

22nd February, 1929.

PLEASE

The Director,
Naval School, Shotley, Harwich.

Dear Sir,

Please allow me to bring to your notice the rather terrible case of one of your one-time charges, namely,

Edward Bennett,
2 B.62, Charles Henry Street,
Birmingham.

His Official Number is J. 175040 His ship was the Ganges,
and his List Number was 15a/2226

He volunteered to serve 12 years in October 9, 1925, and was discharged about May 5th 1926.

The rating sheet now before me says that his "marks, wounds, scars" were "nil" on joining up. The character column says "V".

I have spoken to relatives and neighbours who knew him at the time of joining up. Everyone claims that the lad was one of the finest in mind and body to be found; and the Recruiting Officer at the Suffolk Station appears to have thought the same, while the lad says that his Commander called him "a little tiger" when in the boxing ring.

Now there appears to be a vital discrepancy between the reason for discharge, given on your sheet as "mental inefficiency", and the appalling fact that this poor lad is, though all agree to be very fair in mind, an absolute physical wreck for practical purposes. He was discharged from Chatham Hospital. Now he is paralysed in an arm and a leg, and the same affliction makes it difficult to understand a word he utters orally!

All this he claims to be the result of ill-treatment in the Navy. He says that he "never was and is not mentally deficient" that he received "6 cuts of the Birch for having 4 fags in his possession"; that he had "2 cuts for running away"; with "ill treatment by the Petty Officer and his Orders", and "punishment in the Gym."

The issue is clear. (1) Bennett was accepted as a splendid type of young manhood. (2) He was discharged a physical wreck. (3) See in your readiness to do justice may I ask, at this stage, what redress you can offer to this poor boy?

Anxiously awaiting your kind reply,
Faithfully yours, (Signed)

THANK YOU
Fred Longden (Pros. Parl. Cand. for
Deritend)

and endorsed by. (Sd) Alice Longden
(Councillor and Guardian).