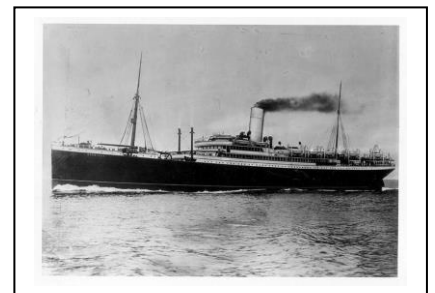




Private Sidney Harttree (Regimental Number 1827) is buried in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery – Grave reference VII. D. 19.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of an engineer, Sidney Harttree had also undergone previous military experience, having spent eighteen months serving in the 6th Welsh Territorials. A recruit of the Sixth Draft, he enlisted at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on September 13, 1915 – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 – and attested on that same day.

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



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

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

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

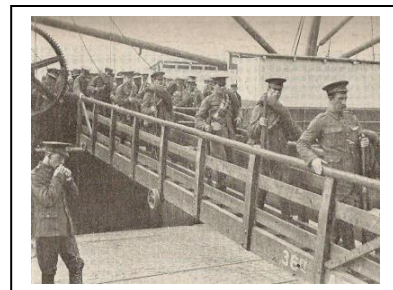


(Right above: *an aerial view of Ayr – probably from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough is to the right. – courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr*)

It was during this posting to the Regimental Depot that, on June 6, some five weeks before his departure to France on *active service*, Private Harttree was prevailed upon to re-enlist *for the duration of the War**.

**At the outset of the War, perhaps because it was felt by the authorities that it would be a conflict of short duration, the recruits enlisted for only a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was obviously going to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist.*

On July 9, the 8th Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr, Private Harttree among its ranks, passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton en route to the Continent. On the morrow, the 10th, the detachment disembarked in Rouen, capital city of Normandy, and site of the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot which had been established there. There the draft spent time in final training and organization* before proceeding on to its rendezvous with 1st Battalion.



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

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

(continued)

There must have been a sense of urgency at the time: 1st Battalion had suffered terribly at a place called Beaumont-Hamel on the morning of July 1, and on July 6 its depleted strength, as reported by the Regimental War Diary, still numbered no more than one-hundred sixty-eight *other ranks*, less than one-fifth of regulation battalion strength.

Private Harttree was one of the contingent of sixty *other ranks* to report *to duty* on July 24 – the War Diary says July 25 – in the small rural town of Beauval, far removed from the front. 1st Battalion had been there since only the day before and it was to stay there for only two more days before marching the twenty kilometres or so to Candas on the 26th to board a train.

On July 27-28 of 1916, 1st Battalion - still under battalion strength at only five-hundred fifty-four strong, even after re-enforcement - 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 re-enforce and to re-organize after the ordeal of Beaumont-Hamel. The Salient was relatively quiet during the time of the Newfoundlanders' posting there, yet they nonetheless incurred casualties, a number of them fatal.



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

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



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

On August 4 it was reported in the Regimental War Diary that five men had been struck by shell-fire in the school where they had been billeted*. One of them was Private Harttree who had incurred multiple shrapnel wounds to the head. He was immediately evacuated to the 10th Casualty Clearing Station at the Rémy Siding, Poperinghe, a short distance to the west of Ypres.

**This was 'C' Company's billet: even though Private Harttree was later referred to officially as being with the Re-enforcement Company that would have only been temporary.*

The son of Thomas Harttree and Mary Ann Harttree of Swansea, South Wales – his own address recorded as 208 South First Street, Perth Amboy, New Jersey USA - he was also brother to at least Ivor. This brother lived in Perth Amboy with an aunt, a Mrs. Jane Stevens, to whom Private Harttree had allocated a daily allowance of twenty cents and also willed his all.



He was reported as having *died of wounds* on that same day, August 3, 1916, in the same 10th CCS and was buried, also on August 3, by a Reverend W. J. Baxter.

Sidney Harttree had enlisted at the age of twenty-two years and seven months.

(Right above: *Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery towards the end of the War – from Miroir(?)*)

Private Sidney Harttree was eligible for the British War Medal (on left) and also the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

