

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY PRESS

Saturday, May 16, 1942

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SOUTH COAST AIR RAIDS.

during the two heavy air attacks made on a South Coast town within a few hours of each other last week one of the least perturbed residents, who inspired great confidence in the other members of the household, was 93-year-old Mrs. Ellen Pocock. During both ordeals she acted with commendable coolness and provided a great source of comfort to her two daughters and friends, sheltering under the stairs in the passage of the house. Several large bombs fell quite close to the house which had most of its windows broken and several of the doors forced open.

FUNERAL OF VICTIMS.

The funerals of the victims took place on Tuesday and Wednesday, when a large number of sympathisers gathered at the respective cemeteries. On the former day, while the long procession was proceeding to the burial ground, an air raid alert was sounded and gun-fire was plainly heard. Despite the danger that lurked close at hand above the low clouds very few people were driven from paying their last respects to their unfortunate fellow townspeople. The coffins were borne in motor wagons which were draped with Union Jacks, and among those present were the chairman and vice-chairman of the District Council as well as other members and officials, the chairman, vice-chairman, and members and officials of the County Council, the Mayor and Town Clerk of a neighbouring town, the Chief and Deputy-Chief Constables, and the county A.R.P. controller and officer. Other bodies represented in the procession were the police, Home Guard, the N.F.S., the W.V.S., members of the town and a works A.R.P. Services, and a number of Fire Guards. The Archdeacon and local clergy participated in the service at the graveside and a combined choir from three churches was in attendance. The A.R.P. services provided the bearers except in one instance – that of a Wolf Cub, whose coffin, on which were his cap and neckerchief, was carried by senior members of his Scout Group. As the procession wended its way from the Cemetery entrance to the communal grave several large bomb craters, which bore testimony to the savagery of the raid, had to be passed. The service included the singing of the hymns “Jesu, Lover of my soul,” “Rock of ages,” “Abide with me,” and “Jesus lives,” and the chanting of the 23rd Psalm. - In a short address, the Archdeacon expressed sympathy with those who had been bereaved and offered them words of comfort. He also paid tribute to the gallantry displayed by the various services in the execution of their duty at a time when hell was being let loose over their town, and to the courage and, fortitude shown by the people during their severe ordeal. There was a large number of beautiful floral tributes.

When the remainder of the victims were interred on Wednesday there was again a large number of sympathisers present, which included many of the leading citizens of the district and from neighbouring towns, as well as most of the heads of the Civil Defence Services. Representative bodies of the various services also attended. There was no procession to the Cemetery as on the previous day, as the coffins had been placed in the communal grave, the sides of which had been draped with Union Jacks, in readiness for the graveside service. Most of the local clergy were present and several of them took part in the service, which included the singing of the hymn “Lead, kindly light.” A short address was given by a former Vicar of the parish, who said that the loss of life was part of the heavy price they had to pay in the fight for freedom. Those who had been killed had died for their country and were spared further sufferings as they were now at peace. He felt the blow that had been dealt them very acutely, as many of the victims were personally known to him. He extended sincere sympathy with the bereaved and to those who had lost their homes and possessions. May God grant them comfort and peace. There were nearly 200 beautiful floral tributes, which included wreaths from the M.P. for the Constituency and from the Mayor and

Corporation of two neighbouring boroughs.

Six children of one family under 7 years of age, who were killed in another town, were buried together on Friday week. One of the parents who were rescued has since died. Among those attending the funeral were the Mayor and Mayoress.

THE BISHOP'S SYMPATHY.

The Bishop of Portsmouth writes; "I write to ask if you will allow me to send through your columns a message of sympathy to those who suffered in the recent savage attack by the enemy. I took the first opportunity I had of visiting the town after the raid, with the Archdeacon, and I was deeply impressed by the bearing of its people, and more than ever convinced that the spirit of resistance is only increased by such action on the part of our enemies. But it was obviously impossible in the space of an afternoon to get in touch with all who had suffered, and for this reason I want, through your paper, to convey to them a sense not only of my very deep sympathy in the loss of relatives or of homes, or in the wounds they may themselves have received, but also of my admiration of the spirit of all whom I met in the way in which they are carrying on, confident of final victory. I wish I could have said this to each in person; as this is impossible, I hope they will accept this expression of my feelings."