

THREE SUTTON NURSES KILLED IN MANCHESTER BLITZ

Trapped When Bomb Hits Hospital

To be Buried In One Grave at St. Anne's

ELLEN SHERIDAN, 14 Belvedere-avenue, Sutton; ROSE MOFFATT, Reginald-road, Sutton; MARGARET LOWERY, 22 Reginald-road, Sutton. These three girls, each 19 years, probationary nurses at the Salford Royal Hospital were killed when the hospital was hit in the Manchester blitz on Whit Monday morning.

The greatest sympathy, in which the "Newspaper" joins, will be expressed to the parents of the Sutton girls, who gave their lives for their country as heroically as the soldier who falls in action. The girls were bosom friends, attended St. Anne's School, Sutton, together, and after a period of work in the district took on nursing as a profession.

It is difficult to obtain precise information what happened, but from a reliable source it is understood that eleven nurses including the Sutton girls, along with 150 patients, were evacuated from the hospital to a nearby building, when a bomb tore its way through the floor, was somehow or other deflected and exploded in the roadway, causing the building to collapse, and trapping the nurses. There was, of course, very little hope from the first, but frantic rescue operations commenced immediately the raiders' passed signal had been given, and these continued all Monday, ceased only a few hours during the darkness, and proceeded on Tuesday. The bodies of the dead nurses were reached on Tuesday evening.

Requiem Mass

It has been arranged that the bodies of the three dead nurses will be interred in one grave at Sutton. The coffins, bearing the remains, will be taken into St. Anne's Church on Friday evening at 8 p.m., and will remain overnight, when a Solemn Requiem Mass will be said next morning at 10 a.m.

The Father Rector of St. Anne's, Sutton, speaking to a "Newspaper" representative, paid a high tribute to the three dead girls, and expressed on behalf of the community the greatest sympathy with the bereaved. The girls, he said, were members of many Confraternities in the parish, and he knew of no girls more devoted to their duty.

TRAGIC MESSAGE

The first intimation that something was amiss came on Monday afternoon, when a message was received saying that the girls were missing. Their parents immediately contacted Manchester, but it was only late on Tuesday night that they learned of the fate suffered by the three friends. With grey, tired faces, twenty determined rescue workers continued their efforts to save the [illegible] and the ten nurses who were trapped.

Snatching a few hours rest after twenty-four hours continuous toil, the rescue party returned to the job on Tuesday. On Whit Monday they had worked like negroes till daylight left the sky, rendering work impossible. The workers were back on the job with the dawn. Demolition squads were there to help them in their grim task. The Sutton girls were really great friends and were held in high esteem by all who knew them.

ATTENDED ST. ANNE'S

Ellen and Margaret attended St. Anne's R.C. School together. Miss Moffatt's parents lived in Aldershot before coming to Sutton, and there Miss Moffatt had her schooling. Coming with her parents to Sutton, Rose Moffatt soon became friends with Ellen and Margaret. Together, they attended St. Anne's Church, and they played a prominent part with the Children of Mary. Rose and Margaret worked at Messrs. Littlewood, Liverpool. Always keen on the idea of nursing, the pair left

together about 15 months ago to take up probationary positions at the fated Salford Royal Hospital. Ellen, too, desired to enter the nursing profession, and she soon left her job as a clerk to join her friends.

OFF DUTY – DID NOT GO HOME

Margaret Lowery was off duty on Saturday evening, but instead of coming home, as was her custom, her parents visited her. Ellen Sheridan, too, was off duty on Saturday. She came home, remaining in Sutton all Sunday. She had only been back at the hospital an hour or so when the blitz started.

GREATLY ADMIRER

When the *NEWSPAPER* representative called in the district during the week, he found that neighbours were shocked by the news of the loss of three of their most popular girls. "They were greatly admired and had made a large circle of friends with their kindly disposition and happy nature," one of the neighbours said. "Miss Sheridan and Miss Lowery were natives of the district, and had endeared themselves to everybody."

Sister Urban, from the nearby convent of St. Paul of the Cross, paid the girls an excellent tribute. "They were three of my best girls," she said, "and were much beloved by their school chums. They had passed through the various classes at the school since their childhood and I could not give more than the highest praise for them. They had been connected with the school operettas each year, and later were prominent figures in the Children of Mary."

AN APPRECIATION

By the Rev. Fr. R. McCONNELL, C.P. (Rector, St. Anne's, Sutton)

The parish of St. Anne's, Sutton, suffered a grievous loss as a result of last Sunday night's Nazi air-raid on Manchester. Three young girls - Margaret Lowery, Rose Moffatt and Nellie Sheridan – probationers at Salford Royal Hospital, were killed when the shelter in which they had taken refuge with other nurses received a direct hit. The three girls were all children together at St. Anne's Girls' School and were fast friends. They became members of the Children of Mary Sodality and were loved by their companions for their unassuming virtue and cheerfulness.

They were always bright and happy, and it came as no surprise to those who knew them when all three decided to take up Nursing as a profession. Last year they were admitted as members of the staff of Salford Royal, a hospital famous for the training of young nurses, and their success in the profession was immediate. They entered upon their duties with youthful zest and quickly gave every satisfaction to the Hospital Authorities. Their love of the work and their keenness in its execution came largely from the fact that, as Catholic girls of the best type, they looked upon the Nursing profession not as a job, but as a vocation which must call upon and exercise all the best in their splendid characters.

The alleviation of suffering was their life's work, and in the heroic performance of that duty they met their deaths. They had helped to evacuate 150 patients in the Hospital to a place of safety during the air-raid and were killed immediately after. As they were united in life by similar ideals and high ambitions, so were they united in death and so are they enjoying the reward, "exceeding great". May they rest in peace!

Their broken bodies will repose in St. Anne's Church during Friday night, and Requiem Mass will be said on Saturday morning. The funeral will take place in St. Anne's Cemetery immediately afterwards and they will all be buried in one grave, so that what honour we can pay them, and what respect we can show them will be some small consolation to their sorrowing parents and friends and in appreciation of their services in the cause of stricken humanity, for "in a short time they fulfilled much."

Three Nurses Buried in One Grave

Mourners In Tears At Sutton Funeral

Many hundreds of mourners from the surrounding districts of Sutton paid their last respects to the three popular nurses of the district who died in the Manchester "blitz" on Whit Monday, at the funeral in St. Anne's Cemetery on Saturday. The various Guilds and Confraternities of the Church lined the path from the Church to the cemetery where pathetic scenes were witnessed at the graveside. Many of the victims' friends were present, and Fr. Romuald, C.P., gave the Absolutions, to the plain chant accompaniment of the Students' Choir. Mr. Barr was at the organ.

By a "Newspaper" Representative

Sheltered under a canopy of trees adjacent to the sepulchre of the famous Passionist Missionary, Ven. Dominic, C.P., to whose tomb they annually made a pilgrimage with the Children of Mary, the remains of the three Sutton nurses, Helen Sheridan, Belvedere-avenue, Margaret Lowery and Rose Moffatt, of Reginald-road, who died as a result of enemy action in the Whit Monday blitz on Manchester, were laid to rest on Saturday.

The grave where they lie is almost under the walls of the Church, and is near to the tomb of the Passionist Fathers of Sutton. The scene at Sutton on Saturday was particularly moving. People wept openly in the churchyard, as the three caskets containing the remains were lowered into the grave. Many of the three dead girls' friends, who had attended school at St. Anne's with them, and members of the various confraternities bade a sad farewell to the girls who had lost their lives in such tragic circumstances.

Theirs had been a perfect friendship in life, for they had all played their parts in the operettas at the school, and had been in the Children of Mary together, as well as organising many of the social events connected with the mission.

TEACHERS AT GRAVESIDE

One of the last actions of Rose Sheridan when she was in Sutton on a recent visit, was to call on her former school teacher, Miss M. Swift, who was at the graveside on Saturday morning to pay respect to her old pupils. Sister Urban, of St. Paul of the Cross Convent, under whose care the girls were for many years, was present at the Requiem Mass.

It was fitting to the occasion that the Rector of St. Anne's, Fr. Romuald, C.P., should offer the Requiem Mass for the repose of their souls. The caskets had been received into St. Anne's Church on Friday night, by the Rector, after coming by road. As the cortege approached the district members of the Children of Mary and the Carmelites provided an escort to the church.

Some hours prior to the Mass commencing a number of parishioners who knew the girls personally filed down the aisle of the church, where the caskets rested at the foot of the high altar. On each side of the coffins were six candles, draped in black, the altar also being draped in the same sombre colour. On the coffins were laid wreaths bearing the following inscriptions: "From Mum and Dad to our Rose: In loving memory of one who gave her life in a noble cause." "In loving memory of dear Helen," from Mum, Dad and Jack. "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend"; while an equally touching tribute rested on the coffin of Margaret Lowery.

REQUIEM MASS

Shortly before the Requiem Mass commenced members of the various organizations wearing regalia peculiar to their organisations, entered the church. There were members of the Guild of the

Cross and Mission, Children of Mary and Carmelites. The mourners occupied pews on each side of the three caskets in the Nave of the church. When the Mass finished the confraternities lined the route into the cemetery, where many pathetic scenes were witnessed. The school staffs, scholars and neighbours were unable to control their emotions, as the committal service went on, and the caskets were lowered into the one grave. At the conclusion of the service the assembly filed past the grave, and laid wreaths and Mass Cards on the ground.

MOURNERS

The mourners were Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan (parents); Mr. J. Sheridan (brother); Mrs. Sheridan (grandma); Mr. and Mrs. Jim Sheridan; Mr. Pat Sheridan; Mr. and Mrs. T. Mellors; Mr. and Mrs. Fairclough; Mr. and Mrs. Webster; Mr. and Mrs. S. Mellors; Mr. and Mrs. T. Woods; Mr. and Mrs. G. Woods; Mr. and Mrs. F. Woods; Mr. and Mrs. A. Woods; Mr. and Mrs. Brennan; Mrs. Southward; Mrs. Morris; Mrs. Western; Mrs. Liptrot; Mr. and Mrs. G. Hughton; Mr. and Mrs. Lowe. The bearers were Messrs. J. Sheridan, T. Mellors, F. Woods, G. Woods.

The mourners at Miss Lowery's funeral were: Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Lowery (parents); Misses Joan, Winnie, Josephine, Theodora Lowery (sisters); Master Leonard Lowery (brother); Mrs. Lowery (grandma); Mr. Jonathan Webster; Misses Mildred and Theodora Lowery; Mr. Peter Lowery; Mr. and Mrs. Jack Lowery; Mr. and Mrs. W. Lowery; Mr. and Mrs. E. Proudlove; Brian, Jackie and Anthony Lowery and Miss Proudlove; Mrs. Tracey; Miss Tracey; Sister Harley, St. Helens Hospital; Mr. Paddy McDermott; Mr. Peter McDermott. The bearers were Messrs. Peter, John and Willie Lowery, and E. Proudlove.

The mourners at Miss Moffatt's funeral were Mr. and Mrs. Moffatt (parents); Mrs. Williams; Mr. William Moffatt; Mr. Desmond Moffatt; Mr. J. Moffatt; Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson; Mrs. Hodcroft; Mrs. Cooke; Miss Emily Basles; Rev. Donoghue, St. Teresa's, Sutton Manor. The bearers were: Messrs. J. Mellors, S. Mellors, A. Liptrot, P. Sheridan. The undertaker for the three funerals was Mr. A. Hawley, Sutton.

WREATHS

Wreaths were received from: Mr. and Mrs. H. Berry, Houghton; Evelyn; Thelma; Uncle George, Aunt Francis and Family; T.H. and S.A. Royle; Employees of S. Royle, Taylor Street; Tom and Aunt Emma and all at Southport; Uncle Jack and Auntie Ruth; Mr. and Mrs. Yarwood and family and Mrs. and Mr. Newham and Audrey; Mr. and Mrs. Hughes; Mr. and Mrs. Taylor; Mr. and Mrs. P. Lowe; Mrs. Traverse and Mrs. Phythian; Staff and fellow workmates of machine [illegible]; Cousins Louie and Jim; Overhauling of and oil sheeting department, St. Helens Junction; Staff of S. Royle and Sons, Peckers Hill-road; Staff and Employees H.M. Factory; All at 248 Nutgrove-road; To Ellen from Mr. and Mrs. Moffatt and family; Mr. and Mrs. Murphy and family. In memory of Margaret from Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan and family. To Margaret from Mr. and Mrs. Moffatt and family; Mr. and Mrs. J. Wilkinson; Auntie [illegible], Uncle George and cousins, Manchester. In loving memory of Sister Rose who did her duty to the sick and helped sister and brother-in-law. In loving remembrance of Rose from Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan and Jack; Counc. Mr. and Mrs. Robertson; Mr. and Mrs. Cook; Pat and Alan; Mr. and Mrs. Fishwick, Leach-lane. In loving memory of dear Sister Rose from Willie and Desmond; Kathleen A. Millar (Ward M.M.2); Joan; Edna and Alf; Detachment War Department Constabulary; Neighbours and Friends; All at 15 Bold-road; Mrs. Sutton and Ada; Gran-dad, Grandma and Aunt Sarah; Mama; Dada, brothers and sisters; Mr. and Mrs. Tracey and Joan; Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Young and family; Friends in Belvedere-avenue; Mary Griffiths; Esther; Mr. and Mrs. Johnson. All at 42 Green-lane, Hadfield, Manchester; Esther; Mr. and Mrs. Hickson; Sally; Home Guard, No. 3 Platoon; Coun. and Mrs. J. E. Hughes; Olive and Les; Uncle Fred, Auntie Maggie and Freda; All at 10 Belvedere-avenue; Florrie and Jim; Friends and neighbours at Reginald-road and Sutton Leach; Grandma, Aunt and Uncle; Friends in Belvedere-avenue; Brian, James and Tony; Grannie; Mildred, Theo and Peter; M. Kirkham; Margaret; Uncle Billy, Auntie Lily; Auntie Winnie and Uncle Albert; Mr. and Mrs. H. Cobden Turner; Mam, Dad and Jack; Edna and Alf.

MASS CARDS

Mass Cards were received from:-

Mr. and Mrs. Moffatt and family; Mr. and Mrs. Spencer 11 Junction-lane; Mr. and Mrs. Morris; Mrs. Lowery; Peter, Theo and Mildred; Helen, Margaret and Rose at Salford Cathedral; A friend, M.M.; Mr. and Mrs. Liptrot and family; Marjorie and all at 104 Mill-lane; Uncle Jim; Auntie May and Bernard; Neighbours and friends; Mrs. Egan and family; Ellen, from Mam, Dad and Jack; Uncle Tom, Aunt Mary and family; Mr. and Mrs. Phythian and family; Mrs. H. Houghton; St. Anne's Children of Mary; Mr. and Mrs. Heswick (Prince of Wales); A.G. Borrows (Peckers Hill House); Uncle Sam and Lydia; Lanna; Mrs. Bentley, Mrs. Unsworth and Kathleen; Grandmother and Uncle Pat; Margaret Fildes; Friends and neighbours, Reginald-road; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas and family, Reginald-road; Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan and Jim, Widnes.

Friends and neighbours in Reginald-road; Mrs. Lowery; Peter, Theo and Mildred; Mr. and Mrs. Morris; Margaret Fildes; Lauren, Joe and Nellie; St. Anne's children; Mr. and Mrs. A. Livsey; Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan and Jack; Marjorie Almond; Mum, Dad and boys; Mr. and Mrs. Morris; Mother and Dad; Peter; Theo M. Norris; Friends and neighbours at Reginald-road; St. Anne's Children of Mary; Margaret Fildes; Margaret and George; Auntie and Uncle; Mrs. Rothwell; Grannie; Mr. and Mrs. Sheridan and Jack; Mildred; Friends and neighbours, Reginald-road; Mr. and Mrs. Sullivan and Jim; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas and family (Reginald-road); Imelda Young; Sally.

Notes:

a) Part of the St. Helens Newspaper report from June 6th 1941 incorrectly refers to Helen Sheridan as Ellen. Her age was also incorrect as Helen was 18 and not 19 years old.

b) Every effort has been made to ensure this transcript is accurate. However the poor quality of the prints has meant that the accuracy of a few words, especially some names, cannot be guaranteed.

c) Transcribed by Stephen Wainwright of [Sutton Beauty & Heritage](#) from newspaper microfilm prints supplied by the St. Helens Local History & Archives Library.

d) Below is a photograph of the shared grave of the three nurses in St. Anne's R.C. Cemetery in Sutton, St. Helens, grave number 565B. The monument's inscription reads 'Of your charity pray for the repose of the souls of Helen Sheridan aged 18 years, Margaret Mary Lowery aged 19 years, Rose Helen Moffatt aged 19 years of this parish who, after nobly doing their duty as nurses tending the sick and helpless were killed by enemy action 2nd June 1941. R. I. P.'

November 2013



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★ SHERIDAN ★
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BY THE BOMB EXPLOSION 29th JUNE 1961.
R.I.P.

MARY BE OUR SAVIOUR