

TROOPSHIP DISASTER.

Two Well-known Lutonians
Aboard.

One Known to be Saved.

We participate in the national mourning for the fate of Royal Edward, the troopship which was torpedoed and went down in the Aegean Sea last Saturday with the loss of a thousand lives, but before these lines are read it may be that one Luton family may suffer a more poignant grief.

From what we can gather the fears that the vessel belonged to the convoy conveying the Division including the 1/5th Bedfordshire Regiment are groundless, but two well-known Lutonians were on board. One of these is safe.

In the case of the other, Sgt. Woodcroft, he was on his way to join the 54th East Anglian Casualty Clearing Station. Nothing is yet to hand concerning his fate, so we may only live in hopes that he is one of the 600 survivors.



Sergt. Arthur Woodcroft was well known in Luton, and was employed by Messrs. A. Hucklesby and Co., of 46, George-street, Luton, before enlisting. For many years he had been an enthusiastic member of the Luton Branch of the St. John Ambulance Association, and frequently attended the Luton Town football matches and other sports in the town. He joined the East Anglian Casualty Clearing Station of the R.A.M.C. He lost a brother in the fighting round Ypres last November, and his father is on the staff of the Bedfordshires at Kempston Barracks.

Writing a day or two after sailing, Sergt. Woodcroft said:—"Dear Mother,—Just a line to let you know I am safe so far. We have had a splendid voyage. There is something the ship can do, and that is, provide good food—three courses for breakfast, four for dinner, and so on, and we have it different every day. We sailed on the same day that I sent the card, and we have been over a week on the water—never sighted land until we saw 'Gib.' I have been made Sanitary Sergeant of the ship for the voyage. You may be hot in England, but it is very hot here. I am writing this on the ship and posting it when I get the chance at our first port of call. Little did I think last August that I should be spending this August holiday on the water. I think this is all for the present.—Your affectionate son."

From Malta Sergt. Woodcroft sent one of the pictorial cards issued by the St. John Ambulance Association. He wrote on the card:—"You will know where we are from this. We are besieged with fruit-sellers."

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