

William James Early

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS - 1 January 1916

NEWPORT RIFLEMAN'S RECOVERY FROM WOUNDS.

Rfn. W. Early, of Newport, writing on Dec. 9th from Alexandria to Mr. J. Eldridge, leader of the St. John's Men's Bible Class, Newport, states that he has recovered from the wound in his arm, and adds: "It was a treat to see a bit of cultivated land after the barren country we had been on (in the Gallipoli Peninsula). We arrived at Cairo about 7 o'clock and were taken by motor to the Citadel Hospital, where I stopped for about a month, and then went to a convalescent home down by the river Nile. It was a palace that had belonged to the Sultan's sister, and was a lovely place. All the walls and ceilings were prettily decorated, and there were nice grounds to walk round. The mosquitoes were very busy there. I was simply covered with bites the first week, but I got hardened to it after a bit. I paid a visit to the mosque at the Citadel. The mosques are fine inside, with marble pillars and statues, and the font was of mother-o'-pearl. I went up to the top of the tower, from which you can get a fine bird's-eye view of Cairo. I was booked out of the convalescent home last week-end and came on to Alexandria. We are out on the desert now and just getting used to trudging about in the sand, which is rather trying. . . . The weather is a bit different here from what it is in England at this time of the year; it is very hot during the day. I hope this will find you all well. Give my kind regards to the members of the class. I wish them all a happy Christmas, and hope the New Year will see us all together again."

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3 February 1940

**FUNERAL OF
POPULAR EX-I.W. RIFLEMAN**

MR. W.J. EARLY, OF NEWPORT

In spite of extremely inclement weather a remarkable tribute to the popularity and esteem which he enjoyed was paid by the large attendance of old comrades and other friends at the funeral at Newport on Sunday of Mr. William J. Early, M.M., butcher, of 17 Lower St. James's-street, Newport, an ex-sergeant of the I.W. Rifles, whose death after a short illness at his residence, Priory Mead, Alderbury-road, we announced last week.

A detachment of Princess Beatrice's I.W. Heavy Regiment, R.A., the successors of the I.W. Rifles, marched at the head of the procession from the house and formed guards of honour at St. John's Church and at the interment at Newport Cemetery, and following the cortege were about 20 members of the I.W. Rifles Comrades' Association, wearing their decorations. Six other old comrades acted as bearers, and the undertaker, Mr. J. Hamilton, was also an old comrade of the deceased and wore his medals. The large gathering also included members of the St John's Men's Bible Class and Court Island Foresters. Mr. Early had been a member of the Bible Class since his youth, and the president of the class (the Rev. W.H. Mackinnon) conducted the service and paid a tribute to the deceased's high Christian character, his good sportsmanship, kindness of heart, and splendid example of devotion to duty in whatever he undertook. He mentioned that he was one of the best instructors of the junior gymnastic class the St John's Athletic Club ever had, exercising a wholesome influence on the lads, and referred to the unflinching cheerfulness which was the outstanding trait of his life. It was probable that his anxiety to help entertain troops at the Drill-hall canteen when he was far from well hastened his death. The Vicar added tributes paid in letters by the leader of the Bible Class (Mr. James Eldridge) and the Rev. G.C. Seymour (Rector of Calbourne). Mr Herbert Lower T.C. (deputy leader of the Bible Class) read the lesson, the hymns "The Strife is o'er" and "Abide with me" were

sung, and Miss D. Welby-Pryer, L.R.A.M. (organist) played Mendelssohn's funeral march. At the graveside the Last Post and Reveillé were sounded by a trumpeter of the I.W. Heavy Regiment, R.A.

The chief mourners were the widow, Mr. R. Early (son), Messrs. A.C., S.C., and H.F. Early (brothers), Mesdames W. Thornton and C.A. Stears and Miss B. Early (sisters), C.S.M. C.A. Stears (brother-in-law), Mesdames S.G. Early, H. Way, and F. Dyer (sisters-in-law), Mr. D. Early (nephew), Mrs. G. Cheverton (aunt), Mrs. S. Early (cousin), Gunner G. Morey (representing his father, Mr. F. Morey, brother-in-law), and Messrs. H. Way, F. Dyer, R. Dore, F.G. Keen, and A. Ventress. Mrs. A.C. Early was prevented from attending by indisposition. In addition to those already mentioned the St. John's Men's Bible Class was represented by Messrs. R.J. Eldridge, E.A. Walmsley, W. Jennings, and H.B. Lower (vice-presidents), G.W.H. Jones (hon. Treasurer), H. Morris (hon. secretary of the Athletic Club), Messrs. F.W. Pullinger, W.G. Sibbick, A.T. Brown, H.B.J. Lower, E. Hannam, W. Matthews, G.W. Embling, A.A. Knight, A. Geary, L. Church, and N.H. Westmore (present or past members of the Committee), and about 20 members. The members of the I.W. Rifles Comrades' Association, acting as bearers, were Messrs. W.E. Mathews, C.J. Cousins, F.R. Shilton, A. Mabb, H.J. Harvey, and F. Merkel, and the chairman (Mr. W.O. Minns), the hon treasurer (Mr. H.G. Peachey), and about 20 members also attended, the parade being in the charge of Mr F.H.J. Damp, M.C. Court Island Foresters was represented by Bros. H. Phillips (chief ranger), B. Butchers (sub-chief ranger), C. Eldridge (senior trustee), A.J. Williams (district treasurer), R. Goddard (district secretary), J.C. Williams (District Trustee), W. Spanner (court secretary), and G. Matthews (treasurer of the juvenile section).

Those also present included Lt.-Col. C.W. Brannon, M.C., T.D., D.L. (commanding I.W. Heavy Regiment, R.A.), Major A.D. Dockrill, Chief Petty Officer J.R. Williams R.N., Mesdames A.A. Knight, T. Weavers, Coward, and H. Porter, and Messrs. W.J. Eldridge, A. & B. Knight, O. Whittington, C. Cole, A. Scott, A.D. Callaway (representing his wife, a cousin), W.G. James (St. Paul's Athletic Club), B. Clark (Sandown), J. Lindsay, G. Smith, E.J. Fairweather (representing the workers at the Drill-hall Soldiers' Recreation-room), E.F. Millgate (hon. secretary, British Legion), D. White and K. Scovell (St. Thomas's Bible Class), V. and S. Gibbs (Newport Trades C.C.), R.J. Purdy, E. Hendy (Salvation Army), H.P. James, P. Hawkins, T. Ash, H.J. Wellspring, A.B. Shaw, M.B.E., G. Crews (Cowes), and G.C. Adams.

At tea-time in the Drill-hall Recreation-rooms on Sunday the large gathering of troops stood in silence for a minute as a tribute of respect to the memory of Mr. Early and of appreciation of his devoted work at the rooms.

Mrs Early and her son gratefully acknowledge the kindness of Mrs. Whiston and Messrs. J. Drudge and C. Brown and also express their appreciation of the sympathy and respect shown by the attendance at the funeral of the detachment of the I.W. Heavy Regiment, R.A., and representatives of the I.W. Rifles Comrades' Association, the St. John's Men's Bible Class, the Foresters, and the Drill-hall canteen committee.

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