



Private John Lambert (Regimental Number 1744) is buried in Ayr Cemetery, Ayrshire: Grave reference G.3.3..

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *fisherman*, John Lambert was a recruit of the Sixth Draft. He presented himself for a medical examination at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on July 27 of 1915. It was a procedure that was to pronounce him as being...*Fit for Foreign Service*.

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On the day of that medical assessment, July 27, and at the same venue, the *CLB Armoury* on Harvey Road, John Lambert was now to enlist. He was thereupon engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of a single dollar, this to be supplemented by a ten-cent per diem Field Allowance.

It was then only some forty-eight hours afterwards that there then came the final formality of his enlistment: attestation. On July 29 he pledged his allegiance to the reigning monarch, George V, at which moment John Lambert thus became...*a soldier of the King*.

An extended waiting-period was now in store for the recruits of this draft, it to be designated as 'G' Company, before they were eventually to depart from Newfoundland for...*overseas service*.

Private Lambert, Regimental Number 1744, was not to be again called upon until October 27, after an interval of thirteen weeks. Where he was to spend this intervening time appears not to have been recorded although he may well have returned temporarily to work and perhaps returned home to spend time with family and friends in the community of Southport (originally *Fox Harbour*), Random, Trinity Bay – this, of course, is only speculation.

On the above-cited date of October 27, 'G' Company left St. John's by train to cross the island to Port aux Basques, the other passengers on board reportedly having included several naval reservists and also some German prisoners-of-war. The contingent then traversed the Gulf of St. Lawrence by ferry – documented as having been the *Kyle* - and afterwards proceeded again by train from North Sydney as far as Québec City.

There the Newfoundlanders joined His Majesty's Transport *Corsican* for the trans-Atlantic voyage to the English south-coast naval establishment of Devonport where they arrived on November 9. The vessel had departed Montreal on October 30 with Canadian troops on board before stopping at Québec: the 55<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Battalion and the Second Draft of the (1<sup>st</sup>?) Divisional Signals Company.



(Right adjacent: *The image of Corsican is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site. Launched in 1907 for the Allan Line, one of the largest private shipping companies of the time, she spent much of her early career chartered to the Canadian Pacific Line which in 1917 was to purchase the entire Allan Line business. She was employed as a troop-ship during much of the Great War which she survived – only to be wrecked near Cape Race on May 21, 1923.*)



(Right: *The once-busy Royal Navy facility and harbour of Devonport almost a century after the Great War – photograph from 2012(?)*)

By the morning of November 10, Private Lambert's 'G' Company had again travelled by train, to Scotland where it had been billeted in huts in a military camp at Gales, not far

removed from the evolving Newfoundland Regimental Depot at Ayr where accommodation for the new arrivals was as yet not available.

\* \* \* \* \*

More than a year prior to that November 10 of 1915, in the late summer and early autumn of 1914, the newly-formed Newfoundland Regiment's first recruits had undergone a period of training of five weeks on the shores of *Quidi Vidi Lake* in the east end of St. John's and elsewhere in the city, and were formed into 'A' and 'B' Companies.

During that same period the various authorities had also been preparing for the Regiment's transfer overseas.

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



This first Newfoundland contingent was to embark on October 3, in some cases only days after a recruit's enlistment and/ or attestation. To become known to history as the *First Five Hundred* and also as the *Blue Puttees*, on that day they had boarded the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* awaiting in St. John's Harbour.

The ship had sailed for the United Kingdom on the morrow, October 4, 1914, to its rendezvous with the convoy carrying the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division overseas, off the south coast of the Island.

(Right below: *Fort George, constructed in the latter half of the eighteenth century, still serves the British Army to this day. – photograph from 2011*)



Once having disembarked\* in the United Kingdom this first Newfoundland contingent was to train in three venues during the late autumn of 1914 and then the winter of 1914-1915: firstly in southern England on the *Salisbury Plain*; then in Scotland at *Fort George* – on the *Moray Firth* close to Inverness; and lastly at *Edinburgh Castle* – where it was to provide the first garrison from outside the British Isles.

*\*It was to do so at Devonport through which 'G' Company would pass eleven months later.*

Only days after 'A' and 'B' Companies had taken up their posting there, on February 16 of 1915, 'C' Company – the first re-enforcements for the original contingent - would arrive directly – through Liverpool of course - from Newfoundland. On the final day of the month of March it had been the turn of 'D' Company to arrive – they via Halifax as well as Liverpool – to report...*to duty*...at Edinburgh, and then 'E' Company five weeks less a day later again, on May 4\*.

*\*These five Companies, while a contingent of the Newfoundland Regiment, was not yet a battalion and would not be so for a further five months – as will be seen below.*



(Right below: *The venerable bastion of Edinburgh Castle dominates the Scottish capital from its hill in the centre of the city.* – photograph from 2011)

Seven days after the arrival of 'E' Company in the Scottish capital, on May 11 the entire Newfoundland contingent had been ordered elsewhere. On that day, seven weeks into spring – although in Scotland there was apparently still snow - the unit had been dispatched to *Stobs Camp*, all under canvas and south-eastwards of Edinburgh, close to the town of Hawick.



(Right below: *The Newfoundland Regiment marches past on the training ground at Stobs Camp and is presented with its Colours on June 10, 1915.* – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and of Mrs. Lillian Tibbo)

Two months less a day later, on July 10, 'F' Company would march into *Stobs Camp*.

This had been an important moment: the Company's arrival was to bring the Newfoundland Regiment's numbers up to some fifteen hundred, establishment strength\* of a battalion which could be posted on...active service.



*\*A number sufficient to furnish four 'fighting' companies, two re-enforcement companies and a headquarters staff.*

(Right: *The men of the Regiment await their new Lee-Enfield rifles.* – original photograph from the *Provincial Archives*)



From *Stobs Camp*, some three weeks after the arrival of 'F' Company, in early August 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', the four senior Companies, having now become the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment, had been transferred to *Aldershot Camp* in southern England. There they were to undergo final preparations – and a royal inspection – before the Battalion's departure to the Middle East and to the fighting on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.

(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* – the photograph is from *Bain News Services* via the *Wikipedia* web-site.)



The later arrivals to the United Kingdom, 'E' and 'F' Companies, were to be posted to the new Regimental Depot and were eventually to form the nucleus of the soon to be formed 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment.

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(Preceding page: *An aerial view of Ayr, likely from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr, where were quartered the 'other ranks', is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough, where were housed the officers, is to the right.* – by courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr)



(Right: *The High Street in Ayr as shown on a postcard of the time, the imposing Wallace Tower – it stands to this day (2017) - dominating the scene* – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs Lillian Tibbo.

The Regimental Depot had been established during the summer and the early autumn of 1915 in the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland, there to serve as a base for the newly-forming 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion. It was from there – as of November of 1915 – that the new-comers were to be sent in drafts, at first to *Gallipoli* and then subsequently to the *Western Front*, to bolster the four fighting companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion\*.

*\*The first such draft was, in fact, to depart from Ayr for service on the Gallipoli Peninsula days after the arrival in Scotland of Private Lambert's 'G' Company, on November 15.*

This then had been the situation facing the new-comers: the new Regimental Depot had still been in the throes of its establishment when Private Lambert and comrades-in-arms of 'G' Company were to arrive in Scotland on November 10 of 1915; thus, as related in a preceding paragraph, the new-comers were required to be quartered at Gailles, some sixteen kilometres further up the coast – but apparently sixty kilometres distant by road.

Almost five months after his arrival in the United Kingdom, Private Lambert was admitted into the *Heathfield Hospital*, Ayr, on April 6, there to be diagnosed as suffering from scarlet fever.

(Right: *The sacrifice of Private John Lambert is honoured on the War Memorial which stands in the grounds of St. Alban the Martyr Anglican Church in the Trinity Bay community of Gooseberry Cove.* – photograph from 2022)



The son of Samuel Lambert, fisherman, and of Rebecca Lambert (née *Smith*) – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of sixty cents from his pay - of Southport (originally *Fox Harbour*), Random, Trinity Bay, he was also brother to Henry, William, Benjamin, Thomas\*, Samuel Jr., and apparently to two sisters as yet unidentified.

*\*Seaman Thomas Lambert, Number 779x. of the (Newfoundland) Royal Naval Reserve (the rank may be incorrect).*



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Private Lambert was reported as having...*died of sickness*...on the day following his admission into hospital, April 7, 1916.

(Preceding page : *The Newfoundland Plot in Ayr Cemetery* – photograph from 2012)

A telegraph was sent to the Reverend W. A. Butler of Hodge's Cove requesting that he bear the news to the family.



(Right above: The likeness of Private Lambert is from the *Southwest Arm Historical Society* web-site.)

His few effects were sold by auction to his comrades and the monies earned – eighteen shillings and ten pence - added to his estate.

John Lambert had enlisted at a *declared* twenty years and two months of age.

Private John Lambert was entitled to the British War Medal for his *overseas service*.



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 19, 2023.