

Corporal John Thomas Doyle (Regimental Number 1014), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in the Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.



His occupation previous to military service recorded as that of a miner earning a daily \$2.00, John Thomas Doyle presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on January 28, 1915. He then enlisted – engaged at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem - on the following day, January 29, before attesting on February 11.



Private Doyle embarked with Number 8 Platoon of 'D' Company, some five weeks later again, onto the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Stephano* (right above – 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: *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.



(Previous page: *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 Doyle 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.*

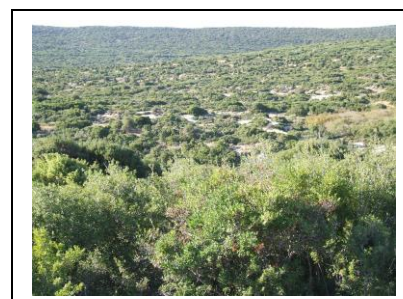
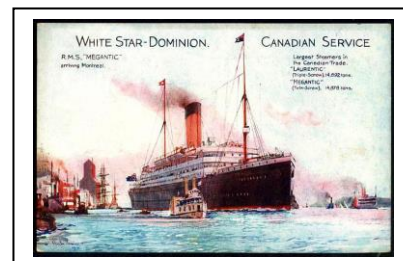
On August 20, 1915, Private Doyle took ship on board the requisitioned passenger liner *Megantic* (right above) for passage to the Middle East and to the fighting in Gallipoli where, a month later – of which two weeks had been spent billeted at the British barracks at Abbassia, near the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, 1st Battalion landed on the beach at Suvla Bay on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

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

(Right: *Cape Helles (see following paragraph) as seen from the Turkish positions on the misnamed Achi Baba, positions which were never breached. The Newfoundland positions were to the right-hand side of the picture.* – photograph from 2011)



On the night of December 19-20, the British abandoned their positions and withdrew from Suvla Bay, the Newfoundlanders, the only non-British unit to serve there, forming a part of the rear-guard on that occasion. 1st Battalion was transferred two days later to Cape Helles on the western tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The Newfoundlanders were soon, on the night of January 8-9, to be abandoning Cape Helles as well.



(Right above black & white: *'W' Beach at Cape Helles as it was days before the final British evacuation – from Illustration*)

(Right: *'W' Beach almost a century after its abandonment by British forces and by the Newfoundlanders who were the last soldiers to leave the beach: vestiges of the wharves in the black-and-white picture above are still to be seen – photograph from 2011*)



When the British evacuated the entire Gallipoli Peninsula in January of 1916, 1st Battalion was sent to Alexandria, arriving there on the 15th of that month. From there the Newfoundlanders were transferred, almost immediately, south to Suez where they were to await further orders. To that point it seems that the theatre of the future posting of 29th Division was still uncertain.



(Right above: *The British destroy their supplies during the final evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The Newfoundlanders, employed as the rear-guard, were among the last to leave on two occasions. – photograph taken from the battleship Cornwallis from Illustration*)

It was during this period at Suez, on February 27, that Private Doyle received promotion, to the rank of corporal*

**He had apparently been elevated to the rank of lance corporal at some time prior (or perhaps just prior) to embarking for the Gallipoli Peninsula, but there seems to be no further information among his papers.*



On March 14, the officers and men of 1st Battalion embarked through Port Tewfiq at the southern end of the Suez Canal onto His Majesty's Transport *Alaunia* (right adjacent) for the voyage to the French Mediterranean port of Marseilles, en route to the *Western Front*.



(Right above: *Port Tewfiq at some time just before the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

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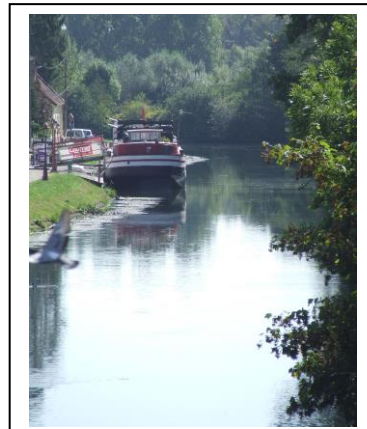
(Right: *British troops march through the port area of the French city of Marseilles. – from a vintage post-card*)



Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, the Battalion's train arrived at the small provincial town of Pont-Rémy.

It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for them travelling unused in a separate wagon. De-training at the station at two in the morning the Newfoundlanders still had a long march ahead of them before they would reach their billets at Buigny l'Abbé.

(Right: *the Somme seen from the bridge at Pont-Rémy as it flows through the community – photograph from 2010*)



It is doubtful that any of those tired soldiers paid much attention to the slow-moving stream flowing under the bridge that they passed on their way from the station. Some three months later *the Somme* would be a part of their history.

On April 13, 1st Battalion marched into the village of Englebelmer – three kilometres behind the lines and perhaps some fifty kilometres in all distant from Pont-Rémy – where it was billeted, welcomed re-enforcements on the 15th and, on that same day, was introduced into the British lines where the Newfoundlanders were then put to work making improvements to the communication trenches.

The Newfoundlanders were also soon to be preparing for the British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for that same meandering river which flowed through the region, *the Somme*.

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



The son of Edward Doyle – employee of the *Colonial Cordage Company* and to whom his son willed his all - and Lucy Doyle – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of seventy cents from his pay – originally of King's Cove, Bonavista Bay - his own place of residence was cited as *c/o Colonial Cordage Co., St. John's*.

Corporal Doyle was reported as having been *killed in action* at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, 1916, while serving with 'C' Company during the fighting of the first day of *the Somme*.



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John Thomas Doyle was twenty years of age at the time of his enlistment.

(Preceding page: *Beaumont-Hamel - looking from the British lines down the hill to Y Ravine Cemetery which today stands atop part of the German front-line defences - The Danger Tree is to the right in the photograph. – photograph taken in 2009*)



(Right above: *a grim, grainy image purporting to be Newfoundland dead awaiting burial at Beaumont-Hamel – from ...*)

(Right: *The sacrifice of Corporal Doyle is honoured on the Summerville War Memorial. – photograph from 2010*)



Corporal John Thomas Doyle 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).

