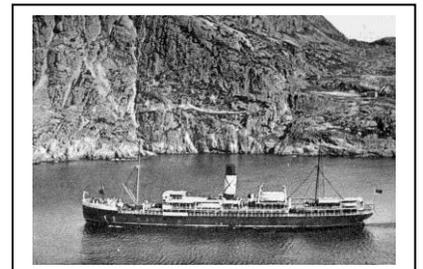


Private Walter Augustus Dean (Regimental Number 949) is buried in Vichte Military Cemetery – Grave reference I. A. 21.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a seaman earning a monthly \$30.00, Walter Augustus Dean presented himself form medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John’s on January 30, 1915. He then enlisted two days later – engaged at the private soldier’s rate of \$1.10 per diem - on February 1, before attesting four days later again, on February 5.



(continued)

Private Dean then embarked with 'D' Company, some six weeks later again, onto the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Stephano* (previous 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 30th, 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.



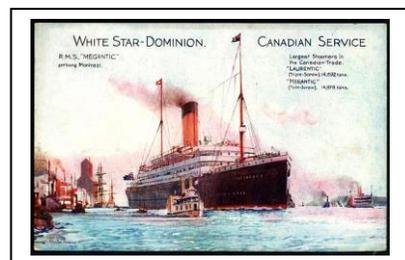
(Right above: *The venerable bastion of Edinburgh Castle dominates the skyline of the Scottish capital city from the summit of Castle Hill. – photograph from 2011*)

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 1st 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 2nd (Reserve) Battalion.

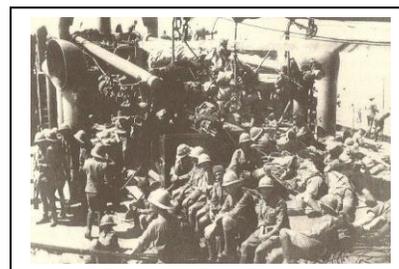


It was during this period at Aldershot, on August 15, that Private Dean was prevailed upon to re-enlist, on this occasion for the *duration of the war**.

**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 Dean took ship on board the requisitioned passenger liner *Megantic* (right above) 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, 1st Battalion landed on the beach at Suvla Bay on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

(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)



(Right: 'Kangaroo Beach', where the men of 1st Battalion landed on the night of September 19-20, 1915, is 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 from 2011)

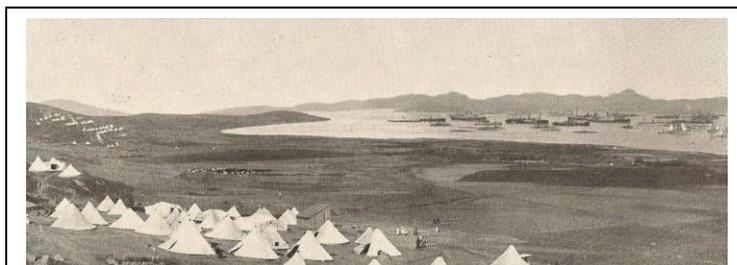


(Right below: almost a century later, the area, little changed from those far-off days, of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla, and where Private Dean served during the fall of 1915 – photograph from 2011)

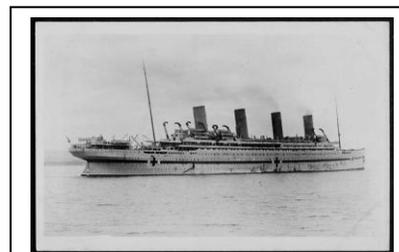


On November 26 – during the period of a freak snow-and-ice storm - Private Dean was admitted into the 54th Casualty Clearing Station at Suvla where he was diagnosed as suffering from jaundice. From there he was evacuated on the 30th to the 2nd Australian Hospital at Mudros on the Greek island of Lemnos and later, on December 4, to the 27th General Hospital at West Mudros.

(Right: By the end of 1915, the Bay at Mudros with its busy but minuscule harbour was almost entirely surrounded by Allied medical establishments, many of them under canvas. – from Illustration)



The second day of January in the New Year, 1916, saw Private Dean evacuated from Lemnos en route to the United Kingdom where he arrived a week later. There he was admitted into the 3rd London General Hospital in the Borough of Wandsworth. He had made the passage on board His Majesty's Hospital Ship *Britannic* (right), sister ship to both *Olympic* and the ill-starred *Titanic*.



(Right: The main building of what became 3rd London General Hospital during the Great War was opened, on July 1st, 1859, as a home for the orphaned daughters of British soldiers, sailors and marines. – photograph from 2010)



(Previous page far right: *Newfoundland patients, unfortunately unidentified, convalescing at 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth* – courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo)

On March 17 Private Dean commenced a ten-day furlough, a customary period of leave which was granted to military personnel released from hospital. In Private Dean's case, this was followed by a posting to the Regimental Depot at Ayr where he reported on the 26th of the same month.

The 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 the base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion. It was from there – as of November of 1915 up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers from home were sent in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1st 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)

Private Dean was now to spend almost two years based at Ayr. For much of this time, however, he was in the nearby - and not-so-nearby - hospitals where he was admitted three times during the spring and summer of 1917, for a total of one-hundred four days: the complaint was venereal disease.

In that summer of 1917, 2nd Battalion was transferred from Ayr to another Scottish location: Barry. Following his treatment, it was to this new – and, as it transpired, temporary - Depot that Private Deans was posted before returning to Ayr in mid-September. He and 2nd (Reserve) Battalion were on the move again in a matter of months.

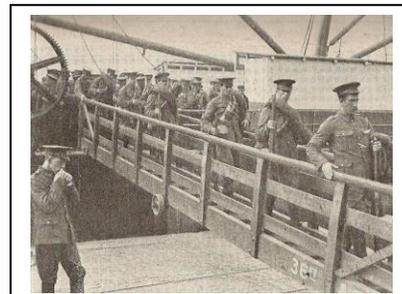
2nd (Reserve) Battalion was to permanently move quarters from the Royal Borough of Ayr in Scotland to southern England, to Hazely Down, Hampshire, not far distant from the cathedral city of Winchester. This transfer was finalized during the latter part of January, 1918, and it was there that Private Deans would have been stationed at the beginning of March when he was ordered to re-join the British Expeditionary Force on the Continent.



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

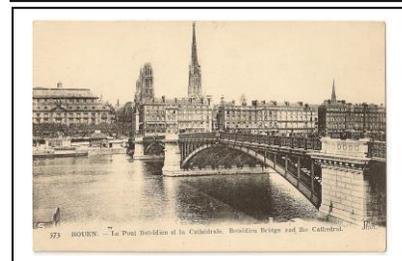
On March 1 of 1918 Private Dean was a soldier of the 39th Re-enforcement Draft from the 2nd Battalion which passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton to rejoin 1st Battalion which was by then stationed on the Franco-Belgian border. Landing in the capital city of Normandy, Rouen, the contingent made its way to the large British Expeditionary Fore Base Depot there for final training and organization*.

(Right: *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.*

But once more a medical problem interposed itself and on March 5 Private Dean was admitted to 1st Stationary Hospital in Rouen, once more for attention to a venereal problem. Discharged *to duty* at the Base Depot, Rouen, on April 28, it was yet another few days before he reported *to duty* with the Newfoundland unit, on the 3rd - or the 5th - of May, by which time 1st Battalion had ceased to be attached to 88th Brigade and the 29th Division.



(Right above: *The River Seine flows through the centre of the French city of Rouen - and past the imposing spires and towers of its medieval gothic cathedral – at or about the time of the Great War. – from a vintage post-card.*)

On April 24, after the efforts in Flanders of stemming the German spring offensive, 1st Battalion had said farewell to its comrades-in-arms of 88th Brigade and 29th Division. The Newfoundlanders would later be deployed to another unit, but for the summer of 1918 they were to move a world away from Flanders where they had been fighting only days before. 1st Battalion was now to be stationed on the west coast of France. On April 29, the Newfoundlanders took train in Belgium for Étaples, where they arrived at eleven o'clock in the late evening.

The summer of 1918 was to pass peaceably for the personnel of 1st Battalion. For the months of May, June and until early July, the unit had been 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.*)

The cosmetic honour of this new role masked the reality* that 1st Battalion, the 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 majority of 1st Battalion heard the news of the granting of the title 'Royal' during a parade and inspection of February 8, months earlier.*

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.



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

The Newfoundlanders returned to the fray on Friday, September 13, as one of the three battalions 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 was to finish its war on October 26 at a place called Inghoyghem (today Ingoogem).



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

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 a conflict of movement.

**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 advance, despite fierce resistance at times, was relentless. On the night of October 19-20, 1st Battalion crossed the Lys Canal under fire just to the east of Courtrai – today Kortrijk - on barrel bridges and on the morrow was advancing towards the village of Vichte.

(Right: the Lys – both canal and river – at a point not far from the crossing-place – right to left - of October 19-20, 1918 - The Harlebeke Caribou stands about one hundred metres behind the camera. – photograph from 2010)



(Right: the railway line into, and the fields to the west of, the village of Vichte, the scene of a great deal of fighting – photograph from 2010)

(continued)

The son of Matthew Dean, former fisherman, and Rhoda Dean (both likely deceased by the time of enlistment) originally of Great Brahat, White Bay, his own place of residence was recorded as Freshwater in the District of Baie de Verde.



Private Dean was reported as having been *killed in action* on October 25, 1918, while serving with 'D' Company during fighting near the village of Vichte in Belgium. It was on the following day that 1st Battalion was to march away from the front for the final time.

Walter Augustus Dean had enlisted at twenty-five years of age.

His sister, Mrs. Thomas (Elizabeth) Somers – by then living in Freshwater, then later at Carbonear - claimed his entire estate.

(Right above: The Caribou at Harlebeke – commemorates 1st Battalion's crossing of the Lys Canal and the sacrifices of the last campaign of the War. – photograph from 2012)

Private Walter Augustus Dean 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).

