



Private Edward Hardy (Regimental Number 677) is interred in Bancourt British Cemetery – Grave reference VIII. M. 1.

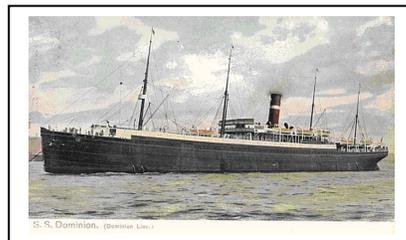
His occupation previous to military service recorded as that of a *dry-goods clerk* with *William A.B. Sclater* of *Water Street* and earning five dollars per week, Edward Hardy presented himself for medical examination on December 2 of 1914, at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* on *Harvey Road* in *St. John's*, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland. It was a procedure which was to pronounce him as...*Fit for Foreign Service*. He was a recruit of the *Second Draft*.

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Thirteen days later, on December 15, Edward Hardy was to return – perhaps in the meantime having made the journey home to Carbonear - to the *C.L.B. Armoury* in St. John's, there to enlist – engaged at the private soldier's daily rate of a single dollar a day plus a ten-cent *Field Allowance*. It appears that he was also to attest on that same December 15.

Now for Private Hardy, Number 677, there was to be a seven-week waiting period.

On the fourth day of February of 1915, the first reinforcements – this was 'C' Company - for the Newfoundland contingent – it was not yet at battalion strength - which by this time was serving in Scotland (see further below), were to embark via the sealing tender *Neptune* onto the *SS Dominion* – the vessel having anchored to the south of St. John's, off Bay Bulls, because of ice conditions.



The vessel was then to sail - and Private Hardy thus departed Newfoundland for overseas service - a day later again, on February 5, for passage to the United Kingdom.

(Right above: *The image of the steamer 'Dominion' - launched in 1894 as the 'Prussia' - is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site. An older vessel, she was to be requisitioned during the latter part of the Great War as a store and supply ship. She survived the conflict to be scrapped in 1922.*)

**There appears to be some confusion in some sources as to whether these troops were 'C' or 'D' Company. However, 'D' Company was to go overseas some time later on 'Stephano' to Halifax and then on 'Orduña' to Liverpool.*



(Right: *The photograph of personnel of 'C' Company on board the 'Neptune' on the way to the harbour at Bay Bulls is from the Provincial Archives.*)

Having disembarked in the English west-coast port-city of Liverpool, the Newfoundlanders entrained for Edinburgh, the first Newfoundland Regiment contingent having by this time been posted to the historic Castle in Scotland's capital city. There they were to provide the garrison, thus being the first unit from overseas ever to do so.



Private Hardy and the other new-comers reported *to duty* at Edinburgh Castle on February 16.

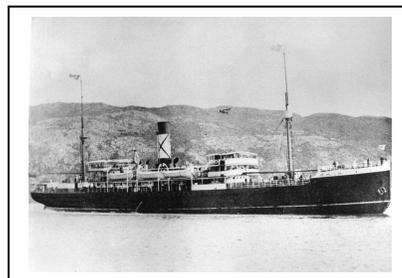
(Right above: *Edinburgh Castle dominates the city from its position on the summit of Castle Hill. – photograph from 2011*)

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(continued)

Five to six months before that time, in the late summer and early autumn of 1914 there had been a period of training of some 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 - 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 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.



The ship would sail for the United Kingdom on the morrow, October 4, 1914, to its rendezvous with the convoy carrying the 1st Canadian Division overseas, off the south coast of the Island of Newfoundland.

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

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



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 – and where 'C' Company and Private Hardy, as also cited beforehand, would arrive from Newfoundland on February 16 of 1915.

* * * * *

Some three months later, on May 11, and three weeks into spring – although in Scotland there was apparently still snow - the entire Newfoundlanders unit was ordered moved 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 received the reinforcements from home – 'F' Company which arrived on July 10, 1915 - that would bring its numbers up to that of British Army establishment battalion strength*. The now-formed 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was thus rendered eligible to be sent on 'active service'.

(Right: *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*)

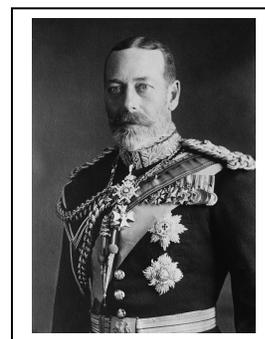


****This was approximately fifteen hundred, sufficient to furnish four ‘fighting’ companies, two re-enforcement companies and a headquarters staff.***

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 Aldershot. This force, now the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment, was thereupon attached to the 88th Brigade of the 29th Division of the (British) Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

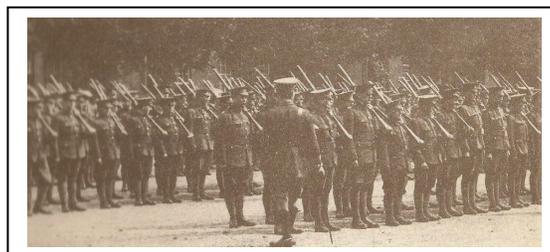
Meanwhile the two junior Companies, ‘E’ – last arrived at Edinburgh - and the aforementioned ‘F’, were ordered transferred to Scotland’s west coast, to Ayr, there to provide the nucleus of the newly-forming 2nd (Reserve) Battalion.

(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 – the photograph is from *Bain News Services* via the *Wikipedia* web-site.)



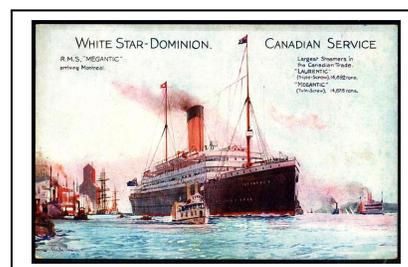
It was during this period at Aldershot, on August 15, that Private Hardy was prevailed upon to re-enlist, on this occasion for the *duration of the war.**

****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.***



(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, 1915, Private Hardy and the Newfoundland unit 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 landed 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.)*

(continued)

(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 adjacent: 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 below: A century later, the area, little changed from those far-off days, of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla, and where the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was to serve during the autumn of 1915 – photograph from 2011)



When the Newfoundlanders 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 proved to be little more than a debacle:



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.**

(Right above: No-Man's-Land at Suvla Bay as seen from the Newfoundland positions – from Provincial Archives)



(Right: An un-identified Newfoundland soldier in the trenches at Suvla Bay – 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.**

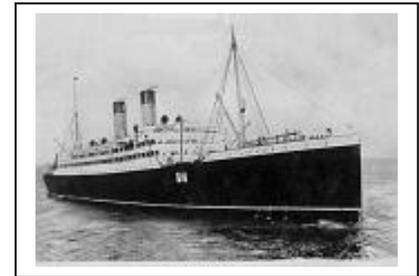
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On November 5, Private Hardy was evacuated from *Suvla Bay* by hospital ship and admitted into the 5th Canadian Stationary Hospital in Cairo suffering from chronic diarrhoea. From there he was apparently to be forwarded almost immediately – perhaps as early as the day of his admission - to the *Abbassia Rest Camp* in the outskirts of the city - and where he had spent time with the Newfoundland Battalion in early September some two months before.



(Right above: *the Egyptian capital city, Cairo, at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

At this point a somewhat incomplete record has him embarking for *Gallipoli* on November 29 on board His Majesty's Transport *Empress of Britain* – but then not re-joining his unit, the 1st Battalion, until January 26 of the New Year, 1916, by which time it had left the *Peninsula* and was encamped at Suez (see below).



(Right above: *The image of the Canadian Pacific vessel 'Empress of Britain' is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site. On the outbreak of the Great War she was requisitioned as an armed merchant-cruiser, but in 1915 was converted into a troop-carrier, a role in which she was employed for the remainder of the conflict. She was returned to her owners in 1919.*)

It may perhaps be speculated that, because of the impending total evacuation of the *Gallipoli Peninsula* by both the British and the French, that Private Hardy was returned to Egypt and to the Base Depot at Alexandria – perhaps having spent time on the Greek island of Lemnos – without having been re-attached to the Newfoundland unit at *Suvla Bay* – but this is not confirmed.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, during this period of Private Hardy's absence from his unit, things had been worsening at *Gallipoli** for the British in general and for the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment in particular.

**The French know the place as 'Les Dardanelles' while the Turks call it 'Çanakkale'.*

November 26 of 1915 would see perhaps the nadir of the Newfoundland Battalion's fortunes at *Gallipoli*; there was to be a freak rain-, snow- and ice-storm 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.

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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.

As the days, weeks and months passed at *Suvla Bay*, the British position there was to become more and more untenable and thus on the night of December 19-20, they abandoned the area – the Newfoundlanders, the only non-British unit to serve there, to form a part of the rear-guard.



Some of the Battalion personnel were to be evacuated to the nearby island of Imbros, some to Lemnos, further away; but in neither case would the respite be of a long duration; the 1st Battalion would be transferred only two days later to the area of *Cape Helles*, on the western tip of the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



(Right above: *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*)

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

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



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

**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.*

(Right above: *'W' Beach almost a century after its abandonment by British forces in 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 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 would then immediately be 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: 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: 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 boarded 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: British troops march through the port area of the French city of Marseilles. – from a vintage post-card)

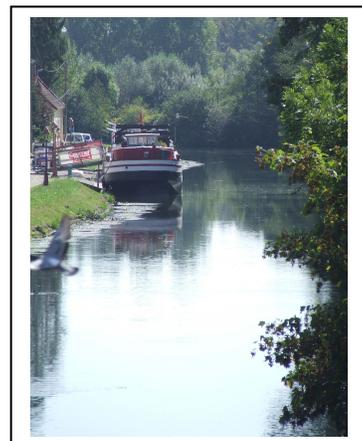
Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, the Newfoundland Battalion's train was to find its way to the small provincial town of *Pont-Rémy*, a thousand kilometres to the north of *Marseilles*. It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for the troops having inexcusably 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 then marched on their way from the station. But some three months later *the Somme* was to have 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 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*.



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 then ordered to move further up for the first time into forward positions on April 22.

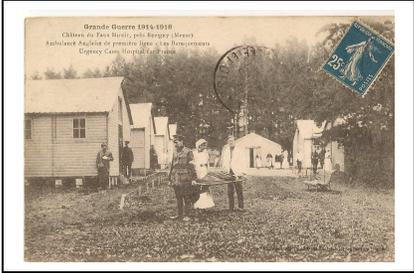
**It should be said that the Newfoundland Battalion and two-hundred men of the Bermuda Rifles who were serving at the time in the 2nd Lincolnshire Regiment Battalion, were then the only units at the Somme from outside the British Isles - true also on the day of the attack on July 1.*

(Right: A further part of the reconstituted battlefield, here showing the British front lines, in the Newfoundland Park at Beaumont-Hamel: today the wire serves only to keep the tourists out of the trenches. – photograph from 2010(?))



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.

In the case of Private Hardy, however, there was still to be *one* disagreeable incident to occur which interrupted the routines of those days and weeks: on June 15 he was obliged to seek medical attention for an ulcerated leg and was admitted into the 87th Field Ambulance. Apparently his condition was not overly serious and he reported back to *duty* on the 18th, just three days afterwards.



(Right above: A British field ambulance, of a more permanent nature than some – from a vintage post-card)

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*.



(Right above: *Beaumont-Hamel: 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)

(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.***



(Right: Wounded at the Somme being transported in hand-carts from the forward area for further medical attention – from Le Miroir)

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 in the annals of the British Army...and, perhaps just as depressing, the carnage of *the Somme* was to continue for the next four and a half months.

(Right: 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...?)

While on the nominal roll of 1st Battalion for July 1, 1916, the first day of *the Somme*, Private Hardy was not, however, to figure in the fighting with the 1st Battalion at Beaumont-Hamel. He may well have been among those of the ten per cent reserve – fourteen officers and eighty-three other ranks – held back at Louvencourt. This contingent did not reach the field until later that day when the fighting had subsided*.



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

****These men answered a roll call of the following day as did those who had fought the battle and survived it unscathed. Where the documentation shows 'with Battalion on July 4', this is apparently the date on which the roll calls of July 2 were eventually officially recorded.***



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 a 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 - 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 would then be a further two days before the unit 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*)



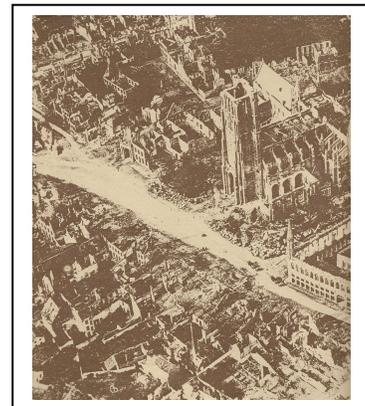
There, on July 11, a draft of one-hundred twenty-seven reinforcements – a second source cites one-hundred thirty – reported *to duty*. They were to be the first to arrive following the events at Beaumont-Hamel but even with this additional manpower having arrived, the Regimental War Diary records that 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.

On July 27-28 of 1916, the 1st Battalion - still under establishment battalion strength at only five-hundred fifty-four strong, even after further re-enforcement – having been ordered transferred north, was to enter into the *Kingdom of Belgium* for the first time.



It had been moved to be stationed in the *Ypres Salient*, one of the most consistently 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.

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



The Salient – close to the front lines for almost the entire fifty-two month conflict - was to be a relatively quiet sector during the time of the Newfoundland Battalion's posting there; yet the unit was nonetheless to incur casualties, a number – fifteen? - of them fatalities.

(continued)

(Preceding page: *An aerial view of Ypres, taken towards the end of 1916: it is described as the 'Ville morte'. – from Illustration*)

Then on October 8, after having served in Belgium for some ten weeks, the Newfoundland 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 that return to France, on October 12, 1916, the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment would again be ordered to the offensive; it was to be at a place called Gueudecourt, the vestiges of a village some dozen or so kilometres to the south-east of Beaumont-Hamel.

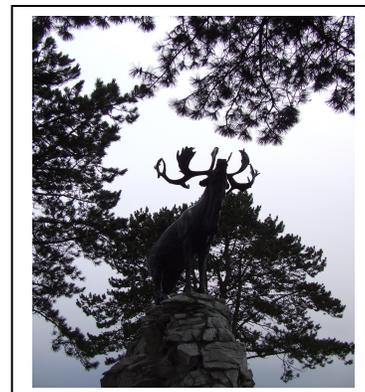


The encounter would – alas! - prove to be another ill-conceived and costly affair – two hundred and thirty-nine casualties all told - for little gain.

(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*)

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

The son of George Francis Hardy, labourer, and of Elizabeth B. Hardy (née *Reid*, also found as *Reed*)* of 60 (later 24?), Monroe Street, St. John's, he was also brother to at least to William-Francis (see below) to Gertude, to Lilian-Beatrice and to Marion.



**The couple was married on November 6, 1886.*

Private Hardy was at first recorded as *missing in action* on October 12, 1916, while serving with 'C' Company on the day of the assault at Gueudecourt. Some six months later he was officially *presumed dead*.

However, in March of 1918, it was subsequently reported that the remains of Private Hardy had been identified and buried...*two-and-a-half miles to the south-west of Bapaume...and thus his record was amended so as to read killed in action or died of wounds on or shortly after 12/10/1916.* Private Hardy was re-interred early in 1920, transferred from the original burial site to the cemetery where he rests today.



Edward Hardy had enlisted at the age of nineteen years: the year of his birth is recorded as 1895.

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His brother, William Frank Hardy (Private, Regimental Number 179), had died, *killed in action* on September 23, 1915 – one of the Newfoundland Battalion’s first casualties...*killed in action* - during the *Gallipoli Campaign*. Since that time he lies in the British Hill 10 Cemetery at *Suvla Bay* on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

(Preceding page: *Hill 10 Cemetery, Suvla Bay, wherein lies Private William Frank Hardy* – photograph from 2011)

Private Edward Hardy 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) (right).



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 9, 2023.