



Private James Ford (Regimental Number 1955) is buried in Paisley (Hawkshead) Cemetery – Grave reference B.38.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *fisherman*, James Ford was a volunteer of the Seventh Recruitment Draft. He presented himself at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland on October 25 of 1915 in order to enlist and was thereupon engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of a single dollar, to which was to be added a ten-cent per diem Field Allowance.

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On the day following his enlistment, October 26, James Ford was to return to the same venue, the *CLB Armoury* on Harvey Road, where he was now to undergo a medical examination. It was a procedure which was to pronounce him as being...*fit for Foreign Service*.

There were now a further forty-eight hours to wait after that medical assessment before there then came about the final formality of his enlistment: attestation. On that same October 28 he pledged his allegiance to the reigning monarch, George V, at which moment James Ford became...*a soldier of the King*.

A long waiting-period was now in store for the recruits of this draft, designated as 'H' Company*, before they were to depart from Newfoundland for...*overseas service*.

**In fact, 'H' Company was to depart from Newfoundland in two detachments: the first one-hundred recruits, Private Ford among that number, would be the first to leave in that December of 1915. The second part of 'H' Company would not follow until the fourth week of the upcoming month of March. It was to make the journey on board the SS Sicilian and report to Ayr on April 9.*

Until as late as that spring of 1916 it had been the intention to form a 2nd Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment to fight on the Continent. In fact it would seem that the one-hundred sixty-three recruits of the second contingent, 'H' Company, were to form a part of the nucleus of that unit, while the personnel already at the Depot by this time would form a reserve battalion to serve as a re-enforcement pool for both the Regiment's fighting units.

It could not have been long before a change of plan came about as, very soon, men of the second half of 'H' Company were being sent to strengthen the 1st Battalion already on the Continent – maybe Beaumont-Hamel had something to do with it.

Private Ford, Regimental Number 1955, would be one of the one-hundred men who comprised the first detachment of 'H' Company to travel for...*overseas service*. He was now to wait fifty-one days after attestation before being called, but where he was to spend this time is not certain: he *may* have temporarily returned to work although neither that nor a return to his home is certain as he was from the northernmost reaches of Labrador – although he apparently had a step-sister in South River, Conception Bay*.

**It is also likely that some of the recruits, those whose home was not in St. John's or close to the city, or those who had no friends or family to offer board and lodging, were to be quartered in the curling rink at Fort William in St. John's, a building which was to serve as a barracks.*

This first detachment of 'H' Company left St. John's by train to cross the island to Port aux Basques on December 18, 1915. After the short sea-voyage to traverse the Gulf of St. Lawrence the detachment entrained once again, in North Sydney, for Saint John, New Brunswick.



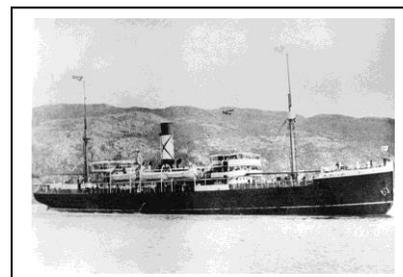
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The Atlantic crossing was to be effected from there on board the Royal Mail Ship *Corinthian* and the draft reported to the Regimental Depot at Ayr on January 4 of the New Year, 1916.

(Preceding page: *The Allan Line Ship 'Corinthian' was built in 1899 and was to serve mainly on trans-Atlantic routes between Great Britain and Canada. At the beginning of the Great War she formed a part of the convoy carrying the Canadian Expeditionary Force to the United Kingdom although after that it appears that she resumed her commercial work, transporting troops only if and when it suited her schedule. In December of 1918 she was driven ashore in the Bay of Fundy and although there was no loss of life, the ship was wrecked.*)

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Some sixteen months prior to that January 4 of 1916, in the late summer and early autumn of 1914, the newly-formed Newfoundland Regiment's first recruits had undergone a period of training of five weeks on the shores of *Quidi Vidi Lake* in the east end of St. John's and elsewhere in the city, and were formed into 'A' and 'B' Companies.



During that same period the various authorities had also been preparing for the Regiment's transfer overseas.

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

This first Newfoundland contingent was to embark on October 3, in some cases only days after a recruit's enlistment and/ or attestation. To become known to history as the *First Five Hundred* and also as the *Blue Puttees*, on that day they had boarded the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* awaiting in St. John's Harbour.

The ship had sailed for the United Kingdom on the morrow, October 4, 1914, to its rendezvous with the convoy carrying the 1st Canadian Division overseas, off the south coast of the Island.

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

Once having disembarked* 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 it was to provide the first garrison from outside the British Isles.



*It was to do so at Devonport through which 'G' Company was to pass eleven months later.

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Only days after 'A' and 'B' Companies had taken up their posting there, on February 16 of 1915, 'C' Company – the first re-enforcements for the original contingent - would arrive directly – through Liverpool of course - from Newfoundland. On the final day of the month of March it had been the turn of 'D' Company to arrive – they via Halifax as well as Liverpool – to report...*to duty...*at Edinburgh, and then 'E' Company five weeks less a day later again, on May 4*.

**These five Companies, while a contingent of the Newfoundland Regiment, was not yet a battalion and would not be so for a further five months – as will be seen below.*

(Right: *The venerable bastion of Edinburgh Castle dominates the Scottish capital from its hill in the centre of the city. – photograph from 2011*)



Seven days after the arrival of 'E' Company in the Scottish capital, on May 11 the entire Newfoundland contingent had been ordered elsewhere. On that day, seven weeks into spring – although in Scotland there was apparently still snow - the unit had been dispatched to *Stobs Camp*, all under canvas and south-eastwards of Edinburgh, close to the town of Hawick.



(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 of Mrs. Lillian Tibbo*)

Two months less a day later, on July 10, 'F' Company would march into *Stobs Camp*.

This had been an important moment: the Company's arrival was to bring the Newfoundland Regiment's numbers up to some fifteen hundred, establishment strength* of a battalion which could be posted on...*active service*.



**A number sufficient for four 'fighting' companies, two re-enforcement companies and a headquarters staff.*

(Right above: *The men of the Regiment await their new Lee-Enfield rifles. – original photograph from the Provincial Archives*)

From *Stobs Camp*, some three weeks after the arrival of 'F' Company, in early August 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', the four senior Companies, having now become the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment, had been transferred to *Aldershot Camp* in southern England. There they were to undergo final preparations – and a royal inspection – before the Battalion's departure to the Middle East and to the fighting on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



The later arrivals to the United Kingdom, 'E' and 'F' Companies, were to be posted to the new Regimental Depot and were eventually to form the nucleus of the soon to be formed 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment.

(Preceding page: *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.)

(Right: An aerial view of Ayr, likely from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr, where were quartered the 'other ranks', is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough, where were housed the officers, is to the right. – by courtesy of the *Carnegie Library* at Ayr)



(Right below: *The High Street in Ayr as shown on a postcard of the time, the imposing Wallace Tower – it stands to this day (2017) - dominating the scene* – by courtesy of Reverend *Wilson Tibbo* and Mrs *Lillian Tibbo*.)



The Regimental Depot had been established during the summer and the early autumn of 1915 in the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland, there to serve as a base for the newly-forming 2nd (Reserve) Battalion. It was from there – as of November of 1915 – that the new-comers were sent in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and then subsequently to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1st Battalion*.

**The first such re-enforcement draft was, in fact, to depart from Ayr for service on the Gallipoli Peninsula on November 15, some seven weeks before the arrival in Scotland of Private Ford's 'H' Company.*

That November 15 of 1915 (see immediately above) was to see not only the departure of the 1st Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr to the Middle East and to the fighting of the *Gallipoli Campaign* but also, only five days prior, the arrival from Newfoundland of 'G' Company which would be obliged to take up quarters at *Gailes Camp*, some sixteen kilometres up the coast from Ayr itself – but just over sixty if one went by road.

A further seven weeks plus a day were now to pass before Private Ford and the first one-hundred of 'H' Company were to present themselves at the Regimental Depot.

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Transferred upon their arrival in Scotland on January 4 to serve with 'G' Company, the new-comers of 'H' (now 'G') Company were to be quartered in the barracks of the Royal Scots Fusiliers; they, however, had not yet vacated the aforesaid premises, due to an epidemic of measles at the time. It was not long before the disease had also taken its toll on the Newfoundlanders amongst whom there would be fatalities.

Private Joyce – alas! - to be one of those affected.

A month after his arrival in Scotland, he was admitted into the *Bladda Hospital for Infectious Diseases* in Paisley on February 5 of 1916 and was diagnosed there as suffering from measles and broncho-pneumonia.

The son of Henry Ford and Christiana (often found as *Christina*) Ford (she later *Lyll*) of Port Burwell, Cape Chidley (also *Chudleigh*), the northernmost point of Labrador, and born at Ford Harbour, Paul's Island, close to Nain, Private Ford was brother to Abe and to Henry, the latter having died young.

He was also also step-brother of Miss Wealthiness Lyall – she at the time living with the family of Thomas and Margaret Boone of South River, Conception Bay. Wealthiness was apparently the niece of Margaret – and it was to this step-sister that Private Ford had allocated a daily allowance of fifty cents from his pay.



Considered to be...*dangerously ill*...by the medical staff on February 22, Private Ford was subsequently reported as having...*died of sickness*...in hospital in Paisley, Scotland, four days later, on February 26, 1916.

James Ford had enlisted at a *declared* twenty-one years and two months of age.

A subsequent auction of his effects held on March 6 realised the sum of £2/8/1 (two pounds, eight shillings and one pence).

(Right above: *A further view of Paisley (Hawkshead) Cemetery, Scotland – photograph from 2012*)

Private James Ford was entitled to the British War Medal for his overseas service.

