



Private Harvey Lionel Hodge, Number 9028, of the 2nd Battalion, the Honourable Artillery Company*, British Expeditionary Force, is buried in Varennes Military Cemetery – Grave reference I. J. 56.

**It is the oldest unit in the British Army.*

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *Buyer of Dry Goods* and clerk with the family firm of *H.W. Lodge*, merchants and ship-owners – he was also a Mason of the Twillingate Lodge of the United Grand Lodge of England – Harvey Lionel Hodge enlisted *for the duration of the war* and attested, both on the same day, on September 22 of 1916, at Canning Town in the East End of London* – on the same page is documented *at Armoury House, Finsbury*, just north of the City of London**.



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****He may have travelled to England – for his job? – in the summer of 1913: there are records of a H.L. Lodge who travelled from the Newfoundland port of Botwood to London on board the Donaldson Line vessel Marina, to disembark there on July 20 of that year. The ship was eventually torpedoed and lost in October of 1916.***

There are also records of a H.L. Lodge travelling from St. John's, Newfoundland, to Halifax on board the Florizel in July of 1916 – but further details are so far not to be found.

(Right: The photograph of the steamer SS Marina is from the bing.com/images web-site.)



*****The City of London – known simply as The City – is roughly a single square mile in area and is on the north bank of the Thames encompassing such well-known places as the Tower of London and St. Paul's Cathedral.***

Although his unit boasts the designation of Artillery Company, the unit also raised three infantry battalions during the Great War and it was the infantry into which Harvey Lionel Hodge enlisted.

It was Private Hodge of the 1st Battalion of the Honourable Artillery Company, attached to the 22nd Brigade, 7th Division, who embarked on December 24, Christmas Eve, of 1916 in the English south-coast port-city of Southampton and who disembarked in France, at Le Havre, on Christmas Day. He had been bureaucratically transferred from the 3rd Battalion, into which he had enlisted, on that same Christmas Eve.



(Right above: The French port-city of Le Havre at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card)

If his badly-damaged papers have been interpreted correctly, Private Lodge was to remain at Rouen for a mere day, despatched from there on Boxing Day to somewhere *in the field*. It may have been to one of the four camps run by the British Army to instil a few final days of training* into the newcomers' systems - but this is only speculation.

(Right: British troops disembark in the port of 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, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.***



Private Hodge, almost certainly a soldier of a re-enforcement draft from Rouen, joined the 2nd Battalion of the HAC *in the field* on January 25-26 and was posted to 'A' Company. He had been attached on that same day – again on paper – to his new unit.

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For the next while the 7th Division, and thus the 2nd Battalion HAC, was stationed to the north of *the Somme* battlefields of only months before, in the vicinity of the community of Buquoy*.

(Right: *Bucquoy Road Cemetery is today the final resting-place of almost two-thousand servicemen of the Great War, having taken in the remains of the dead from smaller cemeteries after the conflict had concluded. – photograph from 2015*)



It was during this time that the British began to realize that the Germans intended to retreat. They had been building a new defensive line – the British baptized it the Hindenburg Line – which shortened the length of the German front and which, of course, had been built in the most advantageous positions.

Once the German intentions had been recognized, the British began to exert pressure on them; thus a goodly number of operations took place in the months of February and March. The 7th Division was involved enough in this campaign so that the *Retreat to the Hindenburg Line* was to later become one of the formation's battle honours.

One of these operations was on a German strong-point on the night of March 13-14: it was apparently to be a costly failure.

It was then and there that Private Hodge was wounded in the chest, an injury reported as inflicted by a gun-shot, but also documented as the result of a bomb (likely being a hand grenade) blast. He was evacuated from the field to an unidentified Field Ambulance*.

**One source cites it as having been the 9th, but this field ambulance was at the time in the north, in the region of Armentières.*

From there Private Hodge was transferred to an unspecified (the designation unfortunately illegible) Casualty Clearing Station*.

**But possibly the 51st CCS – also known as the Highland CCS - established at the time at Puchevillers and not far distant to Varennes where he is buried.*

(Right: *a British casualty clearing station – the one pictured here under canvas for mobility if and when the necessity arose – being established somewhere in France during the early years of the War – from a vintage post-card*)



The son of Richard Dorman Hodge (former merchant, deceased April 3, 1908) and of Grace Helen Hodge (née *Purkis* of Wimbourne*, England) of Twillingate, Newfoundland, he was also brother to Arthur-Harold, to Mabel-Adeline, to Cyril-Leonard, to Daisy-Frances and to Amy-Violet who had died young.

**The couple was married in Wimbourne Minster, Dorset, England, on July 18, 1878.*

Private Hodge was reported as having *died of wounds* by the commanding officer of that Casualty Clearing Station on March 22, 1917.

Harvey Lionel Lodge had enlisted in London at the age of thirty-two years and nine months: date of birth at Twillingate, Newfoundland, February 3, 1884.

(Right and far right: *The sacrifice of Harvey Lionel Hodge is commemorated by a family memorial in the Methodist Cemetery in Twillingate and is also honoured on a plaque affixed to the exterior of the old United Church in the same community.* – photographs from 2013(?))



Private Harvey Lionel Lodge was entitled to the British War Medal (left) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

