

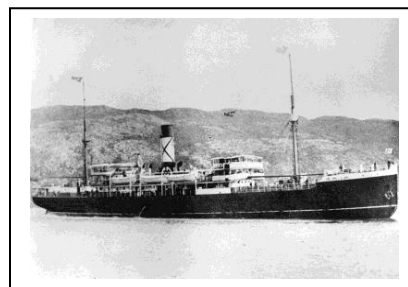


Second Lieutenant Lionel Thomas Duley (Regimental Number 2945) is interred in Tyne Cot Cemetery – Grave reference L111. H. 8.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a bank clerk with the *Canadian Bank of Commerce*, he had also been educated at the Methodist College in St. John's before becoming a recruit of the Twelfth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on April 10, 1916, he then enlisted, also in St. John's – *for the duration of the war* and at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and also attested some three months later, on July 7.

On two occasions before his departure for overseas service, Private Duley, while still in St. John's, received promotion: to the rank of lance corporal on November 14, 1916 – apparently while he was still working with the bank - and to that of acting corporal on January 26 of the New Year, 1917.

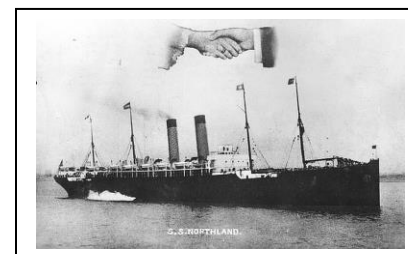
Corporal Duley was one of the approximately three-hundred twenty *all ranks* to leave St. John's for overseas service on the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* (right), bound for Halifax, on January 31, 1917, from there to take ship to the United Kingdom.



Immediately upon its arrival in Nova Scotia, however, this detachment was forwarded to accommodation in the town of Windsor where it was soon to be quarantined because of an epidemic of measles and mumps.

It was not before a lapse of some two-and-a-half months after its arrival that transport could be arranged for the trans-Atlantic crossing to the United Kingdom for the so-called *Windsor Draft* – minus the twenty-five or so personnel still unable to travel.

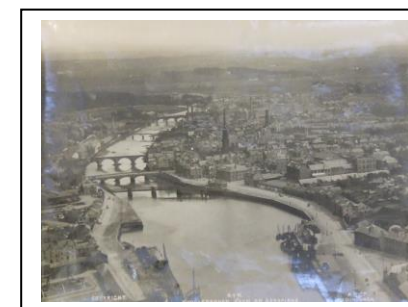
On April 17, Corporal Duley embarked onto His Majesty's Transport *Northland* – originally the *Zeeland* - (right), one of three ships carrying the Newfoundlanders to sail on the following day in a trans-Atlantic convoy from Halifax. The vessels were carrying Canadian re-enforcements to the English west-coast port of Liverpool, where the ships docked on April 29.



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

By the time that the Windsor Draft arrived at the Regimental Depot, 2nd (Reserve) Battalion was becoming critically short of personnel.

(Right: 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)



There is no mention in the records of Corporal Duley receiving promotion to the rank of sergeant. But not long after his arrival in Scotland he attended the 23rd Course of Instruction at Troon, the date given as May 14, 1917. It may well be that this was a course in officer training as, on the 18th of that same month, only four days later, he is recorded as having received his (temporary) Imperial Commission as second lieutenant. He apparently remained at Ayr – and temporarily at Barry* as of July 3 – until the end of the year.

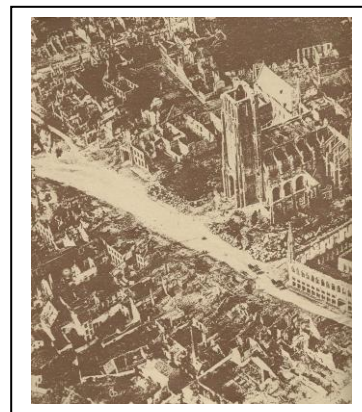


(Preceding page: *Wellington Square in Ayr, the area where the officers were quartered – photograph from 2012*)

**During the summer months of 1917, 2nd (Reserve) Battalion was transferred from Ayr to not-so-distant Barry in the region of the city 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.*

The *Regimental War Diary* documents Lieutenant Duley as reporting to 1st Battalion on January 6 of the New Year, 1918 – one of a dozen officers to report *to duty* at that time at Zudausques, a commune just to the west of the larger northern French centre of St-Omer. Some three weeks later he was to be fighting in Belgium. How and when he travelled from the Regimental Depot is, however, not documented but it was not unusual for officers to travel singly or in small parties.

Some five weeks previous, at the close of the *Battle of Cambrai* at the beginning of December of 1917, 1st Battalion – once again badly under-strength due to the heavy casualties incurred – had been withdrawn from the area of the front lines to re-enforce and to re-organize. The following weeks had been spent at first to the south-west of the city of Arras, at Humbercourt and then at some distance to the north-west, at Fressin. The weather had obliged and allowed the Newfoundlanders some snow, a bit too much at times, apparently.



At the beginning of January of 1918, and after that snowy Christmas period spent to the west of Arras and withdrawn from the front, the Newfoundlanders of 1st Battalion had been ordered to Belgium, to the *Ypres Salient*, for a third time.

There, like the other British and Empire troops in the area, they were to spend much of their time building and strengthening defences.

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

Meanwhile, while the Allies built their defences, by the beginning of 1918 the Germans were 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 the Germans would launch a spring offensive. While they were waiting, the Newfoundlanders continued to dig.

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(Preceding page: *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*)

Then 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.

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, April 10, the day after the first heavy bombardments, as the Germans approached the towns of Armentières and Nieppe, troops were deployed to meet them. The Newfoundlanders, due at the time to come out of the line and move back to *the Somme* to stem the German flow there, boarded buses at three o'clock in the afternoon but then 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.

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



On April 13, during the defensive confrontation 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.



(continued)

(Previous page: *These are the De Seule crossroads, lying astride the Franco-Belgian frontier, also the scene of fierce fighting involving 1st Battalion on April 12 -14, 1918. Today there are several houses and a convenience store. – photograph from 2009(?)*)

What exact role Lieutenant Duley played during this frantic time seems not to be recorded but the period 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.

On April 24, 1st Battalion said farewell to its comrades-in-arms of 88th Brigade and 29th Division. On the following day there was 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 during the crisis of the German spring offensive, 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 Étaples, 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.

The summer of 1918 was to pass peaceably enough for the personnel of 1st Battalion. For the months of May, June and until early July, the unit was posted to Écuire, to the Headquarters of Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force in Europe.

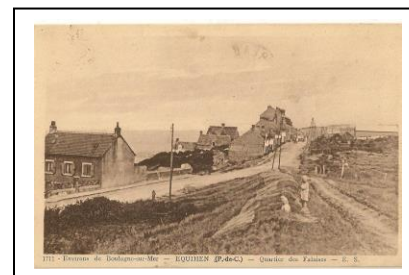


(Right: *Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force at the time of the Battalion's posting to GHQ – from Illustration*)

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*)

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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 *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 son of Thomas James Duley, St. John's jeweller, deceased January 13, 1920, – to whom he had allocated a daily fifty cents from his pay - and Tryhena Chancey Duley (née *Soper*) of 51, Rennie's Mill Road in St. John's, he was also brother to Cyril* (see below), to Nelson, to Margaret who became a writer, and to Florence.

Lieutenant Duley was reported as having been *killed in action* at the Kieberg Ridge, Belgium, on September 29, 1918.

Lionel Thomas Duley had enlisted at the age of eighteen years and ten months.

(Right: *the re-constructed village of Dadizeele (Dadizele) just to the north of which the Newfoundlanders dug in on the evening of September 29, 1918 – photograph from 2013*)



The remains of Lieutenant Duley were later transferred to where they repose today.

**Captain Cyril Chancey Duley OBE, Regimental Number 872, was also an officer of the Newfoundland Regiment. He was severely wounded in December of 1916, but survived the War.*

Paymaster & Officer i/c Records, London – 2/Lieut. Duley was wounded on the 29/9/18 in the thigh. He died very shortly afterwards and his body was found on the battle field by 2/Lieut. R. E. Evans of this Battn. And buried and a cross erected over his grave.

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The grave is located is erected at a spot south west of Kieberg. This is not a Military Cemetery but at the place where he was found dead with some of our own men lying dead beside him. They were all buried together.

**(Sgd) F. A. Edens a/Ajt
for Lt. Col. Comdg.**

P.S. KEIBERG is a village midway between ZONNEBEKE and WATERDAMHOEK

2nd Lieut. Duley was killed on the morning of September 29th about 11 o'clock. He was hit in the thigh by a Machine gun bullet while leading his platoon in the front wave of the attack and before he could be taken back died, probably from shock and severe loss of blood. He was buried where he was killed, a cross being erected by the Regiment

**(Sgd) T. G. Mathias, Lt. Col.
Comdg. 1st Bn. R. Nfld. Regt.**

(Right: A family memorial which stands in the General Protestant cemetery in St. John's, commemorates the sacrifice of 2nd Lieutenant Lionel Thomas Duley. – photograph from 2015)



Lieutenant Lionel Thomas Duley was entitled to the British War Medal (left) and also the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

