



Private John Patrick (baptized thus but known as *John*) Dunphy (Regimental Number 44) lies in Azmak Cemetery at Suvla – Grave reference II. C. 21.

His occupation previous to military service recorded as that of a *cooper* working for a weekly wage of \$12.00, John Dunphy presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury on Harvey Road in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on August 24, 1914, three weeks less a day after the *Declaration of War*. It was an exercise which was to pronounce him as...*Fit for Foreign Service*.

Five days later, on September 2, John Dunphy was to return to the *C.L.B. Armoury*, on this second occasion for enlistment, whereupon he was engaged at the private soldier's daily rate of a single dollar plus a ten-cent per diem *Field Allowance*. A recruit of the First Draft, he was likely now ordered to the tented area by that time established on the shores of *Quidi Vidi Lake* in the East End of St. John's where a four-five week course of training was already under way.

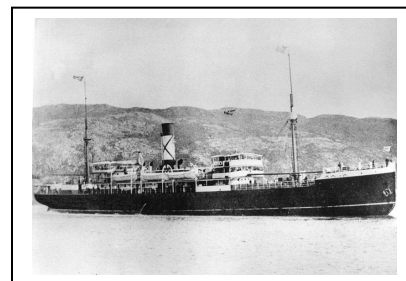
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The regimental authorities were *also* busy by now, preparing for the transport of this, the first body of volunteers, to *overseas* - and later to *active* – service.

At the beginning of the month of October a large number of the new recruits underwent attestation; Private Dunphy would be one of that number, taking his oath of allegiance on October 2.

Two days later, after the Newfoundland contingent – it was not as yet a battalion – of ‘A’ and ‘B’ Companies had paraded through the city, it embarked onto the Bowring Brothers’ vessel *Florizel* which was awaiting in St. John’s Harbour.

Private Dunphy and his comrades-in-arms of the *First Five Hundred* – also to be known to history as the *Blue Puttees* – were now to sit on board ship for the best part of a day as it was not to be until the morrow that *Florizel* would sail to the south coast of the Island and to its rendezvous with the convoy carrying the Canadian Division to the United Kingdom.



(Right above: *The image of Florizel at anchor in the harbour at St. John’s is by courtesy of Admiralty House Museum.*)

(Right below: *Fort George, constructed in the latter half of the eighteenth century, still serves the British Army to this day. – photograph from 2011*)

In the United Kingdom this first Newfoundland contingent was to train in three venues during the late autumn of 1914 and then the winter of 1914-1915: firstly in southern England on the Salisbury Plain; then in Scotland at *Fort George* – on the Moray Firth close to Inverness; and lastly at Edinburgh Castle where the unit was to provide the first garrison from outside the British Isles.



(Right below: *The venerable Edinburgh Castle dominates the city from its position on the summit of Castle Hill. – photograph from 2011*)

Some three months later, on May 11, and some seven weeks into spring – although in Scotland there was apparently still snow - the entire Newfoundland unit – by now, ‘A’ and ‘B’ Companies re-enforced by ‘C’, ‘D’, and ‘E’ - was ordered moved from the Scottish capital to *Stobs Camp*, all under canvas and south-eastwards of Edinburgh, in the vicinity of the town of Hawick.



It was to be at *Stobs Camp* that the Newfoundland contingent received the re-enforcements from home – ‘F’ Company which arrived on July 10, 1915 - that would bring its numbers up to that of British Army establishment battalion strength\*. The now-formed 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was thus rendered ready to be ordered on ‘*active service*’.

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***\*The number was about fifteen hundred, sufficient to provide four ‘fighting’ companies, two re-enforcement companies and a headquarters staff.***

***(Right: The Newfoundland Regiment marches past on the training ground at Stobs Camp and is presented with its Colours on June 10, 1915. – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo)***

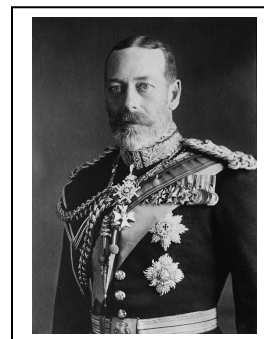


**At the beginning of that August of 1915, the four senior Companies, ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’ – Private Dunphy among their ranks - were then sent south from *Stobs Camp* to undergo a final two weeks of training, as well as an inspection by the King, at Aldershot.**

**This force, now designated the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment, was thereupon attached to the 88<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division of the (British) Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.**

**Meanwhile the two junior Companies, the later-arrived ‘E’ and the aforementioned last-arrived ‘F’, were ordered transferred to Scotland’s west coast, to Ayr, there to provide the nucleus of the newly-forming 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion.**

***(Right: George V, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India – the photograph is from Bain News Services via the Wikipedia web-site.)***



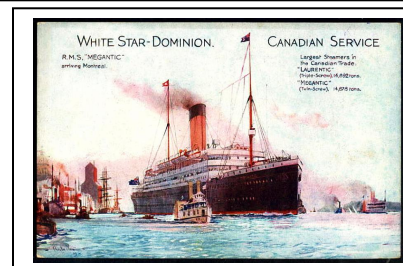
**It was also during this period while on duty at Aldershot that on August 14 Private Dunphy re-enlisted, on this occasion for the *duration of the war*\*.**

***\*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 a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was likely to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist.***

***(Right: Some of the personnel of ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’ Companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment at Aldershot in August of 1915, prior to its departure to active service on the Gallipoli Peninsula – from *The Fighting Newfoundlander* by Col. G.W.L. Nicholson, C.D.)***



**While ‘E’ and ‘F’ Companies had been beginning their posting to the Regimental Depot at Ayr, on August 20 of 1915 the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had embarked in the Royal Navy Harbour of Devonport onto the requisitioned passenger-liner *Megantic* for passage to the Middle East and to the fighting against the Turks.**



(Preceding page: *The image of Megantic, here in her peace-time colours of a 'White Star Line' vessel, is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site.*)

There, a month later – having spent some two weeks billeted in British barracks in the vicinity of the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was to land at *Suvla Bay* on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.

(Right: *Kangaroo Beach, where the officers and men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Newfoundland Regiment, landed on the night of September 19-20, 1915, is to be seen 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 taken in 2011*)



(Right: *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: *A century later, the area, little changed from those far-off days, of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla, and where the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was to serve during the fall of 1915 – photograph from 2011*)



When the Newfoundlanders had landed from their transport ship at *Suvla Bay* on that September night of 1915, they were to disembark into a campaign that was already on the threshold of collapse.

Not only in the area where the Newfoundland Battalion was to serve but, even ever since the very first days of the operation in April of 1915, the entire *Gallipoli Campaign*, including the operation at *Suvla Bay*, had proved to be little more than a debacle:

Flies, dust, disease, the frost-bite and the floods – and of course the casualties inflicted by an enemy who was to fight a great deal better than the British High Command\* had ever anticipated – were eventually to overwhelm the British-led forces and those of the French, and it would finally be decided to abandon not only *Suvla Bay* but the entire *Gallipoli* venture.

(Right: *An un-identified Newfoundland soldier in the trenches at Suvla Bay – from Provincial Archives*)



*\*Many of the commanders chosen were second-rate, had been brought out of retirement, and had little idea of how to fight – let alone of how to win. One of the generals at Suvla, apparently, had handed in his resignation during the Campaign and had just gone home.*

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November 26 would see the nadir of the Newfoundland Battalion's fortunes at Gallipoli; a freak rain-, snow- and ice-storm was to strike the *Suvla Bay* area and the subsequent floods had wreaked havoc amongst the forces of both sides. For several days, survival rather than the enemy was to be the priority.

There were to be many casualties on both sides, some of them, surprised by the sudden inundation of their positions, fatalities who had drowned in their trenches – although no Newfoundlanders were to be among that number. Numerous, however, were those afflicted by trench-foot and by frost-bite.

Private Dunphy appears not to have suffered as much as had some of his fellow soldiers, some of whom it had been necessary to evacuate for hospitalization. He and those remaining, by the second week in December, were busy in preparation for the leaving of the place in another week's time.

An eye-witness account rendered at the time records that '*...he was sitting on a fire-step with his cup of tea...*' when a bullet ricocheted off a sentry's periscope, struck him in the head and killed him instantly.



Private Dunphy was originally interred in the small Borderers' Gully Cemetery alongside Captain Charles Wighton and others of the Newfoundland Battalion. After the war his remains were re-interred in Azmec, where they repose today.

(Right above: *Suvla Bay in the distance – the light-blue patch is the Salt Lake - seen from some of the hills which ring the place and which served the Turkish defences admirably - photograph taken in 2011*)

The son of Martin Dunphy, fireman on the SS *Kite*, of 23, Princes Street - later of Barter's Hill - in St. John's, and of Catharine Dunphy (née *Walsh*, deceased by the time of her son's death), he was also brother to several siblings\*.

*\*According to Roman Catholic Parish Records they were: William-Joseph ) born 1892), to William\*\* (born 1895), to a second John Patrick (born 1897), to Bridget (born 1898), to James-Francis (born 1899) and to Patrick (born 1901).*

Private Dunphy was reported as having been *killed in action* on December 12, 1915, while serving at *Suvla Bay, Gallipoli*.

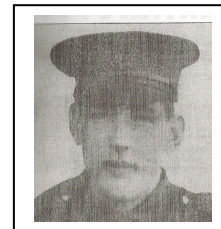


John Dunphy had enlisted at a *declared* twenty years of age: date of birth in St. John's, Newfoundland, May 27, 1894 (from Roman Catholic Parish Records).

*\*\*His brother, William Dunphy (Private, Regimental Number 15), was later to be killed in action on July 1, 1916, the first day of First Somme, at Beaumont-Hamel. He lies in Hawthorn Ridge Cemetery Number 2, Auchonvillers, as shown to the right above. His story is related elsewhere in these files.*

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

**(First page: *In the very centre of the photograph of the area of Suvla may be discerned a horizontal white trace; that is the wall of Azmec Cemeterly.* – photograph from 2011)**



**Private John Dunphy 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).**



**The above dossier has been researched, compiled and produced by Alistair Rice. Please email any suggested amendments or content revisions if desired to [criceadam@yahoo.ca](mailto:criceadam@yahoo.ca). Last updated – February 10, 2023.**