



Lance Corporal Joseph Ezekiel (Regimental Number 1336), 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 an annual \$500.00, Joseph Ezekiel presented himself for medical examination and also officially enlisted at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 - on March 23, 1915. He then attested nine days afterwards, on April 1**.



**Although his last employer is recorded as the Dominion Iron & Steel Company, Bell Island.*

***A second source has him attesting on the day of his enlistment.*

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

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)



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From Stobs, some thirteen weeks later again, in early August, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', the senior Companies now become 1st 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 2nd (Reserve) Battalion.

When he was apprised of his transfer seems not to be recorded, but Private Ezekiel 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 Ezekiel was prevailed upon to re-enlist *for the duration of the war*. This he did on August 15*.

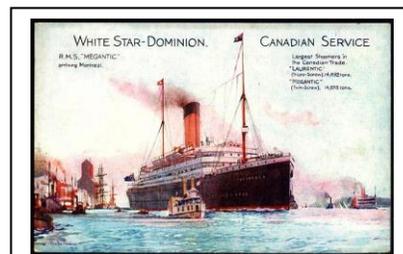
**At the outset of the War, perhaps because it was felt by the authorities that it would be a conflict of short duration, the recruits enlisted for only a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was obviously going to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist.*

On August 20, 1915, Private Ezekiel 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 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: 'Kangaroo Beach', where 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 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 Ezekiel served during the fall of 1915 – photograph from 2011)



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



(Right: *the same '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 adjacent: *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)*



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

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) for the voyage to the French Mediterranean port of Marseilles, en route to the *Western Front*.



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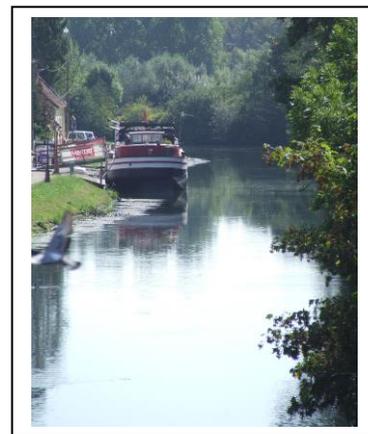
(Right: *British troops march through the port area of the French city of Marseilles. – from a vintage post-card*)



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



On July 1, 1916, the first day of *the Somme*, Private Ezekiel was wounded at Beaumont-Hamel (right), suffering gun-shot wounds to his left hand. On the next day he was admitted into the 6th Stationary Hospital at Frévent and, on the following day again, July 3, the 7th Canadian General Hospital at Étaples.

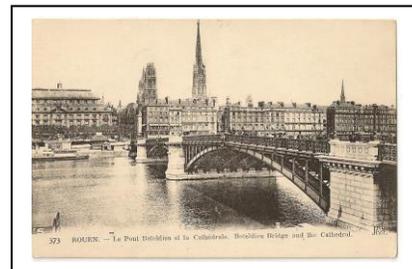
(Right above: *Beaumont-Hamel - looking from the British lines down the hill to Y Ravine Cemetery which today stands atop part of the German front-line defences - The Danger Tree is to the right in the photograph. – photograph taken in 2009*)



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It was on August 8 that Private Ezekiel was moved from Étaples to the 3rd Convalescent Depot at Le Tréport, also on the coast, whence, a week later, on the 15th, he was *discharged to duty* to Base Depot at Rouen.

(Right: *the River Seine flowing through the port-city of Rouen – and past its venerable gothic cathedral - at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)



At the end of the month of July 1st Battalion had been sent from the area of Beaumont-Hamel north into Belgium. It had been posted to the *Ypres Salient* – a lethal area at the best of times during the entire War – there to continue to re-enforce and to re-organize. It was there that Private Ezekiel re-joined his unit – his record cites September 1; the Regimental Diary suggests the 3rd – at a time when the Newfoundlanders were launching gas attacks against the Germans.



It was during this period at Ypres, on September 14, that Private Ezekiel received promotion to the rank of lance corporal.

(Right above: *the entrance to 'A' Company's quarters in the ramparts of Ypres when it was posted there in 1916 – photograph from 2010*)

(Right: *the city of Ypres towards the end of 1915 – and eight months before the Newfoundlanders were posted there for the first time – from a vintage post-card*)



It was on October 8, after having spent the preceding ten weeks in the *Ypres Salient*, that 1st Battalion boarded a train which transported the Newfoundlanders southwards, again to France, and again to *the Somme*. Only four days later - having moved up to the front-line positions on the 10th - on October 12, 1st Battalion went again to the attack at a place called Gueudecourt. It proved to be another costly affair – two hundred and thirty-nine casualties all told - for little gain.



(Right above: *This is the ground over which 1st Battalion advanced and then mostly conceded at Gueudecourt on October 12. Some managed to reach the area where today stand the copse of trees and the Gueudecourt Caribou, on the far right horizon. – photograph from 2007*)

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The son of Paul Ezekiel, fisherman, and Lucy Ezekiel (née *Gorman*) – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of sixty cents from his pay - of Harbour Main, he was one of at least six siblings: Michael, Patrick and William, all fishermen of Harbour Main; Peter, living in Boston, Massachusetts; and sister Mary-Gertrude.

Lance Corporal Ezekiel was reported as having been *killed in action* on October 12, 1916, while serving with 'D' Company during the fighting at Gueudecourt.

Joseph Ezekiel had enlisted at the age of twenty-two years.

(Above right: *The Caribou at Gueudecourt stands on the site of the furthest point of advance of the Battalion on October 12, 1916. – photograph from 2012*)

Private Joseph Ezekiel 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).

