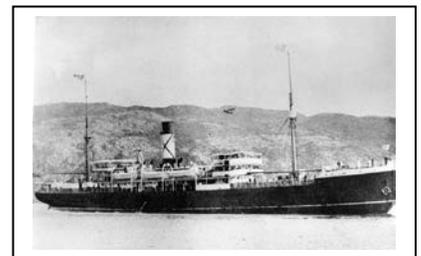




Private Lewis Hancock* (Regimental Number 3546) lies in Berlin South-Western Cemetery – Grave reference I. B. 12.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *fisherman* earning an annual \$400.00, Lewis Hancock was a recruit of the Fourteenth Draft. He presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on March 16, 1917, then enlisted - engaged *for the duration of the war* and at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and attested on the same day.

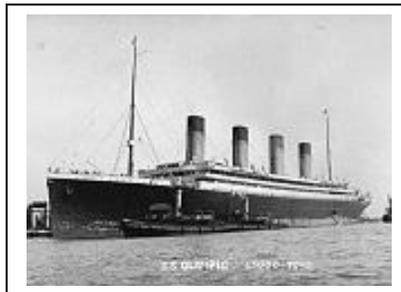
Private Hancock was not to depart from Newfoundland for overseas service until May 19, when the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* left en route to Halifax. His contingent of three officers and one-hundred eighty-two *other ranks*, and also ninety-nine recruits of the newly-formed Newfoundland Forestry Unit, then left Nova Scotia for the United Kingdom on board an unspecified* troop-transport on May 29.



(continued)

(Preceding page: *The photograph of 'Florizel' in the harbour in St. John's, Newfoundland, is by courtesy of the ' Admiralty House Museum in Mount Pearl.*)

**The ship in question was likely to have been the White Star liner Olympic (right) – sister ship to Titanic – requisitioned as a troop transport during the war. May 29 was in fact the date of embarkation by the Newfoundland contingent, the vessel not having sailed until June 2 with four under-strength Canadian infantry battalions and detachments and drafts of five others on board.*



Arriving in the English west-coast port of Liverpool on June 9 the contingent entrained for the west coast of Scotland. By this time, the Regimental Depot at Ayr* had already been in existence as the base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment for some two years. It was from here – since November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers from home were being despatched in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later to the *Western Front*, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1st Battalion.



(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. – by courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr*)

**During the summer months of 1917, the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion was transferred from Ayr to not-so-distant Barry in the region of Dundee. Initially intended to be a permanent move, the protest from several quarters was so great that the Newfoundlanders were back in Ayr by the third week of September.*

It was not to be until November 6, 1917, that Private Hancock took ship again; on this occasion he was on his way to the Continent, passing through the English south-coast port of Southampton as one of the one-hundred eleven *other ranks* of the 32nd Draft from Ayr. The Newfoundlanders disembarked in Rouen on the following day and made their way to the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot there for a few days of final training and organizing* before then making their way to a rendezvous with the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment.



(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 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.*

By that time, the 1st Battalion had been withdrawn from the *Passchendaele* campaign, on October 17, in order to prepare for yet another upcoming offensive: *Cambrai*. The unit had been ordered back south from Belgium into northern France to re-enforce, to organize and to train in the vicinity of Berles-au-Bois, a rural community a dozen or so kilometres to the south-west of Arras.

It was there that, on November 14, four officers and one-hundred forty-one *other ranks* – one of its soldiers Private Handcock – reported from Rouen *to duty* with the 1st Battalion.

* * * * *

By this time the first companies of the Newfoundland Regiment had been on *overseas service* for some thirty-seven months. The Regiment had spent the late fall of 1914 and then the subsequent winter at a series of postings: at the large British Army Camp on Salisbury Plain; then Fort George on the Firth of Moray and in close proximity to the city of Inverness; Edinburgh Castle where it had provided the first garrison from outside the British Isles; and finally *Stobs Camp* where 'F' Company had reported *to duty* on that July 10 of 1915.



This last-mentioned detachment had brought the unit up to the numbers necessary to put a battalion in the field. Thus within weeks the four senior companies of the now-1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment had been posted to *Aldershot Camp* in southern England for further training – and a royal inspection – before being despatched on *active service* to fight against the Turks on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

At the same time, the junior companies had been ordered to the Regimental Depot at Ayr where they were to become the nucleus of the newly-forming 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment which was to be stationed there.

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



(Right: *The Newfoundland Regiment parades at Stobs Camp and is presented with its Colours on June 10, 1915.* – courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo)

On August 20 of 1915, having boarded the ocean-liner *Megantic* – the vessel requisitioned as a troop transport – the 1st Battalion had begun the voyage to the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea and to the fighting in Gallipoli. By then it had been attached to the 88th Brigade of the 29th Division* of the (British) Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

**Apart from a few days in mid-April of 1917, the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was to serve continuously with the 88th Brigade and the 29th Division until the end of that same April.*

After its travels eastward, a journey which was to include a two-week stay at the British *Abbassia Barracks* in the outskirts of the Egyptian capital city of Cairo, on the night of September 19-20 the Newfoundlanders had disembarked at *Suvla Bay* on the Gallipoli Peninsula to re-enforce the British troops already landed there.

Suvla Bay was to be a sobering experience for all involved there, perhaps particularly for the British who would be forced to withdraw from there exactly three months after the arrival of the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment. Surrounded by a semi-circle of hills held by the Turks who – contrary to British expectations – had fought very well, the British forces, poorly led by second-rate senior officers, plagued by dysentery and surprised by floods followed by frost-bite, re-embarked on the night of December 19-20 and sailed away.



(Right above: ‘Kangaroo Beach’, where the 1st Battalion landed on the night of September 19-20, 1915, 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 from 2011)

The Newfoundlanders, having formed a part of the rear guard, were to be among the last to leave the beaches.

Two days later the 1st Battalion would be transferred to Cape Helles on the western tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula where the British had still been holding on. They were soon, however, on January 8-9, to be abandoning Cape Helles as well* and to be sailing back to Egypt.



**The 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment once more supplied personnel for the rear guard, and it was Lieutenant Owen Steele from St. John’s who was the last soldier to step into the final boat to leave Gallipoli behind.*

(Right above: ‘W’ Beach at Cape Helles as it was days before the final British evacuation – from Illustration)



(Right above: The same ‘W’ Beach a century after its abandonment by British forces and by the Newfoundlanders who were the last soldiers to leave the beach: vestiges of the wharves in the black-and-white picture above are still to be seen – photograph from 2011)

Having then spent two months in Egypt in the area of Suez at the south end of the Canal of the same name, the 1st Battalion was now to be transported back to France where the 29th Division, it had finally been decided, was to fight on the *Western Front*. Having embarked on March 14, the ship carrying the Newfoundlanders had docked eight days later in the French Mediterranean port of Marseilles.

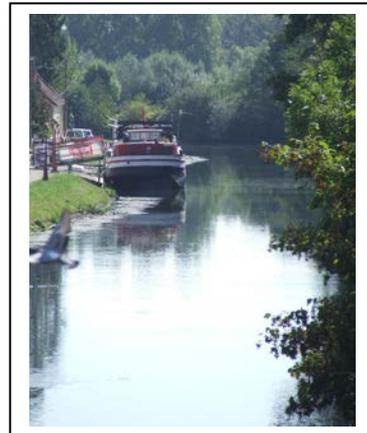


(continued)

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

From Marseilles the 1st Battalion would take a train for the three-day journey northwards to the nondescript community of Pont-Rémy where it had alighted at two o'clock in the morning of March 25 for the long march to its billets. An even longer march was now to be in the offing before its destination was to be reached.

(Right: *The Somme seen from the bridge at Pont-Rémy as it flows through the community* – photograph from 2010)



On April 13 the Newfoundland unit marched into the village of Englebelmer – perhaps some fifty kilometres in all from Pont-Rémy and two kilometres behind the front lines - where the Newfoundlanders were billeted, welcomed re-enforcements on the 15th and, on the evening of that same day, were introduced into the British lines of the *Western Front*, there to be immediately set to work to improve the communication trenches.

The Newfoundlanders were also soon to be preparing for the British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for the languid, meandering river flowing through the region, and over which the parent unit of the 1st Battalion had marched some three weeks previously at Pont-Rémy, *the Somme*.

(Right: *A part of the re-constructed trench system to be found in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel* – photograph from 2007(?))



If there is one name or 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*.

**Perhaps ironically, the majority of the Battalion's casualties was sustained while advancing 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.*

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



(continued)

(Right: *Beaumont-Hamel is a commune, not a village (see below). – photographs from 2010 & 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.



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 had been the biggest disaster ever in the annals of the British Army...and, perhaps worse, it was to continue for the next four and a half months.

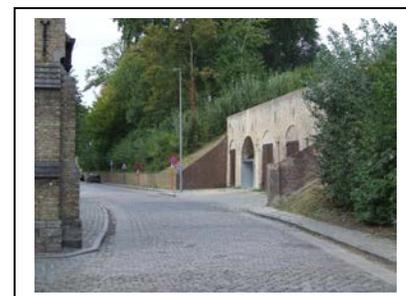
After the events of the morning of July 1, 1916, such had then been the dire condition of the attacking forces that it had been feared a German counter-assault might well annihilate what had survived of the British Expeditionary Force on *the Somme*. The remnants of the 1st Battalion had thus remained in the trenches, 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 be ordered withdrawn to Englebelmer, then a further two days before the unit had marched to 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 re-enforcements – a second source cites one-hundred thirty – had reported *to duty*. They had been the first to arrive following the disaster at Beaumont-Hamel but even with this additional man-power 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.

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



(continued)

(Preceding page: *The entrance to 'A' Company's quarters – obviously renovated since that time - in the ramparts of the city of Ypres when it was posted there in 1916 – photograph from 2010*)

(Right: *An aerial view of Ypres, taken towards the end of 1916 – from Illustration*)



The Salient – close to the front lines for almost the entire conflict - was to be relatively quiet during the time of the Newfoundlanders' posting there, yet they nonetheless incurred casualties, a number – fifteen? - of them fatal. Then on October 8, after having served there for some ten weeks, the 1st Battalion had been ordered to return south, back into France and back into the area of – and the battle of – *the Somme*.

Four days after its return to France, on October 12, 1916, the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment had again passed to the offensive at a place called Gueudecourt, some dozen or so kilometres to the south-east of Beaumont-Hamel.

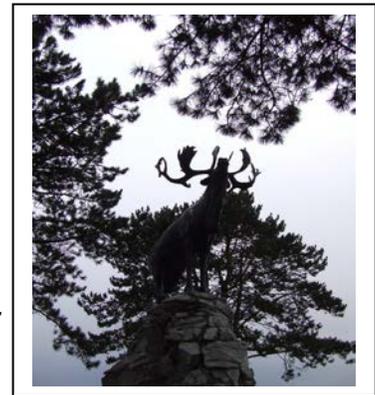
The encounter had proved to be another costly affair – two hundred and thirty-nine casualties all told - for little gain.



(Right above: *This is the ground over which the 1st Battalion advanced and then mostly conceded at Gueudecourt on October 12. Some few managed to reach the area where today stand the copse of trees and the Gueudecourt Caribou, on the far right horizon. – photograph from 2007*)

After Gueudecourt, the Newfoundland 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, during which the Regimental personnel was to be encamped well behind the lines and in close proximity to the city of Amiens.

(Right: *The Caribou at Gueudecourt stands at the furthest point of the 1st Battalion's advance of October 12, 1916 – photograph from 2012*)



(Right: *A typical British Army Camp during a winter period somewhere on the Continent – from a vintage post-card*)

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



(continued)

The only infantry activity directly involving the 1st Battalion during that entire period – from the action at Gueudecourt in mid-October of 1916, until Monchy-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 would bring 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 to be a quiet time for the Newfoundlanders; having departed from the trenches, they had 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 had the pleasure of a visit from the Regimental Band, and also one from the Prime Minister of Newfoundland, Sir Edward Morris, the latter on March 17, St. Patrick's Day.



(Right above: *The Prime Minister of Newfoundland visiting the 1st Battalion encamped at Meaulté – from The War Illustrated*)

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



(Right above: *The remnants of the Grande Place of the city of Arras in early 1916 after some eighteen months of bombardment – from Illustration*)

On April 9 the British Army had 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 count of casualties it was to be the most expensive operation of the *Great War* for the British, its only positive episode being the Canadian assault of *Vimy Ridge* on the opening day of the battle, Easter Monday, 1917.



While the British campaign would prove an overall disappointment, the French *Bataille du Chemin des Dames* was to be yet a further disaster.

(Right above: *The Canadian National Memorial which has stood on Vimy Ridge since 1936 – photograph from 2010*)



(continued)

The 1st Battalion was to play its part during 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, the ineptly-planned action at Monchy-le-Preux would prove to be the most costly day of the Newfoundlanders' war, four-hundred eighty-seven casualties on April 14 alone*.

**It was also an action in which a DSO, an MC and eight MMs were won by a small group of nine men of the Battalion and one from the Essex Regiment .*

(Preceding page: *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*)

(Right below: *Newfoundland troops at ease just after the time of Monchy-le-Preux – from The War Illustrated*)

After Monchy, May of 1917 had been a period when the Newfoundlanders were to be moving hither and thither on the *Arras Front*, in and out of the trenches. Apart from the ever-present artillery, there had been little activity – except for the marching. At the beginning of June, the 1st Battalion had retired from the forward area to Bonneville and there had spent its time again in re-enforcing and re-organizing...and in training for the upcoming British offensive of the summer – and as it was to transpire, the autumn as well.

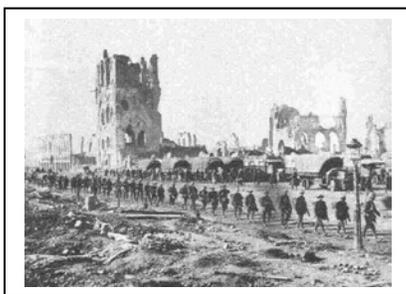


(Right: *Newfoundland troops on the march parading through in the community of Berneville in early May of 1917 – from The War Illustrated*)

The Newfoundlanders had then once again moved north into Belgium – at the end of June - and once again into the area of Ypres – *the Salient*. This low-lying ground 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 was to come to be known to history as *Passchendaele*, having adopted that name from a small village on a ridge to the north-east that later was to be cited as having been – *ostensibly* - one of the British Army's objectives.



(Right above: *Troops file past the vestiges of the historic Cloth Hall and through the rubble of the medieval city of Ypres on their way to the front in the late summer or early autumn of 1917. – from Illustration*)



(continued)

(Preceding page: *An unidentified – perhaps unidentifiable – part of the Passchendaele battlefield in the autumn of 1917 – from Illustration*)

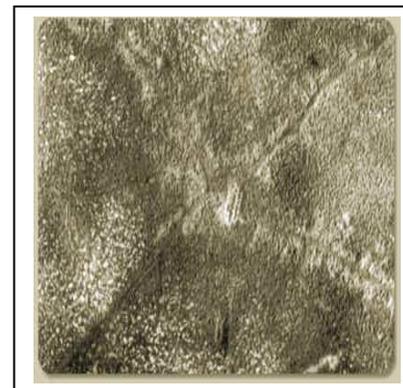
The 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was to remain in Belgium until October 17, a small cog in the machinery of the British Army – as were to be then the Australians, New Zealanders and Canadians – all of which had floundered their way across the sodden countryside of Flanders.

(Right: *The village of Passchendaele as seen from the air in 1916, after two years of war – from Illustration*)



Notably the Newfoundland Battalion at *Passchendaele* had fought in two major engagements, at the *Steenbeek* on August 16, and at the *Broembeek* on October 9. At the former it had incurred nine *killed in action*, ninety-three *wounded*, and one *missing in action*; at the *Broembeek* the cost had been higher: forty-eight *killed or died of wounds*, one-hundred thirty-two *wounded* and fifteen *missing in action*.

(Right: *The village of Passchendaele as seen from the air in 1917, after the battle of that name – from Illustration*)



It was to be only two days after this last-mentioned confrontation that the 1st Battalion had marched to the railway station at Elverdinghe from there to be transported to Swindon Camp in the area of Proven. Having remained there for five days to be both re-enforced and bombed, on the morning of October 17 the unit once more boarded a train. By ten-thirty that same evening, the Battalion had arrived just to the west of the city of Arras and would now march the final few kilometres to its billets in the community of Berles-au-Bois.

The Newfoundlanders were still there, at Berles-au-Bois, four weeks less a day later, on November 14, when Private Handcock's re-enforcement draft arrived...*for forthcoming operations*. Unless he had been designated as one of the ten percent reserve to be left at Berles-au-Bois, Private Handcock's introduction to *active service* was to be a frantic one.

* * * * *

On November 17 the Battalion once again travelled by train, on this occasion in a south-easterly direction to the town of Peronne. From there it began to move further eastward on foot towards the theatre of the battle now imminent. On November 19, while on the move once more, it was issued as it went with...*war stores, rations and equipment*. For much of that night it marched to the assembly areas from where, at twenty minutes past six on that morning of November 20 – Zero Hour – Private Handcock's unit, not being in the first wave of the attack, moved up into its forming-up area. From those forward position, some hours later, at ten minutes past ten, bugles blowing, the 1st Battalion advanced to the fray.

(continued)

This new offensive – apparently initially conceived to be no more than a large-scale raid - the so-called *Battle of Cambrai*, was to officially last for just two weeks and a day, from November 20 until December 4, the Newfoundlanders to be directly involved at all times during that period.

The battle began well for the British who used tanks on a large scale for the first time; but opportunities were squandered, there were no troops available to exploit what was, admittedly, a hoped-for yet unexpected success, and by the close of the battle, the Germans had counter-attacked and the British had relinquished as much – more in places - territory as they had originally gained.



The 1st Battalion was again dealt with severely, in the vicinity of Marcoing, Masnières - where a Caribou stands today - and the Canal St-Quentin which flows through both places: of the total of five-hundred fifty-three officers and men who went into battle, two-hundred forty-eight had become casualties by the end of only the second day*.

**At five-hundred fifty-three all ranks – not counting the aforementioned ten per cent reserve - the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment even at the outset of the operation was operating at just over fifty per cent of establishment strength: not that it would have been any consolation had it been known, but a goodly number of battalions in all the British and Dominion forces were encountering the same problem.*

(Right above: *The Canal St-Quentin at Masnières, the crossing of which and the establishment of a bridgehead being the first objectives for the Newfoundlanders on November 20, the first day of the Battle of Cambrai – photograph from 2009*)



(Right: *The Caribou at Masnières stands on the high ground to the north of the community. The seizure of this terrain was the final objective of the 1st Battalion on November 20; however, whether its capture was ever achieved is at best controversial. – photograph from 2012*)

At the termination of the final fighting retreat of the *Battle of Cambrai*, on December 4 the Newfoundlanders of the 1st Battalion then left behind them the chaos and the exertions of it all – it had been a difficult period. The unit was subsequently billeted in the vicinity of the community of Humbercourt, a number of kilometres just to the south-west of Arras and not far from Berles-au-Bois whence they had gone into battle less than three weeks before.



(Right above: *A number of graves of soldiers from the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment in Marcoing Military Cemetery. Here, as is almost always the case elsewhere, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, has identified them as being Canadian. – photograph from 2010*)

The Newfoundland Battalion remained there at Humbercourt until December 18 when it marched to Fressin, some fifty kilometres to the north-west. There the unit was to spend both Christmas and New Year. The weather obliged and even allowed the Newfoundlanders some snow - a bit too much at times apparently.

At the beginning of January of 1918, and after that snowy Christmas period spent to the west of Arras and withdrawn from the front, the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was to be ordered into Belgium, to the *Ypres Salient*, for a third time.



There, like the other British and Empire troops in the area, they were to spend much of their time building and strengthening defences.

(Right above: *By 1918 Ypres was looking like this; some of these broken buildings had been a school which had served as a shelter for troops in the earlier days of the conflict. – from a vintage post-card*)

Meanwhile, while the Allies built their defences, by the beginning of 1918 the Germans were preparing for a final effort to win the War: the Allies were exhausted and lacking manpower after their exertions of 1917 - the British had fought three campaigns that previous year and some units of the French Army had mutinied.

On the other hand, the Germans now had available the extra divisions that their victory over the Russians in the East had given them. It was expected that the Germans would launch a spring offensive. While they were waiting, the Newfoundlanders continued to dig.



(Right: *countryside in-between Zonnebeke and Passchendaele (today Passendale) in the vicinity of where the Newfoundlanders were stationed in March and early April of 1918 – photograph from 2011*)

The Germans did as was expected of them. Ludendorff's armies had already launched a powerful thrust on March 21, the first day of that spring of 1918, having struck at first in the area of *the Somme*, there to overrun the battlefields of 1916 and beyond; for a while their advance had seemed unstoppable. Then it slowed, but now a second offensive, *Georgette*, was launched in the northern sector of the front, in Flanders, where the Newfoundlanders were stationed: the date was April 9. Within two days the situation of the Allies was desperate.



(Right above: *British troops on the retreat in Flanders in April of 1918 – from Illustration*)

(continued)

On the day after the first heavy bombardments, April 10, as the Germans approached the towns of Armentières and Nieppe, troops were deployed to meet them. The Newfoundlanders, having been due to come out of the line and to move back to the area of *the Somme*, were instead to board buses at three o'clock in the afternoon whereupon they were directed southward, towards the border town of Nieppe. They were in action, attempting to stem this latest offensive, three hours later.



(Right above: *The area of La Crêche - the buildings in the background - where the Newfoundlanders de-bussed on April 10 to meet the Germans in the area of Steenwerck and its railway station – photograph from 2010.*)

The British were pushed back to the frontier area of France and Belgium. On the 12th of April the 1st Battalion, fighting in companies rather than as a single entity, was making a series of stands.

On April 12-13 – the dates in the 1st Battalion's War Diary are not clear - during the defensive stand near the De Seule crossroads on the Franco-Belgian border, one platoon of 'C' Company was obliterated while trying to check the German advance. The remainder of 'C' Company took up defensive positions along a light railway line and, with 'A' Company, stopped a later enemy attack. 'B' and 'D' Companies – in a failed counter-attack on that evening - were equally heavily involved.



(Right above: *Ground just to the east of Bailleul where the 1st Battalion fought during the period April 12 to 21 – photograph from 2013*)

What exact role Private Handcock played at that time is not known (however, see immediately below) - it is recorded, however, that he was a soldier of 'C' Company - but from April 10 to 21 was to be a difficult eleven days for all of the 1st Battalion's personnel. Nevertheless, somehow, the German breakthrough never materialised and the front finally stabilised.

The Regimental War Diary cites *...the remainder of 'C' Coy. under Capt. Paterson, M.C. and Hqrs. took up a position along a light railway line and prepared to fight to a finish. ...there can be no doubt that it was Hqrs., 'A' & 'C' Coys. that by their resistance saved what would have been at least a very serious position for the whole 34th Division*.*



**The 88th Brigade – and therefore the Newfoundland Battalion – was to be seconded to the 34th Division from the 29th Division during this critical period.*

(continued)

(Preceding page: *These are the De Seule crossroads, lying astride the Franco-Belgian frontier, also the scene of fierce fighting involving the 1st Battalion on April 12 -13, 1918. Today there are several houses and a convenience store. – photograph from 2009(?)*)

During those days of April 12-13, 1918, possibly the time of the heaviest fighting for the Newfoundlanders, Private Handcock was reported in British records as both *wounded and missing** while serving with 'C' Company. It was not to be until some seven months later that any further information was received concerning him.

**The German prisoner-of-war file reports Private Handcock as having been captured on April 12.*

When the report came it was from London where an official German list dated June 14 had been received through the offices of the *Red Cross* in Geneva on or about June 25*: Private Handcock had indeed been injured by gun-fire – here reportedly on April 13 - and had sustained wounds to an arm and to the left leg; he had also incurred a fracture to his right wrist.

Then he had been taken prisoner.

**Apparently it was not until August 15 that the news reached his family from the Regimental Record Office in London.*



The eldest son of William Handcock, fisherman and Caroline Handcock (née *Garrett*)* - to whom he had allotted a daily sixty cents from his pay - of Salvage, Bonavista Bay, Newfoundland, he had at least three siblings: brothers Edwin, Wilfred, and Harold.

**The couple married December 8, 1897.*

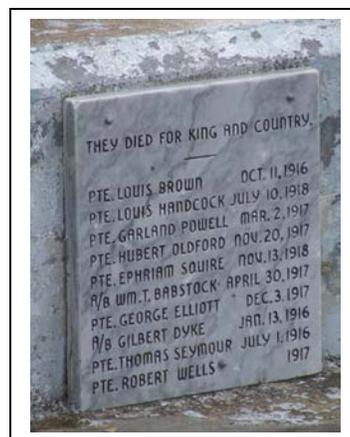
(Right above: *The photograph of Private Handcock is from the Provincial Archives.*)

Private Handcock was reported as having died in captivity in St. John's Hospital, Stendal, Saxony, at nine o'clock on the morning of July, 1918. The cause was possibly tuberculosis – the term *intestinal catarrh* is entered – but also sepsis. Private Handcock was buried in the camp cemetery at Stendal.

In late 1924, his remains were relocated to where they repose today.

Born on October 5, 1898, according to parish records and also to his POW documents, Lewis Handcock had enlisted at the age of eighteen years and six months.

(Right above and right: *The sacrifice of Private Handcock is honoured on the War Memorial in the community of Eastport*.* – photographs from 1913)



(continued)

Private Lewis Handcock was entitled to the British War Medal (on left) and also the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

