



Private Joseph Doran (Regimental Number 1551), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.



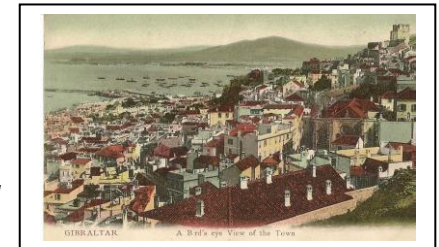
His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a fisherman earning a monthly \$35.00, Joseph Doran was a recruit of the Fifth Draft. He presented himself for enlistment at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on May 18, 1915 – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 – before, it seems, undergoing medical examination three days following, on May 21. He then attested on the next day again, May 22.



*\*One other source has him attesting on the same day as his enlistment.*

Private Doran embarked on board His Majesty's Transport *Calgarian* (above – original photograph from the *Provincial Archives*) on June 20 in St. John's Harbour and sailed (*almost\**) directly to the United Kingdom. He was one of the two-hundred forty-two men of 'F' Company and eighty-five naval reservists to take passage on that day.

*\*Apparently the ship took nineteen days to make what was usually the journey of about a week. Not only was Calgarian escorting three submarines, but she sailed by way of the Portuguese Azores and then Gibraltar – some of the Newfoundlanders apparently even having the time to cross the straits to spend a few hours in North Africa. She reached Liverpool on July 9.*



(Right above: *the Crown Colony of Gibraltar in pre-War days: The Spanish mainland is in the background.* – from a vintage postcard)

On the day after its arrival in the United Kingdom, 'F' Company marched from the railway station and reported *to duty* at Stobs Camp near the Scottish town of Hawick on the evening of July 10. It was an important moment: the Newfoundland Regiment, as of that day counting fifteen hundred personnel, was now at fighting strength and could be posted on *active service*.



(Right above: *The men of the Regiment await their new Lee-Enfield rifles.* – original photograph from the *Provincial Archives*)

From Stobs, some three weeks after the arrival of 'F' Company, in early August, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', the senior Companies, having now become 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment, were transferred to Aldershot in southern England. There they were to undergo final preparations – and a royal inspection – before departing on active service to the Middle East and to the fighting on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

'E' and 'F' Companies – the latter having arrived at Stobs Camp on July 10 - were to be posted to the new Regimental Depot and were to form the nucleus of the newly-formed 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion. The Depot was to become home to Private Doran for the following seven months.

The Regimental Depot was being established during that 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 up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers from home were to be sent in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later 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 not until March 13 of the following year, 1916, that Private Doran, as a soldier of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr, passed through the naval establishment of Devonport on the English south coast, en route – although no-one knew it at the time – for France.

The Newfoundlanders - somewhat surprisingly - were to travel by way of Egypt\*. By that time Private Doran had re-enlisted at Ayr, on February 1, some six weeks before his departure from there.\*\*

*\*At the time there was some confusion as to whether 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion would stay in the Middle East or not, and this draft apparently had orders to set sail for Egypt. However, there was surely a bureaucratic foul-up as 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion embarked in Egypt on only the following day for passage to France. The two ships presumably passed each other in the Mediterranean Sea, going in opposite directions.*

*One can only suppose that the ship from Devonport was carrying supplies, equipment and/ or other personnel that were needed in the Middle East and therefore could not be turned around – either that or the vessel had no radio. The 1<sup>st</sup> Draft then voyaged to Marseilles from Alexandria on HMT Kingstonian (right).*



*\*\*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.*

(Right: *British troops march through the port area of the French city of Marseilles. – from a vintage post-card*)



The draft of one-hundred forty *other ranks*, under the command of Captain Ledingham, having disembarked in the French Mediterranean port of Marseilles on April 3, joined 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion on April 8 in the small town of Louvencourt where the parent unit – still on its march towards the front - had already been billeted for two days.

Five days later, on April 13, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion marched into the village of Englebelmer – situated at some three kilometres behind the front - where the Newfoundlanders were billeted, welcomed re-enforcements from Rouen on the 15<sup>th</sup> and, on the evening of that day, were ordered forward into the British lines to work in some of the communication trenches.



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

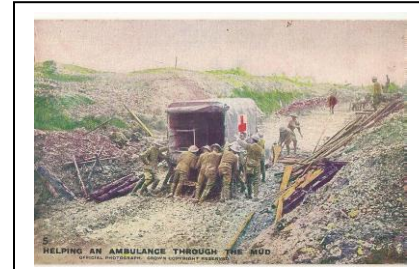
The Newfoundlanders were also soon to be preparing for the British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for the meandering river that flowed – and today still flows – innocuously through the southern part of the region to which it lends its name, *the Somme*.

On July 1, 1916, the first day of *the Somme*, Private Doran was wounded during the fighting at Beaumont-Hamel. Having incurred gun-shot wounds to the right arm, he was evacuated from the field and eventually admitted into the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Hospital at Le Havre no later than on July 3.



(Right: *a part of the re-constituted battle-field in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2007*)

(Right: *transferring sick and wounded from a field ambulance to the rear through the mud by motorized ambulance and man-power – from a vintage post-card*)



On that same July 3, having been embarked onto His Majesty's Hospital Ship *Asturias* (right below), Private Doran made the short crossing of the English Channel back to the United Kingdom. Upon his arrival in England he was admitted into the 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital in the Borough of Wandsworth on either the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> where he spent the next three weeks receiving treatment. His wound was apparently deemed as *not serious*.





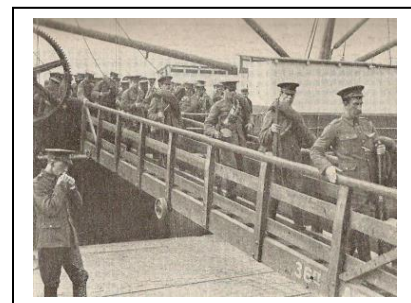
(Right: *The main building of what became 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital during the Great War was opened, on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1859, as a home for the orphaned daughters of British soldiers, sailors and marines. – photograph from 2010*)



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

After being discharged from Wandsworth on July 25, Private Doran was forwarded to the *Brooklands* Convalescent Home in the town of Weybridge. It was not until September 7 that he was granted the customary ten-day furlough granted military personnel in the United Kingdom upon discharge from hospital. On September 16 he was posted to the Regimental Depot at Ayr, reporting there *to duty* on that same date.

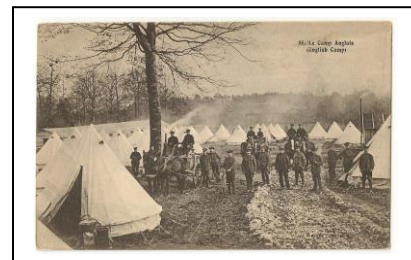
The 15<sup>th</sup> Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr passed on its way to France through the English south-coast port of Southampton on December 12, 1916, Private Doran among its ranks. Disembarking on the following day, the 13<sup>th</sup>, in Rouen, capital city of Normandy, the detachment found its way to the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot established there, for final training and organization, before proceeding to its 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, Étapes, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

This re-union was apparently effected on Christmas Day, 1916, a draft of fifty returning wounded being recorded by the Regimental War Diary as reporting *to duty* on that day. The Newfoundlanders were at the time spending several days at Camps-en-Amienois – part of the total of some six weeks spent out of *active service* in *Corps Reserve*. The time of his contingent's arrival not being documented, one cannot be sure if Private Doran enjoyed the traditional Christmas fare washed down with glasses of *real ale*.



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

Just some three weeks before Private Attwood's return, and after a welcome six-week Christmas respite spent in *Corps Reserve*, the Newfoundlanders had *officially* returned to *active service* on January 23, 1917, although they had been back in the trenches already by that date and had incurred their first casualties of 1917.

The only infantry activity directly involving 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion during the entire period from the action at Gueudecourt in mid-October of 1916, until Monchy-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(?)*)

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: *the remnants of the Grande Place in Arras at the time of the Great War – 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*)

(continued)

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*)

The son of Edward Doran, ferryman, and Mary Ann Doran – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of sixty cents from his pay - of Daniel's Point, Trepassey, in the District of Placentia and St. Mary's, he was also brother to Thomas. Private Doran was reported as having been *killed in action* on April 14, 1917, while serving with the almost annihilated 'D' Company during the fighting at Monchy-le-Preux.



Joseph Doran had enlisted at the age of twenty-eight years.

(Right above: *The Caribou at Monchy-le-Preux stands on top of the vestiges of a German strongpoint in the centre of the re-built community. – photo from 2009*)

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



(continued on following page)

The Officer  
c/o Newfoundland Regt. Records  
58 Victoria Street. London

121 High Street  
Ayr  
7<sup>th</sup> June 17

No. 1551 Pte Joseph Doran  
1/1<sup>st</sup> Newfoundland Regt

Would you kindly inform me if above man is still serving  
in France, or in any casualty to him has been since 21<sup>st</sup> Mar 17

I am

Yours Faithfully  
(Miss) L. Walker

**KIA 14/4/17**

**Answered 9/6/17**