



Private Herbert Hunt Goodridge, Number 6991 of the 7th (*City of London*) Battalion, London Regiment, British Expeditionary Force, is interred in Warlencourt British Cemetery: Grave reference VI.F.3..

His occupation previous to military service recorded as that of a broker, Herbert Hunt Goodridge received an Imperial Commission and was appointed to the rank of lieutenant in the Newfoundland Regiment on September 24 of 1914.

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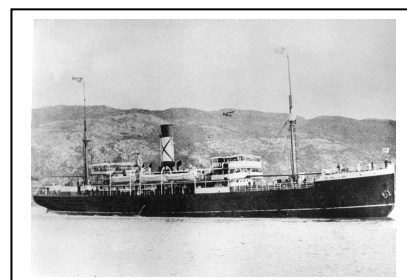


****Officers who were eventually promoted from the ranks may be identified from their Regimental Number. Other officers who were not from the ranks received the King's Commission, or in the case of those in the Newfoundland Regiment, an Imperial Commission, and were not considered as enlisted. These officers thus had no Regimental Number allotted to them.***

Nor were officers bound by the rules that enlisted men were obliged to follow. If the latter chose to walk away at any given moment while on active service, that was considered to be desertion – they were to serve for the year or for the duration, whatever the contract had been; and desertion could mean the death penalty.

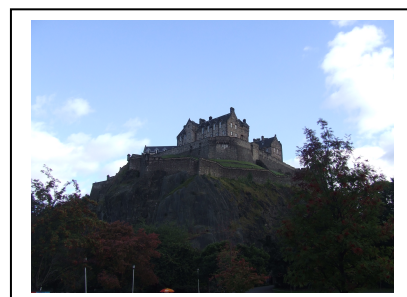
All that was required of an officer was to resign his Commission and he was free to go – a general apparently did so at a crucial time during the Gallipoli Campaign.

Lieutenant Goodridge embarked on October 3 onto the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel*. The ship sailed for the United Kingdom on the following day, joining the convoy carrying the 1st Canadian Division overseas.



(Right: The photograph of Florizel is by courtesy of Admiralty House Museum in Mount Pearl.)

Having arrived in England, Lieutenant Goodridge trained with the Regiment: at first in southern England; then at Fort George in Scotland, near the town of Inverness. The Newfoundlanders subsequently moved to the Scottish capital, Edinburgh, there to garrison its historic Castle, the first troops from outside the British Isles to do so. But whether Lieutenant Goodridge was still serving with the unit by then is difficult to ascertain – but likely not.



(Right above: The venerable bastion of Edinburgh Castle on its hill in the centre of the city – photograph from 2011)

According to local sources, Lieutenant Goodridge relinquished his Commission on April 5 of the following spring: apparently, in January of 1915, his misconduct had been such as to necessitate charges being laid against him. His resignation from the Regiment had been, in fact, already registered in the *Supplement to the London Gazette* as early as in the edition of February 22 of 1915.

Exactly how or when Herbert Goodridge made his way back to Newfoundland seems not to be documented, but that he *did* take passage - which the Regiment apparently offered to him - at some time during the late winter appears to be incontrovertible. Neither is it recorded when and where he decided to return overseas, but he is on the passenger list – having declared his occupation as that of a merchant - of the *SS Tabasco* (torpedoed and sunk the following January) which, having sailed from St. John's, docked in Liverpool on April 18.

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His Army Service Records note that Herbert Hunt Goodridge then enlisted at the community of Kingston-upon-Thames – assigned Regimental Number 3256 - into the 2/6 East Surrey Regiment. *This* unit, however, was never to leave the British Isles and it was surely with this in mind that he transferred to the 1/7th (*City of London*) Battalion of the London Regiment. By this time the 7th Battalion was an element of the 140th Brigade, 47th (*2nd London*) Division, and was already serving on the Continent.

Private* Goodridge is recorded as being on *active service* – in practical terms, posted to the Continent – as of September 1 of 1916.

**The documentation has him as both a lance corporal and as a corporal (acting) (from Service Medal & Award Rolls) but does not note the date of any promotion(s). And, of course, his head-stone records him as a private soldier.*

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By the above-cited date the 47th Division was already in France, having crossed the English Channel at the end of the first week of March, 1915. Two months later it had participated in the offensives at the Aubers Ridge and Festubert during the spring of 1915, then subsequently at Loos – the first use of chlorine gas by the British in the war - during the late summer and early autumn.



(Right above: *The mining village of Loos-en-Gohelle at the time of its capture by the British: The pit-head is underneath the structure baptized by the troops as Tower-Bridge and the Double Cassier is directly behind it. – from Le Miroir*)

(Right: *The very first protection against gas was to urinate on a handkerchief which was then held over the nose and mouth. However, all the armies were soon producing gas-masks, some of the first of which are seen here being tested by Scottish troops. – from either Illustration or Le Miroir*)



The Division had then remained in that sector during the remainder of the year and into the next before it had been ordered further south to the area of Vimy. There it had been among the units overwhelmed in the German attack of May 21 when the British forces had been driven off the crest of the Ridge.

Only months later, the unit, by that time re-enforced and re-organized, was to play its role in the British and French summer offensive of 1916 at *the Somme*.

On August 1 the Division had started marching, taking a circuitous route to where the *1st Battle of the Somme* had opened on July 1. Arriving at its billets behind the line in the last week of August, the 47th spent the following three weeks in training for upcoming events. It was surely then and there that Private Goodridge reported to *duty* with the 7th Battalion (*City of London*) of the London Regiment.

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The first of the actions of *the Somme* in which the 47th Division, and thus the 7th Battalion, London Regiment, was to be involved was the general offensive of September 15 which is known to posterity as *Flers-Courcelette*, the attack undertaken by the British, the New Zealanders and by the newly-arrived Canadian Corps.

The Division's objective was the taking of *High Wood* on September 15 and although the formation was to experience much fighting on later occasions, such was the ferocity of the encounter there that it is at *High Wood* where today, just across a country road from the London Cemetery and Extension, Longueval, stands the 47th Division Memorial. After four days, on September 19, the unit was relieved.



(Right above: *High Wood almost a century later – Such is the quantity of unexploded ordnance lying within its bounds that all entrance is still forbidden to the public. – photograph from 2010*)

On October 4, the 140th Brigade – one of the three brigades of the 47th Division – returned up to the forward area, on this occasion to prepare for a further assault three days hence.

(Right: *the 47th Division Memorial which stands in the fringes of High Wood – photograph from 2009(?)*)



(Right: *A part of the London Cemetery and Extension, Longueval, behind which may be perceived some of High Wood. Within its bounds the Cemetery holds the earthly remains of almost four-thousand dead of the Great War, of whom some eighty per-cent to this day remain unidentified. – photograph from 2010*)



The next recorded action undertaken by Private Goodridge's 7th Battalion came about on October 7. It was an attack on an extremely well-protected German system known as the *Butte de Warlencourt*.

October 7: 140 Brigade, in conjunction with other forces resumed the attack... 23rd Div on left of 7th Bn & 15th Bn London Regiment on the right.

1.45 pm... Zero... Battalion advanced in 4 lines each line consisting of 1 Platoon of each company with the object of seizing the BUTTE DE WARLENCOURT & the trench from the BUTTE DE WARLENCOURT... through the German support line.

The BN reached the top of the mound on the road at M. 17. C. when they were met with very heavy machine-gun fire from new German trench... about 50 men of whom 20 were wounded dug in in a line... these men were not in touch with anyone on left or right...

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9.30 pm Heavy sniping came from LE SARS during the whole of the afternoon making communication by runner & and the collection of wounded very difficult. (Excerpt from the 7th Battalion (City of London) War Diary)

The total number of casualties (of 7th (City of London) Battalion during the Attack on Butte de Warlencourt* amounted to two-hundred ninety-two.

***The position was finally taken by the Australians on February 24 of the following year at a time when the Germans were retreating to new defensive positions subsequently known as the Hindenburg Line.**

The son of A. F. Goodridge, merchant and one time Prime Minister of Newfoundland (April-December, 1894) and of Jane Goodridge (née Hyde) of 4, Park Place, Rennie's Mill Road in St. John's, he was also brother to ten siblings: Richard-Frederick, William-Prout, Avalon-Frederick, Augustus-Alan, Mary (Minnie), Alfred-James, Jane-Hyde, Henry-Churchward, Grace-Hyde and Augustus-George*.

Private Goodridge was reported as having been *killed in action* on October 10, 1916. Yet the number of casualties recorded on that date by the 7th Battalion War Diarist was... *nil*. Neither were any documented on October 9, the previous day, when the unit was retiring to its transport lines.



Although several sources record Private Goodridge as having died at the age of forty-four years, St. Thomas' Anglican Church Parish Records note his date of birth as January 22, 1876.

(Right above: The photograph of Lieutenant Goodridge, taken at Pleasantville in September of 1914 while he was there in training with the Newfoundland Regiment, is from the Provincial Archives.)

Private Herbert Hunt Goodridge was entitled to the British War Medal (left) 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. Last updated – February 18, 2023.



