



Private Eldon Froud (Regimental Number 3389) is interred in Duhallow A.D.S. Cemetery – Grave reference IV. E. 20.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a fisherman, Eldon Froud was a recruit of the Eleventh Draft. One of the so-called *Coaker Recruits**, he presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on January 4 of 1917, before then enlisting – *for the duration of the war* and at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and also attesting one day later, on the 5th.

**W. F. Coaker was a politician, cabinet minister, and founder of the Fisherman's Protective Union. He eventually took it upon himself to recruit among the fishermen, and sixty-nine young men enlisted, to become known as Coaker Recruits. Ten of them died in service.*

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Private Froud was one of the contingent of one-hundred four *other ranks* to leave St. John's on March 17, St. Patrick's Day of 1917, for the journey to Halifax. The means of their departure, however, is not clear: in one source, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, the claim is that it was on board the Bowring Brothers vessel *Florizel*; the files of the soldiers themselves record that it was... *Embarked S.S. Train to Halifax 17/3/17...* presumably via Port-aux Basques and thence by ferry and train again to Halifax. Other sources have not proved helpful.

It was from Halifax that the detachment made its trans-Atlantic crossing in the company of Canadian troops on board His Majesty's Transport *Missanabie* (right), sailing from Nova Scotia on March 28. Thus this draft was to reach the United Kingdom two weeks or so before the ill-fated *Windsor Draft** which had left Newfoundland at the end of January, some ten weeks earlier.



**This was the name given to the draft of about three-hundred twenty all ranks which had left St. John's on January 31, 1917, en route to Halifax from where they were to sail to the United Kingdom. This contingent would eventually make that voyage, but about thirteen weeks later than envisaged. They were quarantined at Windsor as the result of a measles and mumps epidemic that claimed two of their number – and maybe a later third. In the meantime, 2nd (Reserve) Battalion at Ayr was running low on man-power.*

Missanabie having docked in Liverpool on April 6, the Newfoundland 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 Ayr – 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 above: *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)

On June 3, the 24th Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr – Private Froud one of its number - passed through the English Channel port of Folkestone for the short sea-crossing to Boulogne on the French coast opposite.

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From there the Newfoundlanders entrained to travel south to Rouen and to the large British Expeditionary Force Base established there, for final organization and training* before leaving to seek out 1st Battalion.

(Right: a view of the French port of Boulogne at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card)



(Right: the centre of the French city of Rouen with its venerable gothic cathedral, at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card)

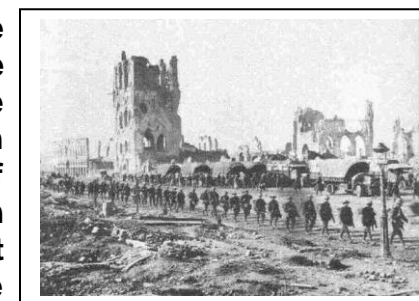


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The records show that was on July 2 – the Regimental War Diary says, in fact, on the day before - that Private Froud's contingent of two-hundred fifty *other ranks* reported to duty at *Caribou Camp*, behind the lines near Woesten – to the north-west of Ypres - in Belgium. For the next few days – and nights – 1st Battalion supplied working parties for road-mending and for the construction of infantry tracks. For that purpose, several of the Newfoundlanders were attached temporarily – until July 20 - to the 173rd Company of the Royal Engineers.

At the end of the month of June, and just prior to Private Froud's arrival, the Newfoundlanders of 1st Battalion were once again ordered north into Belgium and once again to the area of *the Ypres Salient*. This had been selected by the High Command to be the theatre of the British summer offensive of 1917. Officially named the *Third Battle of Ypres*, the campaign came to be known to history as *Passchendaele*, taking that name from a small village on a ridge that was one of the British Army's objectives.



(Right above: Troops file through the rubble of the medieval city of Ypres on their way to the front in the late summer of 1917. – from Illustration)

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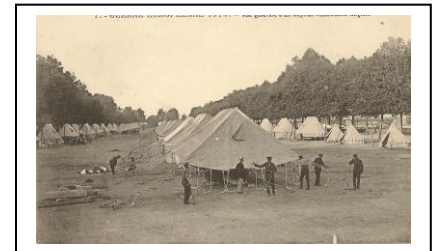
1st Battalion remained in Belgium until October 17, a small cog in the machinery of the British Army which floundered its way across the sodden countryside of Flanders. Notably it fought in two major engagements, at the *Steenbeek* on August 16, and at the *Broembeek* on October 9.

(Right: *an unidentified – perhaps unidentifiable – part of the Passchendaele battlefield in the autumn of 1917 – from Illustration*)



On October 9, at the *Broembeek*, Private Froud was wounded, incurring a severe gun-shot wound to the left leg. He had been evacuated to the 4th Casualty Clearing Station at *Lozinghem** by the following day and, by the end of the next day again, had been admitted into the 6th General Hospital in Rouen.

(Right: *a British casualty clearing station – the one pictured here under canvas for mobility if and when the necessity arose – being established somewhere in France during the early years of the War – from a vintage post-card*)



**Several names such as Mendinghem, Bandagehem and Dozinghem were invented by the British troops as they resembled the Belgian and northern-French fashion of naming villages. These sites were occupied by medical facilities only – and the inevitable cemeteries which today remain. But Lozinghem seems to be an exception in that it is a real place – however much the name lends itself to the morbid spirit of the British soldier.*

At Rouen the decision was almost immediately taken to expedite Private Froud from the 6th General Hospital back across the English Channel to the United Kingdom for further medical attention.

Thus it was that a week later, on October 18, he was placed on board His Majesty's Australian Hospital Ship *Warilda* (right) for the short sea-crossing.



Upon his arrival in England, Private Froud was transported to London where he was admitted into the King George Hospital in Stamford Street. There he was operated on for his wound, apparently a large one, which had turned septic. He remained in that institution for a total of one-hundred two days, until January 19 of the New Year, 1918, when he was forwarded to the 3rd London General Hospital in the Borough of Wandsworth for continuation of his treatment.

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(Right: *The main building of what became 3rd London General Hospital during the Great War was opened, on July 1st, 1859, as a home for the orphaned daughters of British soldiers, sailors and marines. – photograph from 2010*)



(Above far right: *Newfoundland patients, unfortunately unidentified, convalescing at 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth – courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo*)

Treatment ended and convalescence began on February 19, a month later, when Private Froud was released to a remedial programme at the Military Convalescence Hospital at Summerdown, Eastbourne.

From there he was discharged on March 20 and thereupon granted the customary ten-day furlough accorded military personnel upon release from hospital in the United Kingdom. On May 29 Private Froud reported *to duty* with 'H' Company at the new Regimental Depot at Hazely Down*.

Some four months previous, 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment had moved its quarters from the Royal Borough of Ayr in Scotland to southern England, to Hazely Down, Hampshire, not far distant from the historic cathedral city of Winchester. This transfer had been finalized during the latter part of January, 1918, which brought about a conclusion to the Regiment's association with Scotland.



(Right above: *a bleak-looking Hazely Down Camp at some time during the winter of 1918 – from *The War Illustrated**)

On July 25, a re-enforcement draft – either the 48th or 49th - from Hazely Down passed through the port of Southampton to embark for Rouen where it arrived on the 27th. Only days afterwards – on either July 30 or 31 - having seemingly spent little or no time at the Base Depot, Private Froud – as one of a small contingent of seven *other ranks*, all returnees from hospital - reported to 1st Battalion *in the field* at Equihen.

By that time, the summer of 1918 was passing peaceably enough for most of the personnel of 1st Battalion. For the months of May, June and until early July, the unit had been 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 Équièhen – 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.



It was to Équièhen that Private Froud reported at the end of July.

(Right above: a view of the sparsely-populated coastal community of Équièhen at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card)

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 *Ingooigem*).



(Right: *British troops and German prisoners in Flanders during the Hundred Days* – from *Illustration*)

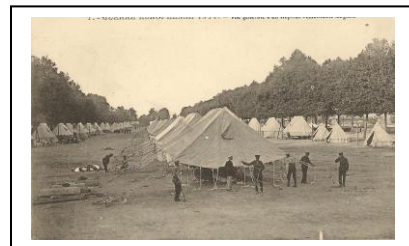
On September 28, the Belgian Army and the 2nd British Army broke out of their positions, overrunning the enemy lines. It was the start, for them, of the *Hundred Days Offensive**. On the following day, the Newfoundlanders were fighting at the Keiberg Ridge. After almost four years of stalemate, it was 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.*

On October 14, after a respite of several days out of the line, the Newfoundlanders were engaged in clearing the enemy from the small village of Ledeghem. The Germans may have been retreating but resistance was still stubborn.



In was on that date that Private Froud was wounded while serving with 'A' Company, on this occasion suffering a gunshot injury to the abdomen. He was evacuated to the 44th Casualty Clearing Station at Berque.



(Above right: *A British casualty clearing station – the one seen here under canvas for mobility if and when necessary – being established somewhere on the Continent during the Great War. – from a vintage post-card*)

(Right above: *the re-constructed village of Ledeghem, Belgium, a century later – photograph from 2010*)

The son of Abram Froud, fisherman – to whom he had allocated a daily sixty cents from his pay - and Matilda Froud (née *Burridge*) of Old Perlican in the District of Bay de Verde, he was also brother to at least Alice and Susannah.

Private Froud was reported as having *died of wounds* later on that same October 14, 1918, in the same 44th CCS.

Eldon Froud had enlisted at the age of twenty-three years, two-and-a-half months.

Private Eldon Froud was entitled to the British War Medal (left) and also the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).



Wishart Street
Dennistown
Glasgow
8th Dec '18

Dear Sir

I got a letter which I had sent to Pte Eldon Froud no 3389 returned to me saying he was dead. I would be very much obliged if you could send me full particulars of his death & if it is positive.

Thanking you
in anticipation

I am

yours Truly
Jean Callaghan