

HARRIETSHAM TIMES

News from May 1915

Ray Alexander goes down with the Princess Irene at Sheerness Harbour

76 Workman and 273 crew including Ray Alexander lost their lives while engaged on the H.M. auxiliary ship Princess Irene when the ship was accidentally blown up in Sheerness Harbour at 11.15 a.m. on 27th May 1915. So far as is known only one survivor, Stoker David Wills, who was thrown clear when the ship suddenly exploded and completely disintegrated. A small steam ship and two barges lying alongside the Princess Irene were also destroyed.

Wreckage fell up to twenty miles away and civilians in Sittingbourne were injured by falling debris. A box of butter was found in Rainham almost six miles away and some papers from the Princess Irene were even found in Maidstone. It is believed the explosion was caused by a defective detonator on one of the mines which was being loaded at the time of the explosion but a full investigation is under way. Ray Alexander was only 20 years old, having joined the navy on 8th May 1912 as a boy sailor. Sympathy goes to his Mother, Emma Jane Alexander and his brother Ralph and sister Winifred.

Harrietsham Volunteer Training Corps. (V.T.C.)

Mr. Tidd who has been drill instructor to the V.T.C. since its inception has received another appointment and must therefore

sever his connection with the Corps. Too much regret of the members they presented him with a handsome marble clock bearing a suitable inscription, as a slight token of their appreciation of his services. For the present his voluntary duties will be carried on by Mr. Jarrett.

Colonel Campbell, Commandant of the Corps, having been called up for service with the Army in the Midlands, Mr. J. T. Hatch, of Lenham, has been unanimously chosen as his successor. Drills are now held on Wednesdays (7.30) and Sundays (2.30). Additional recruits are invited but reminded that they have to provide their own rifle and clothing. Last month's shooting competition was won by F.W. Tidd who was presented with the Lord Roberts medal. W. Crump secured second prize.

Stanmore House, Lenham opens as a VAD Hospital

Stanmore House, in Lenham Square, was the family home and surgery of local doctor, Dr. John Temperley Grey. Dr. Grey and his family have moved out to a nearby cottage to offer their home as a hospital. Kent VAD 135 "Stanmore House" officially opened on 15th May to provide 35 beds and Dr. Grey was appointed Commandant and Medical Officer.

J. B. Matthews Promotion

We are delighted to report that John Brice Matthews has been promoted to Lieutenant and is expected to leave for France very soon.