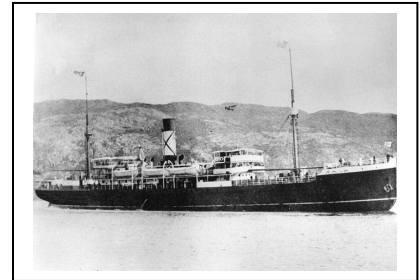


Lance Corporal Hardy Frederick Snow (Regimental Number 322), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated on the bronze beneath the Caribou in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel.



His occupation prior to military service recorded as being that of a *trader* working for \$38.00 a month, Hardy Frederick Snow was to be a recruit of the First Draft.

Having presented himself for medical examination at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on September 1, 1914, four weeks less a day after the *Declaration of War*, the procedure was to pronounce him as...*fit for foreign service*. He then enlisted at the same venue four days later, on September 5 – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 (of which a daily ten cents was considered to be a *field allowance*).



Some three weeks later again – having trained during that interim period - Private Snow attested on October 1 before then embarking on October 3 with the other recruits of the *First Five Hundred* onto the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* awaiting the contingent in St. John's Harbour.



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

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 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division across the Atlantic.

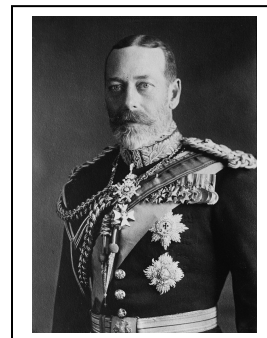
(Right above: *Fort George, constructed in the latter half of the eighteenth century, still serves the British Army to this day. – photograph from 2011*)

In the United Kingdom Private Snow 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.



(Preceding page: *The Newfoundland Regiment on parade at Stobs Camp and about to be presented with its Colours on June 10, 1915* – by 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 2<sup>nd</sup> (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 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Newfoundland Regiment, comprising those four Companies, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', was thereupon attached to the 88<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division of the (British) Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.*

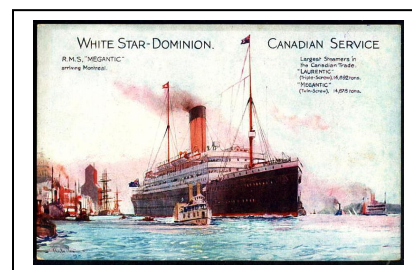
It had then been during the period spent at Aldershot that Private Snow of 'A' Company – he was not alone in doing so - had been prevailed upon, he on August 13, to re-enlist *for the duration of the war\**.

*\*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 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment at Aldershot in August of 1915* – from *The Fighting Newfoundlander* by Col. G.W.L. Nicholson, C.D.)

On August 20, 1915, Private Snow 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 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion at *Suvla Bay* on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



(continued)

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



(Right: *Kangaroo Beach, where the officers and men of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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: the vessel must be one of three, 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*)

(Right below: *A century later, the area shown, little changed from those far-off days, is that of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla Bay, and where the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was to serve during the autumn of 1915 – photograph from 2011*)

Not only in the area where the Newfoundland Battalion was to serve but, even since the very first days of the operation in April of 1915, the entire *Gallipoli Campaign* had proved 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 the French, and it would finally be decided to abandon not only *Suvla Bay* but the entire *Gallipoli* venture.



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

*\*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.*

November 26 was to see a freak rain-, snow- and ice-storm strike the *Suvla Bay* area and the subsequent floods had wreaked havoc amongst both the British and Turkish forces. For several days, survival rather than the enemy was to be the priority.



(continued)

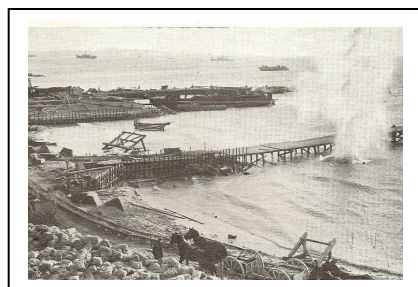
There had been a high number of casualties on both sides, some of them, surprised by the sudden inundation of their positions, fatalities who had drowned in their trenches – although no Newfoundlanders were to be among that number. Numerous, however, were those inflicted by trench-foot and by frost-bite.

On the night of December 19-20, the British had 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 had 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 was to be 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 were also to serve at *Gallipoli* – were now only marking time until a complete withdrawal of the *Peninsula* was undertaken.



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

(Right above: *'W' Beach at Cape Helles as it was 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*)

When the British had evacuated the entire *Gallipoli Peninsula* in January of 1916, the Newfoundland Battalion was to be ordered to the Egyptian port-city *Alexandria*, having arrived there on the 15<sup>th</sup> of that month. The Newfoundlanders were then to be immediately transferred southward to *Suez*, a port at the southern end of the *Canal* which bears the same name, there to await further orders since, at the time, the subsequent destination of the British 29<sup>th</sup> Division had yet to be 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 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 had boarded His Majesty's Transport *Alaunia* at Port Tewfiq on March 14 to sail up through the *Suez Canal* en route to France. The Newfoundlanders would disembark eight days afterwards in the Mediterranean port-city of Marseilles on March 22.**



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

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

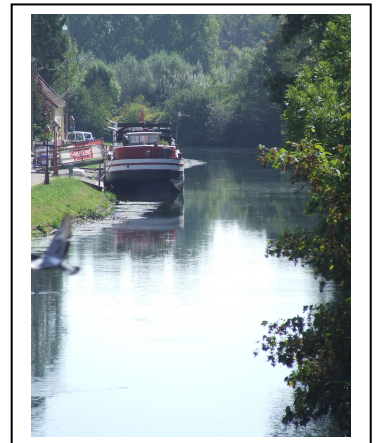


**Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, Private Snow's Newfoundland Battalion's had found its way to the small provincial town of Pont-Rémy, a thousand kilometres to the north of Marseilles. It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for the troops having travelled unused in a separate wagon.**

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

**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 had then marched on their way from the station. But some three months later *the Somme* was to become a part of their history.**

**(Right: *A languid River Somme as seen from the bridge at Pont-Rémy – photograph from 2010*)**



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

**(continued)**

Just days later two of the four Companies – ‘A’, and ‘B’ – were to take over several support positions from a British unit\* before the entire Newfoundland unit was then to move further up into forward positions on the *Western Front* for the first time, on April 22.

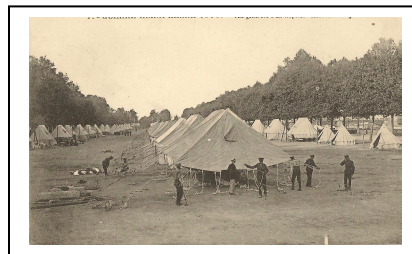
*\*It should be said that the Newfoundland Battalion and two-hundred men of the Bermuda Rifles who were serving at the time in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lincolnshire Regiment Battalion, were the only units at the Somme from outside the British Isles - true also on the day of the attack on July 1.*

The Newfoundlanders were also soon to be preparing for the 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.

On May 3, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion arrived to take over billets in the village of Mailly-Maillet - just behind the front line - from a battalion of the South Wales Borderers who had relieved them in the trenches.

\* \* \* \* \*

On that day Private Snow was admitted into the 29<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station at Gezaincourt well to the rear, and from there was forwarded to the 16<sup>th</sup> General Hospital in the coastal town of Le Tréport three days afterwards, on the 6<sup>th</sup>.



*(Right: A British casualty clearing station being established somewhere in France - this one, like many, under canvas, allowing the facility to be easily transferred – from a vintage post-card)*

By this time he had been diagnosed as being afflicted with a venereal problem and was now to be forwarded to a specialized hospital for treatment. Thus on May 8, five days following, Private Snow was moved on to the 9<sup>th</sup> Stationary Hospital established at Le Havre from where, some seven weeks later again, on June 30, he was ordered to the Number 1 Rest Camp.



Private Snow was finally discharged *to duty* to the British Base Camp at Rouen on July 27.

*(Right above: part of the harbour of the port-city of Le Havre, at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card)*

On August 11 of 1916, Private Snow was to be promoted to the rank of lance corporal, by which time it would appear from his documents that he had re-joined the Newfoundland Battalion *in the field*. By then the *field* in question was Belgium.

\* \* \* \* \*

(continued)

In the meantime, since the departure of Private Snow early in the month of May for medical reasons, his 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had been not only manning support and front-line trenches in the forward area but it had been undergoing training, further re-enforcement and organization for the offensive to commence on the last day of June\*.

*\*Because of poor weather problems, the attack was postponed for twenty-four hours.*

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.*

(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*)

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



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 butchery of *the Somme* was to continue for the next 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.*



(continued)

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 a 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, as seen above, before the Newfoundlanders were to be relieved from the forward area and to be ordered withdrawn to Englebelmer.

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



(Right above: *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*)

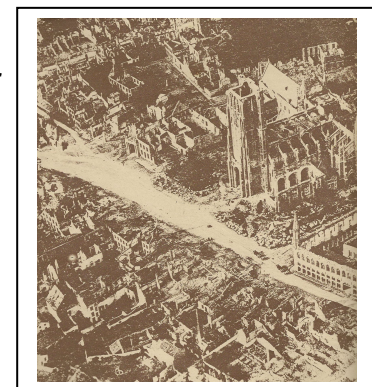
There on July 11, a draft of one-hundred twenty-seven reinforcements – a second source cites one-hundred thirty – reported *to duty*. They were to be the first to arrive following the events at Beaumont-Hamel but even with this additional man-power having arrived, the Regimental War Diary records that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



On July 27-28 of 1916, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion – even now under battalion strength at only five-hundred fifty-four strong after still further reinforcement – moved north and entered into the *Kingdom of Belgium* for the first time.

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

It 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 above: *An aerial view of Ypres, taken towards the end of 1916: it is described as the 'Ville morte'. – from Illustration*)

(continued)



**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 incurred casualties, a number – fifteen? - of them fatal.

(Right: *Canadian trenches at Sanctuary Wood: they are about a kilometre from the Newfoundland positions of September, 1916, at Railway Wood in the Ypres Salient, but of course almost a century later.* – photograph from 2010)



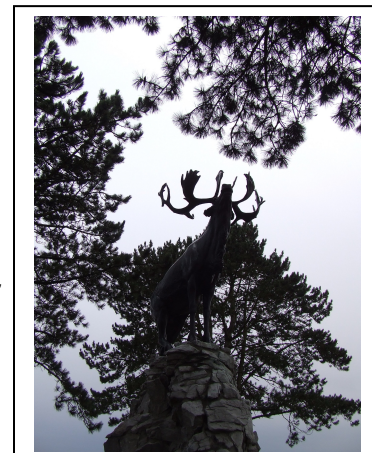
Then on October 8, after having served in Belgium for some ten weeks, the Newfoundland unit had been ordered to return southwards, back into France and back into the area of – and the battle of – *the Somme*.

Four days after its return to France, on October 12 of 1916 the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was again to be ordered to the offensive; it was at a place called Gueudecourt, the vestiges of a village some dozen or so kilometres to the south-east of Beaumont-Hamel.



The encounter proved to be another ill-conceived and costly affair – two hundred and thirty-nine casualties all told - for little gain. Lance Corporal Snow was to be one among that number.

(Right above: *This is the ground over which the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion advanced and then mostly conceded at Gueudecourt on October 12. Some few managed to reach the area where today stand the copse of trees and the Gueudecourt Caribou, on the far right horizon.* – photograph from 2007)



(Right: *The Caribou at Gueudecourt stands at the furthest point of the Newfoundland Battalion's advance of October 12, 1916.* – photograph from 2012)

The son of William Snow, fisherman – to whom he had allotted a daily sixty cents from his pay - and of Naomi Snow (née *Roberts*) of Durrell's Arm, Twillingate – later of Leslie Street in St. John's – he was also brother to Olive-Lucy, Alice-Rebecca and to Susie-Marie.

Lance Corporal Snow was reported as having been *killed in action* on October 12, 1916, while serving with 'A' Company during the fighting at Gueudecourt.

At home, it was the Reverend Alexander V. Robb of Twillingate who was requested to bear the news to his family.

(continued)



Hardy Frederick Snow had enlisted at a *declared* twenty years of age: Date of birth at Durrell's Arm, District of Twillingate, Newfoundland, July 30, 1894.

(Preceding page: *Placed there by William and Naomi Snow in memory of their son, this plinth stands in Durrell United Church Cemetery, Twillingate.* – photograph from 2013)



*(The photograph at right of Private Snow is from the Provincial Archives.)*

Lance Corporal Hardy Frederick Snow 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](mailto:criceadam@yahoo.ca). Last updated – February 12, 2023.

