



Private Ignatius Furey (Regimental Number 1312) (spelled as *Fury* in parish records) lies in Portianos Military Cemetery on the island of Lemnos – Grave reference: V. D. 158.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *fisherman earning* a monthly twenty-five dollars, Ignatius Furey presented himself for medical examination at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on March 27 of 1915. It was a procedure which would pronounce him as...*Fit for Foreign Service*.

Ignatius Furey was then to return to the *CLB Armoury* on Harvey Road on March 29, two days following his medical assessment, on this second occasion to enlist. He was thereupon engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of a single dollar to which was added a ten-cent per diem *Field Allowance*.

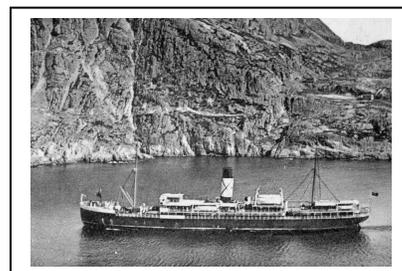
There was now to be just a single further day, the date March 30, before he was to undertake his attestation, to swear his *Oath of Allegiance*, the concluding official formality. At that moment Ignatius Furey became...*a soldier of the King*.

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There now passed a period of three weeks and two days before, on April 22 of 1915, Private Furey, Number 1312, embarked in the harbour of St. John's for...overseas service...with the two-hundred forty-nine officers and...other ranks...of 'E' Company onto the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Stephano* en route for Halifax.

There appear to be no details of how or where he may have spent that final three-week waiting-period before taking ship for...overseas service; Private Furey may have returned temporarily to work, or perhaps merely have gone to spend time at his home in Avondale – but this is mere speculation.

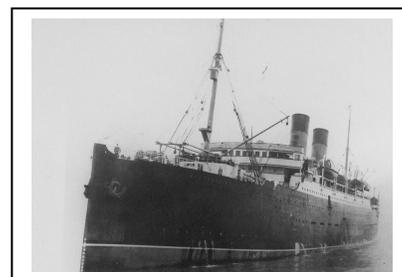
Having arrived in Halifax, on April 24 at eleven-thirty in the evening the detachment began its trans-Atlantic passage on board the trans-Atlantic liner SS *Missanabie* from Nova Scotia to Liverpool. The vessel arrived in that English west-coast port-city on May 2 or 3 – the two dates are recorded although the second may well have been the date of disembarkation.



The Newfoundlanders on this occasion had sailed from Halifax in the company of the Canadian Army Service Corps *Railway Supply Depot*.

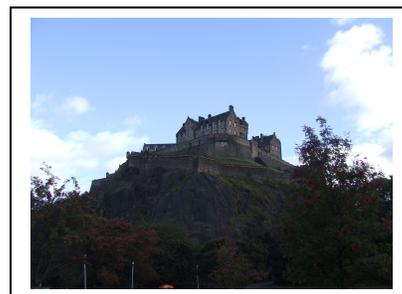
(Right above: *The image of 'Stephano' passing through the Narrows of St. John's Harbour is shown by courtesy of the Provincial Archives.*)

(Right: *The image of 'Missanabie' is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries website. The vessel was of the Canadian Pacific Line and, although transporting troops during the Great War, did so as part of her commercial services which continued during the conflict. On September 9, 1918, she was torpedoed and sunk off the south coast of Ireland with the loss of forty-five lives.*)



From Liverpool the contingent travelled northwards by train to the Scottish capital, Edinburgh where, on May 4, 'E' Company joined 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies which had already taken up station as the garrison at the historic Castle, the first troops from outside the British Isles ever to do so.

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

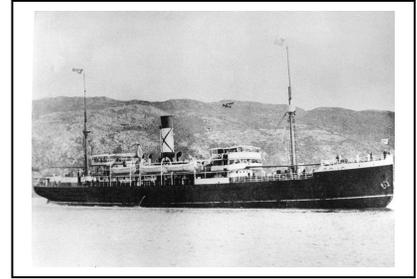


Private Furey's 'E' Company, however, was to have but a few days to savour the charms of the Scottish capital.

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Some seven months before that May 4, in the late summer and early autumn of 1914 there had been a period of training of five weeks on the shores of *Quidi Vidi Lake* in the east end of St. John's for the newly-formed Newfoundland Regiment's first recruits – these to become 'A' and 'B' Companies - during which time the authorities had also been preparing for the Regiment's transfer overseas.



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.

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

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



(Right: *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, as recorded beforehand, it was to provide the first garrison from outside the British Isles.

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.

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

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Seven days after the arrival of Private Furey's 'E' Company in the Scottish capital, on May 11 the entire Newfoundland contingent was ordered elsewhere.

On that day, seven weeks into spring – although in Scotland there was apparently still snow - the unit was dispatched 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 would eventually receive 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\*. On that date the newly-formed 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was thereupon available to be ordered on...*active service*.



(Right above: *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*)

*\*This was approximately fifteen hundred, sufficient to furnish four ‘fighting’ companies, two re-enforcement companies and a headquarters staff.*

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



(Right above: *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.*)

Meanwhile the two junior Companies, ‘E’ – as seen, the last arrived at Edinburgh - and the aforementioned ‘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.

Private Furey, however, although having left Newfoundland as a soldier of ‘E’ Company, was not to be posted to the Regimental Depot but to southern England.

When he had been apprised of this change in plans seems not to be recorded – nor why he was selected - but Private Furey 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. And it was during the period while he was at *Camp Aldershot*, and as was the case with the great majority of the Newfoundland troops there, that Private Furey was prevailed upon to re-enlist...*for the duration of the war*. This he did on August 15\*.

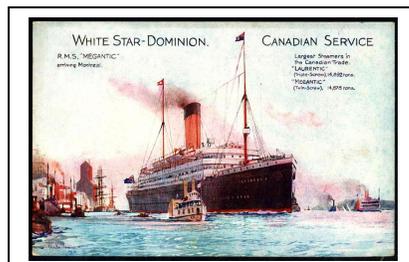
*\*At the outset of the War, perhaps because it was felt by the authorities that it would be a conflict of short duration, the recruits enlisted for a limited period of a single year. As the War progressed, however, this would likely cause problems and they were encouraged to re-enlist. Later recruits signed on for the ‘Duration’ at the time of their original enlistment.*

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(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.)*



(Right: *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.)*



On August 20, 1915, Private Hickey and his 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 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. 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 Newfoundland Battalion 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 been proving to be little more than a debacle:

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



**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 their allies, the French, and it would finally be decided to abandon not only *Suvla Bay* but the entire *Gallipoli* venture.**

**(Right: *No-Man’s-Land at Suvla Bay as seen from the Newfoundland positions – 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.***

**(Right: *This is Anzac Bay in the fore-ground with the Salt Lake in the centre further away. The bottom of Suvla Bay is just to be seen on the left and adjacent to the Salt Lake, and further away again. The hills in the distance and the ones from which this photograph was taken were held by the Turks and formed a horse-shoe around the plain surrounding the Salt Lake - which was where the British and Newfoundlanders were stationed. – photograph from 2011*)**



**It was to be less than five weeks after having set foot on Kangaroo Beach on that September night that Private Furey was admitted into the 88<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance on October 22, suffering from diarrhoea. Unusually perhaps, he was apparently released back to his unit on the same day but it was not to be the end of his medical problems.**

**November 26 would see what was to be perhaps the nadir of the Newfoundland Battalion’s fortunes at Gallipoli: a freak rain, snow and ice-storm struck the *Suvla Bay* area and the subsequent floods were to wreak havoc amongst the forces of both sides. For several days, survival rather than the enemy would be the priority.**

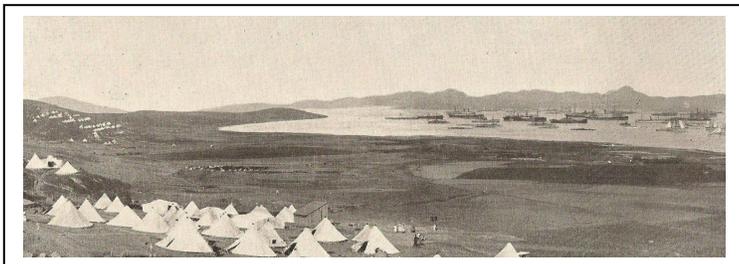
**There were to be many casualties on both sides, some of them, surprised by the sudden inundation of their positions, fatalities who had drowned in their trenches – although no Newfoundlanders were to be among that number. Numerous, however, were those afflicted by trench-foot and by frost-bite.**

**Private Furey was to be among that number.**

**\* \* \* \* \***

**It was a week after that cataclysmic storm, on December 2-3, that he was evacuated from the Newfoundland positions at *Suvla Bay* and ferried from there to the Greek island of Lemnos, some seventy kilometres distant.**

Once having arrived at Mudros Bay, Private Furey was to be admitted into the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Stationary Hospital\* established there; by this time he had been diagnosed as suffering from not only the aforementioned frost-bite but also from a case of jaundice.



(Right above: *By the end of the year 1915 the bay at Mudros and its small harbour were almost entirely surrounded by Allied medical facilities, a goodly number of which were under canvas. – from Illustration*)

*\*No Canadian troops were to serve in the Gallipoli Campaign, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Stationary Hospital being perhaps the only Canadian presence – apart from a hospital in the outskirts of Cairo - in the eastern Mediterranean during this period. The hospital’s matron and a nursing sister also lie in Portianos Cemetery, victims of dysentery.*



(Right: *That part of Portianos Military Cemetery in which are to be found the graves of Nursing Sister M.F.E. Munro and Matron J.B. Jaggard of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Canadian Stationary Hospital. – photograph from 2011*)

The son of George Furey, farmer-fisherman(?) and of Margaret Furey (née Murray)\* – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of eighty cents from his pay - of Harbour Main in Conception Bay, he was also brother to Michael-Joseph; Anthony-George; Thomas-Bernard; Bridget-M.; and to George.



*\*The couple was married on July 7, 1882.*

Private Furey was reported as having *died of sickness* in hospital on Lemnos, of tetanus, on December 7, 1915.

Ignatius Furey had enlisted at a *declared* nineteen years of age: date of birth in Harbour Main, Newfoundland, July 30, 1896 (from the Newfoundland Birth Register).



(Right above: *Portianos Cemetery and the surrounding hills on the Greek island of Lemnos – photograph from 2011*)

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

(Right: *A memorial in the family plot in Avondale Assumption Roman Catholic Cemetery – the larger stone to the right – commemorates the sacrifice of Private Furey. – photograph from 2015) – with many thanks to the gentleman who showed me the way...*



Private Ignatius Furey 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).



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 6, 2023.