

ISLE OF WIGHT OBSERVER Saturday 7th February 1920

**A RYDE TRAGEDY.
Ex-Soldier's Determined Suicide.**

A shocking case of suicide occurred at 30 Warwick Street, Ryde, on Thursday evening, an ex-soldier, **Fred Harold FORD** 21 years of age, cutting his throat with a razor, from the effects of which he died. The young fellow, since his recent discharge from the Army, resided with his mother at the above address, and he was troubled with a wound in the leg which had not healed. His mother went out to fetch something for him, and on her return about 8.30 she found him in bed covered with blood and a razor by his side having, during her absence, and whilst alone in the house, severed the arteries of his throat. The police and a doctor were called, and the unfortunate man, who was in a terrible state from loss of blood, was removed in the police ambulance to the County Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries within an hour. Much sympathy is felt for Mrs. FORD in her bereavement. An inquest will be held in due course.

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**Soldier's Suicide.
INQUEST AND FUNERAL**

An inquest into the circumstances of the sad death of Pte. FORD (21) late 30 Warwick-st., was held at the Primitive Methodist schoolroom on Saturday morning, before the Deputy Coroner (Alderman W. H. F. P. THIRKELL) who sat without a jury.

Elizabeth FORD, mother of deceased and a widow, identified the body, and said her son had lived with her at 30 Warwick Street for the last two months, and came from the Military Hospital at Parkhurst. He was wounded in the left leg whilst in France two years ago, and had been in hospital about a year. The wound had healed but broke out again since he came home, and Dr. PRESTON was attending him for it. During the last week she could not get him to eat anything and he had recently been very strange in his manner, also complaining of sleeplessness. Witness had three sons wounded in the war. Deceased had kept to his bed during the last month and she rarely left him. He had said "I have suffered so much Mother, during these 25 months that I wished they had shot me (meaning killed) in France," but he had never threatened to commit suicide. He always shaved himself until the last two or three mornings, but on the morning previous to his death a barber came in to cut his hair and shaved him. On Thursday afternoon he behaved strangely, throwing some fruit about the room which had been brought him. About 7 p.m. she left the house to get his insurance paper signed by the doctor, and left deceased alone in the house in bed. As she was leaving she heard a bump as if he was getting out of bed, and she called out to him she would not be long, which he replied he was only reaching for his paper. Witness was gone an hour and when she returned she found him in bed covered with blood and quite unconscious. She called Mr. MILLS and sent for the police and doctor. Deceased had two razors, one of which he kept in the washingstand drawer.

William MILLS, 9 St. John's Road, umbrella maker, said he was called to the last witness's house on Thursday evening and found deceased as described with a large wound in his throat. He tied a towel round it, The blood was congealed and he should think the injury had been inflicted at less three-quarters of an hour previously. He had much trouble in holding him and remained with him until he was removed to the hospital

Police sergt. ORCHARD deposed that on Thursday about 8.30 p.m., in company with P.C. JACKSON, he went to 30 Warwick Street and found deceased in bed struggling, and the last witness trying to prevent him doing himself further injury. He struggled all the way to the hospital, whither he was taken in the Police ambulance. On the bed was the razor case produced, and on searching the bed he found the razor which was bloodstained.

Dr. L. L. PRESTON stated he had been attending deceased since December 15th last. He was a discharged soldier and wounded in the left leg during the war. He, witness, saw him on Tuesday the 3rd when he found him depressed on account of his leg not being healed. Deceased had been in the military hospital for some months and the wound had healed but broke out afresh. He complained of not being able to eat or sleep. On Thursday evening he was called to the house and found the young fellow on the bed with

a large wound in the throat which had severed the arteries and was unconscious and pulseless. He bandaged the wound and had him removed to the hospital.

Could you judge that the wound had been self-inflicted? – Undoubtedly, and by the razor produced. Witness considered the man's condition was hopeless when he sent him to the hospital.

Dr. George THOM, house-surgeon at the I.W. County Hospital, said he saw deceased soon after his arrival, He died about 9.30 and the cause of death was haemorrhage and shock, and in witness's opinion the wound was self-inflicted. The windpipe was severed which increased the shock. Witness was of opinion that if deceased could have been attended to immediately at the house his life might have been saved.

“DIED FOR HIS COUNTRY.”

At the conclusion of the evidence the Coroner in expressing his sympathy with the mother of deceased, told her she could regard her son as having died an honourable death just as if he was killed in battle, or died for his country like any other soldier. The wound from which he had suffered affected his mind and he took his life whilst not responsible for his actions, in other words he committed suicide whilst temporarily insane, which was the verdict that he would record. He came back to die from his wounds. He was very sorry for the mother but that was her consolation that deceased died for his country.

Mrs. FORD acknowledged the remarks of the Coroner and said she had five children alive.

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MILITARY FUNERAL

The Funeral took place from the deceased's home, 30 Warwick-street, on Tuesday afternoon when Military honours were accorded, the firing party, bearers and bugler being sent from Parkhurst, 1st Battalion Royal Irish Rifles, under the command of Lieut. SPENCE. The band of the D.S.O. accompanied the cortege to the Cemetery, Mr. E. M. SHINAR, Secretary, kindly arranging the latter. The principal mourners were: Mrs. FORD (mother), Tom and Percy (brothers), Mrs. BARTLETT (aunt), Mrs. R. BARTLETT, Mr. and Mrs. MILLS, Mrs. SHERLOCK, Mr. H BARTLETT, Mr. H.S. PENSEY (chum). The other three brothers serving were unable to get home.

The wreaths were from Mother, brothers, aunt and cousins, Mrs. R. BARTLETT, Mr. and Mrs. MILLS, Miss CAREY, Mrs. WYATT, Mrs. SHERLOCK, Mrs. OLIVER, Mrs. WILLETT and Mrs. WILSON. The coffin was covered with the Union Jack.

The funeral arrangements were carried out by Mr. TAYLOR, military undertaker, St. Johns road. Large numbers attended at the graveside where the Last Post was sounded.

Mrs. FORD and family wish to return thanks to all those who have shown sympathy in their sad bereavement
