



**Private Israel Anderson (Regimental Number 1069) lies in Y Ravine Cemetery – Grave reference Special Memorial C. 31.**

**His occupation prior to his military service recorded as that of a fisherman earning an annual \$300.00, Israel Anderson enlisted at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's – engaged at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem - on January 20 of 1915, and attested some four weeks later, on February 18.**

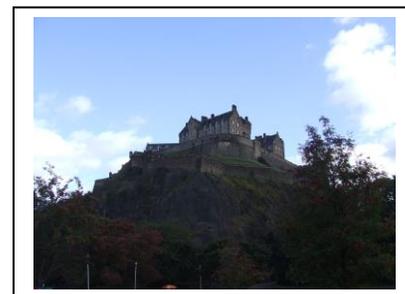
**(continued)**



Private Anderson then embarked with Number 8 Platoon of 'D' Company, just over four weeks later again, onto the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Stephano* (Preceding page – from *Provincial Archives*) on March 20, 1915, for passage to Halifax and for overseas service. From Halifax he took ship on His Majesty's Transport *Orduna* (right) for the trans-Atlantic crossing to Liverpool.



Sailing from Nova Scotia on March 22 for Liverpool, the draft landed there eight days later, on the 30<sup>th</sup>, and entrained to Edinburgh, arriving at the historic Castle on the same day. For the next six weeks, having been united with 'A', 'B' and 'C' Companies already stationed there, the Newfoundlanders formed the garrison – the first troops from outside the British Isles to do so - of the guardian of Scotland's capital city.



(Right: *The venerable bastion of Edinburgh Castle dominates the skyline of the Scottish capital city from the summit of Castle Hill. – photograph from 2011*)

On May 11 the Newfoundlanders were transferred to Stobs Camp, near Hawick, to the south-east of Edinburgh. There they remained for some three months until the beginning of August when the senior Companies, 'A', 'B', 'C', and 'D' – now to become 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Newfoundland Regiment - were sent south to Aldershot in the south of England. There they received final training – and a royal inspection - to prepare for *active service* in Gallipoli.



(Right above: *the Regiment on parade at Stobs Camp on June 10, the day it received its Colours – courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo*)

The later arrivals, 'E' and 'F' Companies, were sent to the new Regimental Depot recently being established at Ayr, on the west coast of Scotland. There they were to become the nucleus of the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion.



It was during this period at Aldershot, on August 15, that Private Anderson was prevailed upon to re-enlist, on this occasion for the *duration of the war*\*.



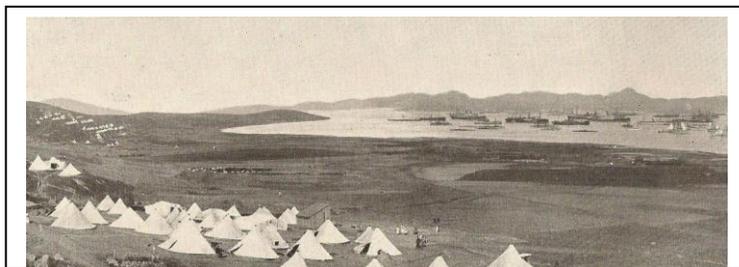
*\*At the outset of the War, perhaps because it was felt by the authorities that it would be a conflict of short duration, the recruits enlisted for only a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was obviously going to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist.*

On August 20, 1915, Private Simms took ship on board the requisitioned passenger liner *Megantic* (preceding page) for passage to the Middle East and to the fighting in Gallipoli where, a month later – of which two weeks had been spent billeted at the British barracks at Abbassia, near the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion landed on the beach at Suvla Bay on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

(Preceding page black & white: *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*)

But Private Anderson was almost certainly not one of that number to disembark on Kangaroo Beach. He had been taken sick during the voyage from Alexandria to Suvla and thus was either evacuated from the ship during the transfer onto the Prince Abbas at Mudros on the Greek island of Lemnos, or he was brought back from Suvla to Mudros not having disembarked, and admitted into the 1<sup>st</sup> Stationary Hospital. He was suffering from chronic diarrhoea.

Only six days later, Private Anderson was discharged from hospital and sent to Convalescent Depot A. 36. The next record of his movements shows Private Anderson returning to his unit on March 1 of the following year, 1916.



(Right above: *By the autumn of the year 1915, Allied medical facilities, many of them under canvas, almost completely surrounded a busy Mudros Bay and its minuscule harbour. – from Illustration*)

(Right: *The British destroy their supplies during the final evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The Newfoundlanders, employed as the rear-guard, were among the last to leave on two occasions. – photograph taken from the battleship Cornwallis from Illustration*)



When the British had evacuated the entire Gallipoli Peninsula in January of 1916, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had been sent to Alexandria, arriving there on the 15<sup>th</sup> of that month. From there the Newfoundlanders had been transferred, almost immediately, south to Suez. To that point it seems that the theatre of the future posting of 29<sup>th</sup> Division was still uncertain. It was there at Suez that Private Anderson reported *to duty* to 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion on March 1.



On March 14, the decision having been taken, the officers and men of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion embarked through Port Tewfiq at the southern end of the Suez Canal onto His Majesty's Transport *Alaunia* (right above) for passage to the French Mediterranean port of Marseilles, en route to the *Western Front*.



(Previous page: *Port Tewfiq at some time just before 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)

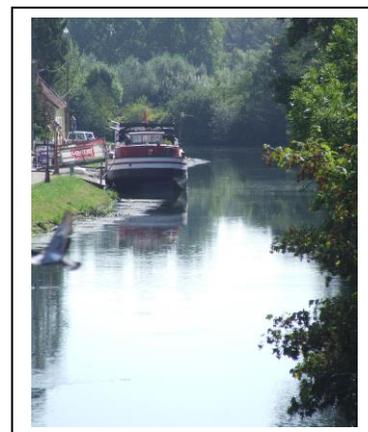
Some three days after the unit's disembarkation in France on March 22, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's train arrived at the small provincial town of Pont-Rémy.



It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for them travelling unused in a separate wagon. De-training at the station at two in the morning the Newfoundlanders still had a long march ahead of them before they would reach their billets at Buigny l'Abbé.

(Right: *the Somme seen from the bridge at Pont-Rémy as it flows through the community* – photograph from 2010)

It is doubtful that any of those tired soldiers paid much attention to the slow-moving stream flowing under the bridge that they passed on their way from the station. Some three months later *the Somme* would be a part of their history.



On April 13, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion marched into the village of Englebelmer – three kilometres behind the lines and perhaps some fifty kilometres in all distant from Pont-Rémy – where it was billeted, welcomed re-enforcements on the 15<sup>th</sup> and, on the evening that same day, was introduced into the British lines where the Newfoundlanders were then put to work making improvements to the communication trenches.

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

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



The month of May was marred by the loss of Private Anderson's gas-helmet (gas-mask) on the 4<sup>th</sup> while he and the Battalion were billeted at Mailly-Maillet. Apparently he was obliged to pay double its price as a penalty.

(continued)

The son of Joseph Anderson, fisherman, and Jessie Anderson\* – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of 60 cents from his pay - of Mouse Island (off the coast of Channel, Port aux Basques), Private Anderson was at first reported as *missing in action* at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, 1916, while serving with 'D' Company during the fighting of the first day of *the Somme*. Some six months later, on December 31, he was officially *presumed dead*.



However, subsequently, a burial report, dated April 23, 1917, was submitted by the General Officer Commanding 5<sup>th</sup> Corps, documenting his interment on that date in ground just to the west of the Y Ravine. Private Anderson's record was thus amended so as to read *killed in action*.

Israel Anderson had enlisted at the declared age of nineteen years.

*\*One source, Ancestry, lists the following eight offspring of Joseph and Jessie Anderson of Mouse Island, but Israel is not included among them – although his age would seemingly fit into the somewhat meagre pattern of birth dates available: Alice, Charles, George, John, Thomas, Agnus (sic), Jemimia (sic) and Frederick.*

(Right top: *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 ...*)

Private Israel Anderson 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) (right).

