

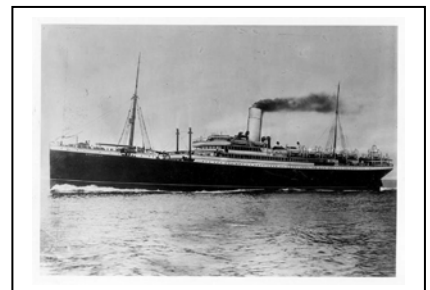


Private Peter Joseph Hudson (Regimental Number 1689) lies buried in Gezaincourt Communal Cemetery Extension – Grave reference II. A. 5.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a labourer employed by the *Newfoundland Brewery*, Peter Joseph Hudson was a recruit of the Sixth Draft. He presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on July 5, 1915, before enlisting – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 – on the following day, July 6. He attested six days later again, on July 12.

****A second source has him attesting on the day of his medical examination – hardly likely.***

Private Hudson 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* on or about October 30 for the trans-Atlantic passage to the United Kingdom. Private Hudson's draft was to be accompanied on the voyage by two units of the Canadian Army: the 55th Battalion of Canadian Infantry and the 2nd Draft of the Divisional Signalling Company.

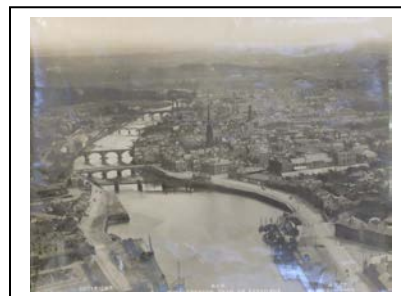
(Preceding page: *The photograph of HMT Corsican is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site.*)

The vessel sailed from the port of Québec on that October 30, 1915, to arrive in the English south-coast naval facility and dock of Plymouth-Devonport some ten days later, on November 9. By the morning of the following day 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 Gailles, not far removed from the new Regimental Depot where accommodation for the contingent was as yet not available.



(Right above: *The harbour of Plymouth-Devonport as it was almost a century after the Great War – a lot less busy nowadays - photograph from 2013*)

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, Newfoundland Regiment.. It was from there – as of November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 – that the newcomers arriving from home were to be despatched in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and then subsequently to the *Western Front*, France and Belgium, to bolster the four fighting companies of the 1st Battalion.



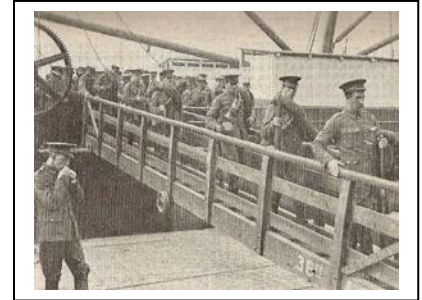
(Right above: *An aerial view of Ayr – probably from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough is to the right. – courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr*)

It was during this posting to the Regimental Depot that, on April 5, 1916, and only three days before his departure to France on *active service*, Private Hudson 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.*

It was on April 8 that Private Hudson, as a soldier of the 4th Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr, passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton on his way to report to the 1st Battalion on the Continent. Arriving on that same day in Rouen, the capital city of Normandy and site of the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot, the Draft was posted there for several days of final training and organization*.

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

Private Hudson was one of the contingent of a single officer and thirty-two *other ranks* which reported to the parent unit probably late in the day of May 4. The Newfoundlanders of the 1st Battalion had finished their first tour in the trenches on just the previous day and were being billeted in the village of Mailly-Maillet, just behind the lines.

(Right: *The re-constructed French village of Mailly-Maillet – the local Monuments aux Morts in the foreground - is today twinned with the community of Torbay in the District of St. John's East. – photograph from 2009*)



The Newfoundlanders, as a unit of the British 29th Division, were soon to be preparing for the impending British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for the meandering river that flowed – and today still flows - innocuously through the French *département* to which it lends its name, *the Somme*.



(Right: *The Somme as it passes today just to the east of the city of Amiens towards that city – photograph from 2009(?)*)

On July 1 of 1916, Private Hudson of the Re-enforcement Company was one of the many wounded at Beaumont-Hamel during the fighting of the first day of *the Somme*. On the following day, July 2, having been evacuated from the field, he was admitted into the 29th Casualty Clearing Station at Gezaincourt. The nature of his wounds – except to say they were caused by gun-fire - seems not to have been recorded.



(Right above: *At Beaumont-Hamel looking from the British front lines down the hill to Y Ravine Cemetery which today stands atop part of the German first-line defences - the Danger Tree is to the right in the photograph. – photograph taken in 2009*)



(Right: *Wounded at the Somme being transported in hand-carts from the forward area for further medical attention – from Le Miroir*)

The son of James Hudson, a checker with *Harvey & Company*, and of Bride (*Bridie* on the family monument) Hudson* (see below) – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of sixty cents from his pay - of 20, Mullock Street in St. John's, Private Hudson was reported as having *died of wounds* on July 4, 1916.

He was buried on the following day, July 5 – a second source has July 4 - by the Reverend H. King attached to the same 29th Casualty Clearing Station.

Peter Joseph Hudson had enlisted at the declared age of nineteen years. However, according to the CWGC, he died at the age of eighteen years* (see immediately below).

**The Roman Catholic Basilica Parish Records document the birth of a Peter Francis Hudson, son of James Hudson and Bridget Hudson (née Byrne), on July 20 1898.*

(Right: A family memorial which stands in Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Cemetery in St. John's commemorates the sacrifice of Private Hudson. – photograph from 2015)



Private Peter Joseph (*Francis?*) Hudson was entitled to the British War Medal (left) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).



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

Beaumont-Hamel was a commune – it still exists as such today – at the time and comprised two communities: Beaumont, a village on the German side of the lines, and Hamel, which was behind the trenches of the British front.

No-Man's-Land, on which the Newfoundland Memorial Park lies partially today, and where the action of July 1 was fought, was on the land between Beaumont and Hamel, land which today is still part of the commune.



