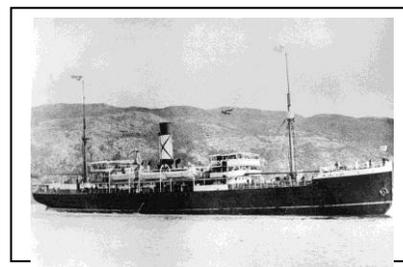




Private Joseph Dewey (Regimental Number 3587) is buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery – Grave reference XXXV. A. 52.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a school-teacher earning a monthly \$16.00, Joseph Dewey was a recruit of the Fourteenth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on April 12, 1917, he then enlisted - engaged *for the duration of the war* at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and also attested on that same day.

Private Dewey was not to depart from Newfoundland for overseas service until May 19, when the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* (right) left en route to Halifax. His contingent of three officers and one-hundred eighty-two *other ranks*, and also ninety-nine recruits of the newly-formed Newfoundland Forestry Unit, then left Nova Scotia for the United Kingdom on board an unspecified* vessel, on May 29.



**The ship in question may well have been the White Star liner Olympic (right) – sister ship to Titanic – requisitioned as a troop transport during the war, which sailed on June 2 from Halifax with Canadian military personnel as well – there are no other departures on or about this date. May 29 may have been the date of embarkation by the Newfoundland contingent.*



Arriving in the English west-coast port of Liverpool on June 9 the contingent entrained for the west coast of Scotland. By this time, the Regimental Depot at Ayr* had already been in existence as the base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment for some two years. It was from here – since November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers from home were being despatched in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1st Battalion.

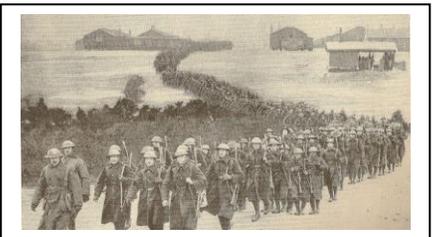


(Right above: an aerial view of Ayr – probably from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough is to the right. – courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr)

**During the summer months of 1917, 2nd (Reserve) Battalion was transferred from Ayr to not-so-distant Barry in the region of Dundee. Initially intended to be a permanent move, the protest from several quarters was so great that the Newfoundlanders were back in Ayr by the third week of September.*

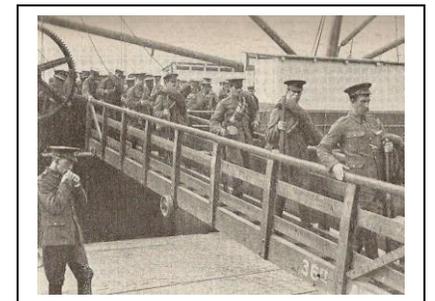
There being no evidence to the contrary, it must be assumed that Private Dewey spent the following seven months in Scotland.

Then in January of the New Year, 1918, 2nd (Reserve) Battalion moved its quarters definitively from the Royal Borough of Ayr to southern England, to Hazely Down, Hampshire, not far distant from the historic cathedral city of Winchester. It was from there that Lance Corporal Newton was to travel when he received his orders to join the British Expeditionary Force.



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

It was on the 27th of March that the 40th Re-enforcement Draft of eighty *other ranks* – Private Dewey one of its soldiers - passed through the English south-coast port-city of Southampton to board ship for the Continent. The contingent disembarked on the 29th in Rouen, capital city of Normandy, but was to spend little time there in final training and organization before moving on to its rendezvous with 1st Battalion.



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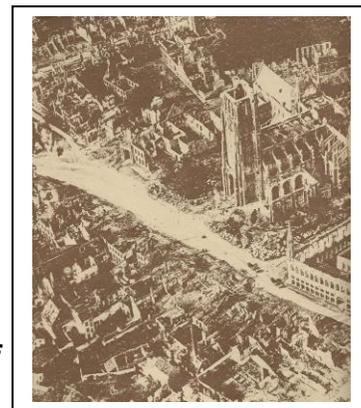
(Previous page: *British troops disembark at Rouen en route to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

**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.*

Private Dewey reported to duty with 1st Battalion on April 4 while it was out of the line at Hasler (Haslar) Camp near St-Jan, just north-east of Ypres. However, by the evening of the next day the Newfoundlanders were back *in* the line, by then having relieved the 2nd Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment, and having taken over positions near the remnants of the village of Passchendaele.

In the meantime, some four months previously, at the beginning of January of 1918, after a snowy Christmas period spent to the south-west of Arras and withdrawn from the front, the Newfoundlanders of 1st Battalion had returned to Belgium, to the Ypres Salient, for a third time. Once there, as with the other British and Empire troops in the area, they were to spend much of their time building and strengthening defences.

(Right below: *an aerial view of Ypres, taken towards the end of 1916 – from Illustration*)



In the meantime, the Germans had been preparing for a final effort to win the War: the Allies were exhausted and lacking man-power after their exertions of 1917 - the British had fought three campaigns and some units of the French Army had mutinied - and the Germans had available the extra divisions that their victory over the Russians in the East now allowed them. It was expected that they would launch a spring offensive.



In the mean-time, while they waited, the Newfoundlanders dug.

(Right: *countryside in-between Zonnebeke and Passchendaele (today Passendale) in the vicinity of where the Newfoundlanders were stationed in March and early April of 1918 – photograph from 2011*)

Lance Corporal Newton and his contingent had arrived at a propitious moment.

The Germans did as was expected of them. Ludendorff's armies had already launched a powerful thrust on March 21, striking at first in the area of *the Somme*, overrunning the battlefields of 1916 and beyond; for a while the advance seemed unstoppable.

(continued)

Then a second offensive, *Georgette*, was launched in the northern sector of the front, in Flanders, where the Newfoundlanders were stationed: the date was April 9. Within two days the situation of the Allies was desperate.

(Right: *British troops on the retreat in Flanders in April of 1918 – from Illustration*)



On the day after the first heavy bombardments, April 10, as the Germans approached the towns of Armentières and Nieppe, troops were deployed to meet them. The Newfoundlanders, due to come out of the line and move back to the Somme, boarded buses at three o'clock in the afternoon and were suddenly directed southward, towards Nieppe. They were in action, attempting to stem this latest offensive, three hours later.



(Right above: *the area of La Crêche - the buildings in the background - where the Newfoundlanders de-bussed on April 10 to meet the Germans in the area of Steenwerck and its railway station – photograph from 2010.*)

The British were pushed back to the frontier area of France and Belgium. On the 12th of April 1st Battalion, fighting in companies rather than as a single entity, was making a series of stands.

On April 13, during the defensive action near the De Seule crossroads on the Franco-Belgian border, one platoon of 'C' Company was obliterated while trying to check the German advance. The remainder of 'C' Company took up defensive positions along a light railway line and, with 'A' Company, stopped a later enemy attack. 'B' and 'D' Companies – in a failed counter-attack on that evening - were equally heavily involved.



(Right above: *ground just to the east of Bailleul where 1st Battalion fought during the period April 12 to 21 – photograph from 2013*)

What exact role Private Dewey played during this time is not known - it seems not even to be recorded of which Company he was a soldier - but from April 10 to 21 was to be a difficult eleven days for all of 1st Battalion's personnel. Nevertheless, somehow, the German breakthrough never materialised and the front finally stabilised.



(Right above: *These are the De Seule crossroads, lying astride the Franco-Belgian frontier, and also the scene of fierce fighting involving 1st Battalion on April 12 -13, 1918. Today there are several houses and a convenience store. – photograph from 2009(?)*)

Only days after the crisis of the German spring offensive had passed, on April 24, the Newfoundlanders of 1st Battalion said farewell to their comrades-in-arms of 88th Brigade and 29th Division. On the following day there had been a recessional parade. 1st Battalion was to later be deployed to another unit, but for the summer of 1918 it was to move a world away from Flanders where it had just fought, 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. They still had a two-hour march ahead of them to their new quarters.

For Private Dewey the latter part of the month of May was to prove a little more agitated than he might perhaps have desired. On the 19th, only eleven days after 1st Battalion's duty had begun at Headquarters, he was admitted in the Military Hospital for medical attention to what was diagnosed as NYD (*Not Yet Determined*).

Apparently on or about the 25th he was transferred to the 6th Convalescent Depot at Étapes whence – perhaps via the nearby Base Depot - he returned to duty with his unit on the morrow. The whole affair had lasted but a week – and it finally transpired that he had been suffering from a mild case of the 'flu.

Nevertheless, for the majority of the personnel of 1st Battalion, the summer of 1918 was to pass peaceably enough. For the months of May, June and until early July, the unit remained posted at Écuire, at 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 Équihen – 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 above: *a view of the sparsely-populated coastal community of Équihen 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 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 was to finish its war on October 26 at a place called Inghoyghem (today *Ingooigem*).



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

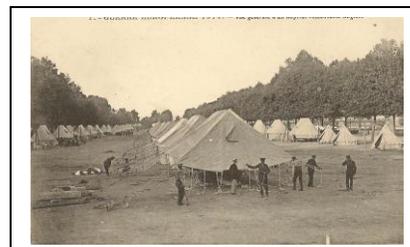
On September 28, the Belgian Army and the 2nd British Army broke out of their positions, overrunning the enemy lines. It was the start, for them, of the *Hundred Days Offensive**. On the following day, the Newfoundlanders were fighting at the Keiberg Ridge. After almost four years of stalemate, it was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



(Right: *the re-constructed village of Ledeghem, Belgium, a century later - photograph from 2010*)

On October 4, Private Dewey was wounded during the prolonged attack on the village of Ledeghem. Evacuated at first to the 3rd Australian Casualty Clearing Station to the north of Poperinghe, he was forwarded – still on the same October 4 – to the 10th Casualty Clearing Station at Arneke for treatment to gun-shot injuries to the chest. There he was deemed to be *dangerously ill*.



(Right above: *a British casualty clearing station – the one pictured here under canvas for mobility if and when the necessity arose – being established somewhere in France during the early years of the War – from a vintage post-card*)

The son of Francis (Frank), fisherman, and Edith Dewey – to whom he had allotted a daily sixty cents from his pay - of Greenspond, Bonavista Bay, he was also brother to Alberta, Benjamin*, Mur(r)iel, Hannah-B., Robert-G., Maggie-J. and Enid-M.**.



Private Dewey was reported as having *died of wounds* on October 21, 1918, in the same 10th CCS...

(continued)

- ...as a result of strict enquiries the Officer Commanding 10th Casualty Clearing Station states that Private Dewey died from bomb* wounds in the left side chest, penetrating, on 21st/10/18.**

Joseph Dewey had enlisted at the age of nineteen years and four months.

(Preceding page: *The Greenspond War Memorial honours the sacrifice of Private Dewey.* – photograph from 2010)

**Private Benjamin Pierce Dewey, Regimental Number 3924, was serving at Hazely Down at the time of his brother's death.*

***A certain W. J. Dewey of Terrenceville sent several letters of enquiry, but they do not reveal his relationship to Private Dewey.*

****likely a hand-grenade, called a bomb in those days, but possibly also a mortar bomb*

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

