



Private Leonard Hynes (Regimental Number 5859), 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 *seaman*, Leonard Hynes was a recruit of the 15th(?) Draft. He presented himself for medical examination at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury**, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on July 27, 1918. It was a procedure which found him...*Fit for Foreign Service*.

**The building was to serve as the Regimental Headquarters in Newfoundland for the duration of the conflict.*



It was to be on the day of that medical assessment, July 27, and at the same venue, that Leonard Hynes was now to be enlisted. He was engaged...*for the duration of the war**...at the daily private soldier's rate of a single dollar to which was to be appended a ten-cent per diem Field Allowance.

**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 – as of or about May of 1916 - signed on for the 'Duration' at the time of their original enlistment.*

Only a further few hours were then to go by before there came to pass, while still at the *CLB Armoury* on Harvey Road, the final formality of his enlistment: attestation. On that same twenty-seventh day of that July* he pledged his allegiance to the reigning monarch, George V, whereupon, at that moment, Leonard Hynes became...*a soldier of the King*.

**It had been two months prior to this that the Newfoundland Military Service Act (conscriptio had come into effect. From May 11 through to the end of the Great War, the Department of Militia was to call a total of 1,470 men into active service. No evidence found among his documents suggests that Leonard Hynes was or was not one of those to be conscripted.*

Many of the recruits during this period are recorded as having been granted several days of a final furlough before departure for *overseas service*. Private Hynes, Number 5859, was to be one of those to receive these several days of leave, his records showing that following some initial training he was granted home leave to the Newfoundland west-coast

community of Codroy in the District of St. George from August 8 to 18 before returning to St. John's and accordingly reporting...to duty..., but not until the 22nd day of the month – no reason appears among his papers and he was apparently to suffer no consequences because of the delay.

Following his enlistment it is likely that Private Hoddinott reported...to duty...to be quartered in the temporary barracks apparently established since 1915 in the St. John's curling rink and the Prince's Skating Rink in the eastern end of the city. He surely returned there following the aforesaid period of leave.

(Right: *This photograph of the Prince's Rink in St. John's with military personnel, apparently attired in uniforms of Great War vintage, on parade is from the Ice Hockey Wiki web-site. There appears to be no further information a propos.*)



Only a week later, Private Hynes, by then exhibiting the symptoms of mumps, was admitted into the *Military Hospital for Infectious Diseases* in St. John's on August 25. On the following day, however, he was released from there to go to 21, Field Street – a convalescent institution? – where he remained until September 18.

Only a single day later again, on the 19th, he was sent for...special duty...to Mount Pearl where at the time there was little more than a few farms and a wireless station operated by the Intelligence Service of the British Admiralty.

(Right: *Navy Men in front of His Majesty's Wireless Station Mount Pearl c. 1915-1922 – photograph courtesy of Admiralty House Museum, Mount Pearl*)



On September 22, Private Hynes was one of 24th Draft to leave Newfoundland. It took the train from St. John's to Port aux Basques, to North Sydney and on as far as Québec (his files record to Halifax but – if the date of September 22 is correct – and other information makes Québec almost certainly the ultimate Canadian destination – it is likely he travelled via Halifax, there changing trains to travel onward to Québec.

In the Port of Québec the Newfoundland troops embarked onto His Majesty's Transport *Huntsend* and sailed for the United Kingdom on the 28th day of the month. Unfortunately, the three troopships in the convoy – *Victoria* and *City of Cairo* the other two - were all infected with the influenza which was soon to engulf the world: about one hundred men in all would die at sea and more were to expire after having arrived in England.



(Preceding page: *The image is of the former German vessel Lützow which had been seized by the British in 1914 and re-named Huntsend. – the photograph is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site*)

The son of Richard Hynes, fisherman, deceased of rheumatism on May 6, 1917, and of Margaret Philomena Hynes (née *Cormier) – to whom he had allotted a daily sixty cents from his pay - of Melville (also found as *Millville*) Post Office in the District of St. George - his own place of residence, as seen above, recorded as Codroy - he was also brother to Esther-Ann, Catherine-Anne, Harriet-Helen, Joseph, Richard-Dominic and to John-Alexander.**

****The couple was married in the Codroy Valley, Parish of St. Anne, on September 11, 1875.***

Private Hynes, having been admitted into the ship's hospital on October 3, was reported as having *died of sickness* - of influenza – at five minutes to four in the morning five days later on board HMT *Huntsend*, and as having been almost immediately *buried at sea*, on the same October 8, 1918*.

****Other papers cite the date of his death as having been October 12 but by that time the ship had already been docked in the English south-coast port and Royal Navy facility of Devonport since on or about October 9...and a wireless message from Huntsend records October 8.***

Of all his possessions, apparently only his wrist-watch was ever returned to his family – much of the rest likely destroyed from fear of contamination.

Leonard Lacten (or *Lactin*) Hynes had enlisted at a *declared* twenty-three years of age: date of birth at Grand Codroy River, November 7, 1895 (from the Newfoundland Birth Register).

Private Leonard Hynes was entitled to the British War Medal for his overseas service.

Note: *The Wikipedia web-site has the ship carrying six-hundred forty-nine Canadians and continues to claim the following...five percent of the Canadians died before the troopship disembarked on October 11, 1918. Some, if not all, of these men were buried at Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial, a memorial site...*

Much of this is blatantly incorrect, of course: Firstly - any Newfoundlanders on board the ship were not Canadians; secondly – of those who died on board ship during the passage (such as the above Private Leonard Hynes and also Private Charles McCarthy) at least some, likely all of them, given the contagious and lethal nature of the disease, were buried at sea; thirdly – those sick while on board but who died after having disembarked were quickly buried for the same reason*.

Their clothing and bed-linen was usually burned as soon as possible.

****The vessel docked in Plymouth, England, while Beaumont-Hamel is, of course, in France. The memorial does, however, honour those whose bodies were committed to the waves.***



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 – January 31, 2023.