

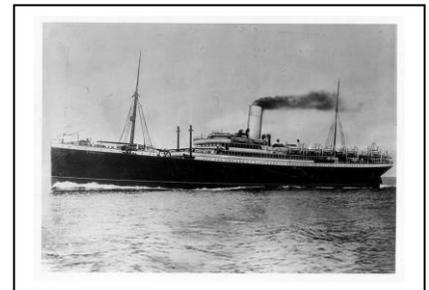
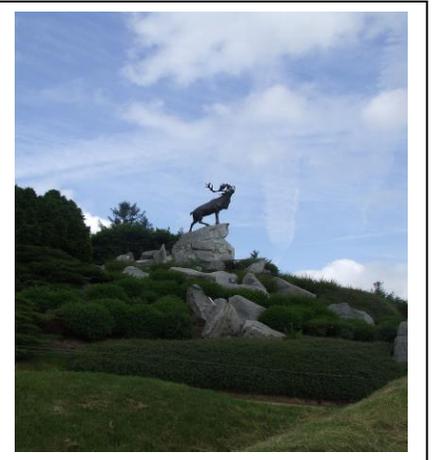
Private Samuel Francis Goss (Gosse*) (Regimental Number 1907), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

**This is his father's spelling of the name which is also on some but not all official documents.*

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a farmer, Samuel Goss was a recruit of the Sixth Draft. Apparently he had also, previous to his enlistment in Newfoundland, served for three years in the *Prince of Wales' Fusiliers* in Montreal.

He presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's, enlisted – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 – and attested, all on the same day, October 13, 1915.

Private Goss and the other personnel of 'G' Company – apparently in the company of several naval reservists and also some German prisoners (these latter presumably to remain in Canada) - left St. John's by train on October 27, to cross the island to Port aux Basques. The contingent then traversed the Gulf of St. Lawrence by ferry, and proceeded by train from North Sydney to Quebec City.



At Québec the Newfoundlanders boarded His Majesty's Transport *Corsican* (above) for the trans-Atlantic passage to the English south-coast naval establishment of Devonport where they arrived on November 9.

By the morning of the 10th the new arrivals had travelled by train and had gone north to Scotland. There they had been billeted in huts in a military camp at Gailies, not far removed from the new Regimental Depot where accommodation for the contingent was as yet not available.

That new Regimental Depot had been established during the summer of 1915 in the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland there to serve as a base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion. It was from there – as of November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers arriving from home were sent in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and then subsequently to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1st Battalion.



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(Previous page: *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*)

It was during this posting to the Regimental Depot that, on June 19, a mere six days before his departure to France on *active service*, Private Goss was prevailed upon to re-enlist for *the duration of the War**.

**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 only a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was obviously going to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist.*

On June 25, the 7th Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr, Private Goss among its ranks, passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton en route to the Continent. On the morrow, the 26th, the detachment disembarked in Rouen, capital city of Normandy, and site of the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot which had been established there. There the draft spent time in final training and organization* before proceeding on to its rendezvous with 1st Battalion.



(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen on their way to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

**Apparently, the standard length of time for this final training at the outset of the war had been ten days – although this was to become more and more flexible as the War progressed - in areas near Rouen, Étapes, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

This meeting was effected on July 11 (recorded elsewhere as the 12th) while the parent unit was just behind the line, being quartered in huts in the remnants of the village of Mailly-Maillet. It was here that Private Goss and a further one-hundred twenty-six *other ranks* of a re-enforcement contingent from Rouen reported to *duty*.

Even with this additional man-power, the Regimental War Diary records that on the 14th of July, 1st Battalion still numbered only *11 officers and 260 rifles* after the disaster of Beaumont-Hamel, a quarter of regulation battalion strength.

(Right: *The re-constructed village of Mailly-Maillet – the French Monument aux Morts in the foreground - is twinned with the community of Torbay, St. John's East. – photograph from 2009*)

On July 27-28 of 1916, 1st Battalion - still under battalion strength at only five-hundred fifty-four strong, even after re-enforcement – had moved north and entered into Belgium for the first time.



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It had been ordered to the *Ypres Salient*, one of the most dangerous pieces of real estate on the entire *Western Front*, there to continue to re-enforce and to re-organize after the ordeal of Beaumont-Hamel. The Salient was relatively quiet during the time of the Newfoundlanders' posting there, yet they nonetheless incurred casualties, a number of them fatalities.



On October 8, after ten weeks in Belgium, 1st Battalion moved south back to France and back to the area of – and the battle of – the Somme.

(Right above: *the entrance to 'A' Company's quarters in the ramparts of Ypres when it was posted there in 1916 – photograph from 2010*)

(Right: *the city of Ypres towards the end of 1915 – and eight months before the Newfoundlanders were posted there for the first time – from a vintage post-card*)

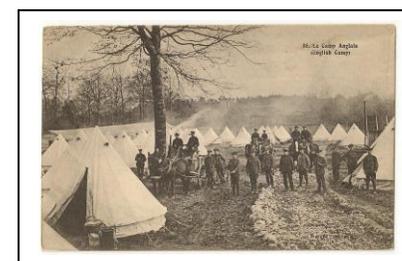


Only four days after its return to France on October 8, 1st Battalion had been ordered to pass to the offensive, on this occasion on the outskirts of the ruined village of Gueudecourt perhaps a dozen kilometres or so to the south-east of Beaumont-Hamel. Here, on October 12 – and during a heavy enemy bombardment of the previous evening – the Newfoundlanders again lost heavily – two-hundred thirty-nine casualties in all during those two days - with little reward for the sacrifice.



(Right above: *the fields across which the Battalion advanced on October 12, towards the copse of trees on the far right horizon; they are where the Gueudecourt Caribou today stands - photograph from 2009.*)

After Gueudecourt, 1st Battalion continued its watch in and out of the trenches of *the Somme* – not without casualties – during the late fall and early winter, a period broken only by the several weeks spent in *Corps Reserve* during the Christmas period, encamped well behind the lines and close to the city of Amiens.



(Right above: *a typical British Army Camp during a winter period somewhere in France – from a vintage post-card*)

After that welcome six-week Christmas respite spent in *Corps Reserve* well to the rear, the Newfoundlanders had *officially* returned to *active service* on January 23, although they had been back in the trenches already by that date and had incurred their first casualties – and fatality – of 1917.

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The only infantry activity directly involving 1st Battalion during that entire period – from the action at Gueudecourt in mid-October of 1916, until Monch-le-Preux in April of 1917 – was to be the sharp engagement at Sailly-Saillisel at the end of February and beginning of March, an action which brought this episode in the Newfoundlanders' War – in the area of *the Somme* - to a close.



(Right above: *The fighting during the time of the Battalion's posting to Sailly-Saillisel took place on the far side of the village which was no more than a heap of rubble at the time. - photograph from 2009(?)*)

After Sailly-Saillisel the month of March was a quiet time for the Newfoundlanders; having departed from the trenches, they now spent their time near the communities of Meaulté and Camps-en-Amienois re-enforcing, re-organizing, and training for upcoming events. They even had the pleasure of a visit from the Regimental Band, and also one from the Prime Minister of Newfoundland, Sir Edward Morris (right), the latter on March 17, St. Patrick's Day.



On March 29, 1st Battalion began to make its way – on foot – from Camps-en-Amienois to the north-east, towards the venerable medieval city of Arras and eventually beyond, their march to finish amid the rubble of a village called Monchy-le-Preux.



(Right adjacent: *the remnants of the Grande Place in the city of Arras in early 1916 – from Illustration*)

On April 9 the British Army launched an offensive in the area to the north of the Somme battlefields; this was the so-called *Battle of Arras* intended to support a French effort elsewhere. In terms of the daily count of casualties it was the most expensive operation of the War for the British, its only positive episode being the Canadian assault of Vimy Ridge on the opening day of the battle, Easter Monday. The French offensive was a disaster.



(Right above: *the Canadian National Memorial which stands on Vimy Ridge – photograph from 2010*)

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1st Battalion was to play its part in the *Battle of Arras*, a role that would begin at a place called Monchy-le-Preux on April 14 and which would finish ten days later, on April 23, perhaps a kilometre distant, at *Les Fosses Farm*. After Beaumont-Hamel, Monchy-le-Preux was to prove the most costly day of the Newfoundlanders' war, four-hundred eighty-seven casualties on April 14 alone.



(Right above: *The village of Monchy-le-Preux as seen today from the western – in 1917, the British – side of the community. The Newfoundlanders advanced, out of the ruins of the place, to the east, away from the camera. – photograph from 2013*)

The son of Peter Michael Gosse, fisherman – to whom he had allocated a daily allowance of sixty cents from his pay - and Mary Gosse (née *Bradbury*, deceased March 6 of 1906) of Tor Bay (sic) in the District of St. John's East, he was also brother to Henry, Emily, Elizabeth, Mary-Josephine, Bertha, Robert, Catherine, John, Laura, Bridget and Ellen (Helen)*.

One well-documented source records him having married a Bertha in Newfoundland before his departure. It may well be that they had met in Montreal, for that is where she chose to live after her husband went overseas.

Private Gosse was at first reported as *missing in action* on April 14, 1917, while serving with 'B' Company in the fighting at Monchy-le-Preux during the *Battle of Arras*. However, on or about June 16 of that same year, due perhaps to the memos to be found below, his record was amended so as to read *killed in action 14/4/17*.



Samuel Francis Gosse had enlisted at the age of twenty-three years and four months (birth-date June 11, 1892).

(Right above: *The Caribou at Monchy-le-Preux stands atop the remains of a German strongpoint in the centre of the re-constructed village. – photograph from 2009(?)*)

(Right: *the War Memorial in Torbay honours the sacrifice of Private Gosse. – photograph from 2010.*)



****Peter Gosse later married Margaret Furlong by whom he had four daughters – therefore step-sisters to Samuel and the other siblings – two whose names seem not to be recorded and also Beatrice-Mary and Mary-Anne.**

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Private Samuel Francis Goss was entitled to the British War Medal (on left) and also the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).



Statements made by No 2216 Pte Moores and by N A Galgay:

I saw 1907 private S. Gosse killed in the trench beside me on the night of the 13th April. A shell hit him and blew him to pieces. He was in my machine-gun section. He was No 1 and I was No 3

Edward Moores

Dear Sir The above name mentioned was killed April 13/4/17

I was in charge of platoon at time and quite near him – Killed instantly by a shell in our trenches

Yours Truly

N A Galgay*

Esher Red Cross Hospital

10/6/17

***Corporal Nicholas Augustus Galgay at the time**