



**Private Augustus Quinton (Regimental Number 2195) lies buried in Earlsfield (Wandsworth) Cemetery: Grave reference, Nfld. 770.**

**His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a fisherman, Augustus Quinton was a volunteer of the Eighth Recruitment Draft. He presented himself for medical examination on February 28 of 1916 at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland. It was a procedure which was to pronounce him as...*Fit for Foreign Service*.**

**It was then to be but a day later, on February 29 – 1916 was a leap-year - following that medical assessment and at the *same venue* that he was then to enlist. Augustus Quinton was thereupon engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of a single dollar, to which was to be added a ten-cent per diem Field Allowance.**

**(continued)**

Only a few hours were now to pass before there then came to pass, once again at the *CLB Armoury* on Harvey Road, the final formality of his enlistment: attestation. On the same 29<sup>th</sup> day of February he pledged his allegiance to the reigning monarch, George V, whereupon, at that moment, Augustus Quinton became...*a soldier of the King*.

Private Quinton, Number 2195, would not sail to the United Kingdom until a further three weeks and three days had then elapsed. What the reasons might have been for this delay, or how he was to spend the lengthy waiting-period after his attestation, appear not to have been documented. It may therefore be that he continued to work temporarily and was perhaps to spend time with friends and family at his home in the Bonavista Bay community of Red Cliff – but of course, these conclusions are a little bit speculative and it is possible that he was to remain in St. John's to be billeted and trained\*.

*\*A number of the recruits, those whose home was not in St. John's or close to the capital city, or those who had no friends or family to offer them board and lodging, were to be quartered in the curling rink in the area of Fort William in St. John's, a building which was at the time to serve as a barracks.*

When he eventually took ship it was as a private soldier of the second contingent of 'H' Company that he embarked for...*overseas service...onto the SS Sicilian* in St. John's Harbour on March 23-24, 1916. The vessel did not sail from Newfoundland until the morrow, the 25<sup>th</sup>, to reach the United Kingdom some two weeks later - a slow crossing\*.

*\*It was surely not because she was in a slow-moving convoy as this system did not come into being until 1917. The fact that she was carrying a large quantity of fish from St. John, New Brunswick - and had sailed from there on March 18 - to supply the needs on the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the United Kingdom was likely not a factor either.*

For whatever the reason – perhaps the annual spring ice had been a problem - it was nevertheless a slower than normal voyage: the date of disembarkation – although the port is not named - and the date of the contingent's arrival at the Regimental Depot in Scotland are both recorded as being the same April 9.

(Right: *The image of 'Sicilian' is from the Old ship Picture Galleries web-site. Some sixteen years previously - as of 1899 when she was launched – the vessel, originally built for the Allan Line, had been requisitioned as a troop-ship and transport carrying men, animals and equipment to South Africa for use during the Second Boer War. It seems that during the Great War, even though she was often to carry troops, it was as a part of her commercial business and not as a requisitioned vessel.*)



\* \* \* \* \*

Some nineteen months prior to that April 9 of 1916, in the late summer and early autumn of 1914, the newly-formed Newfoundland Regiment's first recruits had undergone a period of training of five weeks on the shores of *Quidi Vidi Lake* in the east end of St. John's and elsewhere in the city, and were formed into 'A' and 'B' Companies.

During that same period the various authorities had also been preparing for the Regiment's transfer overseas.

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

This first Newfoundland contingent was to embark on October 3, in some cases only days after a recruit's enlistment and/ or attestation. To become known to history as the *First Five Hundred* and also as the *Blue Puttees*, on that day they had boarded the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* awaiting in St. John's Harbour.

The ship had sailed for the United Kingdom on the morrow, October 4, 1914, to its rendezvous with the convoy carrying the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division overseas, off the south coast of the Island.

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

Once having disembarked\* in the United Kingdom this first Newfoundland contingent was to train in three venues during the late autumn of 1914 and then the winter of 1914-1915: firstly in southern England on the *Salisbury Plain*; then in Scotland at *Fort George* – on the *Moray Firth* close to Inverness; and lastly at *Edinburgh Castle* – where it was to provide the first garrison from outside the British Isles.

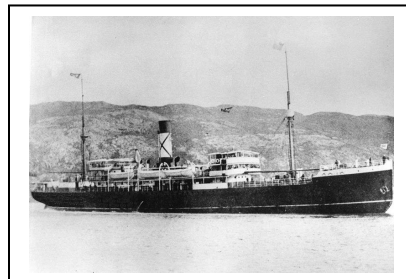
Only days after 'A' and 'B' Companies had taken up their posting there, on February 16 of 1915, 'C' Company – the first re-enforcements for the original contingent - would arrive directly – through Liverpool of course - from Newfoundland. On the final day of the month of March it had been the turn of 'D' Company to arrive – they via Halifax as well as Liverpool – to report...*to duty...*at Edinburgh, and then 'E' Company five weeks less a day later again, on May 4\*.

*\*These five Companies, while a contingent of the Newfoundland Regiment, was not yet a battalion and would not be so for a further five months – as will be seen below.*

(Right: *The venerable bastion of Edinburgh Castle dominates the Scottish capital from its hill in the centre of the city. – photograph from 2011*)

Seven days after the arrival of 'E' Company in the Scottish capital, on May 11 the entire Newfoundland contingent had been ordered elsewhere. On that day, seven weeks into spring – although in Scotland there was apparently still snow - the unit had been dispatched to *Stobs Camp*, all under canvas and south-eastwards of Edinburgh, close to the town of Hawick.

(continued)



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



Two months less a day later, on July 10, 'F' Company would march into *Stobs Camp*.

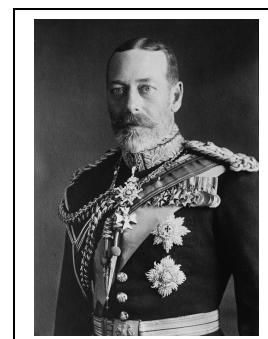
This had been an important moment: the Company's arrival was to bring the Newfoundland Regiment's numbers up to some fifteen hundred, establishment strength\* of a battalion which could be posted on...*active service*.

*\*A number sufficient for four 'fighting' companies, two re-enforcement companies and a headquarters staff.*

(Right: *The men of the Regiment await their new Lee-Enfield rifles. – original photograph from the Provincial Archives*)



From *Stobs Camp*, some three weeks after the arrival of 'F' Company, in early August 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', the four senior Companies, having now become the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment, had been transferred to *Aldershot Camp* in southern England. There they were to undergo final preparations – and a royal inspection – before the Battalion's departure to the Middle East and to the fighting on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



The later arrivals to the United Kingdom, 'E' and 'F' Companies, were to be posted to the new Regimental Depot and were eventually to form the nucleus of the soon to be formed 2<sup>nd</sup> (*Reserve*) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment.

(Right above: *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 – the photograph is from Bain News Services via the Wikipedia web-site.*)

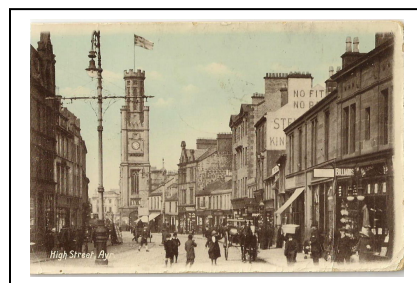


(Right: *An aerial view of Ayr, likely from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr, where were quartered the 'other ranks', is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough, where were housed the officers, is to the right. – by courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr*)

The Regimental Depot had been established during the summer and the early autumn of 1915 in the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland, there to serve as a base for the newly-forming 2<sup>nd</sup> (*Reserve*) Battalion. It was from there – as of November of 1915 – that the new-comers were sent in drafts, at first to *Gallipoli* and then subsequently to the *Western Front*, to bolster the four fighting companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion\*.

(Right below: *The High Street in Ayr as shown on a postcard of the time, the imposing Wallace Tower – it stands to this day (2017) - dominating the scene – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs Lillian Tibbo.*

That November 15 of 1915 (see above) was to see not only the departure of the 1<sup>st</sup> Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr to the Middle East and to the fighting of the *Gallipoli Campaign* but also, only five days prior, the arrival from Newfoundland of 'G' Company which would be obliged to take up quarters at *Gailes Camp*, some sixteen kilometres up the coast from Ayr itself – but just over sixty if one went by road.



A further seven weeks plus a day were now to pass before the first one-hundred personnel of 'H' Company, having sailed in mid-December as recorded in an earlier paragraph, were to present themselves at the Regimental Depot on January 4, some of them to be affected, even fatally, by an ongoing measles epidemic of the time.

After that there was now to be an interlude of three months plus several days before Private Quinton's detachment reported on the aforesaid April 9 to the Regimental Depot.

*Note: Until as late as the spring of 1916 it had been the intention to form a 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment to fight on the Continent. In fact it would seem that Private Quinton's contingent of one-hundred sixty-three recruits was to form the nucleus of that unit, while the personnel already at the Depot by this time would form a reserve battalion to serve as a re-enforcement pool for both the fighting units.*

*It could not have been long before a change of plan came about as very soon men of Private Quinton's contingent (the second half of 'H' Company) were being sent – including Private Quinton himself – to strengthen the 1<sup>st</sup> Newfoundland Battalion already on the Continent – maybe Beaumont-Hamel had something to do with it.*

\* \* \* \* \*

During the winter of 1915-1916 the men of the soon-to-be 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion (*Reserve*) had been lodged in several venues, at a nearby military camp at Gailes and also as far afield as the one at Paisley Barracks, some sixty-five kilometres distant. However, by the spring of 1916 the difficulty had been overcome by housing the men in a school, in a tented community and in the Ayr Racecourse Grandstand, all in the district of Newton-upon-Ayr.



(Right above: *The new race-course at Ayr - opened in 1907 – where the men of the Regiment were sometimes billeted and where they replaced some of the turf with a vegetable garden; part of the present grandstand is original – photo from 2012)*

It was to be at *the Racecourse* at Newton-on-Ayr that Private Quinton was prevailed upon to re-enlist in June of 1916\*, on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of the month and only days before his departure for the Continent.

*\*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. Later recruits signed on for the 'Duration' at the time of their original enlistment.*

By that time of his departure the Regimental Depot had already seen the dispatch of the first seven re-enforcement drafts from Ayr: the First directly to *Gallipoli*; the Second which had sailed to Egypt before being turned back to land in France; and the Third which had sailed straight to France at the end of the month of March. Those which had sailed since then – and those which were to do so later on – also had gone or would also cross directly to the Continent.



Private Quinton had not been selected to serve in any of the earlier drafts since his arrival at the Regimental Depot; he would remain posted in Scotland for some three months altogether before his turn was to come. When it *did* come, his draft was to be dispatched directly to France.

(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen earlier in the War on their way to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

On July 9, the 8<sup>th</sup> Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr, Private Quinton one of its rank and file, passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton en route to the Continent. On the morrow, the 10<sup>th</sup>, the detachment disembarked in Rouen, capital city of Normandy, and site of the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot which had been established there. There the draft spent time in final training and organization\* before proceeding on to its rendezvous with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

*\*The standard length of time for this final training at the outset of the war had been ten days – although this was to become more and more flexible as the War progressed - in areas near Rouen, Étapes, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

There must have been a sense of urgency at the time: the 1<sup>st</sup> Newfoundland Battalion had suffered terribly at a place called Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, and on July 6 its depleted strength, as reported by the Regimental War Diary, still numbered no more than one-hundred sixty-eight *other ranks*, one-sixth of establishment battalion (fighting) strength.

At this stage, Private Quinton's 8<sup>th</sup> Draft, a fairly large detachment, was to be divided, its personnel to march in one of the several re-enforcement drafts ordered at this time to report to the parent unit.

He, Private Quinton, was one of the contingent of one-hundred twenty-six *other ranks* from Rouen to report...*to duty*...with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion on July 21 in the small community of Acheux\*. The Newfoundland unit had marched to there from the trenches in the area forward of Mailly-Maillet four days prior, and would continue this march as far as Beauval

on the 23<sup>rd</sup> where they stayed for only forty-eight hours before covering – still on foot – a further twenty kilometres to Candas on the 26<sup>th</sup> to board a train.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment had been ordered northwards into the *Kingdom of Belgium*.

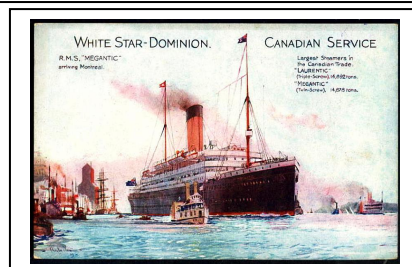
\* \* \* \* \*

A year prior to this juncture, in the summer of 1915, the Regimental Depot in Scotland had only just been beginning to evolve: both ‘E’ and ‘F’ Companies had only then been beginning their time of training at Ayr; as for Augustus Quinton, he had still to enlist and attest, after which he would then have those twenty-four days to wait before the call was to come to sail overseas to the United Kingdom.

The aforementioned four senior companies, ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’, of the Newfoundland Regiment, having now become the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had at this same time been attached to the 88<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division of the (British) Mediterranean Expeditionary Force and had been dispatched from *Camp Aldershot* to...*active service*.



(Right above: *Some of the personnel of ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’ Companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment at Aldershot in August of 1915, prior to its departure to active service on the Gallipoli Peninsula – from The Fighting Newfoundlander by Col. G.W.L. Nicholson, C.D.)*



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

(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)*



On August 20 of 1915, the Newfoundland Battalion had 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.

There, a month later – having spent some two weeks billeted in British barracks in the vicinity of the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was to land at *Suvla Bay* on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



(continued)

**(Preceding page: ‘Kangaroo Beach’, where the officers and men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the 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: A century later, the area, little changed from those far-off days, of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla, and where the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was to serve during the fall of 1915 – photograph from 2011)**



**When the Newfoundlanders had landed from their transport ship at Suvla Bay they were to disembark into a campaign that was already on the threshold of collapse.**

**Not only in the area where the Newfoundland Battalion would now serve but, even ever since the very first days of the operation in April of 1915, the entire Gallipoli Campaign, including the operation at Suvla Bay, had been proving to be little more than a debacle:**

**Flies, dust, disease, the frost-bite and the floods – and of course 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 those of their allies, the French, and it would finally be decided to abandon not only Suvla Bay but the entire Gallipoli venture.**

**\*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.**

**(Right: This is Anzac Bay in the fore-ground with the Salt Lake in the centre further away. The bottom of Suvla Bay is just to be seen on the left and adjacent to the Salt Lake, and further away again. The hills in the distance and the ones from which this photograph was taken were held by the Turks and formed a horse-shoe around the plain surrounding the Salt Lake - which was where the British and Newfoundlanders were stationed. – photograph from 2011)**



**November 26 would see what perhaps was to be the nadir of the Newfoundland Battalion’s fortunes at Gallipoli; there was to be a freak rain, snow and ice-storm strike the Suvla Bay area and the subsequent floods had wreaked havoc amongst the forces of both sides. For several days, survival rather than the enemy was to be the priority.**

**(Right: An un-identified Newfoundland soldier in the trenches at Suvla Bay – from Provincial Archives)**



**(continued)**

There were to be many casualties on both sides, some of them, surprised by the sudden inundation of their positions, fatalities who had drowned in their trenches – although no Newfoundlanders were to be among that number.

Numerous, however, had been those afflicted by trench-foot and by frost-bite.

*(Right: No-Man's-Land at Suvla Bay as seen from the Newfoundland positions – from Provincial Archives)*

By this time the situation there had daily been becoming more and more untenable, thus on the night of December 19-20, the British had abandoned the entire area of *Suvla Bay* – the Newfoundlanders, the only non-British unit to serve there, to form a part of the rear-guard.



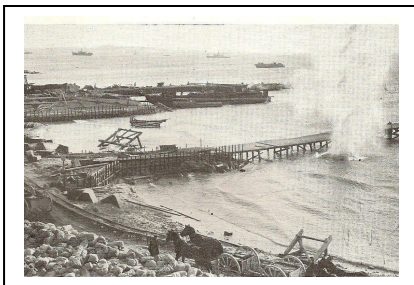
Some of the Battalion personnel had thereupon been evacuated to the nearby island of *Imbros*, some to *Lemnos*, further away, but in neither case was the respite to be of a long duration; the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion would be transferred only two days later to the area of *Cape Helles*, on the western tip of the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.

*(Right: 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, Indian and *Anzac* forces – the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was also to serve at *Gallipoli* – had by now simply been marking time until a complete withdrawal of the *Peninsula* could be undertaken.

This final operation would take place on the night of January 8-9, the Newfoundland Battalion to furnish part of the British rear-guard on this second occasion also.



*(Right above: 'W' Beach at Cape Helles under shell-fire as it was only days before the final British evacuation – from Illustration)*

*\*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: 'W' Beach almost a century after its abandonment by British forces in that January of 1916 and by the Newfoundlanders who were to be the last soldiers off the beach: Vestiges of the wharves in the black-and-white picture are still to be seen. – photograph from 2011)*



(continued)

Immediately after the British evacuation of the *Gallipoli Peninsula*, the Newfoundland unit had been ordered to the Egyptian port-city of Alexandria and beyond.

On January 14, the Australian Expeditionary Force Transport *Nestor* had arrived there with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion on board. The vessel was to sail just after mid-day on the 16<sup>th</sup>, on its way southwards down the Suez Canal to Port Suez where she had docked early on the morrow and where the Newfoundlanders had landed and marched to their encampment.

There they were to await further orders since, at the time, the subsequent destination of the British 29<sup>th</sup> Division had yet to be decided\*.

(Right: *The image of the Blue Funnel Line vessel Nestor is from the Shipspotting.com web-site. The vessel was launched and fitted in 1912-1913 and was to serve much of her commercial life until 1950 plying the routes between Britain and Australia. During the Great War she served mainly in the transport of Australian troops and was requisitioned once again in 1940 for government service in the Second World War. In 1950 she was broken up.*)

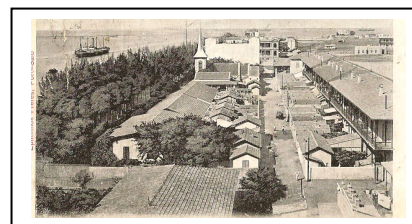


*\*Bulgaria had entered the conflict on the side of the Central Powers, and Salonika was already becoming a theatre of war.*

(Right: *The British destroy their supplies during the final evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment were among the last to leave on two occasions, at both Suvla Bay and Cape Helles. – photograph taken from the battleship Cornwallis from Illustration*)



After a two-month interim spent in the vicinity of Port Suez, the almost six-hundred officers and *other ranks* of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion were to board His Majesty's Transport *Alaunia* at Port Tewfiq, on March 14 to begin the voyage back up through the *Suez Canal* en route to France.



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

The Newfoundlanders would disembark eight days afterwards in the Mediterranean port-city of Marseille, on March 22.

(Right below: *British troops march through the port area of the French city of Marseille. – from a vintage post-card*)



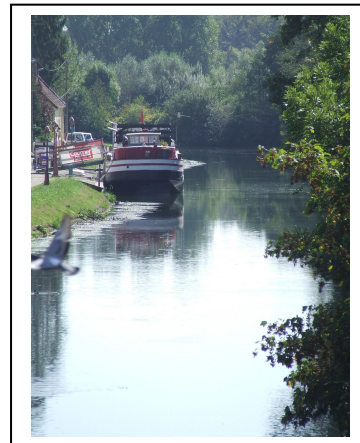
Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, the Newfoundland Battalion's train was to find its way to the small provincial town of Pont-Rémy, a thousand kilometres to the north of Marseille.

It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for the troops having inexcusably travelled unused in a separate wagon.

Having de-trained at the local station at two o'clock in the morning, the Newfoundlanders were now still to endure the long, dark march ahead of them before they would reach their billets at Buigny l'Abbé.

(Right: *A languid 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 which they had then traversed on their way from the station. But some three months later *the Somme* was to have become a part of their history.



On April 13, the entire 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had subsequently marched into the village of Englebelmer – perhaps some fifty kilometres in all from Pont-Rémy - where it would be billeted, would receive re-enforcements from Scotland via Rouen and, in two days' time, would be introduced into the communication trenches of the *Western Front*.

(Right: *A part of the re-constructed trench system to be found in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2009(?)*)

Just days following the Newfoundland Battalion's arrival on the *Western Front*, two of the four Companies – 'A', and 'B' – were to take over several support positions from a British unit\* before the entire Newfoundland unit had then been ordered to move further up for the first time into forward positions on April 22.

(Right above: *Beaumont-Hamel: 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*)

*\*It should be said that the Newfoundland Battalion and two-hundred men of the Bermuda Rifles who were serving at the time in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lincolnshire Regiment Battalion, were then the only units at the Somme from outside the British Isles - true also on the day of the attack on July 1.*

(Right above: *A view of Hawthorn Ridge Cemetery Number 2 in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2009(?)*)

(continued)



Having then been withdrawn at the end of that April to the areas of Mailly-Maillet and Louvencourt where they would be based for the next two months, the Newfoundlanders had soon been preparing for the upcoming British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for the languid, meandering river, *the Somme*, that flowed – and still does so today – through the region.

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.*

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

It was to be the greatest disaster ever in the annals of the British Army...and, perhaps just as depressing, the carnage of the...*First Battle of the Somme*...was to continue for four and a half months.



(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.*



After the events of the morning of July 1, 1916, such had then been the dire condition of the attacking British forces that it had been feared that any German counter-assault might well annihilate what had managed to survive of the British Expeditionary Force on *the Somme*.

The few remnants of the Newfoundland Battalion – and of the other depleted British units – had thus remained in the trenches perhaps fearing the worst, and at night searching for the wounded and burying the dead. It was to be July 6 before the Newfoundlanders were to be relieved from the forward area and to be ordered withdrawn to Englebelmer.

There were then a further two days before the unit had marched further again to the rear area and to billets in the village of Mailly-Maillet.

(Preceding page: *The re-constructed village of Mailly-Maillet – the French Monument aux Morts in the foreground - is twinned with the community of Torbay, St. John's East. – photograph from 2009*)

There at Mailly-Maillet on July 11, a draft of one-hundred twenty-seven re-enforcements – a second source cites one-hundred thirty – had reported...*to duty*. They had been the first to arrive following the events at Beaumont-Hamel but even with this additional man-power, the Regimental War Diary records that on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July, 1916, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was still to number only...*11 officers and 260 rifles...*after the holocaust of Beaumont-Hamel, just one-quarter of establishment battalion strength.

Of course, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment had not been the only unit in the British Army to have incurred horrific losses on July 1, 1916, even though it had indeed been one of the most devastated. But even with its depleted numbers, the Battalion was needed and, after that first re-enforcement, it had almost immediately again been ordered to man the trenches of the front line: as of that July 14, undermanned as seen above, the Newfoundlanders began another tour in the trenches where...*we were shelled heavily by enemy's 5.9 howitzers and a good deal of damage was done to the trenches* (excerpt from the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion War Diary).

A second re-enforcement draft from Rouen had then arrived days later, on July 21, while the Newfoundland Battalion was at Acheux and then, only three days afterwards – at the very time day that the Prime Minister of Newfoundland had visited the unit – a third draft of sixty other ranks had arrived in Beauval and reported...*to duty*.

As recorded in an earlier paragraph, it had been as a soldier of the second of the three above-mentioned contingents that Private Quinton had reported...*to duty...with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion* and then was to move by train into Belgium.

\* \* \* \* \*

On July 27-28 of 1916, the Newfoundland Battalion - still under establishment battalion strength at only five-hundred fifty-four strong – maybe even fewer - even after still further re-enforcement – would move northwards and enter into the *Kingdom of Belgium* for the first time.

(Right: *The entrance to 'A' Company's quarters – obviously renovated since that time – sunk in the ramparts of the city of Ypres, when the Newfoundland Battalion was posted there in 1916 – photograph from 2010*)



(Right: *The same re-constructed ramparts as shown above, here viewed from just outside the city and from the far side of the moat which still partially surrounds it – image from 2010*)



The unit had been ordered to the *Ypres Salient*, one of the most dangerous pieces of real estate on the entire *Western Front*, there to continue to re-enforce and to re-organize after the ordeal of *Beaumont-Hamel*.

(Right adjacent: *Canadian trenches in Sanctuary Wood, not far removed from the Newfoundland Battalion's positions during August and September of 1916 – photograph from 2010*)



*The Salient* – close to the front lines for almost the entire fifty-two month conflict - was to be relatively quiet during the time of the Newfoundlanders' posting there; yet they nonetheless would incur casualties, a number – fifteen? - of them fatal.

And it was to be there in *the Salient* in the sector of a place called *Railway Wood*, that the parent Newfoundland Battalion would soon be serving after its transfer had been completed from France.

(Right: *Railway Wood, the Newfoundland positions at the time, almost a century later – a monument to the twelve Royal Engineers buried alive there may just be perceived on the periphery of the trees – photograph from 2014*)



(Right adjacent: *The already-battered city of Ypres seen here towards the end of the year 1915 – and some eight months before the Newfoundlanders were to be posted there for the first time – from a vintage post-card*)



On September 8 the Newfoundland Battalion was completing a tour in the forward lines. Having been heavily shelled in the trenches during the preceding days, the Newfoundlanders were to retire from their positions in the vicinity of *Railway Wood* back into quarters in Ypres there in turn to relieve the 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the *Worcestershire Regiment*, thus allowing that unit to withdraw even further to the rear..

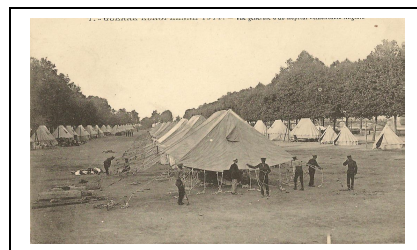


Although the enemy shelling of the previous days had been intense at times, the War Diary entry for September 8 makes no mention of it on that particular day. Nonetheless, it was on that date that Private *Quinton* was recorded as having been wounded in the back by shell-fire.

(continued)

(Preceding page: *Wounded at the Somme being transported in hand-carts from the forward area for further medical attention – from Le Miroir*)

He was evacuated through Ypres to the 10<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station at the Rémy Siding, just south-west of Poperinghe, from where was transferred on the following day to the 13<sup>th</sup> General Hospital in Boulogne. There he was placed on board His Majesty's Hospital Ship *St. David* – on September 13 - for the short crossing of the Channel back to the United Kingdom.

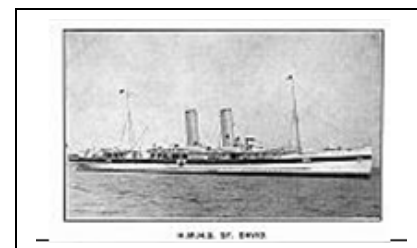


(Right above: *A British casualty clearing station – the one pictured here under canvas for mobility if and whenever the necessity were to arise – being established somewhere in France during the early years of the War. Other such medical establishments were often of a much more permanent nature. - from a vintage post-card*)



(Right: *The French port of Boulogne at or about the period of the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

(Right: *The image of 'St. David' clad in her war-time hospital-ship garb is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site. The vessel was a ship built in 1906 to service the crossing from Wales to Ireland for the Great Western Railway but that role was cut short by the Great War which saw 'St. David' and three sister-vessels employed as hospital ships on the cross-Channel routes. She survived the War and returned to her former work until 1933 when she was scrapped.*)



Once in England on that same September 13, Private Quinton was admitted into the King George Hospital in London for treatment and – on September 21 – an operation, this one at least his second - *to remove bone & reduce pressure on spinal cord – recovered from op* (medical report). There was apparently still the possibility that he would remain a paraplegic, but – even though an optimistic telegram... *progressing very favourably ...* was sent on September 29 – alas! - even that was not to be.

The son of William Quinton, fisherman – to whom he had willed his everything - and of Selina Quinton (née *Miles*\*) - to whom he had allocated a daily allowance of sixty cents from his pay - of Red Cliff, Bonavista Bay, he had apparently but a single sibling, older sister Jessie.



(Right above: *The family monument in St. Michael's Anglican Cemetery, Red Cliff, erected to Private Quinton by his parents – photograph from 2012*)

(continued)

***\*The couple was married in the community of Openhall on January 16, 1893.***

Private Quinton was reported as having...*died of wounds*...at two o'clock in the morning in the King George Hospital, London, on November 19, 1916. At home it was the Reverend Mr. Dawson of King's Cove who was requested to bear the news to his family.

Private Quinton was buried three days later, on November 22, at three o'clock in the afternoon, with full military honours including an escort and a firing party.

Augustus Quinton had enlisted at the *declared age* nineteen years and three months: date of birth in Red Cliffe (sic), Bonavista Bay, Newfoundland, November 13, 1896 (from the Newfoundland Birth Register as is the spelling of *Cliffe*).



(Right above: *The Summerville War Memorial also honours the sacrifice of Private Quinton.* - photograph from 2010)

Private Augustus Quinton was entitled to the British War Medal (on left) and also to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).



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](mailto:criceadam@yahoo.ca). Last updated – February 4, 2023.