



Lieutenant Hubert Clinton Herder (Regimental Number 3*) lies in Y Ravine Cemetery – Grave reference C. 69.

**Officers who were eventually promoted from the ranks may be identified from their Regimental Number. Other officers who were not from the ranks received the King's Commission, or in the case of those in the Newfoundland Regiment, an Imperial Commission, and were not considered as enlisted. These officers thus had no Regimental Number allotted to them.*

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

His occupation prior to enlistment recorded as that of a student at *Methodist College* in St. John’s at the time, Hubert Clinton Herder left his studies as an *agriculturist* to become a recruit of the First Draft.

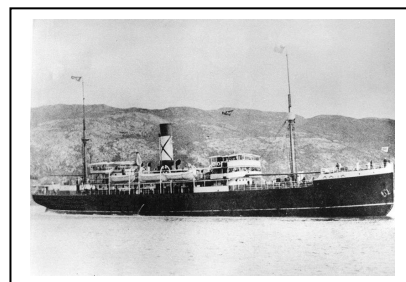
Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury on Harvey Road in St. John’s, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, a procedure which was to pronounce him as...*Fit for Foreign Service*, he – enlisted at the daily private soldier’s rate of \$1.10, including a daily ten-cent field allowance, on September 2, 1914.

By the time that he was to attest just over one month later, on October 1, he had apparently already been promoted from private soldier to the rank of lance corporal, on the 21st day of September.

Corporal Herder embarked on October 3 onto the *Bowring Brothers* vessel *Florizel* awaiting the first Newfoundland contingent – to become known to history as the *First Five Hundred* and also as the *Blue Puttees* - in St. John’s Harbour.

The ship would not sail for the United Kingdom until the following day, October 4, as, off the southern coast of the Island, it was to rendezvous with the convoy carrying the 1st Canadian Division overseas.

(Right: *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 the Newfoundland contingent was to train in several venues: firstly in southern England on the Salisbury Plain; then in Scotland firstly at Fort George – on the Moray Firth close to Inverness; at Edinburgh where it was to garrison the Castle, the first troops from outside the British Isles to do so; and later again at the tented *Stobs Camp* near to the town of Hawick to the south-east of Edinburgh.

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

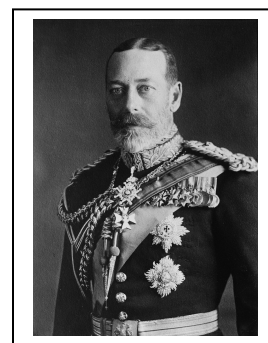


During this period in the United Kingdom, Lance Corporal Herder received further advancement on two occasions: on November 15 of 1914 while on the Salisbury Plain, he had put up his corporal’s stripe.

Then, by the time that the Newfoundlanders had departed to *Stobs Camp* from Edinburgh Castle on May 11, Corporal Herder had received an Imperial Commission and had been appointed to the rank of Second Lieutenant on April 5.

At the beginning of that August of 1915, the four senior Companies, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', were then to be sent south-wards to undergo a final two weeks of training, as well as an inspection by the King, at Aldershot. Meanwhile the two junior Companies, the later-arrived 'E' and 'F"', would be sent to Scotland's west coast, to Ayr, where they were to provide the nucleus of the newly-forming 2nd (Reserve) Battalion.

(Right below: *George V, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India* – photograph from *Bain News Services via Wikipedia*)



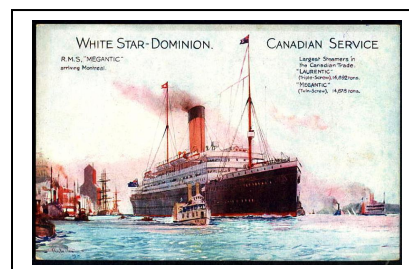
**On July 10, 1915, 'F' Company had arrived at Stobs Camp from Newfoundland, its personnel raising the numbers of the unit to battalion establishment strength, and thus permitting it to be ordered to active service.*

The 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment, comprising those four Companies, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', was thereupon attached to the 88th Brigade of the 29th Division of the (British) Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

(Right: *Some of the personnel of 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies of the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment at Aldershot during that August of 1915* – from *The Fighting Newfoundlander* by Col. G.W.L. Nicholson, C.D.)



(Right below: *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, Second Lieutenant Herder and his comrades-in-arms 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 where, a month later – having spent two weeks billeted in British barracks in the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, the 1st Battalion disembarked at *Suvla Bay* on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



(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*)

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Second Lieutenant Herder, however, was not to serve on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.

Certain officers and *other ranks* of the Newfoundland Battalion's *Transport Section* had been seconded to one of several composite battalions formed by the British High Command in Egypt to counter the Senussi* uprising on the western frontiers of the country.

Thus Second Lieutenant Herder was to remain at the Sidi Bishr Base Depot at the port city of Alexandria. He was to serve as *Transport Officer* until November of that year - on the 23rd of which month he received promotion to the rank of First Lieutenant (antedated to October 15) – at which time he was sent to serve in the area of the Egyptian western frontier, to remain there until February of 1916.



**The Senussi was a religious leader – his followers were referred to by the same name – who had a history of insurrection in the area.*

(Right above: *One of the principal thoroughfares of the city of Alexandria at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

Lieutenant Herder would eventually re-join the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment on the 22nd of February at Suez, at the southern end of the Canal.

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During the period of Second Lieutenant Herder's secondment to the composite battalions the Newfoundland unit had served on the Gallipoli Peninsula and had subsequently withdrawn from there.

It had stated on the night of September 19-20 when the 1st Battalion had landed on the so-designated Kangaroo Beach at Suvla Bay.



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



(continued)

Not only in the area where the Newfoundland Battalion was to serve but, even since the very first days of the operation in April of 1915, the entire *Gallipoli Campaign*, including the operation at *Suvla Bay*, would prove 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: *An un-identified Newfoundland soldier in the trenches at Suvla Bay – from the 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.*

November 26 had seen the nadir of the Newfoundland Battalion's fortunes during the *Gallipoli Campaign*. A freak rain-, snow- and ice-storm had struck the *Suvla Bay* area on that day and the subsequent floods had wreaked havoc amongst the forces of both sides. For several days, survival from the wrath of Nature rather than from that of the enemy was to be the priority.

There were to be many casualties in both camps, 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 had been those afflicted by trench-foot and by frost-bite but the end of the *Gallipoli Campaign* had already been in sight. After the storm, the Newfoundlanders were to remain stationed at *Suvla Bay* for only a further twenty-five days.

By that time they were to have served there for exactly three months to the day.

On the night of December 19-20, the British had abandoned the area of *Suvla Bay* – the Newfoundlanders, the only non-British unit to serve there, to form a part of the rear-guard.

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

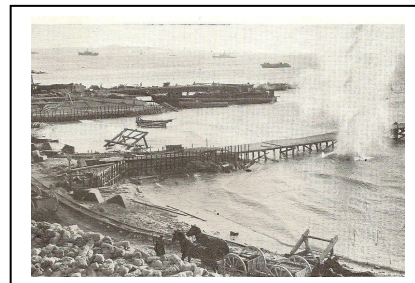


(Right above: *Cape Helles as seen from the Turkish positions on the misnamed Achi Baba, positions which were never breached. The Newfoundland positions were to the right-hand side of the picture. – photograph from 2011*)

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

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

(Right: 'W' Beach at Cape Helles as it was only days before the final British evacuation in January of 1916 – 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: The same '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)



When the British had evacuated the entire *Gallipoli Peninsula* in January of 1916, the Newfoundland Battalion was to be ordered to the Egyptian port-city Alexandria, having arrived there on the 15th of that month.

The Newfoundlanders were then to be immediately transferred southward to 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.*

As recorded further above, it was at the Newfoundland camp in the vicinity of Suez that Lieutenant Herder was to report back to his Battalion

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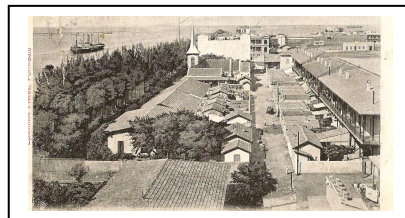
(Right: *The British destroy their supplies during the final evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The men of the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment were among the last to leave on two occasions, at both Suvla Bay and Cape Helles.* – photograph taken from the battleship *Cornwallis* from Illustration)



After a two-month interim spent in the vicinity of Port Suez, the almost six-hundred officers and *other ranks* of the 1st Battalion were now to board His Majesty's Transport *Alaunia* at Port Tewfiq on March 14 to sail up 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.

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



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

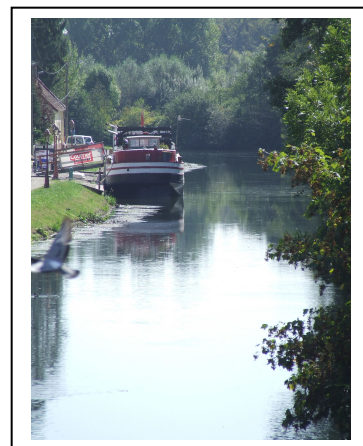


Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, the Newfoundland Battalion's train had found its way to the small provincial town of Pont-Rémy, a thousand kilometres to the north of Marseilles. It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for the troops having travelled unused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

On April 13, the 1st Battalion had marched into the village of Englebelmer – perhaps some fifty kilometres in all from Pont-Rémy - where they 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*.



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

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

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



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, *the Somme*, that flowed – and still does so today – through the region.

(Preceding page: *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: *Hawthorn Ridge Cemetery Number 2 in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2009(?)*)

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



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

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



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

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

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

The son of William James Herder, proprietor of the *Evening Telegram* and Elizabeth Herder (née *Barnes*) of St. John's, he was also brother to Arthur-John, Ralph, James, William, Douglas and Herbert-Augustus.

Lieutenant Herder was reported as having been *killed in action* on July 1, 1916, during the fighting on the first day of *the Somme*, on the field at Beaumont-Hamel.

Hubert Clinton Herder had enlisted at twenty-three years of age: date of birth in St. John's, Newfoundland, July 29, 1891 (from the Newfoundland Birth Register).



'...Captain Nunns fell shot in the leg. He called to one of his subalterns, Lieutenant Hubert Herder, to take charge of the Company ('B' Company) and to carry on. Snatching up rifle and bayonet, from his platoon sergeant who had just been hit, Herder shouted to his men 'Come on boys!', and led them forward – only to be mortally wounded shortly afterwards.' – excerpt from *The Fighting Newfoundlander*



His brother, Lieutenant Arthur John Herder, was to die on December 1, 1917, from wounds incurred during the closing days of the *Battle of Cambrai*. He lies in Tincourt British Cemetery (see elsewhere in these files).

Another brother, Lieutenant Ralph Herder, Regimental Number 34, was wounded at Beaumont-Hamel on that July 1, 1916, and again at Monchy-le-Preux in April of 1917. He survived the conflict.



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

(*The photograph of Private Herder is from the Provincial Archives.*)

(Right above: *A family memorial to be found in the General Protestant Cemetery in St. John's commemorates the sacrifice of Lieutenant Herder. – photograph from 2015*)

Lieutenant Hubert Clinton Herder was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, as well as to the British War Medal (centre) and 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 11, 2023.