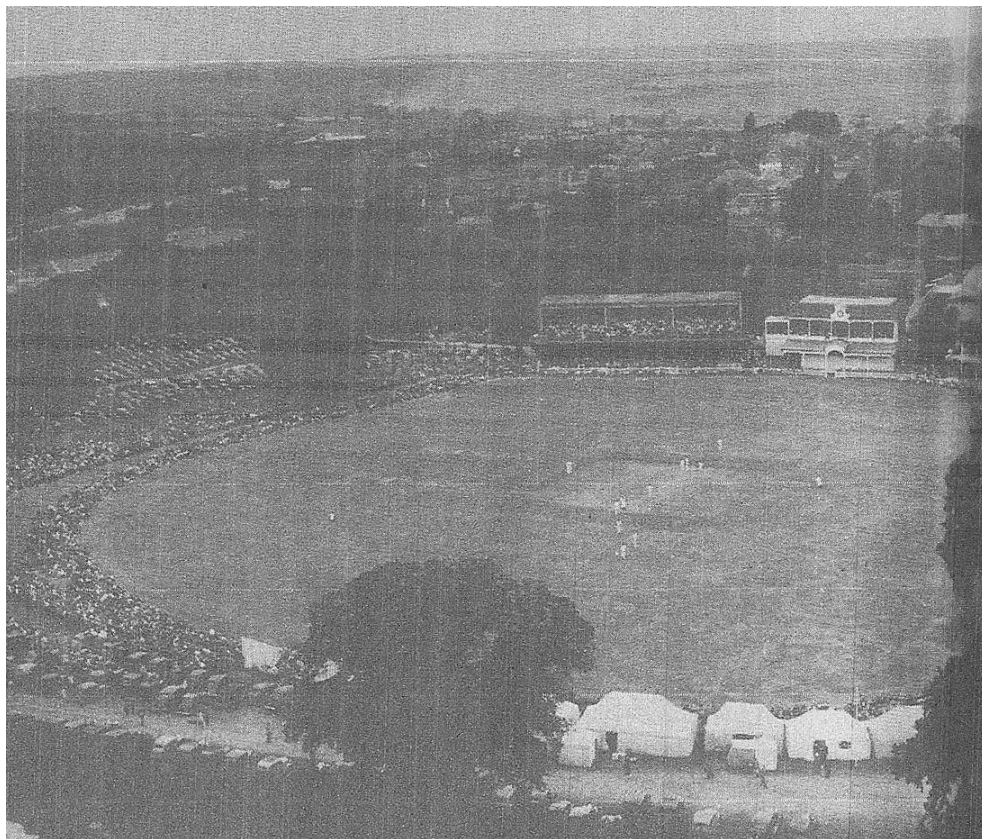
There will be no need to remind our readers that the Cricket Festival is both the oldest and easily the most famous of any in the Country. Year after year, people come to Canterbury in their thousands – their visits being as much of a custom with them as were the pilgrimages in the old days to Becket's shrine...Of later years especially the Festival has become more and more a democratic festival. Nobility and clergy, middle-class and artisan and labourer coming in the most natural way. In their support of Kent cricket there are no class distinctions, and the enjoyment which is derived is essentially a mutual enjoyment."

2.

Kent was a cricketing power in the years before the war, winning the Championship in 1909, 1910 and 1913. Their outstanding bowler, who also played for England, was Colin Blythe and he was to be one of the Club's twelve casualties of the war.



4 Colin Blythe



5 St Lawrence cricket ground



6 Soldiers at St Lawrence cricket ground

START OF WAR

“When war broke out (4/8/1918) the British Army was hopelessly ill-prepared. Part of the problem was tradition. Britain had always relied on a large navy to defend itself from invasion....All the other great powers had systems of conscription (compulsory military service). This meant that Russia, Germany, Austria and France all had large armies in 1914.” (12).

News of the outbreak reached Canterbury via a telegram posted on the window of the Kentish Gazette office (photo Gaz 8/8/14 p5) and the paper showed signs of local unreadiness, before and after 4th August.

Gazette 1/8/1914

PRECAUTIONS AT CANTERBURY GARRISON

In view of the present grave European situation, preparations are being made at the Garrison in the event of hostilities. Brigadier-General Bingham has been recalled and all leave has been stopped to the troops whilst those away on furlough have been ordered to immediately return. Sentries have been placed on guard at all entrances.”



7 New recruits marching past drill hall Canterbury barracks

Front page of the Gazette 8/8/1914

CITY & COUNTY BOROUGH OF CANTERBURY
FOOD SUPPLIES

The public are earnestly requested to REFRAIN FROM PURCHASING PROVISIONS FOR STORAGE PURPOSES, the extensive supply of food in the Country happily rendering this unnecessary.

Immediately under this was

NOTICE FROM BUTCHERS

Owing to the very grave position into which our Country has been suddenly plunged, the BUTCHERS are face to face with an APPALLING RISE IN THE PRICE OF ALL LIVE STOCK. Consequently, we, the Master Butchers of Canterbury are obliged (not willingly, but of necessity) to raise the price of meat."

On 8th August 1914 the Defence of the Realm Act was passed, giving the Government wide-ranging powers during the War, aimed at defending the Country from internal enemies and mobilising the war effort. "Some of the things the public were not allowed to do included flying a kite, lighting a bonfire, buying binoculars or feeding wild animals bread. Alcoholic beverages were watered down and pub opening times were restricted (an afternoon gap lasting until 1988)." (8.)

"There were street celebrations throughout Britain..(and) many believed that the war would be over by Christmas.(11.). The Government asked for 100,000 volunteers but got 750,000 (predominantly working-class (2. p275) in just one month". (11.) "Trade unions renounced strikes and all political parties, including the Irish Nationalists, supported the common effort (2. p268).... Suffragette movements suspended campaigns". (2. p274). All imprisoned suffragettes were unconditionally released (10/8/14)(8.). In practice the government made little use of (the DORA powers) and Britain, self-mobilised for war. (2. p271).

In Canterbury the Gazette announced that Lord Kitchener, who had recently purchased a house near Barham, had been appointed War Minister and called for 500,000 men (8/8/14 p5). Several pieces in same edition of the paper show the resolve and rapid change of mood in the City:



8 Lord
Kitchener's
appeal

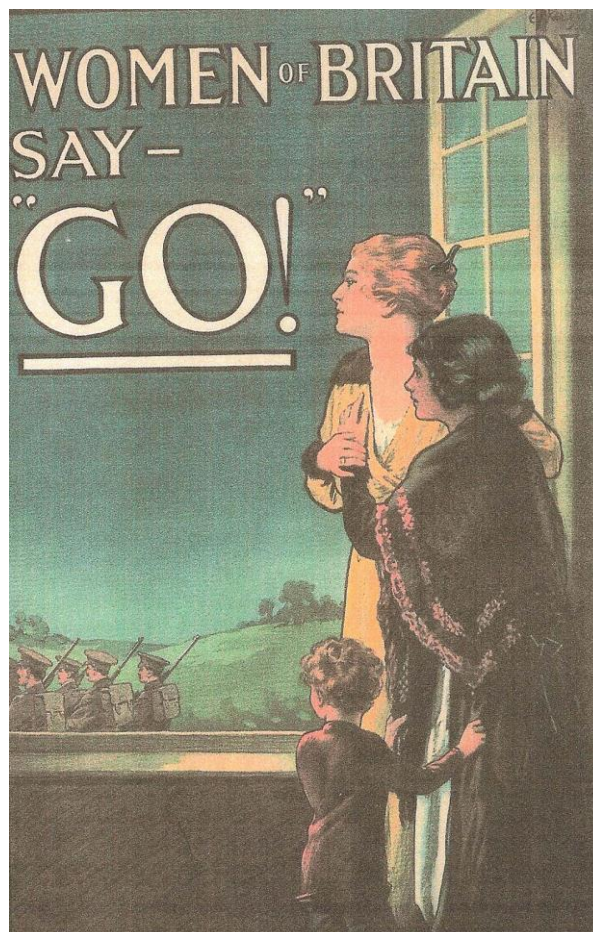
HOW THE NEWS WAS RECEIVED IN CANTERBURY

3.

The grim realities likely to ensue...were reflected in the grave faces to be seen on every side. But there is no panic...the practically unanimous opinions expressed by men of all shades of political thought and creed in the locality that England's cause was a just one and that she literally been forced into the conflict to vindicate her national honour.

- * The Marseillaise was played at the Cricket ground
- * The gas holder in Martyrs Field and water works in Wincheap are guarded at night by troops
- * Canterbury trades holiday excursion is abandoned
- * Houses at which troops are billeted have chalk marks on the doors indicating the number and company of the men
- * Government vets are commandeering private individuals' horses
- * Skating rink taken over as troop accommodation

"Britain was swept with flag-waving, patriotic jingoism befitting its great Empire" (6.p5). Soon, women were getting involved in nursing, fund raising and helping the likes of Belgian refugees. "The iconography of womanhood was a common feature of early war posters" calling on men to enlist and protect British women from violation from hordes of invading Huns, a concept made more real and dreaded after the press coverage of the Rape of Belgium" (6. p5).



9 War poster

On 30th August 1914, retired Admiral Charles Fitzgerald founded the order of the White Feather in Folkestone, aimed at coercing men to enlist in the army by persuading women to present men not in uniform with a white feather.(4. p133).

Several pieces from the Kentish Gazette illustrate how the spirit of patriotism had captured Canterbury and how the city was mobilising its efforts:

THE CALL TO ARMS ENTHUSIASTIC MEETING AT CANTERBURY THEATRE
..people of all classes poured into the building.. they listened to patriotic airs feelingly played by an orchestra (1. 5/9/14)

THE WAR IS A TEST OF NATIONAL CHARACTER IMPRESSIVE ADDRESS BY THE PRIMATE
“ENGLAND’S CONSCIENCE CLEAR” (1. 29/8/14)

“FALL IN” by Harold Beoble (8 verses + cartoon)
(Verse 7) Why do they call, sonny, why do they call,
 for men who are brave and strong.
 Is it naught to you if your country fall
 And right is smashed by wrong? (1. 12/9/14)

ADVERTISEMENT THE NEW EXPEDITIONARY FORCE “THE BUFFS”
 A NEW BATTALION IS BEING RAISED (1. 29/8/14)

ENGLAND’S GREAT NEED REVIEW OF TROOPS AT CANTERBURY
Many thousands of troops billeted in Canterbury were reviewed on Thursday en masse in Old Park (1. 5/9/14)

BILLETING OF TROOPS WHAT HOUSEHOLDERS ARE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE
(29/8/14)

PRIVATE HOUSEHOLDERS

The following increase in tariff is payable:

Soldiers lodgings and attendance per night	9d
Breakfast	7 1/2d
Dinner	1s 7 1/2d
Supper	4 1/2d
Stable room & forage 2s	7 1/2d per day

10 The military
in Broad
Street



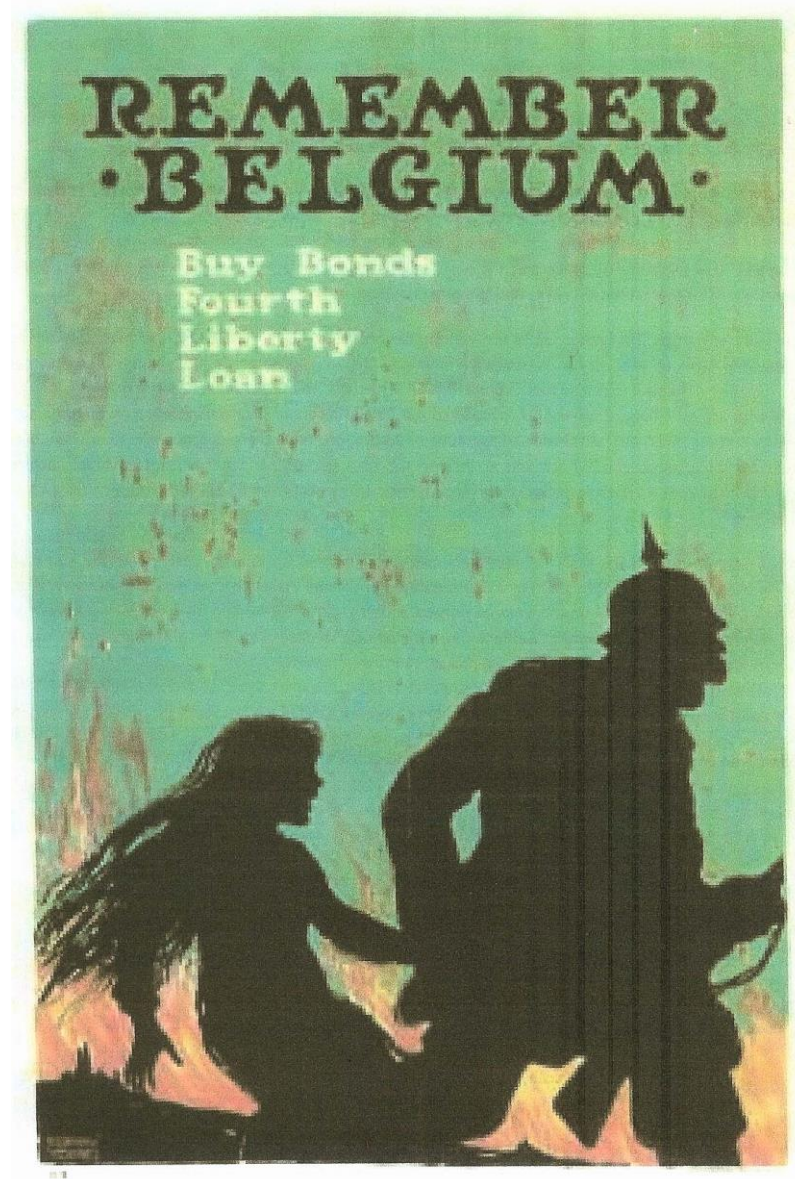
Letter to the editor NEED OF WARM BATHS (1. 5/8/14)

Sir. As you have no public warm baths in Canterbury, may I suggest that one of your householders throw open their bathroom to us "Terriers" at a reasonable charge. Billeted as some of us are, it is not possible to get these baths at present. The Japanese proved in war the value of an occasional warm bath.. Yours faithfully A "Terrier"

CANTERBURY ELECTRIC THEATRE NOW SHOWING "EUROPE IN ARMS" (1. 5/9/14)
CANTERBURY CINEMA GERMAN ATROCITIES IN BELGIUM (1. 26/9/14)

THE LONG HAUL

As the opening German advance across Belgium was halted, the war became a trench stalemate, sucking in enormous quantities of men, horses and munitions.



11 Remember Belgium poster

“Positive opinion management was accompanied by censorship”, and “the worst horrors were concealed”. “The papers exaggerated the Allied forces’ achievements and downplayed those of the enemies”. Provincial papers were less subject to scrutiny than was Fleet Street” *(2. p273)

The Kentish Gazette printed regular lists of casualties, letters from the front and obituaries of the dead, together with a continual mood of exhortation and virulent anti-German sentiment.

THE KAISER’S ORDERS EXTERMINATE THE ENGLISH PREPARING FOR THE WOUNDED AT CANTERBURY

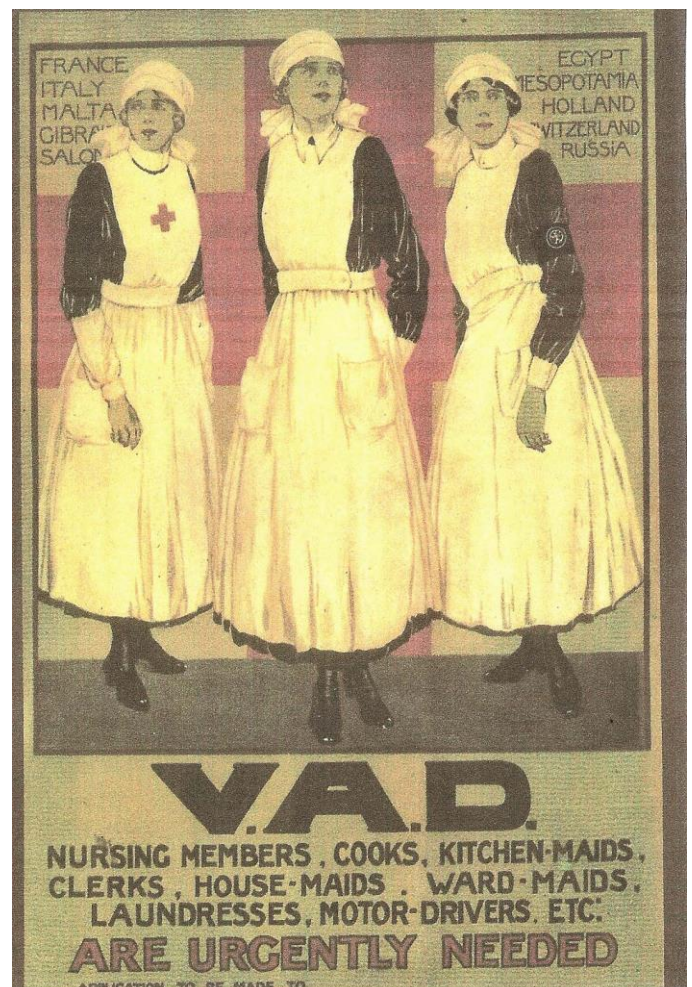
Owing to the large number of troops quartered in and around the City, orders have been received to mobilise the two ladies Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs) in Canterbury, Kent 70 and Kent 100. The member (of parliament) for Canterbury has placed Abbots Barton at their disposal. The senior detachment, Kent 70, is quartered at Dane John House (1. 3/10/14)... “lent through the kindnesses of the Misses Wightwick”.



12 The Dane John VAD hospital



13 Belgian soldiers at Abbots Barton



14 VAD poster

**BELGIAN SOLDIERS ARRIVE IN CANTERBURY
OVER 100 WOUNDED IN THE HOSPITALS**

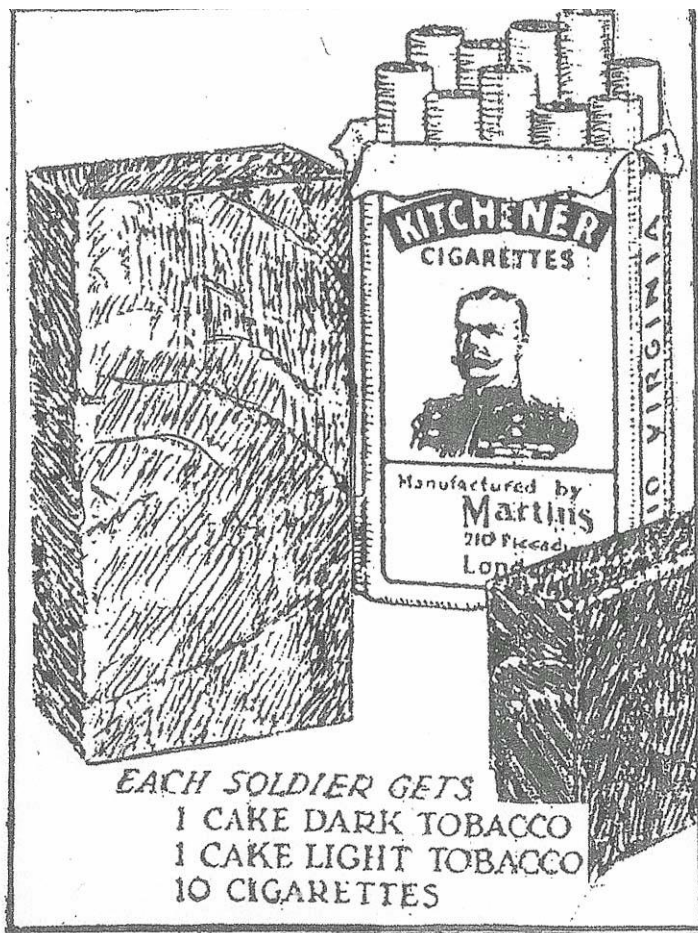
The sight of Belgian officers and soldiers, in their trim, red bordered uniforms, has become quite a familiar sight in the streets of Canterbury (1. 10/10/14)

Photo of convalescent Belgian soldiers (1. 14/11/14)

**TOBACCO FOR OUR SOLDIERS AT THE FRONT
YOU CAN HELP TO SEND EACH ONE ¼ lb
KENTISH GAZETTE SCHEME**

Our brave soldiers are in short supply. It will cost you only sixpence.

The French people have been very generous to Tommy Atkins in regard to the "smokes" but Tommy dislikes their cigarettes. He says they have no "bite" in them. He longs for British "fags". Tobacco Department Kentish Gazette (3/20/14)



15 Kentish Gazette tobacco scheme advertisement

Many traders used patriotic and appropriate slogans in their adverts in the Gazette

AD ECONOMY DURING THE WAR

The best form of economy is to preserve and make do with the possessions we already have. SCOTTS DYEING AND CLEANING processes will be found a most valuable aid in this direction (1. 3/10/14)

AD YOUR FIGHTING FRIENDS at the front will be glad to receive

A RICH PLUM PUDDING AND CHRISTMAS CAKE

FINNS STORES EARLY ORDERS (1. 7/11/14)

At Christmas 1914 the Kentish Gazette (9/1/15) reprinted a letter published in the Daily Mail from a member of the Queen's Westminster Rifles:

HOW ENGLISH AND GERMANS FRATERNISED AT CHRISTMAS

Last night (Christmas Eve) was the weirdest stunt I have ever seen. All day the Germans had been sniping very industriously with some success, but after sunset, they started singing and we replied with carols. Then they shouted "Happy Christmas" to us and we replied in German. It was a topping moonlight night and we carried on long conversations, and kept on singing to each other and cheering.



16 Christmas truce at the front

5.

CHRISTMASTIDE AT CANTERBURY

THE WORKHOUSE

VISIT OF THE MAYOR AND MAYORESS

The decorations at the Union Workhouse this year were not quite so lavish as usual but the general scheme was marked by even greater taste than heretofore and with a special appropriateness to the circumstances under which this year the Yuletide Season is being celebrated. The bottom female ward was prettily decked-out in the colours of the Belgian Comrades in arms and in another ward a representation of a soldier in the trenches and of ambulance workers in the field, whilst good wishes for the success of the allies, for our

English troops, and, the like, were prominently displayed in various parts of the institution.. (1. 2/1/15)

THE "NO LIGHTS" REGULATION

An order issued on Tuesday by the General Officer Commanding in Chief Central Forces, prohibited not only public lighting in the streets, but also the visibility of any artificial lighting from the windows of houses, churches, etc. (1. 30/1/15)

THREE MILLION MEN NEEDED

FINAL TRIAL OF THE VOLUNTARY SYSTEM (1. 6/2/15)

On 24 January 1916, almost a year after the above Gazette warning, The Military Service Act was passed, introducing conscription for all single men aged 18 to 40 and extended to married men in April 1916. Some people were exempt, such as men in jobs which were vital to war industries (reserved occupations). Anyone called up could appeal and have his case heard by a tribunal. (12.)

LORD MILNER'S GARDENER

APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION AT THE BLEAN TRIBUNAL

The application by Lord Milner of Sturry Court for the exemption of his head gardener, Mr Phillip Boston, was...not assented to and.. left to Military doctors. (1. 20/5/16)

DAYLIGHT SAVING LEGISLATION

The Summer Time Bill comes into force at 2am on Sunday (21st May). All clocks are to be advanced by one hour.. up to 30th September. (1. 20/5/16)

DEATH OF KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM

Sinking of HMS Hampshire west of Orkneys (Obituaries & Tributes)

HIS KENTISH HOME

It will always be a matter of pride to Kentish folk the Lord Kitchener should have selected a residence within the County as his home during the closing years of his life. Lord Kitchener was four years ago the purchaser of Broome Park, Barham. (1. 10/6/16)

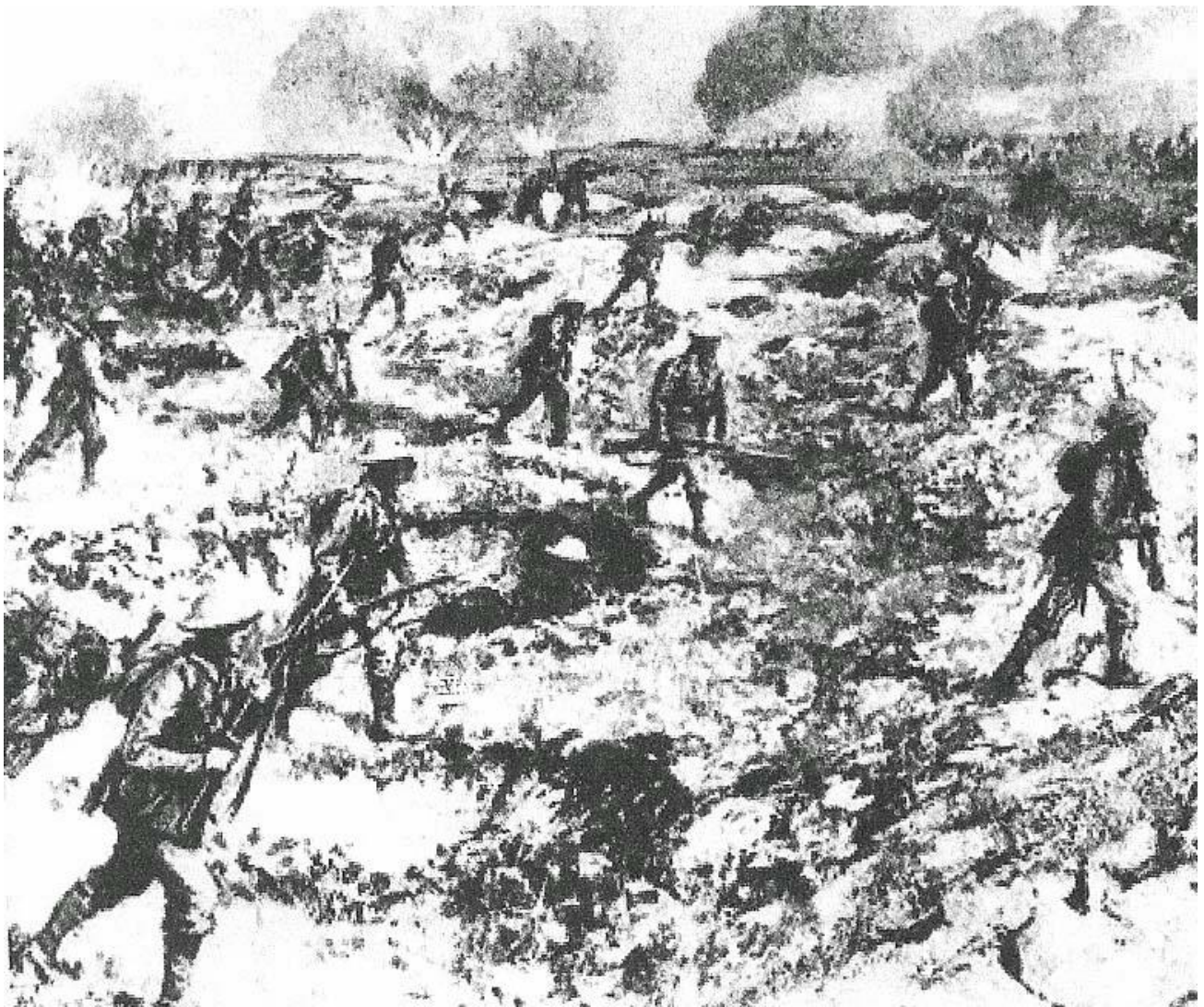
Between 1 July and 18 November 1916 one of the most costly battles of the War took place on the Somme. There were 60,000 British Empire casualties on the first day and over a million men died in the battle. (8.)

PROGRESS OF THE WAR

(Weekly heading during the war)

The "Big Push" in the West

It is wonderful news that we have been having from the Western Front these last few days... It constitutes probably the most important development in the whole course of the World campaign. The "New British plan". (1. 8/7/16)



17 Trench warfare

PROGRESS OF THE WAR

Our task in the West since the “Big Push”

When our offensive commenced on the Somme these unreasoning persons (referred to earlier in the piece) seemed to expect that the resistance of the Germans would melt away before our advancing armies..(1. 15/7/16)

During the War, “Dear Old Blighty” was a common sentimental reference, suggesting a longing for home by soldiers in the trenches. The term, which originated in the British Raj in India, was particularly used by World War 1 poets such as Wilfred Owen

6.

and Siegfried Sassoon. During the war, a Blighty wound – a wound serious enough to require recuperation away from the trenches but not serious enough to kill or maim – was hoped for by many, and sometimes self-inflicted. (8.)

The Kent Cricket Club War Memorial, was dedicated on 23rd August 1919 as a memorial to the great Kent and England bowler Colin Blythe, arguably the most famous cricketer killed in WWI. Blythe was killed at Ypres on 18th November 1917 aged 38. (7. p31)

Broad Oak Road

Site of the crash of a Gotha (German bomber) in the morning of 7th December 1917, in Lilley's Field...just to the south of Folly Farm. The crew survived, set fire to their aircraft and surrendered to the Rev.PP Somerville, Rector of St Stephen's Church, who was a Special Constable. (7. p25)

Food shortages were not a major problem in Britain initially. A bigger problem was rising prices because the government restricted the amount of food and other goods which could be imported.. Following a poor harvest in 1916 (5. p140), the situation deteriorated in 1917 when the Germans adopted a tactic of unrestricted submarine warfare. Essential supplies ran out and in April 1917 Britain was six weeks away from running out of wheat. In order to release men and increase the work force and home farming acreage, the Women's Land Army was formed in February 1917. (8.). 10% of the WLA were to be employed in Kent. Another way of releasing men was the formation in 1917 of the Royal Defence Corps of soldiers too old for the front. This anticipated The Home Guard of 1940. (9.)



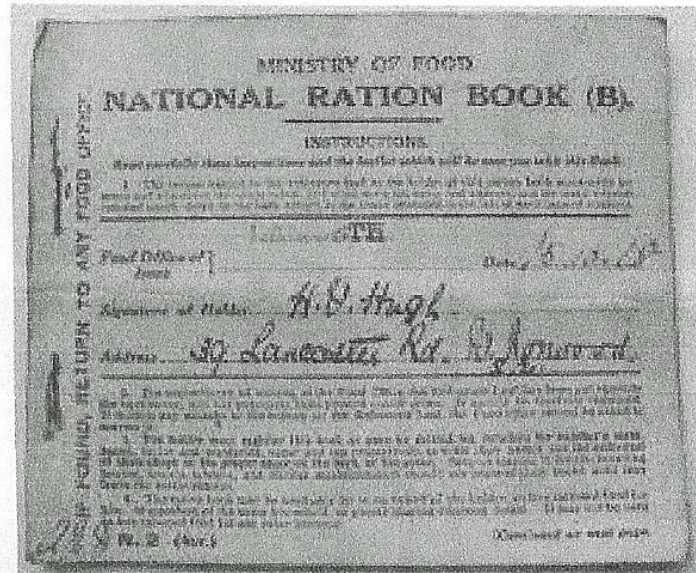
18 Women's
Land
Army

In January 1918 the government introduced food rationing. (9.)

MARGARINE AND MEAT

Have you received your ration card?

By February 13th you should receive food cards for every member of the family. (1. 2/2/18)



19 Ration book

Ad TWO WAYS OF "HELPING TO WIN"

First – Buy National War Bonds

Second --Drink coffee for breakfast... will enable the Food Controller to more easily cope with the present shortage of tea

INTERNATIONAL STORES (1. 2/2/18)

On 6th February 1918 the Representation of the People Act gave women the vote provided they were over 30 and were (or were married to) a local government elector. It also removed most property qualifications, giving all adult (over 21) male resident householders the vote. (8.)

CANTERBURY WOMEN CITIZEN'S ASSOCIATION

There are now 4913 women in Canterbury who are Local Government Electors

Canterbury's very own Red Baron (14. 7/2011)

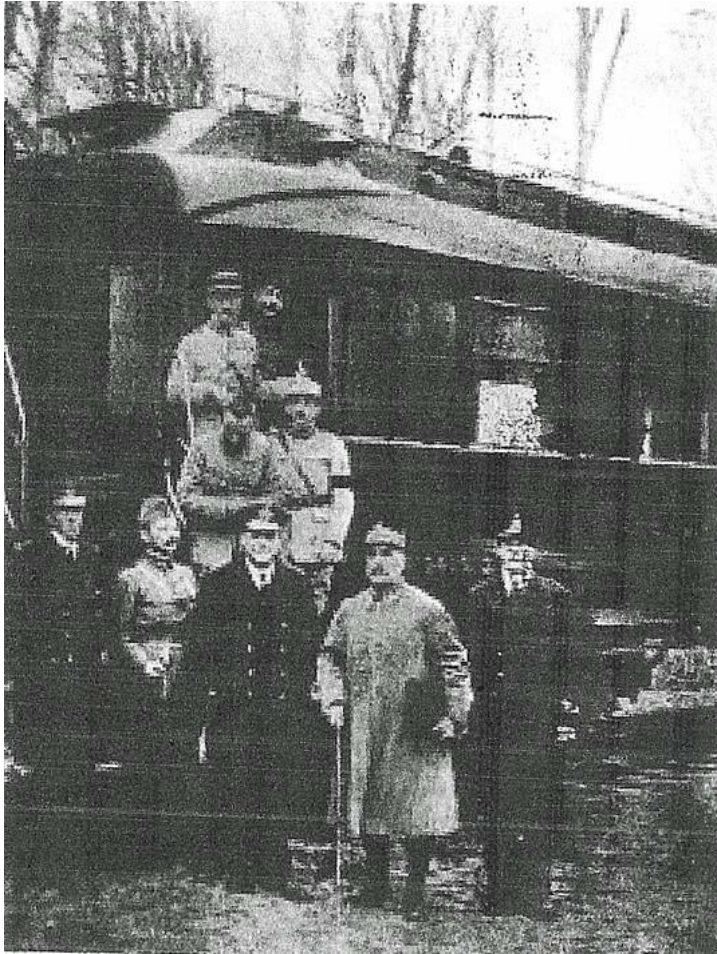
Major Edward "Mick" Mannock, a pilot brought up in Canterbury, may have been the highest-scoring British Empire Ace of all time, with a tally of 61 confirmed kills. He was killed in action on 26th July 1918 and posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross medal. (Wikipedia, which does not mention his upbringing in Canterbury) There is a memorial to him on the South wall of Canterbury cathedral Nave.



20 Mick
Mannock

END OF THE WAR

The War finally ended on 11th November 1918 when Germany signed an armistice agreement with the Allies in a railroad car outside Compiègne in France.



21 Field Marshall Foch's carriage at Compiègne

7.

END OF THE WAR GERMAN SURRENDER RECEPTION OF THE NEWS AT CANTERBURY

Canterbury, which we are so proud in acclaiming as the Mother City of the Anglo-Saxon race, celebrated the occasion worthily with true joy of heart . (1. 16/11/18)

GREAT THANKSGIVING SERVICE AT THE CATHEDRAL (1. 16/11/18)

THE SCENES AT NIGHT

In the evening... Canterbury was a veritable "City of Light"... a delightful scene from Fairyland after the Stygian darkness of the past four years... though Canterbury has been singularly fortunate in escaping the attractions of the Zepps and Gothas. (1. 16/11/18)

AFTER FOUR YEAR (Editorial)

It was Cricket Week at Canterbury four years ago when the outbreak happened...Thenceforward the grim realities of war have held our Country in thralldom... It was in March 1917, that the air-fiends succeeded in dropping bombs with half a mile of the City. She has been spared by a merciful Providence the terrible experience of the Thanet coast towns....But the inhabitants have had their share of mental torture and not a few of their sons are numbered among the valiant dead who gave their lives for the great righteous cause to which England set her hand...now the hordes of the Kaiser Arch-Fiend have been beaten to their knees. The God of Battles has given victory, the Right has triumphed over misdirected might. (1. 16/11/18)

During the Great War eight battalions of the (Canterbury based) Buffs regiment went on active service and another seven served at home. No less than 33,000 men passed through the ranks of the regiment of whom some 6,000 died; forty-eight battle honours were awarded and one VC. (10.)

22 Warriors' chapel
Canterbury Cathedral



The Buffs and other Canterbury based regiments, before and after the Great War, are commemorated in the Warriors' Chapel at Canterbury Cathedral where there is a ceremony at 11:00am every day at which a page in the Book of Remembrance is turned.

The First World War marked the end of an era in many ways. British hegemony as the leading economic and military power in the World ended. The United States of America had overtaken the UK as the largest economy by 1903*.

The war was a great social leveller; class barriers were reduced, the bargaining hand held by trade unions was considerably strengthened and it "revolutionised the ..position of women. It found them serfs and left them free". (4. p157). The War accelerated technological developments, not only in armaments, but in the role motor transport.. All of the major combatants began the conflict with cavalry forces as well using horses for logistical purposes. By the end of the War, horses had largely been replaced by motor vehicles.

* GDP	1903	1918	1919	
UK £bn	1.88	5.1	5.5	Source UKpublicspending.co.uk
X £/\$ 4.75	8.93	24.2	26.1	Source USgovernmentspending.com
USA \$bn	25.9	59.7	75.8	

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SOURCES FOR IMAGES USED

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- 2 **Taxis at Westgate** Wartime Canterbury p2 (Audrey Bateman)
- 3 **Anti-suffragette poster** Wartime Canterbury p9 (Audrey Bateman)
- 4 **Pictures of local heroes** **Colin Blythe** Wartime Canterbury p3
- 5 **St Lawrence Cricket Ground** Britain in Old Photos p80 & 81 Derek Butler
- 6 **Soldiers at St Lawrence Cricket Ground** Wartime Canterbury p4 (A B)
- 7 **New recruits marching past drill hall Canterbury barracks** Wartime C. p10
- 8 **Lord Kitchener's appeal ad** Wartime Canterbury p5 (A.Bateman)
- 9 **Women of Britain say GO! Poster** Women in WW1 p4
- 10 **The military in Broad Street** Wartime Canterbury p43 (Audrey Bateman)
- 11 **Remember Belgium Poster** Wartime Propaganda website
- 12 **The Dane John V.A.D. Hospital** East Kent Gazetteer p28
- 13 **Belgian Soldiers at Abbots Barton** Wartime Canterbury p12 (A. Bateman)
- 14 **V.A.D. Poster** Women in WW1 p14
- 15 **Kentish Gazette Tobacco scheme ad** Wartime Canterbury p45 (A.Bateman)
- 16 **Christmas Truce at the Front** 1914-1918net/truce
- 17 **Trench warfare** Photos of the Somme Google
- 18 **Women's Land Army** Women in WW1 p46
- 19 **Ration Book** WW1 Ration Book Google
- 20 **Pictures of local heroes** **Mick Mannock** Wartime Canterbury p63
- 21 **Field Marshall Foch's carriage at Compiègne** Wikipedia
- 22 **Warriors' Chapel, Canterbury Cathedral** CHAS web site