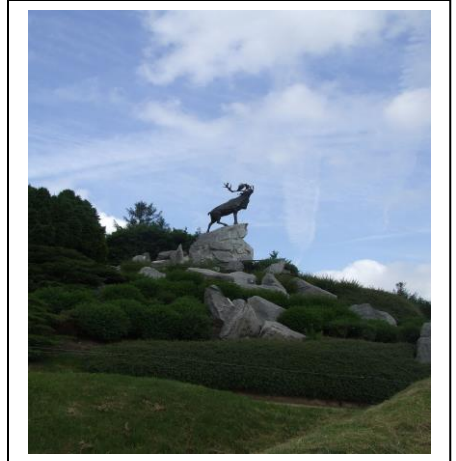




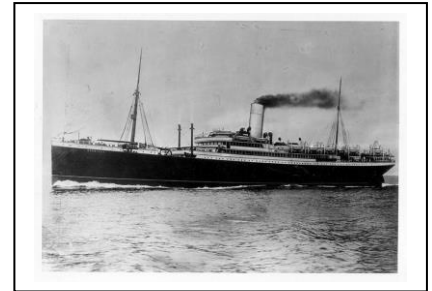
Corporal Bernard Carroll MM (Regimental Number 1903), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in the Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a fisherman, Bernard Carroll was a recruit of the Sixth Draft. He enlisted at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 – on October 13, 1915, and attested on that same day.

Private Carroll and the other military personnel of 'G' Company – apparently in the company of several naval reservists and also some German prisoners (these latter presumably to remain in Canada) - left St. John's by train on October 27, to cross the island to Port aux Basques. The contingent then traversed the Gulf of St. Lawrence by ferry, and proceeded by train from North Sydney to Quebec City.



At Québec the Newfoundlanders boarded His Majesty's Transport *Corsican* (above) for the trans-Atlantic passage to the English south-coast naval establishment of Devonport where they arrived on November 9.



By the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> the new arrivals had travelled by train and had gone north to Scotland. There they had been billeted in huts in a military camp at Gailles, not far removed from the new Regimental Depot where accommodation for the contingent was as yet not available.

That new Regimental Depot had been established during the summer of 1915 in the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland to serve as a base for the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion. It was from there – as of November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers arriving from home were sent in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and then subsequently to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

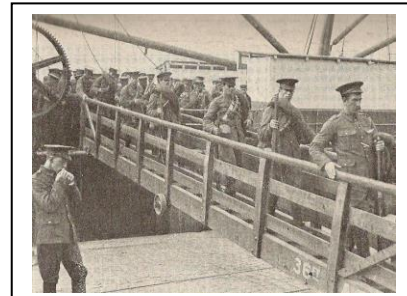


(Right above: *an aerial view of Ayr – probably from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough is to the right. – courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr*)

It was during this posting to the Regimental Depot that, on April 5, only three days before his departure to France on *active service*, Private Carroll was prevailed upon 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.***

**The 4<sup>th</sup> Re-enforcement Draft – Private Carroll among its ranks - passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton on its way to the Continent on April 8, 1916. It arrived in the Norman capital of Rouen on the same day, whereupon the contingent was received into the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot, there to continue final training\* and to organize before moving onwards towards the front and to a rendezvous with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.**



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

***\*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, Étaples, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.***

**A draft of a single officer and forty-one *other ranks* from Rouen, Private Carroll among that number, joined the parent unit on April 26. At the time all four companies of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion were in the throes of a first tour in the front-line trenches, not far from the village of Englebelmer.**



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

**The Newfoundlanders were also soon to be preparing for the British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for the meandering river that flowed – and today still flows - innocuously through the southern part of the region to which it lends its name, *the Somme*.**



**(Right: *the Somme as it still flows today between the town of Albert and the city of Amiens – photograph from 2009*)**

**It was during a tour of the trenches, while billeted at the village of Mailly-Maillet that – on June 2 – that Private Carroll was found to be bereft of his gas-helmet (mask) and was obliged to pay the cost of same.**

**(continued)**

Private Carroll was not one of those who figured in the fighting of the morning of July 1 with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion at Beaumont-Hamel, but his name was included on the unit's nominal roll; most of those who were not to present in the attack were those of the ten per cent reserve of fourteen officers and eighty-three *other ranks* held at Louvencourt and not called forward until later in the afternoon of that day when the fighting had subsided.



However, in Private Carroll's case, he was one of the detachment of twenty-two *other ranks* who had been seconded to serve with 88<sup>th</sup> Brigade's Machine-Gun Section. Thus he was a part of the fighting of the morning of July 1, but not with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

*\*The well-known roll-call of July 2 of those who survived the battle unscathed was not officially recorded until two days later. The roll call of those who had been in the ten per cent reserve of fourteen officers and eighty-three men held back for most of the day at Louvencourt was apparently also recorded officially only later. Thus the inscription 'With Battalion 4/7/16' on certain records.*

(Right top: *another part of the reconstituted battlefield, here showing the British front lines, in the Newfoundland Park at Beaumont-Hamel: today the wire serves only to keep the tourists out of the trenches. – photograph from 2010(?)*)

On July 27-28 of 1916, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion - still under battalion strength at only five-hundred fifty-four strong, even after re-enforcement - moved north and entered into Belgium for the first time. 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. The Salient was relatively quiet during the time of the Newfoundlanders' posting there, yet they nonetheless incurred casualties, a number of them fatalities.



On October 8, after ten weeks in Belgium, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion moved south back to France and back to the area of – and the battle of – the Somme.

(Right above: *the entrance to 'A' Company's quarters in the ramparts of Ypres when it was posted there in 1916 – photograph from 2010*)

(Right: *the city of Ypres towards the end of 1915 – and eight months before the Newfoundlanders were posted there for the first time – from a vintage post-card*)



Four days after its return to France, on October 12, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion went again to the attack at a place called Gueudecourt, some dozen or so kilometres to the south-east of Beaumont-Hamel. It proved to be another costly affair – two hundred and thirty-nine casualties all told - for little gain.

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



It was for his conduct at during the engagement at Gueudecourt that Private Carroll was subsequently awarded the Military Medal...*'for bravery in the field. On October 12th, 1916, after a successful attack on German trenches north of Gueudecourt he displayed great gallantry to go out and aid the wounded in the open under a very heavy fire. By his action he undoubtedly saved several wounded men.'* - London Gazette 6th January, 1917



After Gueudecourt 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion continued its watch in and out of the trenches of *the Somme* – not without casualties – during the late fall and early winter, a period broken only by the several weeks spent in corps reserve at Christmas, encamped well behind the lines and close to the city of Amiens.



And there were also two rapid promotions: to the rank of lance corporal – with its five-cents-a-day pay raise – on December 12, and the second, to that of corporal on February 2 of the following year, 1917.

(Right above: *a typical British Army Camp during a winter period somewhere in France* – from a vintage post-card)

After that welcome six-week Christmas respite spent in *Corps Reserve* withdrawn to the rear, the Newfoundlanders had *officially* returned to *active service* on January 23, although they had been back in the trenches already by that date and had incurred their first casualties – and fatality – of 1917.

The only infantry activity directly involving 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion during that entire period – from the action at Gueudecourt in mid-October of 1916, until Monch-le-Preux in April of 1917 – was to be the sharp engagement at Sailly-Saillisel at the end of February and beginning of March, an action which brought this episode in the Newfoundlanders' War – in the area of *the Somme* - to a close.



(Right above: *The fighting during the time of the Battalion's posting to Sailly-Saillisel took place on the far side of the village which was no more than a heap of rubble at the time.* - photograph from 2009(?))

(continued)

Whether Corporal Carroll served during the action at Sailly-Saillisel is perhaps not certain as on March 3 he was admitted into the 14<sup>th</sup> Corps Rest Station afflicted by a case of impetigo. His case was apparently none too serious as he was discharged back to duty with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion only two days later.

After Sailly-Saillisel the month of March was a quiet time for the Newfoundlanders; having departed from the trenches, they now spent their time near the communities of Meaulté and Camps-en-Amienois re-enforcing, re-organizing, and training for upcoming events. They even had the pleasure of a visit from the Regimental Band, and also one from the Prime Minister of Newfoundland, Sir Edward Morris (right), the latter on March 17, St. Patrick's Day.



On March 29, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion began to make its way – on foot – from Camps-en-Amienois to the north-east, towards the venerable medieval city of Arras and eventually beyond, their march to finish amid the rubble of a village called Monchy-le-Preux.



(Right adjacent: *the remnants of the Grande Place in the city of Arras in early 1916 – from Illustration*)

On April 9 the British Army launched an offensive in the area to the north of the Somme battlefields; this was the so-called *Battle of Arras* intended to support a French effort elsewhere. In terms of the daily count of casualties it was the most expensive operation of the War for the British, its only positive episode being the Canadian assault of Vimy Ridge on the opening day of the battle, Easter Monday. The French offensive was a disaster.



(Right above: *the Canadian National Memorial which stands on Vimy Ridge – photograph from 2010*)

1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was to play its part in the *Battle of Arras*, a role that would begin at a place called Monchy-le-Preux on April 14 and which would finish ten days later, on April 23, perhaps a kilometre distant, at *Les Fosses Farm*. After Beaumont-Hamel, Monchy-le-Preux was to prove the most costly day of the Newfoundlanders' war, four-hundred eighty-seven casualties on April 14 alone.



(Right above: *The village of Monchy-le-Preux as seen today from the western – in 1917, the British – side of the community. The Newfoundlanders advanced, out of the ruins of the place, to the east, away from the camera. – photograph from 2013*)

(continued)

The son of Daniel Carroll (fisherman, deceased April 1920) and Elizabeth Carroll – to whom he had allocated a daily allowance of seventy cents from his pay - of Conche on the 'French Shore', he was also brother to John, to Maggie and to William.



Corporal Carroll was reported as *missing in action* on April 14, 1917, while serving with 'B Company during the fighting at Monchy-le-Preux. Some thirty weeks later, on November 17 of the same year, he was officially *presumed dead*.

Bernard Carroll had enlisted at twenty-two years and three months of age.

(Right above: *The Caribou at Monchy-le-Preux stands atop the remains of a German strongpoint in the centre of the re-constructed village.* – photograph from 2009(?))

Corporal Bernard Carroll MM was eligible for the British War Medal (on left) and also the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

