

Private Albert Haines (Regimental Number 1110), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated on the bronze beneath the Caribou in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel.



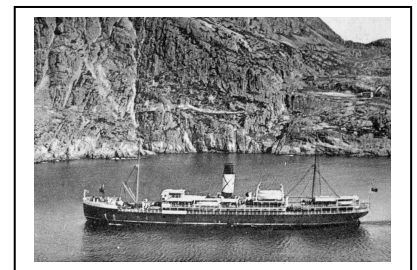
His occupation previous to military service recorded as that of a *lumberman* working for a monthly thirty-five dollars, Albert Haines presented himself for medical examination at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* on Harvey Road in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on February 11 of the year 1915. It was a procedure which was to pronounce him as...*Fit for Foreign Service*.

It was to be only a single day following his medical assessment, on February 12, that Albert Haines returned to the *CLB Armoury* to enlist – engaged at the private soldier's rate of a single dollar per diem plus a daily ten-cent *Field Allowance*, and also apparently 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. Later recruits eventually enlisted... 'For the Duration'.*

Upon his enlistment, whereas attestation for others had come about on the day of enlistment, he was now to await a further twelve days, until February 24, before *that last formality* came to pass and he was to swear his *Oath of Allegiance*, to finally become...*a soldier of the King*.

For Private Haines, Number 1110, there was now to be yet another, and ultimate, waiting period of three weeks plus three days before he would be summoned to...*overseas service*. How he occupied himself during that lengthy interim is not recorded among his papers; he may, of course, have temporarily returned to work, perhaps even home to Jamestown, Bonavista Bay, but this is only speculation.



(Right above: *The image of the Bowring Brothers' vessel 'Stephano', sister-ship of 'Florizel', as she passes through 'the Narrows' of St. John's Harbour is from the Provincial Archives.*)

(continued)

Unlike the two previous contingents to have departed Newfoundland (see below) for...overseas service, Private Haines' 'D' Company was not to sail directly to the United Kingdom. On March 20 it embarked onto the Bowring-Brothers' vessel *Stephano* for the short voyage to Halifax, capital city of the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, where it was thereupon to board a second vessel, the newly-launched *Orduña* for the trans-Atlantic crossing*.



(Right above: *The image of Orduña is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site. The vessel was not to be requisitioned during the Great War but would be used by the Cunard Company to operate on its commercial service between Liverpool and New York.*)

Having then sailed from Nova Scotia on March 22 for Liverpool, Private Haines and his draft landed there eight days later, on the 30th. Once disembarked in Liverpool, the two-hundred fifty men and officers of 'D' Company were thereupon transported on the same date by train directly to Edinburgh, the Scottish capital, to join the Newfoundland Regiment's 'A', 'B' and 'C' Companies.

These units were by this time stationed at the historic Castle, 'A' and 'B' having recently been posted from Fort George and 'C' having arrived directly from home (see further below). After 'D' Company's arrival at the end of that month of March, the Newfoundlanders were now to remain at Edinburgh for the following six weeks.

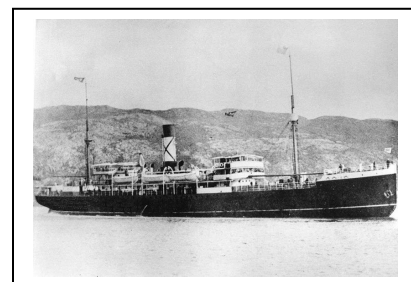


(Right above: *From its vantage point on Castle Hill, the venerable fortress overlooks the city of Edinburgh where in 1915 the Newfoundlanders were to provide the first garrison to be drawn from outside the British Isles. – photograph from 2011*)

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Five to six months before that time, in the late summer and early autumn of 1914 there had been a period of training of some five weeks on the shores of *Quidi Vidi Lake* in the east end of St. John's for the newly-formed Newfoundland Regiment's first recruits – these to become 'A' and 'B' Companies - during which time the authorities had also been preparing for the Regiment's transfer overseas.

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.



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

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

(Right: *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 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, as recorded beforehand, 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 ‘C’ Company – the first re-enforcements for the original contingent* - would arrive directly from Newfoundland.

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

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As seen in a previous paragraph, for the month of April and the first days of May of 1915, ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’ Companies, now united, were to furnish the garrison – the first troops from outside the British Isles to do so - of the guardian of Scotland’s capital city. Then, during the first week of May, ‘E’ Company was to report there...*to duty...*from home. Four days later again, on May 11, the Newfoundland contingent was ordered elsewhere.

On that day, some seven weeks into spring – although in Scotland there was apparently still snow - the entire Newfoundland unit was dispatched to *Stobs Camp*, all under canvas and south-eastwards of Edinburgh, in the vicinity of the town of Hawick.

It was to be at *Stobs Camp* that the Newfoundland contingent would eventually receive the re-enforcements from home – ‘F’ Company which arrived on July 10, 1915 - that would bring its numbers up to that of British Army establishment battalion strength*. The now-formed 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was thus rendered available to be sent on ‘*active service*’.

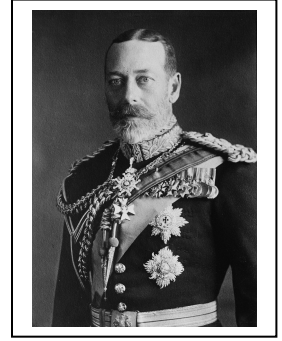
(Right: *The Newfoundland Regiment marches past on the training ground at Stobs Camp and is presented with its Colours on June 10, 1915. – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo*)



**This was approximately fifteen hundred, sufficient to furnish two re-enforcement companies and a headquarters staff.*

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At the beginning of that August of 1915, the four senior Companies, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', were then sent south from *Stobs Camp* to undergo a final two weeks of training, as well as an inspection by the King, at Aldershot. This force, now the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment, was thereupon attached to the 88th Brigade of the 29th Division of the (British) Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.



Meanwhile the two junior Companies, 'E' – last arrived at Edinburgh - and the aforementioned 'F', were ordered transferred to Scotland's west coast, to Ayr, there to provide the nucleus of the newly-forming 2nd (Reserve) Battalion.

(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.)

But then, for whatever the reason, Private Haines – even though a soldier of 'D' Company - did not depart for Aldershot and then subsequently for service at *Gallipoli* with most of the men of the senior Companies in August. He was ordered instead to report to the fledgling Regimental Depot.

At the end of this summer of 1915, the once-Royal Borough of Ayr on Scotland's west coast was to begin to serve as the new overseas base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment from where – as of November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 - re-enforcement drafts from home were to be despatched to bolster the 1st Battalion's numbers, at first to the Middle East and then later to the *Western Front*.



(Right above: *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)

(Right: *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.



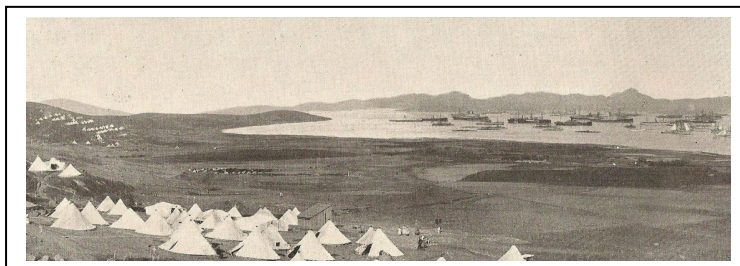
It was not until the fourteenth day of November that the 1st Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr – Private Haines among its ranks - passed through the English south-coast naval establishment of Devonport to embark onto His Majesty's Transport *Olympic*, sister ship of *Britannic* and the ill-fated *Titanic*, en route to *Gallipoli*.



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(Preceding page: *HMT Olympic on the right lies at anchor along with HMHS Aquitania, centre, at Mudros Bay in the autumn of 1915. – from a photograph from the Imperial War Museum*)

The 1st Draft would land at *Suvla Bay* on December 1: but perhaps not so Private Haines. There appear to be no records as to what exactly became of him after having disembarked on November 30, the day before, at Mudros, on the Greek island of Lemnos.



(Right above: *By the end of the year 1915, Allied medical and various other facilities – many of them under canvas – almost entirely surrounded the busy bay at Mudros and its minuscule harbour. – from Illustration*)

He either finished the journey by lighter to land at *Suvla Bay* on the morrow to be very soon afterwards returned to Lemnos: or he remained on board that smaller vessel to immediately sail back to that island: or having disembarked from *Olympic* at Mudros, he thereupon reported sick.

* * * * *

Whatever the case, he is recorded as having been admitted on December 4 into either the 15th or the 16th Stationary Hospital at Mudros, having been afflicted with a case of measles.

There now seems to be no further record of him that month or into the next, until on January 4 of the New Year, 1916, Private Haines was discharged as *fit for duty* and despatched on an undisclosed date to the British Base Depot (*Sidi Bishr* or *Mustapha*) back in Alexandria.

(Right above: *The image of the Mustapha Convalescent Camp and Depot close to Alexandria – and much of it under canvas - is from the Australian War Memorial web-site.*)



(Right: *A vacant Mudros Bay in 2011, shown bereft of any reminder of the Gallipoli Campaign – photograph from 2011*)



When exactly he reported...*to duty*...in Alexandria is not clear, but Private Haines was to serve there for only a matter of days. On January 14, the Australian Expeditionary Force Transport *Nestor* arrived in Alexandria with the Newfoundland Battalion on board, it having withdrawn from the *Gallipoli Campaign*. The vessel was to sail just after mid-day on the 16th, on its way southwards down the Suez Canal to Port Suez where she arrived on the morrow and where the 1st Battalion landed.

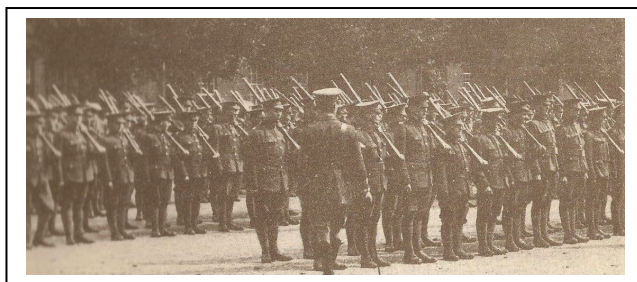


On the morning of that January 16, Private Haines had embarked onto *Nestor* and re-joined the 1st Battalion.

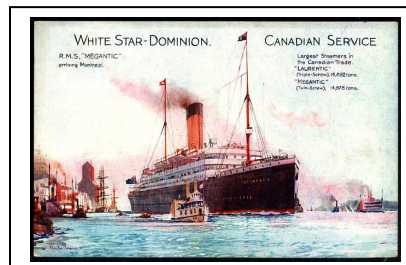
(Preceding page: *The image of the Blue Funnel Line vessel Nestor is from the Shipspotting.com web-site. The vessel was launched and fitted in 1912-1913 and was to serve much of her commercial life until 1950 plying the routes between Britain and Australia. During the Great War she served mainly in the 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.*)

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(Right: *Some of the personnel of 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies of the 1st 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: *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.*)



In the meantime, on August 20, 1915, during the early days of Private Haines' posting to Ayr, the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment 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 1st Battalion was to land 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*)

(continued)

(Right: A century later, the area, little changed from those far-off days, of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla Bay, and where the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was to serve during the autumn of 1915 – photograph from 2011)



When the Newfoundlanders had landed from their transport ship at Suvla Bay on that September night of 1915 they were to disembark into a campaign that was already on the threshold of collapse.

Not only in the area where the Newfoundland Battalion was to 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.



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

(Right below: 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 of 1915 had perhaps seen 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.



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

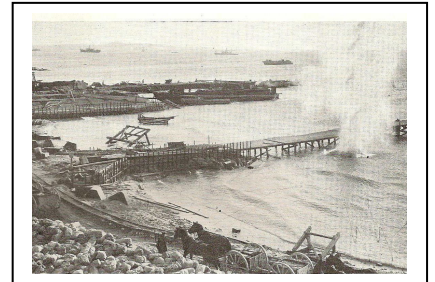


This then, was the situation into which the 1st Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr would step when it had set foot onto the sand and stone – mostly the latter – of Kangaroo Beach on the first day of December, 1915.

During the days that followed, the British positions at *Suvla Bay* – and thus also those of the Newfoundland unit - were to become yet more and more untenable and thus on the night of December 19-20, the area had been abandoned – the Newfoundlanders, the only non-British unit to serve there, to form a part of the rear-guard.

(Preceding page: *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*)

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



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

The British, Indian and *Anzac* forces – the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was also to serve at *Gallipoli* – had by then only been marking time until a complete withdrawal of the *Peninsula* could be undertaken.

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

**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 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*)

Immediately after the British evacuation of the *Gallipoli Peninsula*, the Newfoundland unit had been ordered to the Egyptian port-city of *Alexandria*. Having arrived January 14 on His Majesty's Transport *Nestor* – as seen in an earlier paragraph – the rank and file were now to spend two days on board the vessel while the officers were granted shore-leave.

And it had been, of course, at *Alexandria* during the transfer from *Gallipoli* to its encampment at the southern end of the *Suez Canal*, that the 1st Battalion had welcomed Private *Haines* back into its ranks.

On January 16 at one o'clock in the afternoon *Nestor* sailed and entered the *Suez Canal*. It was not a particularly long journey of only fourteen hours' duration: Lieutenant *Steele* recorded in his diary that the ship arrived had arrived at *Suez* at two o'clock in the morning and that he had been expected to assemble the troops.

Mercifully the encampment appears to have been close at hand. There at Suez the Newfoundland unit was now to await further orders since, at the time, the subsequent destination of the British 29th Division was yet to be decided*. Those orders were not to be immediately forth-coming.

(Preceding page: *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 above: *The British destroy their supplies during the final evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The men of the 1st 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*)

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

At a personal level, the highlight of Private Haines' time spent in Suez was undoubtedly the loss of his water bottle on February 2, for which he was required to pay. Apart from that, nothing else about Suez appears to be documented among his papers.

(Right: *Port Tewfiq at the south end of the Suez Canal as it was 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: *British troops march through the port area of the French city of Marseille. – from a vintage post-card*)



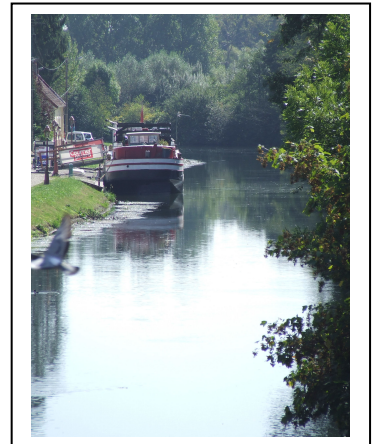
Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, the Newfoundland Battalion's train was to find its way to the small provincial town of Pont-Rémy, a thousand kilometres to the north of Marseille. It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for the troops having inexcusably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

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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.

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 then marched on their way from the station. But some three months later *the Somme* was to have 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 1st Battalion 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*.

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 was then ordered to move further up for the first time into forward positions 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 2nd 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: *A part of the re-constructed trench system to be found in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel* – photograph from 2009(?))

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 were soon to be 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*.



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



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



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 carnage 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 and 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.*



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

The son of Robert John Haines, fisherman and carpenter, and of Rosanna (also known as *Rose*) Haines (*née Humby*)* – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of sixty cents from his pay, and to whom he had willed his all, despite certain reports to the contrary - of Jamestown, Bonavista Bay, he was also brother to Edward-George**, to Robert-John*** and possibly to a third male sibling.



***The couple was married on April 7, 1892.**

****Private Edward George Haines, Newfoundland Regiment Number 1505, was wounded in the knee at Beaumont-Hamel, repatriated for discharge in October, 1917, and discharged in St. John's in August of 1918.**

*****Gunner Robert John Haines, Number 2100060, of the Canadian Field Artillery, enlisted on March 23, 1917, at Sydney, Nova Scotia, sailed to England on 'Olympic' on May 7, 1917, incurred gun-shot wounds to the back on November 2, 1917, was hospitalized and remained in England until the final days of the War then posted to the Continent, saw no further action, returned to England in April of 1919, then to Canada in June, 1919.**

Private Haines was reported at first as...*missing in action*...at Beaumont-Hamel while serving with 'D' Company during the fighting of July 1, the first day of...*First Somme*. His record was later amended so as to read...*killed in action*...possibly having been testified to by an eye-witness.

Albert Haines had enlisted at a *declared* twenty years of age. Date of birth in St. John's, Newfoundland, the family residing on Casey Street at the time, May 30, 1894 (from the Newfoundland Birth Register).

(Right: *The Summerville War Memorial honours the sacrifice of Private Haines.* – photograph from 2010)

Private Albert Haines was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, as well as to the British War Medal (centre) and 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. Last updated – January 30, 2023.

