



**Private Adolphus Garrett Heath (Regimental Number 1166) is interred in Earlsfield (Wandsworth) Cemetery – Grave reference Nfld. 772.**

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *fisherman* earning an annual three-hundred dollars, Adolphus Garrett Heath presented himself for medical examination at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* on Harvey Road in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on February 11 of the year 1915. It was a procedure which was to pronounce him as...*Fit for Foreign Service*.

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There was to be a wait of only six days following his medical assessment, on February 17, before he returned to the *CLB Armoury* to enlist – engaged at the private soldier’s rate of a single dollar per diem plus a daily ten-cent *Field Allowance*.

Enlistment was then to be followed by another wait of twelve days, until March 1, whereupon the concluding formality of attestation would come to pass. With his swearing of the *Oath of Allegiance* on that date, Adolphus Garrett Heath was officially to become...a *soldier of the King*.

For Private Heath, Number 1166, there was now to be yet a further, but final, waiting period of three weeks less two days before he would be summoned to...overseas service. How he occupied himself during that time is not recorded among his papers; he may, of course, have temporarily returned to work, but this is only speculation.



(Right above: *The image of the Bowring Brothers’ vessel ‘Stephano’, sister-ship of ‘Florizel’, as she passes through ‘the Narrows’ of St. John’s Harbour is from the Provincial Archives.*)

Unlike the two previous contingents to have departed Newfoundland (see below) for...overseas service, Private Heath’s ‘D’ Company was not to sail directly to the United Kingdom. On March 20 it, he a soldier of the Number 7 Platoon, embarked onto the Bowring-Brothers’ vessel *Stephano* for the short voyage to Halifax, capital city of the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, where it was thereupon to board a second vessel, the newly-launched *Orduña* for the trans-Atlantic crossing\*.



(Right above: *The image of Orduña is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site. The vessel was not to be requisitioned during the Great War but would be used by the Cunard Company to operate on its commercial service between Liverpool and New York.*)

Having then sailed from Nova Scotia on March 22 for Liverpool, Private Heath and his draft landed there eight days later, on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Once disembarked in Liverpool, the two-hundred fifty men and officers of ‘D’ Company were thereupon transported on the same date by train directly to Edinburgh, the Scottish capital, to join the Newfoundland Regiment’s ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’ Companies.

These units were by this time stationed at the historic Castle, ‘A’ and ‘B’ having recently been posted from Fort George and ‘C’ having arrived directly from home (see further below). After ‘D’ Company’s arrival at the end of that month of March, the Newfoundlanders were now to remain at Edinburgh for the following six weeks.



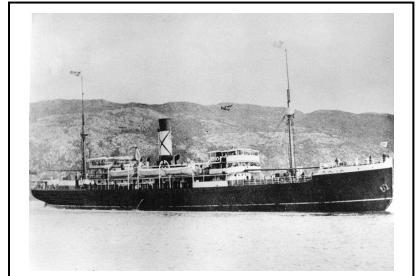
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(Preceding page: *From its vantage point on Castle Hill, the venerable fortress overlooks the city of Edinburgh where in 1915 the Newfoundlanders were to provide the first garrison to be drawn from outside the British Isles.* – photograph from 2011)

\* \* \* \* \*

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 – these 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 a recruit's 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 had sailed for the United Kingdom on the morrow, October 4, 1914, to its rendezvous with the convoy carrying the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division overseas, off the south coast of the Island.



(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.

Only days after 'A' and 'B' Companies had taken up their posting there, on February 16 'C' Company – the first re-enforcements for the original contingent\* - would arrive directly from Newfoundland.

*\*This contingent, while a part of the Newfoundland Regiment, was not yet a battalion and would not be so for a further five months – as will be seen below.*

\* \* \* \* \*

As seen in a previous paragraph, for the month of April and the first days of May of 1915, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies, now united, were to furnish the garrison – the first troops from outside the British Isles to do so - of the guardian of Scotland's capital city. Then,

during the first week of May, 'E' Company was to report there...to duty...from home. Four days later again, on May 11, the Newfoundland contingent was ordered elsewhere.

On that day, some seven weeks into spring – although in Scotland there was apparently still snow - the entire Newfoundland unit was dispatched 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 would eventually receive the re-enforcements 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 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was thus available 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 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 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment, was thereupon attached to the 88<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 29<sup>th</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion.



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

It was while the Newfoundland Battalion was in training during those weeks at Aldershot, on August 15 that Private Heath would be prevailed upon to enlist for the duration of the conflict.

\**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. Later recruits signed on for the 'Duration' at the time of their enlistment.*



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(Preceding page: Some of the personnel of 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 Newfoundlanders* by Col. G.W.L. Nicholson, C.D.)

(Right: 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.)

On August 20, 1915, Private Hearn and his 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 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was to land at *Suvla Bay* on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



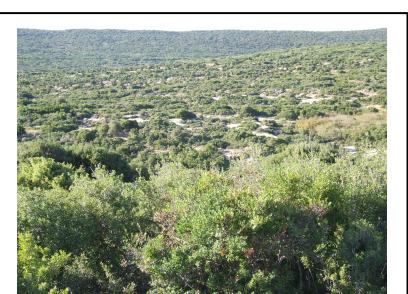
(Right above: Kangaroo Beach, where the officers and men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Newfoundland Regiment, landed on the night of September 19-20, 1915, is to be seen in the distance at the far end of Suvla Bay. The remains of a landing-craft are still clearly visible in the foreground on 'A' Beach. – 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 Bay, and where the 1<sup>st</sup> 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*, was proving to be little more than a debacle:

(continued)

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



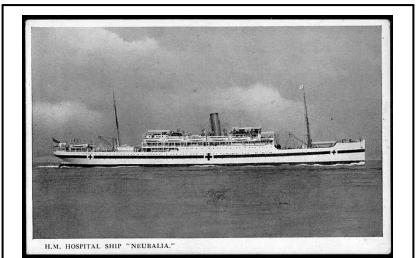
(Right above: *No-Man's-Land at Suvla Bay as seen from the Newfoundland positions* – from Provincial Archives)

(Right below: *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.*

\* \* \* \* \*

On October 24, five weeks after having set foot onto the sand and stone – mostly the latter – of *Kangaroo Beach*, Private Heath was taken on board His Majesty's Hospital Ship *Neuralia* - possibly having first been ferried to *Mudros Bay* on the Greek island of Lemnos some seventy kilometres distant. He was suffering from pyrexia (high fever) of which the cause appears not to have been diagnosed at the time.



He was thereupon evacuated to the British-held Mediterranean island of Malta, to St. Patrick's Hospital, where he was admitted on October 30, by then diagnosed as rheumatic.

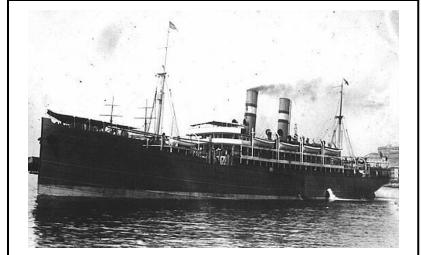
(Right above: *The image of HMHS 'Neuralia'*, here clad in her war-time hospital-ship garb, is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site. The vessel, the largest of the British India fleet at the time of her launching in 1912, was requisitioned in June of 1915 and converted for medical service, capable of accommodation well over six-hundred sick and wounded. 'Neuralia' was to serve as a hospital ship and then as an ambulance transport until July of 1919 when she was returned to her owners.)



(Right above: *Numerous former British military medical establishments today stand disused and abandoned on the now-independent – since 1964 - island of Malta.* - photograph from 2011)

On December 1 or 2, almost five weeks later, Private Heath was taken on board another hospital ship, on this occasion the *Regina d'Italia*, for the eight-day voyage back to the United Kingdom.

(Right: The image of the 'Regina d'Italia' is also from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site. The vessel had been built in Great Britain for the Italian company 'Lloyd Sabaudo' to service commercial routes between Italy and the Americas. During the Great War she was converted for use as a troop-transport and later as a hospital ship to be employed mainly in the Mediterranean. Having survived the conflict she recommenced her pre-War duties and also carried migrants to Australia. She was scrapped in 1928.)

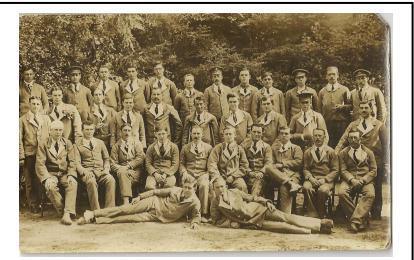


Private Heath was disembarked in England on or about December 10 and immediately transferred to and admitted into the 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital in the Borough of Wandsworth on the same December 10, having by that time been diagnosed as with typhoid (enteric) fever.

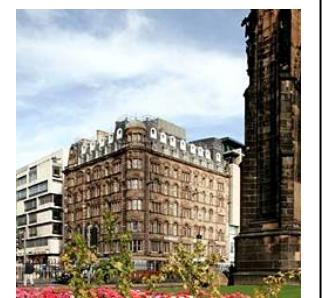
(Right: The main building of what was to become the 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital during the Great War had originally been opened, on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1859, as a home for the orphaned daughters of British soldiers, sailors and marines. – photograph from 2010)



(Right: A party of Newfoundland patients, dressed in hospital uniform but otherwise unfortunately unidentified, is seen here convalescing in the grounds of the 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital at Wandsworth – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo)



After having spent the best part of two weeks at Wandsworth, Private Heath was forwarded to Addington Park Convalescent Home, also on the outskirts of London - on December 23 - for recuperation. As he was recovering from typhoid (enteric) fever, he was likely the recipient of a six-week convalescent period – to which, in the case of Private Heath, appears to have been added the customary ten-day post-hospital furlough from February 2 to February 10 spent at the Waverley Hotel in Edinburgh.



This was immediately by the almost inevitable posting to the Regimental Depot where Private Heath reported...to duty...on that February 10.

(Right above: The image of the Waverley Hotel in Edinburgh is from the Wikipedia web-site. This small chain of hotels was to become popular with those in uniform during the Great War – and afterwards - because of the special rates which were offered by its owners to service personnel.)

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At the end of the summer of 1915, the once-Royal Borough of Ayr on Scotland's west coast was to begin to serve as the overseas base for the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment from where – as of November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 - re-enforcement drafts from home were to be despatched to bolster the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's numbers, at first to the Middle East and then later to the *Western Front*.



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

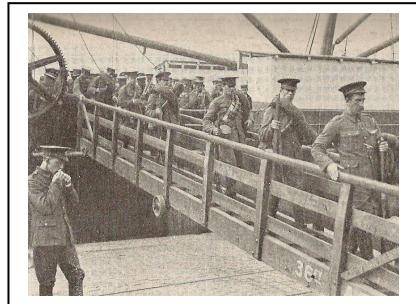


(Right: *The High Street in Ayr as shown on a postcard of the time, the imposing Wallace Tower – it stands to this day (2017) – dominating the scene* – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs Lillian Tibbo.

Having been deemed as...*Fit for Duty*...on March 20 of 1916, Private Heath was a soldier of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr which passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton just eight days later, on March 28 of 1916, to board His Majesty's Transport *Archangel* en route to the *Western Front*. Two days following, on the 30<sup>th</sup>, the contingent landed in Rouen, capital city of Normandy and site of the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot.



The Newfoundland detachment was to immediately proceed to the nearby Base Depot for several days of final training and organization\*.



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

(Right: *British troops disembark earlier in the War 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, Étaples, Le Havre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

On April 15, a re-enforcement draft from Rouen of two-hundred eleven other ranks – accompanied by two officers – reported...to duty...with the Newfoundland Battalion which was by that time billeted in the village of Englebelmer some three kilometres behind the lines of the *Western Front*. Private Heath was among that number.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the meantime, during the first weeks of Private Heath's absence from the Battalion in the autumn of 1915, conditions and the military situation on the *Gallipoli Peninsula* were continuing to deteriorate for the British and French-led forces.

November 26 would see the nadir of the Newfoundland Battalion's fortunes there; 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.

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.

(Right: *This is Anzac Bay in the fore-ground with the Salt Lake in the centre further away. The bottom of Suvla Bay is just to be seen on the left and adjacent to the Salt Lake, and further away again. The hills in the distance and the ones from which this photograph was taken were held by the Turks and formed a horse-shoe around the plain surrounding the Salt Lake - which was where the British and Newfoundlanders were stationed.* – photograph from 2011)



By this time the situation there was daily becoming more and more untenable, thus on the night of December 19-20, the British had abandoned the entire 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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.*

*(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 evacuation of the *Gallipoli Peninsula*, the Newfoundland unit had been ordered to the Egyptian port-city of Alexandria. On January 14, the Australian Expeditionary Force Transport *Nestor* had arrived there with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion on board. The vessel was to sail just after mid-day on the 16<sup>th</sup>, on its way southwards down the Suez Canal to Port Suez where she arrived on the morrow and where the Newfoundlanders landed and marched to their encampment.



There they were to await further orders since, at the time, the subsequent destination of the British 29<sup>th</sup> Division had yet to be decided\*.

*(Right above: The image of the Blue Funnel Line vessel *Nestor* is from the [Shipspotting.com](#) web-site. The vessel was launched and fitted in 1912-1913 and was to serve much of her commercial life until 1950 plying the routes between Britain and Australia. During the Great War she served mainly in the transport of Australian troops and was requisitioned once again in 1940 for government service in the Second World War. In 1950 she was broken up.)*

*\*Bulgaria had entered the conflict on the side of the Central Powers, and Salonika was already becoming a theatre of war.*

*(Right: The British destroy their supplies during the final evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The men of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 below: Port Tewfiq at the south end of the Suez Canal 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 Marseille, on March 22.

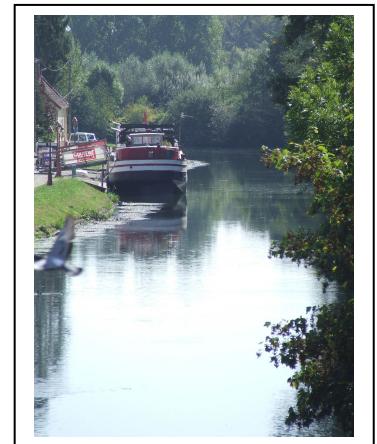
(Right: *British troops march through the port area of the French city of Marseille*. – from a vintage post-card)



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 Marseille. It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for the troops having inexplicably 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 re-enforcements from Scotland via Rouen and, in two days' time, would be introduced into the communication trenches of the *Western Front*.

\* \* \* \* \*

Among those aforementioned...re-enforcements from Scotland via Rouen...was to be found, as related in an earlier paragraph, Private Heath.



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 were then to 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.*

(Preceding page: A part of the re-constructed trench system 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.



(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)

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: 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 above: 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 greatest disaster ever in the annals of the British Army...and, perhaps just as depressing, the carnage of *the Somme* was to continue for the following four and a half months.

(Right above: Beaumont-Hamel: a commune, not a village. – photos 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...?)

Private Heath is next recorded as being *with Battalion* on July 4. He is also recorded as *with the Newfoundland Battalion* during the fighting on July 1 at Beaumont-Hamel and as being one of the few to leave the field unscathed. Both of these records are correct. Those who survived the battle and who answered that roll call of the morning of July 2 were not officially recorded as having done so until July 4\*. The confusion in the offices at that time must have been outweighed only by that *in the field*.

\**The same is true for the ten per cent Reserve who were sent forward only late in the day – as well as for sundry personnel employed elsewhere but who were on the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's nominal roll. All those files read... 'with Batt. 4/7/16'.*

After the events of that morning of July 1, 1916, such was then 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 - thus remained in the trenches perhaps fearing the worst, and at night searching for the wounded and burying the dead. It would be July 6 before the Newfoundlanders were relieved from the forward area and ordered withdrawn to Englebelmer.

It would then be a further two days before the unit marched further again to the rear area and to their 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 re-enforcements – 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 man-power having reported, the Regimental War Diary records that on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July, 1916, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion still numbered only... 11 officers and 260 rifles...after the holocaust of Beaumont-Hamel, just one-quarter of establishment battalion strength.

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On July 27-28 of 1916, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion - still under establishment battalion strength at only five-hundred fifty-four strong, even after further re-enforcement – moved north and entered into the *Kingdom of 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.

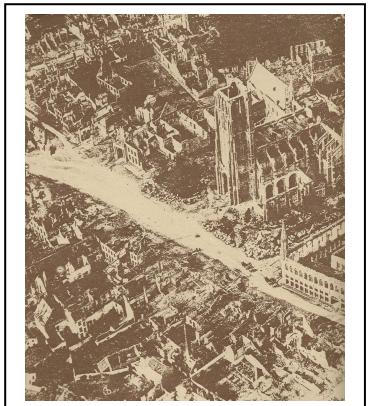
(Right: *The entrance to 'A' Company's quarters – obviously renovated since that time - in the ramparts of the city of Ypres when it was posted there in 1916 – photograph from 2010*)



*The Salient* – close to the front lines for almost the entire fifty-two month 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 in Belgium for some ten weeks, the Newfoundland Battalion, having been ordered to return south, moved back into France and back into the area of – and the battle of – *the Somme*.

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



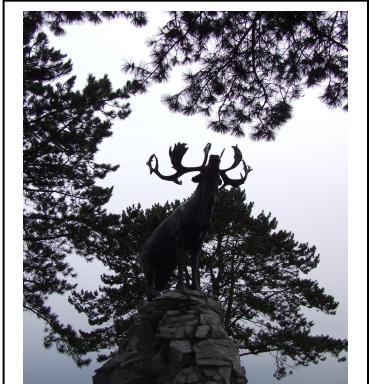
Four days after that return to France, on October 12, 1916, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was again to be ordered to the offensive; it was at a place called Gueudecourt, the vestiges of a village some dozen or so kilometres to the south-east of Beaumont-Hamel.

The encounter proved 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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*)

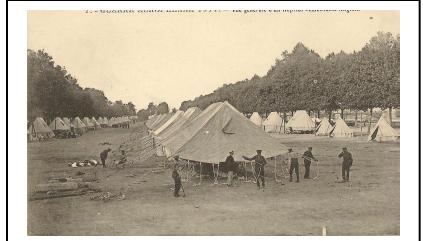
(Right: *The Caribou at Gueudecourt stands at the furthest point of the Newfoundland Battalion's advance of October 12, 1916. – photograph from 2012*)



(continued)

Private Heath was wounded while serving with 'D' Company at Gueudecourt, having incurred injuries inflicted by artillery fire to his left thigh and femur. At first evacuated into the 38<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station at Heilly – but not until October 14 - on October 15 he was transferred to the 23<sup>rd</sup> General Hospital at Étaples.

(Right: *A British casualty clearing station – the one pictured here under canvas for mobility if and whenever the necessity were to arise – being established somewhere in France during the early years of the War: Other such medical establishments were often of a much more permanent nature. - from a vintage post-card)*



Private Heath was transported back to England on October 19 on board His Majesty's Hospital Ship *Cambria*, before being admitted into hospital at Wandsworth once more, on that same date.

(Right: *The image of the SS 'Cambria', here shown in the livery of the 'London and North Western Railway' for whom she was constructed in 1897, is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site. In August of 1914 the vessel was requisitioned by the British Admiralty for use as an armed boarding vessel and a year later was converted to serve as a hospital ship. Having survived the conflict, she was returned to her owners in early 1919. Six years afterwards, in 1925, 'Cambria' was broken up.)*



Some six months later, on April 23 of the following year and still under medical attention at the 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital, Private Heath was pronounced as being seriously ill.

The son of William Henry Heath, former fisherman, deceased March 21, 1909, and of Susannah Heath (née Sharp\*, deceased February 27, 1905) of Ward's Harbour (today Beaumont North) - his own place of residence being recorded simply as Long Island, Green Bay – he was also brother to Rhoda of Woodside Avenue, New York (later of 217, 21<sup>st</sup> Street, College Point, Long Island, New York); to Josiah – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of sixty cents from his pay, and to whom he had willed his everything – resident of the same Woodside Avenue; and to Eliza Lila.

\*The couple had married on September 11, 1886.

Private Heath was reported as having...died of wounds...at the 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital, Wandsworth, on April 24, 1917, and from infection of the fractured neck of the femur. Four days later, at eight-thirty in the morning, he was borne on a horse-drawn gun-carriage, the coffin then draped with the Newfoundland flag, and buried with full military honours:

(continued)

'Some Australians, New-Zealanders and Newfoundlanders who had been wardmates of the late Pte. Heath gathered at the grave to pay their last respects. Three came on crutches, others had their heads of arms bandaged. They spoke of the qualities which had endeared the Newfoundland soldier to them.'

Adolphus Garrett Heath had enlisted at the declared age of eighteen years: date of birth at Burnt Harbour, Newfoundland, September 9, 1896 (from the Newfoundland Birth Register).

(Right above: *The War Memorial in the community of Beaumont North (Ward's Harbour) honours the sacrifice of Private Heath.* – photograph from 2014)

Private Adolphus Garrett Heath 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).



Woodside Ave.

Woodside, LI, NY  
May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1920

Dear Sir

I am addressing these few lines in regards to the inscription I have placed in the Cemetery Register which you have sent me to fill in.

In regards to these words:

I am taking my father's place...

These are the words of my brother when I asked him why he enlisted so soon.

I do appreciate the respect that has been paid to my Dear Brother very, very much.

Yours truly

Rhoda Heath

**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](mailto:criceadam@yahoo.ca).  
Last updated – January 30, 2023.**