

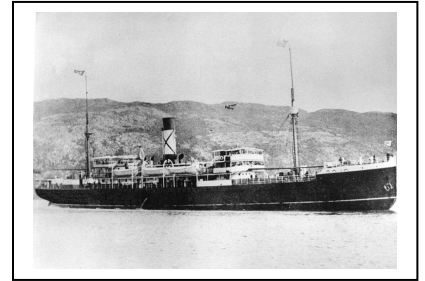


Private George Samuel Knight (Regimental Number 309) lies in Azmak Cemetery at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli – Grave reference II. C. 23.

His occupation previous to military service recorded as that of a machinist working for a weekly wage of seven dollars and twenty cents, George Knight was a member of the *Methodist Guards* – a church-sponsored youth para-military organization – as well as a recruit of the First Draft.

Having presented himself for medical examination at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland on September 1, 1914, a procedure which found him to be...*fit for foreign service*, he then enlisted six days later, on September 7, at the same venue – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 (a sum inclusive of a ten-cent per diem *field allowance*).

There now followed a period of some three weeks during which time Private Knight was to undergo training before then being attested on October 1. Private Knight then embarked only two days later again, on October 3, with the other personnel of the *First Five Hundred* onto the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* awaiting the contingent in St. John's Harbour.



(Right above: *The image of Florizel at anchor in the harbour at St. John's is by courtesy of Admiralty House Museum.*)

The ship sailed on the morrow to its rendezvous off the south coast of the Island where she was to join the convoy transporting the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division across the Atlantic.

(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 Private Knight trained with the Newfoundland contingent: firstly in southern England; then in Scotland at Fort George – on the Moray Firth close to Inverness; at Edinburgh Castle – where it provided the first garrison from outside the British Isles; and later again at the tented *Stobs Camp* near the town of Hawick to the south-east of Edinburgh.



(Right above: *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*)

At the beginning of that August of 1915, the four senior Companies, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', were then sent south 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\*', were sent to Scotland's west coast, to Ayr, where they were to provide the nucleus of the newly-forming 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion.



(Right: *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.*

(continued)



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

***It had then been during the period spent at Aldershot that Private Knight of 'B' Company – he was not alone in doing so - had been prevailed upon, he on August 14, 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.***



***(Right above: Some of the men of 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment at Aldershot in August of 1915 – from The Fighting Newfoundlander by Col. G.W.L. Nicholson, C.D.)***

***(Right: The image of Megantic, in peace-time a 'White Star Line' vessel, is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site.)***



***On August 20, 1915, Private Knight 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, he disembarked with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion at Suvla Bay on the Gallipoli Peninsula.***



***(Right above: Kangaroo Beach, where the officers and men of the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 above: 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)***

***(continued)***



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

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 below: *An un-identified Newfoundland soldier in the trenches at Suvla Bay – from 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.***

In the meantime, just weeks before the withdrawal from *Suvla Bay*, November 26 was to see a freak rain-, snow- and ice-storm strike the *Suvla Bay* area and the subsequent floods had wreaked havoc amongst the forces of both sides. For several days, survival rather than the enemy was to be the priority.



There were to be many casualties on both sides, 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, however, were those inflicted by trench-foot and by frost-bite.

A week later, on December 2, those who had been afflicted by the conditions of the previous days were still being ferried to *Mudros Bay* on the Greek island of Lemnos some fifty kilometres distant for medical attention. By that time, of course, at *Suvla Bay*, things were returning to normal and the fighting had recommenced.



**(Right above: *On Kangaroo Beach where the sand ends – to the left – and where the rocks begin – photograph from 2011*)**

The son of Charles Knight, shipwright and carpenter, and of Phoebe Knight (née *Masters*) of 27, William Street in St. John's - Mr. Knight apparently (also?) having worked with the *General Post Office* - he was also brother to Edith-Gertrude, Stephen, Francis (Frank)-Scott and to Emma.



**(continued)**



(Preceding page: *A Turkish artillery piece still standing guard in the hills surrounding Suvla Bay* – photograph from 2011)

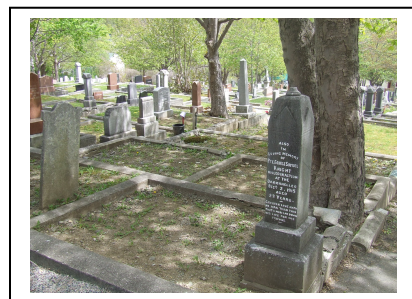
Private Knight was reported as having been *killed in action* while serving with 'B' Company at *Suvla Bay* on...*a cold and damp day*...December 2, 1915. He was originally buried in the nearby small Borderers' Ravine Cemetery from which place his remains were later moved to where they rest today.

George Samuel Knight had enlisted at the *declared* age of twenty-one years: date of birth in St. John's, Newfoundland, January 3, 1892 (from the Newfoundland Birth Register).

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



*Private Knight was at first interred, as were several of his comrades-in-arms of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, in Borderers' Ravine Cemetery. All of the remains therein were later removed and buried in other grounds. On the first page of this file is a photograph that was taken at a distance and which shows the area of the Newfoundland positions surrounded by the hills held by the Turkish forces. One may discern a white horizontal mark in the very centre of that image: it is Azmak Cemetery.*



(Right above: *A family memorial (in front of the tree at right) to be found in the General Protestant Cemetery in St. John's commemorates the sacrifice of Private Knight.* – photograph from 2015)

Private George Samuel Knight 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](mailto:criceadam@yahoo.ca). Last updated – February 11, 2023.