



Second Lieutenant William Hoyes Grant (Regimental Number 410*) is interred in Auchonvillers Military Cemetery – Grave reference II. F. 11.

****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.***

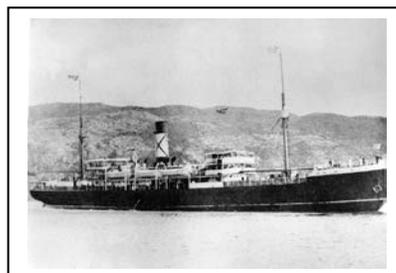
And since officers did not enlist, they were not then required to re-enlist 'for the duration', even though, at the beginning, as a private, they had volunteered their services for only a limited time – twelve months.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *secretary* earning an annual twelve-hundred dollars, William Hoyes Grant, presented himself for a medical examination on September 3 of 1914, thirty days after the *Declaration of War*, at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* on Harvey Road in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland. It was a procedure which would find him...*Fit for Foreign Service*.

At the beginning of that September, the new recruits were now to undergo a period of training on the shores of *Quidi Vidi Lake* in the East End of St. John's. However, it was not to be until September 11 that William Grant enlisted at the daily private soldier's rate of a single dollar plus a ten-cent per diem Field Allowance. The records suggest that he also attested on the same day – so whether or not he was to train for that entire month is not clear – and perhaps unlikely.

October 3, 1914, was the day on which Private Grant and the Newfoundland contingent, to become known to history as both the *First Five Hundred* and the *Blue Puttees* – the unit was not yet a battalion - embarked onto the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* awaiting in St. John's Harbour.

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



The ship sailed from St. John's for the United Kingdom on the following day, October 4, to thereupon rendezvous with the convoy carrying the 1st Canadian Division overseas.

In the United Kingdom Private Grant trained with the Newfoundland contingent: firstly in southern England on the Salisbury Plain; then in Scotland at *Fort George* – on the Moray Firth close to the city of Inverness; then at *Edinburgh Castle* – where the unit was to provide the first garrison from outside the British Isles.

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



(Right: *Edinburgh Castle dominates the city from its position on the summit of Castle Hill. – photograph from 2011*)



It was during the second of these postings, at *Fort George*, that on December 9 John Clift and W.H. Grant – both privates at the time – co-signed a letter addressed to the Governor of Newfoundland – who was also Commanding Officer of the Newfoundland Regiment at the time – Lieutenant Colonel Sir Walter E. Davidson, requesting consideration for a future Commission and officer status. Both were later to be granted.

Private Grant was to return to Newfoundland sooner than foreseen due to the ill health of his father in the spring of 1915. The information tends to be on the sparse side, but the following appears to be what had then ensued:

On March 6, Captain Augustus O'Brien was to sail from Liverpool on the requisitioned *Allan Line* vessel *Corsican* to Halifax, there to await the arrival of 'D' Company from Newfoundland on board *Stephano*, sister ship of *Florizel*. He and they were then to be transported across the Atlantic on board HMS *Orduña*, requisitioned by that time as an armed merchant cruiser and sometime troop transport.

When he arrived in Halifax on March 16, he was accompanied by his batman (officer's servant), Private Grant. The Commanding officer of the Newfoundland contingent at the time, Lieutenant Reginald de Hardwicke Burton, had appointed Private Grant to this duty...*to give him opportunity to see family...*

On March 19, correspondence between Captain O'Brien in Halifax and Sir Walter Davidson in St. John's had resulted in Private Grant being sent onwards to Newfoundland – although his father had already passed away by this date.

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



(Right below: *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 on 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.*)



Private Grant left Newfoundland once again on April 22, 1915, on this occasion with 'E' Company, on board *Stephano* to Halifax, and thence to Liverpool on His Majesty's Transport *Missanabie*, to arrive there on May 2. Two days later, on May 4, after a train journey north, the Newfoundlanders reached the Scottish capital city of Edinburgh.

As seen in a previous paragraph, the personnel of 'A' and 'B' Companies had arrived in Edinburgh from their posting at Fort George at the end of the third week of February. They had been joined almost immediately by the first re-enforcements, 'C' Company, these arriving directly from Newfoundland, and some five weeks later again, also directly from home, by the above-mentioned 'D' Company.

Only days after the arrival of 'E' Company, on May 11 the five-company contingent was to move from Edinburgh to *Stobs Camp*, a tented affair - fortunately the weather was more than co-operative after the first few days when snow was still visible – to the south-east of Edinburgh and some dozen or so kilometres from the town of Hawick. The Newfoundlanders would now remain there for three months.



(continued)

(Preceding page: *The Regiment parades at Stobs Camp on June 10, 1915, the day on which it received its Colours.* – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo)

It was to be during this period served at *Stobs Camp* that Private Grant was promoted to the rank of lance-corporal; it was on May 21 of that 1915.

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 Aldershot. Meanwhile the two junior Companies, the later-arrived ‘E’ – Private Grant’s - and then ‘F’*, were ordered stationed to Scotland’s west coast, to Ayr, where they were to provide the nucleus of the newly-forming 2nd (Reserve) Battalion*.



(Right: *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* – photograph from *Bain News Services* via *Wikipedia*)



***On July 10, 1915, ‘F’ Company had arrived at *Stobs Camp* from Newfoundland, its personnel raising the numbers of the unit to battalion establishment strength, and thus enabling it to be ordered to active service.**

* * * * *

‘E’ Company - with a few exceptions of personnel who were drafted into the first four Companies which were to travel to the Middle East – and Lance Corporal Grant thus remained in Scotland to be ordered posted to the newly-established Regimental Depot at the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland.

This was to be the overseas base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment from where – as of November of that 1915 up until January of 1918 - reinforcement drafts from home were to be despatched to bolster the 1st Battalion’s numbers, at first to the Middle East and then later to the *Western Front*.



(Right above: *An aerial view of Ayr – probably from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr, where were billeted 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: *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)



On October 16, while still in Scotland, Lance Corporal Grant was to be granted the Imperial Commission that he had requested those ten months before, and an accompanying appointment to the rank of second lieutenant.

Having then spent the winter at Ayr, Second Lieutenant Grant was to embark onto His Majesty's Transport *Archangel* on March 28 of 1916* - as a junior officer of the 3rd Reinforcement Draft from Ayr - in the English south-coast port-city of Southampton. The Newfoundlanders were *en route* to Rouen, the capital of Normandy on the River Seine, where the detachment landed two days later.



**He had passed some time in London at this period as he is documented as having signed some papers at the Newfoundland Pay & Record Office on the sixteenth day of that month.*

(Right above: *London – in fact the City of Westminster – in the area of Marble Arch, in or about the year 1913, just prior to the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)



(Right above: *The photograph of a troop-laden HMT Archangel is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site.*)

After several days of final training and organization* at the British Expeditionary Force Base Depot at Rouen, Second Lieutenant Grant was despatched in command of a contingent of forty-one *other ranks* which reported *to duty* with the 1st Battalion on April 26, at a time when the Newfoundlanders – having arrived in France from the Middle East a month previously - were doing a first tour of duty in the trenches of the Western Front.



(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen en route to the Western Front. - from Illustration*)

**Apparently the standard length of time for this final training was 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 to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

* * * * *

While Lance-Corporal Grant and his 'E' Company were beginning their time of training at Ayr in the summer of 1915, those aforementioned four senior companies, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', of the Newfoundland Regiment, having now become the 1st Battalion, had thereupon been attached to the 88th Brigade of the 29th Division of the (British) Mediterranean Expeditionary Force and had been despatched to *active service*.

(continued)

(Right: Some of the personnel of 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies of the 1st 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.)



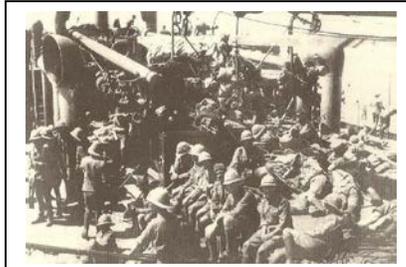
On August 20 of 1915, the Newfoundland Battalion had embarked in the Royal Navy Harbour of Devonport onto the requisitioned passenger-liner *Megantic* for passage to the Middle East and to the fighting against the Turks. There, a month later – having spent some two weeks billeted in British barracks in the vicinity of the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, the 1st Battalion was to land at *Suvla Bay* on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



(Right above: *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.*)



(Right: *Kangaroo Beach, where the officers and men of the 1st Battalion, Newfoundland Regiment, 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 1st Battalion was to serve during the fall of 1915 – photograph from 2011*)

When the Newfoundlanders had landed from their transport ship at *Suvla Bay* they would disembark into a campaign that was already on the threshold of collapse.

Not only in the area where the Newfoundland Battalion were 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 proved to be little more than a debacle:

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

**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.*

November 26 would see the nadir of the Newfoundland Battalion's fortunes at Gallipoli; a freak rain-, snow- and ice-storm was to strike the *Suvla Bay* area and the subsequent floods had wreaked havoc amongst the forces of both sides. For several days, survival rather than the enemy was to 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.

On the night of December 19-20, the British had abandoned the area of *Suvla Bay* – the Newfoundlanders, the only non-British unit to serve there, to form a part of the rear-guard. Some of the Battalion personnel had been evacuated to the nearby island of *Imbros*, some to *Lemnos*, further away, but in neither case was the respite to be of a long duration; the 1st Battalion was to be transferred only two days later to the area of *Cape Helles*, on the western tip of the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.

(Right: *Cape Helles as seen from the Turkish positions on the misnamed Achi Baba, positions which were never breached: The Newfoundland positions were to the right-hand side of the picture. – photograph from 2011*)



The British, Indian and *Anzac* forces – the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was also to serve at *Gallipoli* – had now only been marking time until a complete withdrawal of the *Peninsula* could be undertaken.

This final operation would take place on the night of January 8-9, the Newfoundland Battalion to furnish part of the British rear-guard on this second occasion also.

(Right: *'W' Beach at Cape Helles as it was only days before the final British evacuation – from Illustration*)



**Lieutenant Owen Steele of St. John's, Newfoundland, is cited as having been the last soldier of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force to step into the final small boat to sail from the Gallipoli Peninsula.*

(continued)

(Right: 'W' Beach almost a century after its abandonment by British forces in that January of 1916 and by the Newfoundlanders who were to be the last soldiers off the beach: Vestiges of the wharves in the black-and-white picture are still to be seen. – photograph from 2011)



Immediately after the British had evacuated the entire Gallipoli Peninsula in January of 1916, the Newfoundland Battalion was to be ordered to the Egyptian port-city of Alexandria, to arrive there on the 15th of that month. The Newfoundlanders were then to be immediately transferred southward to the vicinity of Suez, a port at the southern end of the Canal which bears the same name, there to await further orders since, at the time, the subsequent destination of the British 29th Division had yet to be decided*.



*Bulgaria had entered the conflict on the side of the Central Powers, and Salonika was soon to become a theatre of war.

(Right above: The British destroy their supplies during the final evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The men of the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment were among the last to leave on two occasions, at both Suvla Bay and Cape Helles. – photograph taken from the battleship Cornwallis from Illustration)



(Right above: Port Tewfiq at the south end of the Suez Canal as it was just prior to the Great War – from a vintage post-card)

After a two-month interim spent in the vicinity of Port Suez, the almost six-hundred officers and other ranks of the 1st Battalion were to board His Majesty's Transport *Alaunia* at Port Tewfiq, on March 14 to begin the voyage through the Suez Canal en route to France. The Newfoundlanders would disembark eight days afterwards in the Mediterranean port-city of Marseilles, on March 22.



(Right above: British troops march through the port area of the French city of Marseilles. – from a vintage post-card)

Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, the Newfoundland Battalion's train was to find its way to the small provincial town of Pont-Rémy, a thousand kilometres to the north of Marseilles. It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for the troops having inexcusably travelled unused in a separate wagon.

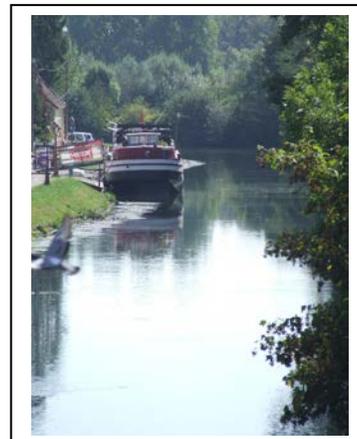
Having de-trained at the local station at two o'clock in the morning, the Newfoundlanders were now still to endure the long, dark march ahead of them before they would reach their billets at Buigny l'Abbé.

It is doubtful if many of those tired soldiers were to pay much attention to the slow-moving stream flowing under the bridge over which they had then marched on their way from the station. But some three months later *the Somme* was to become a part of their history.

(Right: *A languid River Somme as seen from the bridge at Pont-Rémy – photograph from 2010*)

On April 13, the 1st Battalion had subsequently marched into the village of Englebelmer – perhaps some fifty kilometres in all from Pont-Rémy - where it would be billeted, would receive reinforcements from Scotland via Rouen and, in two days' time, would be introduced into the communication trenches of the *Western Front*.

Those abovementioned re-enforcements, which arrived on April 15, were of course the forty-one other ranks from Ayr via Rouen whose senior officer was Second Lieutenant Grant.



* * * * *

Just days following the Newfoundland Battalion's arrival on the *Western Front*, two of the four Companies – 'A', and 'B' – were to take over several support positions from a British unit* before the entire Newfoundland unit was to then be ordered to move further up for the first time into forward positions on April 22.

**It should be said that the Newfoundland Battalion and two-hundred men of the Bermuda Rifles who were serving at the time in the 2nd Lincolnshire Regiment Battalion, were then the only units at the Somme from outside the British Isles - true also on the day of the attack on July 1.*

(Right below: *A part of the re-constructed trench system to be found in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2009(?)*)

Having then been withdrawn at the end of that April to the areas of Mailly-Maillet and Louvencourt where they would be based for the next two months, the Newfoundlanders were soon to be preparing for the upcoming British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for the languid, meandering river, *the Somme*, that flowed – and still does so today – through the region.



Second Lieutenant Grant was also to have some dental work done.

If there is one name and date in Newfoundland history which is etched in the collective once-national memory, it is that of Beaumont-Hamel on July 1 of 1916; and if any numbers are remembered, they are those of the eight-hundred who went *over the top* in the third wave of the attack on that morning, and of the sixty-eight unwounded present at muster some twenty-four hours later*.

(continued)

(Right: *Beaumont-Hamel: Looking from the British lines down the hill towards Y Ravine Cemetery which today stands atop part of the German front-line defences: The Danger Tree, in fact a concrete replica, is to the right in the photograph. – photograph taken in 2009)*



(Right: *A view of Hawthorn Ridge Cemetery Number 2 in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2009(?)*)



**Perhaps ironically, the majority of the Battalion's casualties was to be incurred during the advance from the third line of British trenches to the first line from where the attack proper was to be made, and while struggling through British wire laid to protect the British positions from any German attack.*

There are other numbers of course: the fifty-seven thousand British casualties incurred in four hours on that same morning of which nineteen-thousand were recorded as having been *killed in action or died of wounds*.

It was to be the largest disaster ever in the annals of the British Army...and, perhaps just as depressing, the butchery of *the Somme* was to continue for the next four and a half months.



(Right above: *Beaumont-Hamel is a commune, not a village. – photographs from 2010 and 2015)*

In fact, Beaumont-Hamel was a commune – it still exists today – at the time comprising two communities: Beaumont, a village on the German side of the lines, and Hamel which was behind those of the British. No-Man's-Land, on which the Newfoundland Memorial Park lies partially today, was on land that separated Beaumont from Hamel.



(Right: *A grim, grainy image purporting to be Newfoundland - dead awaiting burial after Beaumont-Hamel – from...?)*

After the events of the morning of July 1, 1916, such had then been the dire condition of the attacking British forces that it had been feared that any German counter-assault might well annihilate what had managed to survive of the British Expeditionary Force on *the Somme*.

The few remnants of the Newfoundland Battalion – and of the other depleted British units - had thus remained in the trenches perhaps fearing the worst, and at night searching for the wounded and burying the dead.

It was to be July 6 before the Newfoundlanders were to be relieved from the forward area and to be ordered withdrawn to Englebelmer.

It had then been a further two days before the unit had marched further again to the rear area and to billets in the village of Mailly-Maillet.

(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*)



There on July 11, a draft of one-hundred twenty-seven reinforcements – a second source cites one-hundred thirty – had reported *to duty*. They had been the first to arrive following the events at Beaumont-Hamel but even with this additional manpower having arrived, the Regimental War Diary records that on the 14th of July, 1916, the 1st Battalion still numbered only...*11 officers and 260 rifles...after the holocaust of Beaumont-Hamel, just one-quarter of establishment battalion strength.*

The Regimental War Diary briefly records the three-day tour of the trenches which was to begin on that July 14 to 16 (inclusive) as follows: *Took over about 450 yards of trenches on both sides of 1st AVENUE, relieving the 4th Worcesters... During this tour in the trenches we were shelled heavily by enemy's 5.9 howitzers and a good deal of damage was done to the trenches.*

The Diary documents no casualties; however, papers in Second Lieutenant Grant's dossier cite his death as having occurred on that July 16, and that he had been *killed in action...in the field.*



(Right: *Almost a century later, a tree standing in a farmer's yard – next to Auchonvillers Cemetery – serves as a dump for the unexploded ordnance still ploughed up each year. The French Army Bomb Disposal Unit frequently collects it and destroys it. – photograph from 2010*)

The son of James William Grant (lumber dealer at the *Board of Trade Bldg.*, deceased March 6, 1915) of 31, Monkstown Road in St. John's, and of Julia Grant (née *MacMillan*, deceased in Nova Scotia in 1891?)*– both she and her husband were originally from the County of Pictou, Nova Scotia. She likely was never to visit Newfoundland.

**The couple were married on January 18, 1890, at East River, Pictou, Nova Scotia.*

William Hoyes Grant appears to have had a brother – in fact a half-brother – Ernest*. His widowed father, James William Grant, was to marry for a second time, to Christie (also found as *Christy*) Elizabeth Cameron in the County of Pictou on March 25, 1893. She apparently had some connections on Bell Island, Newfoundland, where she would live for a while with the family of Charles B. Archibald as early as October of 1918 – but there is little further information.

***Sergeant Ernest Gladstone Grant – born March 8, 1896 – (Number 2330400) of the Canadian Forestry Corps, attested on May 9 of 1917. He went overseas on June 25, 1917, to be repatriated to Canada on April 15, 1918, deemed as unfit for service (venereal problems). He passed away on October 22 of that 1918.**

Second Lieutenant Grant was reported as having been *killed in action* during the course of an intense enemy bombardment of the trenches near Beaumont-Hamel on July 16, 1916.

He was buried in Auchonvillers on the same day by the Reverend C. H. Moss.

William Hoyes Grant had enlisted at a *declared* twenty-three years of age: year of birth at East River, Pictou, Nova Scotia, 1891.

Second Lieutenant William Hoyes Grant was entitled to the British War Medal and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal) (right).



Nov. 5/15

Captain Timewell,
Pay and Record Office,
58 Victoria St.
London W.

Sir,

Having been appointed 2nd Lieutenant in the NFLD Regiment I would like you to make arrangements for me to draw my kit allowance and pay.

Enclosed please find a specimen of my signature.

I have the honour to be

Sir,

Your obedient servant

AH Grant

2nd Lieut.

Ps Kindly make arrangements as soon as possible as I am absolutely broke.

WHTG