

# Mr J. A. Martin

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IN the old days most of the cotton mills in Lancashire had a lodge at the entrance. It was here that the skilled roller coverer was usually to be found, but it was also the place where the mill's first-aid box was kept.

Mr. James Albert Martin, who lives in a neat new bungalow on the Wickfield Estate, was at one time a roller coverer, and at the Rochdale cotton mill where he started work the first-aid box in the little room at the lodge always had a special fascination for him.

He wanted to learn more about first-aid, and thus started a long association with the St. John Ambulance Brigade, which he joined in 1912. Mr. Martin has just been recalled from the reserve to the active list of St. John officers, and on July 13<sup>th</sup> he was asked to become superintendent of the Southbourne Division, which will soon incorporate Christchurch.

Born and bred in Rochdale, Mr. Martin comes from a family of cotton spinners and weavers. It was not surprising, therefore, that he found his way into the industry, but that was at the age of 12. He eventually became a roller coverer, and his job, in the days before World War I when mechanical methods of covering rollers were little used, required great skill.

His interest in the work of the St. John Ambulance Brigade increased as he got older, and he has vivid recollections of some of the casualties he has attended. "In my early days rugby football in the north was very much more robust than we see today. We used to think we had had a quiet time if at least two players weren't sent to hospital during a match," he said.

## HE GOT MORE RATIONS.

World War I saw Mr. Martin serving in the Lancashire Fusiliers. He was out in the Balkans most of the time. "I eventually joined a machine gun corps because we got more rations," he said with a chuckle.

Invalided home towards the end of hostilities, Mr. Martin found that his health prevented him from continuing very long at his trade in the cotton mill. He went into the bakery business, but times were difficult, and then joined the Post Office. That was in 1921

It was while in the Postal service he came south in 1931 and joined the outdoor staff at Bournemouth. The first war, and his work prevented him from taking an active part in ambulance activities for some time, but St. John's was always at the back of his mind. When the last war was imminent the Post Office formed an A.R.P. section, and Mr. Martin resumed his ambulance work in earnest. A Post Office Division of the St. John Ambulance Brigade was formed under Mr. Trew but when he subsequently became Bournemouth Corps Superintendent Mr. Martin took charge of the Post Office Division.

His work as a mail van driver during the black-out was arduous enough, but Mr. Martin never let up on his other war-time duties. "For weeks on end I hardly had an evening at home," he said.

The strain began to tell and the time came when he had to be medically superannuated, but he had completed 24 years service.

Now in his retirement he has come from Southbourne to live in Christchurch, and among his hobbies is gardening.

He is a man who cannot be idle, and apart from the St. John Ambulance Brigade having roped him in again for more duty, he has become an active worker for the local savings movement.