

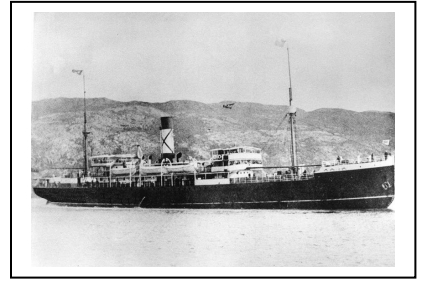


Lance Corporal Llewellyn James Carter (Regimental Number 198) is buried in Doullens Communal Cemetery Extension Number 1 – Grave reference IV. B. 10.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as being that of a *telegraph operator* earning a monthly salary of \$35.00, Llewellyn James Carter, having undergone a medical examination on September 1, a procedure which was to pronounce him as...*fit for overseas service...*, became a recruit of the First Draft.

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He then enlisted at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on September 14, 1914 – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 (including a daily ten-cent field allowance) - before attesting on October 1. Private Carter embarked two days later with the others of the *First Five Hundred* on October 3 onto the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* awaiting in St. John's Harbour.



The ship sailed on the morrow to its rendezvous off the south coast of the Island where she was to join the convoy transporting the 1st Canadian Division across the Atlantic.

(Right above: *The image of Florizel at anchor in the harbour at St. John's is by courtesy of Admiralty House Museum.*)

In the United Kingdom Private Carter trained with the Newfoundland contingent: firstly in southern England; then in Scotland at Fort George – on the Moray Firth close to Inverness; at Edinburgh Castle – where it provided the first garrison from outside the British Isles; and later again at the tented *Stobs Camp* near the town of Hawick to the south-east of Edinburgh.

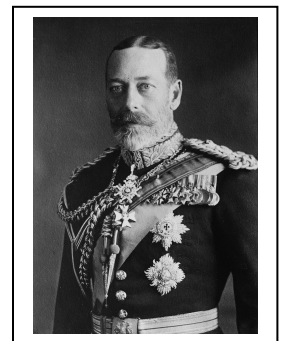


(Right above: *Fort George, constructed in the latter half of the eighteenth century, still serves the British Army to this day. – photograph from 2011*)

(Right: *The Newfoundland Regiment parades at Stobs Camp and is presented with its Colours on June 10, 1915. – courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo*)



At the beginning of that August of 1915, the four senior Companies, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', were then sent south to undergo a final two weeks of training, as well as an inspection by the King, at Aldershot; meanwhile the two junior Companies, the later-arrived 'E' and 'F*', were sent to Scotland's west coast, to Ayr, where they were to provide the nucleus of the newly-forming 2nd (Reserve) Battalion.



(Right: *George V, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India – photograph from Bain News Services via Wikipedia*)

**On July 10, 1915, 'F' Company had arrived at Stobs Camp from Newfoundland, its personnel raising the numbers of the unit to battalion establishment strength, and thus permitting it to be ordered to active service. The 1st Battalion, Newfoundland Regiment, comprising those four Companies, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', was thereupon attached to the 88th Brigade of the 29th Division of the (British) Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.*

It had then been during that period spent at Aldershot that Private Carter of 'A' Company – he was not alone in doing so - had been prevailed upon, he on August 14, to re-enlist for the duration of the war*.

**At the outset of the War, perhaps because it was felt by the authorities that it would be a conflict of short duration, the recruits enlisted for only a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was obviously going to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist.*



(Right above: Some of the men of 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies of the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment at Aldershot in August of 1915 – from *The Fighting Newfoundlander* by Col. G.W.L. Nicholson, C.D.)

(Right: The image of *Megantic*, in peace-time a 'White Star Line' vessel, is from the *Old Ship Picture Galleries* web-site.)



On August 20, 1915, Private Carter and his comrades-in-arms embarked in the Royal Navy Harbour of Devonport onto the requisitioned passenger-liner *Megantic* for passage to the Middle East and to the fighting against the Turks where, a month later – having spent two weeks billeted in British barracks in the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, he disembarked with the 1st Battalion at *Suvla Bay* on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



(Right: *Kangaroo Beach*, where the officers and men of the 1st Battalion, Newfoundland Regiment, landed on the night of September 19-20, 1915, is to be seen in the distance at the far end of *Suvla Bay*. The remains of a landing-craft are still clearly visible in the foreground on 'A' Beach. – photograph taken in 2011)



(Right: Newfoundland troops on board a troop-ship anchored at *Mudros*: either *Megantic* on August 29, *Ausonia* on September 18, or *Prince Abbas* on September 19 – Whichever the case, they were yet to land on *Gallipoli*. – from Provincial Archives)

The campaign was to be a debacle: Flies, dust, disease, frost-bite, floods – and the casualties inflicted by an enemy who was to fight a great deal better than the British High Command* had ever anticipated – were eventually to overwhelm the British-led forces and it would be decided to abandon not only *Suvla Bay* but the entire *Gallipoli* venture.



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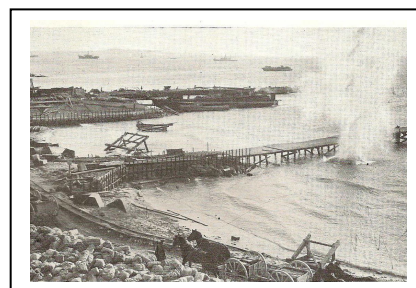
**Many of the commanders chosen were second-rate, had been brought out of retirement, and had little idea of how to fight – let alone of how to win. One of the generals at Suvla, apparently, had handed in his resignation during the Campaign and had just gone home.*

(Preceding page: A century later, the area, little changed from those far-off days, of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla, and where Private Carter was to serve in the fall of 1915 – photograph from 2011)

On the night of December 19-20, the British abandoned the area of *Suvla Bay* – the Newfoundlanders, the only non-British unit to serve there, to form a part of the rear-guard. Some of the Battalion personnel was evacuated to the nearby island of *Imbros*, some to *Lemnos*, further away, but in neither case was the respite to be of a long duration; the 1st Battalion was transferred only two days later to the area of *Cape Helles*, on the western tip of the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



(Right above: Cape Helles as seen from the Turkish positions on the misnamed Achi Baba, positions which were never breached. The Newfoundland positions were to the right-hand side of the picture. – photograph from 2011)



The British and the *Anzac* forces – the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps also served at *Gallipoli* – were now only marking time until a complete withdrawal of the *Peninsula* was undertaken. The operation took place on the night of January 8-9, the Newfoundland Battalion providing some of the rear-guard for this second occasion as well*.



**Lieutenant Owen Steele of St. John's, Newfoundland, is cited as having been the last soldier of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force to step into the final small boat to sail from the Gallipoli Peninsula.*

(Right above: 'W' Beach at Cape Helles as it was days before the final British evacuation – from Illustration)

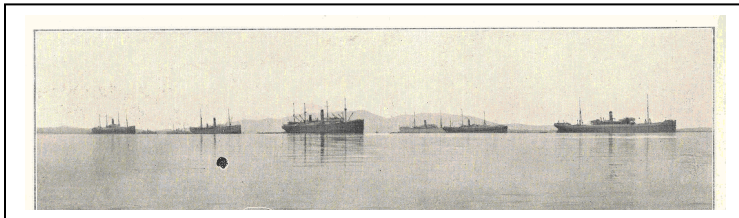
(Right: 'W' Beach almost a century after its abandonment by British forces and by the Newfoundlanders who were the last soldiers off the beach: vestiges of the wharves visible in the black-and-white picture are still to be seen. – photograph from 2011)

* * * * *

Private Carter was to experience neither of the two evacuations from Gallipoli; he was evacuated from the lines into either the 26th or the 54th Casualty Clearing Station at Suvla Bay – both of them are recorded - on November 26 of 1915 for medical attention, whereupon he was diagnosed as suffering from severe jaundice.

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From Gallipoli he was to be then ferried on November 30 to the 2nd Australian Hospital at *Mudros Bay* on the Greek island of Lemnos. On December 4, just days later, he was then transferred to the 27th General Hospital, also at Mudros, for further treatment.



(Right above: *Mudros Bay and its minuscule harbour on the Greek island of Lemnos – shown in the summer and autumn of 1915 occupied by various types of Allied shipping – from Illustration*)



From *Mudros Bay*, Private Carter began his journey back to the United Kingdom on January 2, 1916, invalided on board His Majesty's Hospital Ship *Britannic* – she later to be sunk in the eastern Mediterranean by a mine in November of 1916. Upon arrival in England he was transported to and admitted into the 3rd London General Hospital in the southern Borough of Wandsworth, on January 9.



(Right above: *The image of Britannic, sister ship of both Olympic and the ill-fated Titanic, is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site.*)

(Right above: *The main building of what was to become the 3rd London General Hospital during the Great War was opened, on July 1st, 1859, as a home for the orphaned daughters of British soldiers, sailors and marines. – photograph from 2010*)



(Right: *A group of Newfoundland patients, most of whom are unfortunately unidentified – except the fourth person from the left in the second row who is a Joseph – posing with members of staff at Wandsworth: – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo*)

Following convalescence and the customary ten-day furlough allotted to those military personnel released from hospital – ten days, from February 29 (1916 was a leap year) until March 8, a period which he apparently decided to spend in Edinburgh* – Private Carter was immediately thereupon posted to 'E' Company at the Regimental Depot at Ayr, on the west coast of Scotland, on March 9, 1916.



**From Edinburgh where he had friends, he may have proceeded to Hawick – Stobs Camp was close to the town – from where a Mrs. Huggan in a letter dated July 24, 1916, sent a letter to the Newfoundland Record Office in London, inquiring of the whereabouts and well-being of two Newfoundland soldiers, Privates Carter (Number 198) and Martin (Number 616).*

(Preceding page: *An aerial view of Ayr – probably from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr, where the ‘other ranks’ were quartered, is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough, where lived the officers, is to the right. – courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr*)

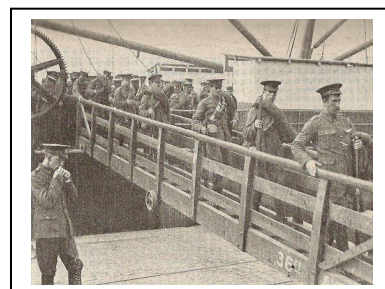
The Regimental Depot had been established during the summer of 1915 in the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland as the base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion. It was to be from there – as of November of 1915 until January of 1918 – that the new-comers from home would be despatched in drafts, at first to *Gallipoli* and later to the *Western Front*, to bolster the four fighting companies of the 1st Battalion.

On March 28, the 3rd Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr - Private Carter among its ranks - sailed on board His Majesty’s Transport *Archangel* from the English south-coast port of Southampton to disembark on the 30th, two days later, in the capital city of Normandy, Rouen. The contingent then made its way to the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot which had been established there, for final training and organization*, before moving on to a rendezvous with the 1st Battalion.



(Right above: *The image of a troop-laden Archangel is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site.*)

(Right: *British troops disembark at Rouen en route to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)



**Apparently the standard length of time for this final training was ten days – although this was to become more and more flexible as the War progressed - in areas near Rouen, Étaples, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known as the Bull Rings.*

The date when Private Carter reported to duty to 1st Battalion seems not to be recorded, but he was almost certainly one of the contingent of two officers and two-hundred eleven *other ranks* which did so on April 15. By that time, the parent unit was billeted at Englebelmer, close enough to the lines for the men to be sent there to work on strengthening the communication trenches.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, when the British had evacuated the entire *Gallipoli Peninsula* in January of 1916, the Newfoundland Battalion had been ordered to the Egyptian port-city of Alexandria, to arrive there on the 15th of that month. The Newfoundlanders were then to be immediately transferred southward by train to Suez, one of the ports at the southern end of the Canal which bears the same name.



There it was to await further orders since, at the time, the subsequent destination of the 1st Battalion’s 29th Division had not yet been decided*.

***Bulgaria had entered the conflict on the side of the Central Powers and Salonika was soon to become a theatre of war.**

(Preceding page: The British destroy their supplies during the final evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The men of the 1st Battalion were among the last to leave on two occasions, at Suvla Bay and at Cape Helles. – photograph taken from the battleship Cornwallis and published by Illustration)

After a two-month interim, on March 14 the Newfoundlander Battalion was to embark through Port Tewfiq, also at the southern end of the Suez Canal, for the journey to the French port of Marseilles. Eight days later it disembarked there, on March 22, en route to the Western Front.

(Right: Port Tewfiq at the south end of the Suez Canal just prior to the Great War – from a vintage post-card)



(Right below: British troops march through the port area of the French city of Marseilles. – from a vintage postcard)

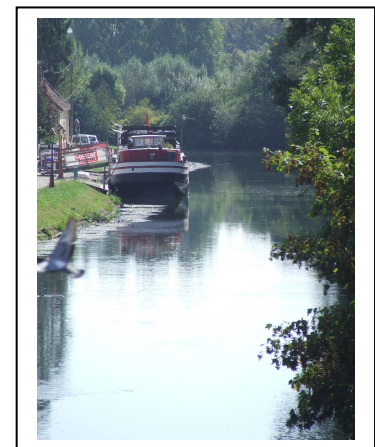
Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, the Newfoundland Battalion's train would arrive at the small provincial town of Pont-Rémy, a thousand kilometres to the north of Marseilles. It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for the troops having travelled unused in a separate wagon. De-training at the local station at two in the morning, the Newfoundlanders had still faced a long march ahead of them before they would reach their billets at Buigny l'Abbé.



(Right below: The River Somme as seen from the bridge at Pont-Rémy – photograph from 2010)

It is doubtful if many of those tired soldiers were to pay much attention to the slow-moving stream flowing under the bridge over which they were marching on their way from the station. But some three months later the Somme would have become a part of their history.

On April 13, the 1st Battalion had paraded into the aforementioned village of Englebelmer – perhaps some fifty kilometres in all from Pont-Rémy - where its personnel would be billeted, would receive re-enforcements from Ayr two days afterwards – as seen, likely including Private Carter - and, on that same day, would be introduced into the trenches of the Western Front.



* * * * *

The Newfoundlanders were also soon to be preparing for the British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for the meandering river which flows through the region, the Somme.

(Right: A part of the re-constructed trench system in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2007(?))



It was during this period of preparation that Private Carter was promoted to the rank of lance corporal, on June 11, 1916, while his 1st Battalion was stationed out of the lines in the village of Louvencourt. The unit had been posted there to undergo further training for the impending offensive up until the eve of the attack.

If there is one name and date in Newfoundland history which is etched in the collective once-national memory, it is that of Beaumont-Hamel on July 1 of 1916; and if any numbers are remembered they are those of the eight-hundred who went *over the top* in the third wave of the attack on that morning, and of the sixty-eight unwounded present at muster some twenty-four hours later*.

**Perhaps ironically, the majority of the Battalion's casualties was to be incurred during the advance from the third line of British trenches to the first line from where the attack proper was to be made, and while struggling through British wire laid to protect the British positions from any German attack.*

There are other numbers of course: the fifty-seven thousand British casualties incurred in four hours on that same morning of which nineteen-thousand were recorded as having been *killed in action or died of wounds*. It was to be the largest disaster ever in the annals of the British Army...and, perhaps just as depressing, the killing of *the Somme* was to continue for the next four and a half months.



(Right above: Looking from the British lines down the hill to Y Ravine Cemetery which today stands atop part of the German front-line defences: The Danger Tree is to the right in the photograph. – photograph taken in 2009)

(Right: Beaumont-Hamel is a commune, not a village. – photographs from 2010 & 2015)

In fact, Beaumont-Hamel was a commune – it still exists today – at the time comprising two communities: Beaumont, a village on the German side of the lines, and Hamel which was behind those of the British. No-Man's-Land, on which the Newfoundland Memorial Park lies partially today, was on land that separated Beaumont from Hamel.



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The son of William Carter*, recorded variously as former fisherman, merchant and master-mariner, deceased November 29, 1909, and of Martha Carter (see below) of Channel, Port aux Basques, he was also brother to Arthur-Percival** and likely to Rebecca-Maud.



(Right: A grim, grainy image purporting to be Newfoundland dead awaiting burial after the action at Beaumont-Hamel – from...?)

Private Carter was reported as having been *wounded in action* on July 1 and as having been evacuated to the 35th Casualty Clearing Station established at the time in the area of the small country town of Doullens.

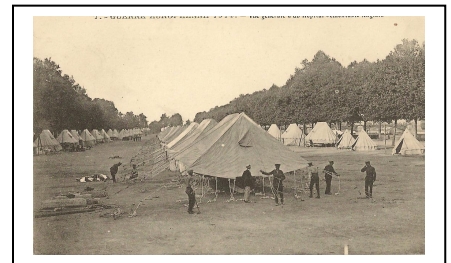
**It appears that our William Carter may have been a widower who married Martha Chaffe (sic) in St. James' Church, Channel, on November 23 of 1882. The only online records which record a previous marriage on the south coast of a William Carter are those of a marriage in the area of Harbour Breton dated August 7, 1874, to Elizabeth Childs. The dates and religious affiliation are compatible with other information but all of this remains speculative until such time as corroboration - or otherwise - is found.*



***Private Percival Carter (Regimental Number 3842) was to be wounded – a bullet wound to the hand and a subsequently amputated finger - in northern France on April 13, 1918, during a German offensive before being invalided to England for the duration of the Great War, arrived home in Newfoundland eleven months later, in March of 1919.*

(Right above: The image of Doullens, seemingly at a time just prior to the Great War, is from a vintage post-card.)

Lance Corporal Carter was subsequently reported as having *died of wounds* at the same 35th Casualty Clearing Station, Doullens, on the following day, July 2, 1916, having succumbed to the gun-shot wounds to the head which he had incurred at Beaumont-Hamel during the fighting of the first day of *the Somme*.



He was buried on the day of his death by a Reverend J. Redmond.

Llewellyn James Carter had enlisted at a *declared* twenty years of age: date of birth at Channel, Newfoundland, January 31, 1895 (from the Newfoundland Birth Register).

(continued)

(Preceding page: *Establishing a typical casualty clearing station – many of them under canvas – in the early years of the War – from a vintage post-card*)

Lance Corporal Llewelyn James Carter was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, as well as to the British War Medal (centre) and the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal) (right).



The above dossier has been researched, compiled and produced by Alistair Rice. Please email any suggested amendments or content revisions if desired to criceadam@yahoo.ca. Last updated – February 13, 2023.