



OVER THE TOP



WAR IS OVER

The 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month is a time to remember peace

THE ARMISTICE

On November 11th 1918, an armistice brought the end to over four years of War. This was followed with scenes of rejoicing on city streets in the victorious countries, but relief and pride were tempered by grief for the fallen.

In the defeated countries, chaos and bitterness reigned.

On the night of the 7th November a German delegation, headed by the respected politician Matthias Erzberger, were taken to Rethondes in eastern France.

Supreme commander of the Allied Armies Marshal Ferdinand Foch, and other allied officers, awaited their arrival.

The allies had agreed to present harsh armistice terms. Germany was to withdraw all of its troops from France, Belgium and Alsace-Lorraine. German territory on the west bank of the Rhine, would be occupied by Allied troops. The naval blockade of Germany would continue to operate.

Foch was not certain that Germany would accept these terms which, by rendering their country indefensible, effectively constituted a surrender rather than a cessation of hostilities.

Allied attacks on the Western Front continued unabated, as did planning for future operations, into 1919.

British commander Field Marshall Douglas Haig, impressed by the strength of German resistance, was keen on an immediate end to the fighting.

Any possibility of the Germans rejecting the Armistice terms was annulled by the outbreak of revolution at home.

Long before the official news came through it was known at Stockton and Thornaby that the armistice had been signed.

However, although workers in many of the factories had downed their

tools for the day, apart from there being a general rush upon the drapery establishment for bunting, there was very little outward sign of excitement.

When however the Gazette was in a position to answer inquiries to the public satisfaction, there was a complete cessation of business, and people gave themselves up almost entirely to rejoicing.

The Town clerk (Mr T Downey) was one of the first to receive the official information from the Gazette, and he at once gave authority for the ringing of the bells of the Parish Church, which was quickly followed by the chorus of work buzzers.

Stockton and Thornaby like most towns, had been hard hit, with terrible depths of loss & bereavement throughout the war, and whilst people accepted in full the

importance of the news, which it was sincerely hoped was the fore-runner of a satisfactory peace, they conducted themselves with propriety and a decorous regard for those whose hearts were saddened by a painful remembrance.

Nor did they lose sight of the great responsibility which lay before them. Alderman Frederick T. Natrass said this when he addressed a private gathering:

“We accept this as a glorious conclusion of the spirit that has prevailed throughout the nation, since the days when we committed ourselves to a righteous war. And I hope we will address ourselves to the responsibility that peace will lay upon the nation in a way which will be worthy of us in the end”.

*The Stockton Herald
16th November 1918*



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WAR DIARIES OF A STOCKTON MAN



During the month of November, Stockton Reference Library will have the original First World War diaries of local man Roger Allison Stamp, on display. The transcripts of the diaries can also be found on <http://heritage.stockton.gov.uk/>

Stockton Reference Library would like to offer our sincere thanks to Roger's relative, Linda Patterson, who originally transcribed the diaries and who has graciously granted us permission to display them. We would also like to acknowledge work done by Durham County Record Office and Durham at War (www.durhamatwar.org.uk), in transferring the material into an accessible format.

VICTORY HALL

Suggested War memorial for Stockton

Alderman M Robinson of Landieu, of Hartburn Stockton, writes: "During these last few days the people of Stockton have tried to give expression to their feelings of thankfulness to God, and gratitude to our brave troops for the glorious victory we have won. We all hope that before long our brave boys will return from war, and most rejoice in this glad fact, yet we cannot forget those who will never come back.

I feel sure that the whole of Stockton would like to join in erecting a memorial which would be useful to our returning heroes, as well as a lasting memory of those who have laid down their lives. I need hardly say that Stockton has long been in need of some institution which would afford pleasure and recreation to our working people, therefore I would like to suggest that a large winter gardens, where all games, reading, writing, refreshments and music could be enjoyed, would meet a long felt public need, and also be a

lasting and worthy tribute to those who have given their all for us. If this suggestion should find in favour and supporters, I will subscribe £1,000 towards the finds, and feel confident that many others, including our working men themselves, will gladly give a liberal contribution as a thank you offering for the safe return of their loved ones. I suggest that the most appropriate name for the building would be Victory Hall. I am sending this to the press in order that the public may have an opportunity of expressing their approval, or otherwise, of the suggestion, and in order that if approved, the Mayors advisory committee, the local war heroes fund and the corporation, will take up the proposition and see it through. My contribution will only be given on the condition that enough money is raised to meet the requirements of the town, and is worthy of its noble object".

The Herald
23rd November 1918

STOCKTON WAR SAVINGS ASSOCIATIONS

All officers and members of associations are cordially invited to take part in the procession on Monday.

Meet in Bishopton Lane at 10.30am
Take part in the 'Thank the Guns' campaign.

YOU HAVE HELPED TO KEEP THE GUNS GOING

Harold Waller ,
Honorable Secretary

DUNN In loving memory of ex-private Herbert T. Dunn who died of shell shock and the effects of gas on November 28th 1917.

Also son of the above; Harold P Dun who was killed in France in 1916

Only a private soldier and a mother's youngest son, killed on the field of battle, his duty nobly done.

*He has fought for his King and his country,
God grant him his eternal rest. He helped the great cause of freedom. He is a British soldier at rest.*

Ever remembered by his loving mother and sister Glennie.

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