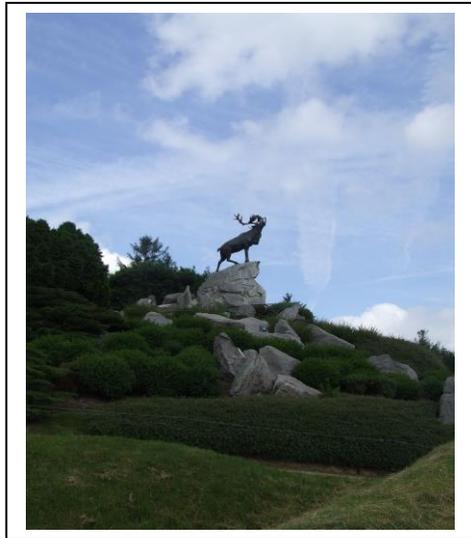


Second Lieutenant John Roy Ferguson (Regimental Number 882), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupations prior to military service recorded as those of both lumberman and sealer, John Roy Ferguson presented himself for medical examination in Millertown on December 8, 1914. The records then show him enlisting a month later - engaged at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem - on January 4 of the following year, at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's.



By the time that he sailed with 'D' Company for Halifax on March 20 - on board the Bowring Brothers vessel *Stephano* (right) - he had already risen rapidly in rank, documented as having been promoted to the rank of sergeant on February 24, and then appointed as Company Sergeant Major Ferguson on March 18 on the recommendation of Captain Ayre.



Two days after landing in Nova Scotia, he was embarking once more, for service overseas.

In Halifax harbour CSM Ferguson's draft boarded His Majesty's Transport *Orduna* (right) for the trans-Atlantic crossing. The ship sailed on March 22 and docked in Liverpool eight days later, on March 30. The Newfoundlanders must have boarded their train almost immediately for the journey north to Scotland as they reported *to duty* on that same day at the historic castle (right below) in Edinburgh, the capital city of that country.



The Newfoundlanders were further transferred in early May to *Stobs Camp*, a large tented site - and close to a prisoner-of-war compound where they may have encountered their first Germans. The establishment was situated near the town of Hawick, to the south-west of Edinburgh, where they also undoubtedly encountered some of the local lassies.



(continued)

(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)



After some final three months of re-enforcement and training the four senior companies were sent south to Aldershot in the summer of 1915 for final training before being sent on active service.

The two junior companies – the last to arrive from home – had been sent from Stobs Camp to the new Regimental Depot at the Royal Borough of Ayr.

(Right above: *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)



On August 20, 1915, Company Sergeant Major Ferguson embarked onto the requisitioned trans-Atlantic liner, now His Majesty's Transport, *Megantic* (right above) for the voyage to the Middle East and for the fighting in Gallipoli where, a month later - having spent two weeks of it in the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, he landed with 1st Battalion at Suvla Bay.



(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 – Whatever the case, they were yet to land on Gallipoli.* – from Provincial Archives)

(Right: *'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 taken in 2011)



(Right below: *almost a century later, the area, little changed from those far-off days, of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla, and where Company Sergeant Major Ferguson served during the fall of 1915* – 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.

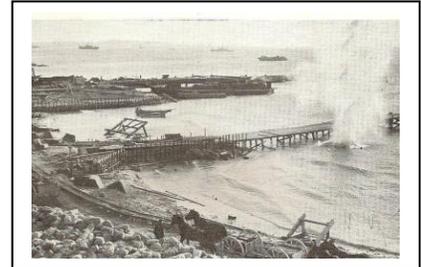
(continued)

They were soon, on the night of January 8-9, to be abandoning Cape Helles as well.

(Right: *Cape Helles 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*)



(Right: *'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 preceding, 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. The Newfoundlanders were immediately posted to Suez at the northern end of the Red Sea where they were to await orders; to that point it seems that the theatre of the future posting of 29th Division was still uncertain.



(Right: *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*)

Two months following, on March 14, CSM Ferguson embarked with 1st Battalion through Port Tewfiq at the southern end of the Suez Canal on HMT *Alaunia* for passage to the French port of Marseilles. The Newfoundlanders were to be transferred to the *Western Front*.



(Right above: *Port Tewfiq in the days just prior to the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

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



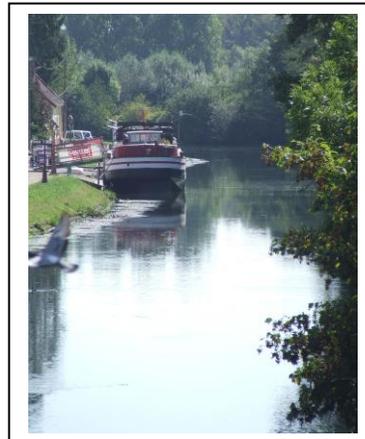
Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, the Battalion's train arrived at the small provincial town of Pont-Rémy.

(continued)

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 as seen from the bridge at Pont-Rémy* – 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 – perhaps some fifty kilometres in all from Pont-Rémy – where the Newfoundlanders were billeted, received reinforcements and, after two days, were ordered into the nearby British lines to be set to work improving 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, *the Somme*.



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

Another promotion was not long forthcoming for CSM Ferguson: on June 5 he received an Imperial Commission and was appointed Second Lieutenant Ferguson – at a rate of two dollars per diem. This is the date on which, in fact, twelve second lieutenants were commissioned, having just completed a finishing course for officers at the *Bull Ring* at Étapes, on the west coast of France. It is not confirmed, however, that he was one of that number, perhaps having been promoted *in the field*.

The son of Daniel Ferguson (*General Road Master* for the *Reid Railway*) and Isabella Ferguson of 67 Springdale Street, St. John's, (later, by 1917, in Clarendville), he was also brother to David, railway engineer, and Stewart Small Ferguson, Sergeant, Regimental Number 95) who was also killed at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, 1916*.

**And was there a younger brother, Daniel, born 1898?*

Husband to Jeannette Herbert Ferguson (née *Herbert*), of Grand Falls* - his own place of residence recorded as Millertown – and to whom he had allocated a daily seventy cents from his pay – he was also father to Ray, born in March of 1915.

(continued)



(Previous page bottom: *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)



Lieutenant Ferguson was reported as having been *killed in action* on July 1, 1916 – *perhaps* while serving with ‘B’ Company - during the fighting of the first day of *The Somme*.

James Roy Ferguson had enlisted at the age twenty-six years.

**She was at 6, Elmbank Road, Sefton Park, Liverpool, on June 7, 1917, but returned to Newfoundland less than a month later – eventually to Grand Falls (where she was by 1920).*

(Right above: *The War Memorial in the community of Grand Falls-Windsor honours the sacrifice of Lieutenant Ferguson.* – photograph from 2010)



(Right: *a family monument in the General Protestant Cemetery in St. John's which commemorates the sacrifice of Lieutenant and of Sergeant Ferguson.* - photograph from 2010)

(Right: *The War Memorial in the community of Whitbourne also honours the sacrifice of both Stewart and Roy Ferguson.* – photograph from 2013)



Lieutenant John Roy Ferguson was entitled to (left to right) the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

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

