

A SOLDIER'S SUICIDE –

The Deputy Coroner (Francis A. JOYCE, Esq.) held an inquest on Wednesday on the body of Pte. **Alfred Ernest WINNING**, Worcestershire Regiment, aged 26, who was found hanging in a barn at Westmont, Queens' s-road, on Tuesday. Mr. Louis BRIND was foreman of the jury. Pte. William John Thomas WINNING, Worcestershire Regiment, brother of the deceased, gave evidence of identification. He said he last saw his brother alive on Thursday evening when he showed him some letters from home. His brother had been in the battalion about a year. He had frequently seen him, and he always seemed happy. The Coroner: Has he taken objection to the Army in any way? – No, sir. – Q. He was not a conscientious objector in any way? – No, sir. – Further questioned, the brother said deceased was ordinarily a man of cheerful disposition. He had had a clean sheet since he had been in the Army. He knew of no cause to induce his brother to take his life. Lance-Corpl. Patrick Edward BURKE told of finding the man. He left deceased in the stables at Westmont in the morning in his usual cheerful mood. When he returned at 11.30 Pte. WILKINS told him deceased had gone. Witness thought it was probable that he had gone to see a doctor.. On returning at 4.30 it was reported to him that the key of the forage barn door could not be found. It was then found that the barn door was locked from the inside. The door was forced, and deceased was found hanging from a beam 10ft. from the ground. Apparently deceased had first got on the chaffcutter. He was cut down at once. Witness added that deceased was talking to him that morning about seeing a doctor. By a juror: Deceased had said nothing about being afraid to go to France. Pte. William WILKINS, Worcestershire Regiment, said deceased seemed as usual while working in the stable with him. Lieut. C. W. EVELYN. R.A.M.C. (attached to the Worcestershires), said that when he arrived at the stable deceased was lying on the floor quite dead. Witness had no doubt that death was due to suffocation through hanging. Deceased had never reported sick to him. There was very little likelihood of his going to the front; his category was a low one. 2nd Lieut. H. F. BONNINGTON, deceased's company officer, said deceased had a clean sheet, with no crimes against him. He was employed as a groom to one of the senior officers, and that spoke for itself, since no man was employed unless he was of good character. With regard to the rumour in the town that he was afraid of going to the Front, that was entirely wrong, since his category did not at present allow him to go out. He was a good fellow and a good soldier. In summing up, the Coroner said deceased destroyed himself for reasons which appeared to be inadequate. He had got on well in the Army, and there was no reason to think that he wanted to get out of it or evade service in France, He was in a class which would prevent his going on active service, so the jury could not look to that as a cause for taking his life. The jury returned a verdict that deceased committed suicide whilst temporarily of unsound mind. Lieut. G. F. leigh SPENCER, on behalf of Col. LEWIS and the regiment, expressed deep regret at the sad occurrence and sympathy with the relatives of the deceased.
