

ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA COURIER AND WARWICKSHIRE STANDARD, AUGUST 7th 1914
THROUGH THE WAR AREA. FROM GERMANY TO LEAMINGTON

VISITORS' EXCITING JOURNEY

The exciting and perilous journey of crossing through the war area from the western borders of Germany to the Hook of Holland and thence to Harwich has been undertaken by a party of twenty Americans, who are now staying at the Regent Hotel, Leamington.

The visitors, amongst whom are several ladies, were held up by armed soldiers, crossed railway bridges which were soon afterwards blown up, and were escorted to England by battleships. They were spending their vacation in sight-seeing, and what they witnesses from the time they were in Germany until they landed at Harwich would create a record for any holiday; in fact, it might well be described as "An American special."

The story of the journey was vividly told to a *Courier* representative by the leader of the party, Mr. W.W.Boyd, a University Professor of Iowa, as we chatted in the vestibule of the Hotel. Mr Boyd with his party had not arrived in Leamington more than a couple of hours when our representative called upon him and he narrated, with a strong American accent, the incidents which were still fresh in his memory.

"Have I recently crossed the English Channel?" As he repeated the question which had been put to him he smiled, no doubt as the occurrences flashed through his mind, and answered, in a manner which was indeed convincing, "I guess I have." Without further interrogation on the part of the interviewer, Mr. Boyd recalled some of his experiences in the journey. "We were in Germany on Saturday," he said, "and the scene was one of intense excitement. Martial law had been proclaimed, and soldiers were moving about in all directions. Train loads of troops dashed through the railway stations on their way to the frontier. Foreigners were making their departure with all haste, amongst them being members of my own party. The stations were well packed with people anxious to leave, and we had great difficulty in getting into the train. We had to separate, and just before the train started I found that the carriages separating my companions were being uncoupled. As I had the whole of the tickets for my party I dashed out and threw several tickets into the carriage in which my friends were."

HELD UP BY SOLDIERS.

Mr. Boyd next described how the trains were held up by soldiers at frequent intervals along the route. He proceeded. "Once we were told to close the carriage windows 'for safety,' so they said, but as I could see no tunnel I opened the window and peered out. This was when we were approaching a bridge. I had no sooner looked out of the window than a soldier looked up and called out, 'Put that head in!' Of course, I obeyed, quickly, but shortly afterwards the bridge was blown up. The soldiers had been laying dynamite. We were stopped at the frontier, and the trains were not allowed to proceed further.

"We snatched up our baggage and scrambled into a train of third-class carriages which were more like Dutch cattle trucks. The accommodation was extremely limited and we were packed, twenty in a carriage. This was

the way we finished the journey to the Hook of Holland. The boat which brought us to Harwich was almost as crowded. People had great difficulty in getting on board. We were crossed over to England early on Wednesday morning. The journey was slow and we were escorted by men-of-war from port to port. Whilst crossing we saw the British fleet put out to the North Sea. It was a wonderful sight.”

“Well, you have arrived safely in Leamington, but what about the return to the States?” queried our representative. The return journey did not seem to concern Mr. Boyd to any great extent. “We have our return tickets,” he said “and I’m assured that the boat will sail. Of course they are not at war with us, and the only thing which will stop us, as far as I can see, is the Germans defeating the British Fleet and blockading the ports.”

“That seems very unlikely,” he added, after a pause, as he wished the *Courier* representative “Good evening” and retired to the sitting-room.