

Photograph as yet not available

Private William Duke (Regimental Number 1306) is interred in Alexandria (Chatby) Military and War Memorial Cemetery.

His occupation previous to military service recorded as that of a fisherman earning \$120.00 per annum, William Duke presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on March 22, 1915. He then enlisted two days later – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 - on March 24, before attesting six days later again, on March 30.



Private Duke of 'E' Company embarked in St. John's on board the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Stephano* (right above – from the *Provincial Archives*) just over three weeks later again, on April 22, 1915.

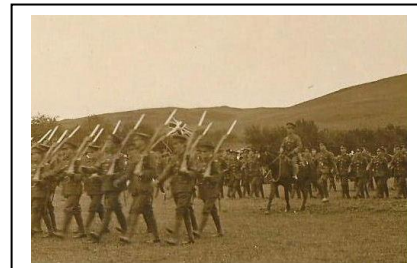
(continued)

The ship sailed to Halifax where his contingent took ship on His Majesty's Transport *Missanabie* (right) – likely with Canadian troops - for the crossing to Liverpool – the ship departed Halifax on April 25. From Liverpool they travelled by train to Edinburgh where the Newfoundlanders arrived on May 2. 'E' Company was to have but a few days to savor the charms of the Scottish capital.



Only nine days later, on May 11, the entire Battalion was posted for training from Edinburgh to a tented Stobs Camp near the Scottish town of Hawick.

(Right: *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)



From Stobs, some thirteen weeks later again, in early August, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', the senior Companies now become 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 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.

When he was apprised of his transfer seems not to be recorded, but Private Duke was one of the few from 'E' Company who were to swell the ranks of the units posted to Aldershot - thus he became a soldier of 'D' Company. It was during the period while he was at Aldershot, and as was the case with the great majority of the Newfoundland troops, that Private Duke was prevailed upon to re-enlist *for the duration of the war*. This he did on August 15\*.

*\*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.*



(continued)

On August 20, 1915, Private Duke took ship on board the requisitioned passenger liner *Megantic* (preceding page) 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, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion landed on the beach at Suvla Bay on the Gallipoli Peninsula.



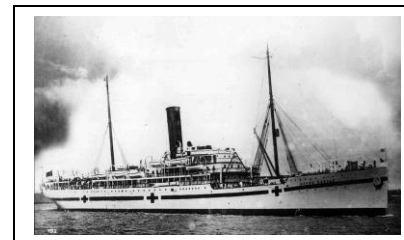
(Right above black & white: Newfoundland troops on board a troop-ship anchored at Mudros, either *Megantic* on August 29, *Ausonia* on September 18, or *Prince Abbas* on September 19 – Whichever the case, they were yet to land on Gallipoli. – from Provincial Archives)



(Right adjacent: 'Kangaroo Beach', where 1<sup>st</sup> 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 visible in the foreground on 'A' Beach. – photograph from 2011)



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



On October 20, Private Duke was evacuated onto His Majesty's Hospital Ship *Dover Castle* (right), diagnosed as suffering from dysentery. On October 26 he was admitted into the 21<sup>st</sup> General Hospital in Alexandria. Just less than a month later, on November 23, he was pronounced as being *dangerously ill*, enteric fever having by now been appended to the diagnosis. Then, on the 25<sup>th</sup>, apparently incorrectly, he was reported as being *out of danger*.

**December 2, 1915**

**Mrs. Mary Duke  
Fox Harbour, P.B.**

**Regret to inform you that Record Office, London, today reports that No. 1306, Private William Duke, previously reported out of danger after attack enteric, is again dangerously ill enteric Twentyfirst General Hospital Alexandria November twentythird.**

**J.R. BENNETT  
Colonial Secretary**

(continued)

The son of Mrs. Mary Carrigan of Town Side, Placentia – she having re-married after her two sons' decease – and to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of sixty cents - Private Duke died in hospital, the cause finally cited as meningitis, on December 23, 1915. At home it was the Reverend Father Ashley who was requested to bear the news to his mother.

William Duke had enlisted at the age of twenty years.

His brother John (Private, Regimental Number, 1964) was to die at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, 1916.

(Right above: a major thoroughfare in the Egyptian city of Alexandria at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card)

(The photograph of Private Duke is from the Provincial Archives.)

Private William Duke 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).



The following letter was probably addressed to the Ministry of Militia in St. John's:

Placentia

Dec 18, 1920

Dear Sir

I am writing to see if you can allow me a little favour as you no I have my sons pay John and William. They were both my sons the two of them went and got killed. I got no pay from John this long while, and now they are after taking William from me. I have a big hearty boy (at home) and he is almost blind and I am trying to get him in the hospital and I cant.

(continued)

Their father died when they were small and left nine, and when they got big they went off to the war and they got killed and that left me almost homeless. Two years after I got married, but the man I married had his own to look to. I do not care how little you send me, just enough to help the blind boy, and I have a little girl not able to earn for herself so will you please try to help me a little, by doing so you will oblige

Mrs Mary Carrigan

Their names were John and William  
My address, Mrs James Carrigan  
Town Side, Placentia