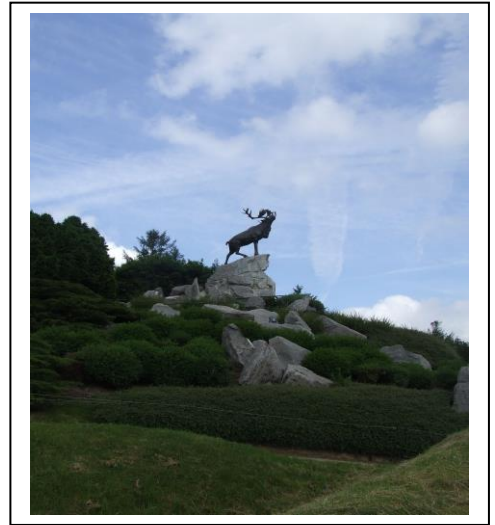




Private Wallace Herder (Regimental Number 2274), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a clerk, Wallace Herder was a recruit of the Ninth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on March 15 of 1916, he then enlisted *for the duration of the war* – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 – on the following day, before attesting two days later again, on March 18.



On May 9 Private Herder was promoted to the rank of lance-corporal; a month after that, on June 9, he was elevated to the rank of acting corporal. But perhaps the responsibilities of a non-commissioned officer were not to his liking for, apparently by his own request, he was reduced to the rank of private soldier on June 28.

Private Herder sailed from St. John's on July 19 on board His Majesty's Transport *Sicilian*\* (right). The ship - refitted some ten years previously to carry well over one thousand passengers - had left the Canadian port of Montreal on July 16, carrying Canadian military personnel.



It is likely that the troops disembarked in the English west-coast port-city of Liverpool; however, it is *certain* that upon disembarkation the contingent journeyed north by train to Scotland and to the Regimental Depot.

*\*Some sixteen years previously - as of 1899 when she was launched – the vessel had served as a troop-ship and transport during another conflict, carrying men, animals and equipment to South Africa for use during the Second Boer War.*

The Regimental Depot had been established during the summer of 1915 in the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland, there to serve as the base for the 2<sup>nd</sup> (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 later to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.



(continued)

(Preceding page: *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*)

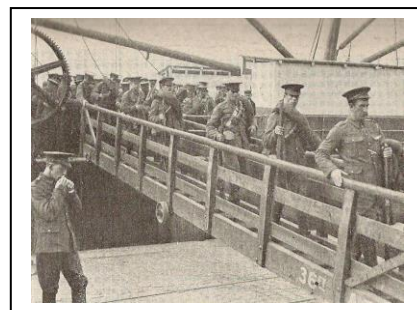
At the outset there had been problems at Ayr to accommodate the new arrivals – plus men from other regiments who were still being billeted in the area – but by the spring of 1916, things had been satisfactorily settled: the officers were in Wellington Square in Ayr itself, and the other ranks had been billeted at Newton Park School and either in the grandstand or in a tented camp at the racecourse in the suburb of Newton-upon-Ayr.



(Right above: *the new race-course at Newton-upon-Ayr - opened in 1907 – where the men of the Regiment were sometimes billeted and where they replaced some of the turf with a vegetable garden; part of the present grandstand is original – photograph from 2012*)

The 11<sup>th</sup> Re-enforcement Draft – Private Herder among its ranks - passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton on October 3 of 1916 on its way to the Continent and to the Western Front.

It disembarked in the Norman capital of Rouen on the next day, October 4, and spent time at the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot located there, in final training and organization\*, before making its way to a rendezvous with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.



(Right: *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, Étapes, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

The contingent with which Private Herder reported *for duty in the field* was a large detachment of two-hundred sixty-six *other ranks* which arrived from Rouen at the Battalion transport lines on October 12. This was also the day on which 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion made its attack on the enemy positions at Gueudecourt, again sustaining heavy casualties – two-hundred thirty-nine all told - and gaining little.

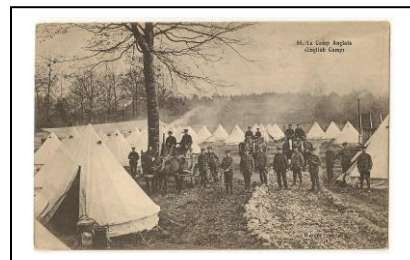
Thus it was that the new-comers remained behind the lines until the 14<sup>th</sup>, two days later, when they were moved up to *Switch Trench* and parcelled out to the Battalion's four depleted fighting companies. Consequently, the date of their arrival is often recorded not as October 12 but as October 14.

(continued)

(Right: *This is the ground over which 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. This is also the area of the positions into which the re-enforcements of October 12-14 were posted. – photograph from 2007*)



After the episode at Gueudecourt, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion remained in the same area of the Somme and was regularly into and out of the trenches. There were no further infantry engagements, but the incessant artillery action ensured a steady stream of casualties. The Newfoundlanders were to be withdrawn from active service on or about December 12 and were to spend the following six weeks or so well behind the lines and close to the city of Amiens.



(Right above: *a typical British Army Camp during a winter period somewhere in France – from a vintage post-card*)

After that welcome six-week Christmas-time respite away from the front lines, the Newfoundlanders of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion *officially* returned to *active* service on January 23, although they had been back in the trenches already by that date and had incurred their first casualties – and fatality – of 1917.

On January 28, 1917, five days after officially returning to active service, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was ending its first tour in the trenches of the New Year. The Regimental War Diary entry of that time reports that ...‘C’ Co. were out helping to bring in wounded & carrying up materials for consolidating purposes...enemy shelled the whole area very heavily in the evening. Batt moved to Intermediate Line. Casualties 7 killed 17 wounded.



(Right above: *Guillemont Road Cemetery and the area where 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was stationed and where Private Herder died on January 28, 1917 – photograph from 2010*)

(Right: *Men of ‘C’ Company were acting as stretcher-bearers at the time. These men not only shared the dangers of the battlefield with their armed comrades, but often spent more time in exposed positions than did the ordinary soldier. – photograph from Illustration*)



The son of H. George Herder and Susannah Herder – to whom he allocated a daily allowance of fifty-five cents from his pay - of 12, Pleasant Street in St. John's, he was reported as having been *killed in action* while serving with ‘C’ Company on January 28, 1917 - during that heavy bombardment of the Battalion positions near the small village of LesBoeufs in the French *Département de la Somme*.

**Wallace Herder had enlisted at eighteen years of age.**

**Private Wallace Herder was entitled to the British War Medal (on left) and also to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).**

