

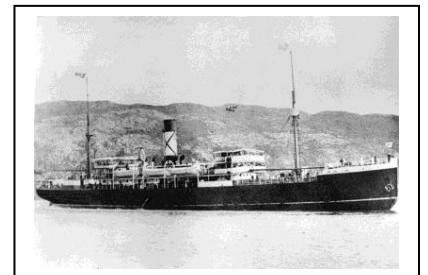


Private Alexander Barter (Regimental Number 4001) is interred in Tyne Cot Cemetery – Grave reference LIX. C. 6.

His occupation prior to military service recorded simply as that of a *collector*, Alexander Barter was a recruit of the Eighteenth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at Headquarters at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on October 19, 1917, he then enlisted - engaged *for the duration the war* at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and also attested on that same day.

Private Barter did not embark for overseas service until January 29 of 1918, onto the Bowring Brothers' Red Cross Line vessel *Florizel* (right) en route for Halifax. From there he sailed on an unspecified troop-ship* to the United Kingdom.

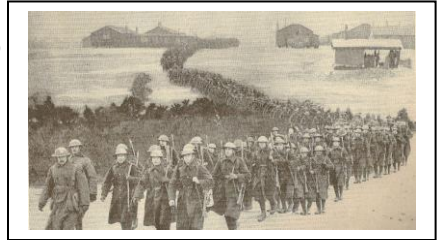
****This draft may even have travelled on to Québec or Montréal where ships were still apparently sailing even at this late time.***



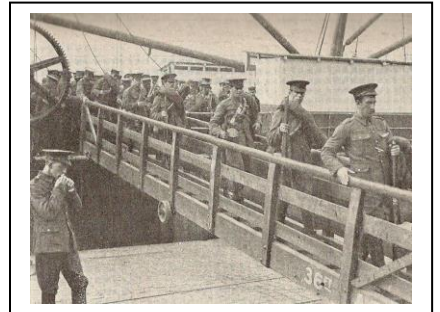
In January of the New Year of 1918, the Regimental Depot used by 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the soon-to-be-designated Royal Newfoundland Regiment had been transferred from the Royal Borough of Ayr in Scotland to southern England, to Hazely Down, Hampshire, and not far distant from the historic cathedral city of Winchester.

This transfer was finalized during the latter part of January, 1918, and it was to Hazely Down that Private Barter reported to *duty* from Newfoundland and *from* there that he was then later despatched to join the British Expeditionary Force on the Continent.

(Right: a bleak-looking Hazely Down Camp at some time during the winter of 1918 – from *The War Illustrated*)



On July 2, either the 47th or the 48th Re-enforcement Draft, from Hazely Down - with Private Barter one of its soldiers - passed through the English port of Folkestone. On either the 4th - or 5th, having likely disembarked in Le Havre, the contingent reported to the British Expeditionary Base Depot in the vicinity of Rouen for final training and organization* before finding its way to 1st Battalion.



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

Only some five days later again, on July 8 – although *his* file says the 9th – Private Barter was surely one of the detachment of one-hundred twenty-eight *other ranks* from Rouen that reported to *duty* with 1st Battalion at Équièhen on the French west coast.

**Apparently, 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.*

Almost ten weeks previous to the arrival of Private Barter at Équièhen, on April 24, 1st Battalion had said farewell to its comrades-in-arms of 88th Brigade and 29th Division and on the morrow had participated in a recessional parade attended by the officer commanding 88th Brigade, Brigadier Freyberg.

The Newfoundlanders would later be deployed to another unit, but for the summer of 1918 1st Battalion was to move a world away from Flanders where it had just fought during the crisis of the German spring offensive, to be stationed on the west coast of France.

On April 29, the Newfoundlanders – 1st Battalion by now reduced to a total strength of just thirty officers and four-hundred sixty-four other ranks - took train in Belgium for the French coastal town of Étapes, where they arrived at eleven o'clock in the late evening. For now, for them, the fighting was a thing of the past.

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The summer of 1918 was to pass peaceably enough for most of the personnel of 1st Battalion. For the months of May, June and until early July, the unit was posted to Écuire, to the Headquarters of Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force in Europe.



(Right: *Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force at the time of the Battalion's posting to GHQ – from Illustration*)

The cosmetic honour of this new role, however, masked the reality that the 1st Battalion of the recently-proclaimed *Royal Newfoundland Regiment* was no longer capable of serving in the field.

**Although few at home cared to admit it publicly, the problem was that 1st Battalion had run out of reserves and was unable to continue as a fighting entity. It was to be September before even a battalion of reduced strength could return to active service. At home, mandatory military service was initiated – conscription by another name – but with limited results.*

The posting to Écuire completed, for most of July and all of August the Newfoundlanders were encamped in much the same area, close to the coastal village of Équihe – itself not far removed from the large Channel port of Boulogne – and far to the rear of the fighting, of which there had been plenty elsewhere.



This was the time at which and the place to which Private Barter reported in early July.

(Right above: *a view of the sparsely-populated coastal community of Équihe at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

Re-enforced, the Newfoundlanders returned to the fray on Friday, September 13, as one of the three battalions of the 28th Brigade of 9th Scottish Division. 1st Battalion was once more to serve on the Belgian front where, some six weeks later, having advanced out of the *Ypres Salient*, it would finish its war on October 26 at a place called Inghoyghem (*Ingoigem*).

On September 28, the Belgian Army and the 2nd British Army broke out of their positions, overrunning the enemy lines. It was the start, for them, of the *Hundred Days Offensive**. On the following day, the Newfoundlanders were fighting at the Keiberg Ridge.

After almost four years of stalemate, it was once again to be a conflict of movement.



(Right above: *British troops and German prisoners in Flanders during the Hundred Days – from Illustration*)

(continued)

****This offensive would prove to be the final campaign of the Western Front and would terminate with the Armistice of November 11. It had begun further to the south on July 18 on the French front on the River Marne, followed on August 8 by an onslaught by British and Empire troops near Amiens in what would also become known as 3rd Somme.***

The only child of James Barter, employee of *Mercantile Cooperage*, and Leah Barter (née *Coyell?*) to whom he had allotted a daily sixty cents from his pay - of 265, South Side, St. John's, he was reported at first as *wounded and missing in action* in Belgium, on September 29, 1918, at the Keiberg Ridge.

Some thirty weeks later, on April 26, 1919, he was officially *presumed dead*.

However, due to subsequent evidence obtained by the *British Red Cross Society* and passed through the hands of the *War Office* to the *Newfoundland Pay & Records Office* in London, Private Barter's file had already been amended, on April 10, 1919, so as to read *killed in action GSW neck* (see below).



At home, it was the Reverend T. Darby of the Methodist College Home who was requested to bear the news to his parents.

Alexander Barter had enlisted at the age of eighteen years.

(Right above: *the re-constructed village of Dadizeele (today Dadizele) just to the north of which the Newfoundlanders dug in on the evening of September 29, 1918 – photograph from 2013*)

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

(continued on following page)



Mr. J. R. Bennet.

Southside,
May 28th, 1919

Dear Sir:

I called at the Military Headquarters today and I was told you were not there. I wished to speak to you about my boy Alex. Barter. I suppose now I know my poor boy is gone for sure, and as his father, as you know, is not well or strong and Alex was his only child and only help we had in our old age he was the only help we had to look to and now he has gone and left us alone. The way things are now we cannot get enough to live and pay out. If he is home sick one day his pay stopped and every holiday is stopped, and if anything should happen to him I am not strong enough to work for myself. The poor boy always said he went to protect his Mother and now he is gone from me. I would like to know what allowance is for me and what money am I his poor mother to get. Aint my poor boy's life just as precious as any other boy's, as others got it that other children, but I got no one.

Please pardon for taking the liberty of writing you but I thought you were the only one that would take any interest in me as my heart is very weak and I am not strong enough to speak to any one on such a subject.

Will you kindly answer and let me know what I are to do and you will oblige,

(sgd) Mrs. James Barter

(Extract from telegram from Syn. To MIL. Dated April 3rd, 1919)

- 3963 Byrne asserts that 4001 Barter previously reported Wounded and Missing Sept. 29th, was killed in action that date GSW Throat

(continued on following page)

- Statement made at the 3rd London General Hospital 5/3/19, by 3963, Pte. L. P. Byrne with regard to: #4001, Pte. A. Barter

I know that Barber (Barter) was killed in action. He got a bullet wound in the throat. He only lived about three minutes. He is buried in Belgium (cannot remember the spot). Q/Master Sellars buried him and took a note from him to his mother. He wrote "Tell my mother I died for a good cause." Q/Master Sellars is since dead, killed by a shell. We were the best of pals since we left home together. His last words were of his mother. I made a will in his favour on my pay book, and he had done the same for me. I do not know where his pay book is and should be glad to know.

Authority: Statement obtained by the British Red Cross Society, passed to War Office and by the latter to the Pay & Record Office.

Later again, on September 17, 1924, Private Barter's body was found – identified from a damaged disc – and buried in Tyne Cot, where he remains to this day.