



Private Joseph Leudy (Regimental Number 1331), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated on the bronze beneath the Caribou in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel.



His occupation previous to military service recorded as that of a *locomotive fireman* and earning seventy dollars per month, Joseph Leudy enlisted at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on March 18, 1915. He was engaged at the private soldier's daily rate of a single dollar to which was to be added a ten-cent per diem *Field Allowance* and was a recruit of the Fifth Draft.

Contrary to most recruits who underwent medical appraisal before enlistment, Joseph Leudy apparently did not present himself to be examined medically until two days afterwards, returning to the *CLB Armoury* on Harvey Road on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the month. It was to be a procedure which would pronounce him as...*Fit for Foreign Service*\*

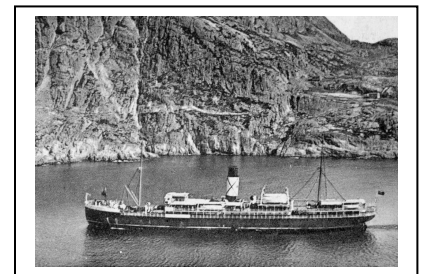
*\*A second source has him attesting on the day of his enlistment.*

It was now to be a further eleven days, the date March 31, before he was to undertake his attestation, to swear his *Oath of Allegiance*, the concluding official formality. At that moment Joseph Leudy became...*a soldier of the King*.

A period of three weeks plus another day then went by before, on April 22 of 1915, Private Leudy, Number 1331, embarked in the harbour of St. John's for...*overseas service*...with the two-hundred forty-nine officers and...*other ranks*...of 'E' Company onto the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Stephano* en route for Halifax.

There appear to be no details of how or where he may have spent that final three-week waiting-period before taking ship for...*overseas service*; Private Leudy may have returned temporarily to work, or even perhaps to home at Little River, Codroy – but this is mere speculation.

Having arrived in Halifax, on April 24 at eleven-thirty in the evening the detachment began its trans-Atlantic passage on board the trans-Atlantic liner *SS Missanabie* from Nova Scotia to Liverpool. The vessel arrived in that English west-coast port-city on May 2 or 3 – the two dates are recorded although the second may well have been the date of disembarkation.

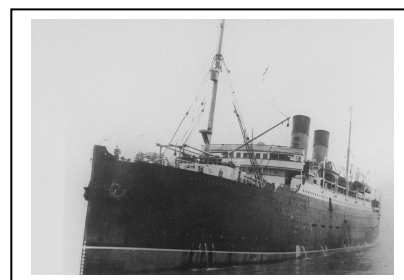


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The Newfoundlanders on this occasion had sailed from Halifax in the company of the Canadian Army Service Corps *Railway Supply Depot*.

(Preceding page: *The image of 'Stephano' passing through the Narrows of St. John's Harbour is shown by courtesy of the Provincial Archives.*)

(Right: *The image of 'Missanabie' is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries website. The vessel was of the Canadian Pacific Line and, although transporting troops during the Great War, did so as part of her commercial services which continued during the conflict. On September 9, 1918, she was torpedoed and sunk off the south coast of Ireland with the loss of forty-five lives.*)



From Liverpool the contingent travelled northwards by train to the Scottish capital, Edinburgh where, on May 4, 'E' Company joined 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies which had already taken up station as the garrison at the historic Castle, the first troops from outside the British Isles ever to do so.

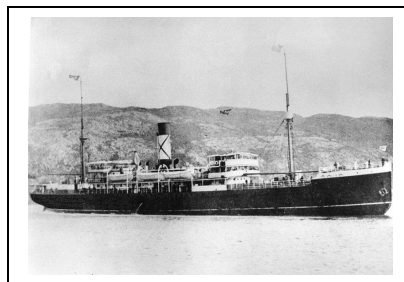


(Right above: *The venerable bastion of Edinburgh Castle dominates the Scottish capital from its hill in the centre of the city. – photograph from 2011*)

Private Leudy's 'E' Company, however, was to have but a few days to savour the charms of the Scottish capital.

\* \* \* \* \*

Some seven months before that May 4, in the late summer and early autumn of 1914 there had been a period of training of five weeks on the shores of *Quidi Vidi Lake* in the east end of St. John's for the newly-formed Newfoundland Regiment's first recruits – these to become 'A' and 'B' Companies - during which time the authorities had also been preparing for the Regiment's transfer overseas.



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.

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

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.





**(Preceding page: *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, as recorded beforehand, it was to provide the first garrison from outside the British Isles.

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.*

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

\* \* \* \* \*

Seven days after the arrival of Private Leudy’s ‘E’ Company in the Scottish capital, on May 11 the entire Newfoundland contingent was ordered elsewhere.

On that day, seven weeks into spring – although in Scotland there was apparently still snow - the unit was dispatched to *Stobs Camp*, all under canvas and south-eastwards of Edinburgh, in the vicinity of the town of Hawick.

It was to be at *Stobs Camp* that the Newfoundland contingent would eventually receive the re-enforcements from home – ‘F’ Company which arrived on July 10, 1915 - that would bring its numbers up to that of British Army establishment battalion strength\*. On that date the newly-formed 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was thereupon available to be ordered on...*active service.*



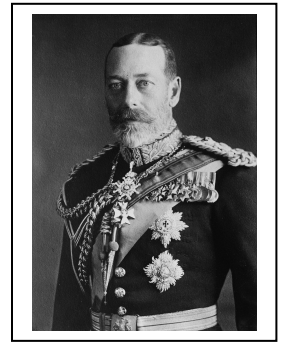
It was to be towards the end of the period spent at *Stobs Camp*, on July 27, that Private Leudy received a first promotion, to the rank of lance corporal.

**(Right above: *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 Mrs. Lillian Tibbo)**

*\*This was approximately fifteen hundred, sufficient to furnish four ‘fighting’ companies, two re-enforcement companies and a headquarters staff.*

At the beginning of that August of 1915, the four senior Companies, ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’, were then sent south from *Stobs Camp* to undergo a final two weeks of training, as well as an inspection by the King, at *Camp Aldershot*. This force, now the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment, was thereupon attached to the 88<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division of the (British) Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

(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.)



Meanwhile the two junior Companies, 'E' – as seen, the last arrived at Edinburgh - and the aforementioned 'F', were ordered transferred to Scotland's west coast, to Ayr, there to provide the nucleus of the newly-forming 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion. The new Regimental Depot at Ayr was to be home for Lance Corporal (later Corporal) Leudy for the next eight months.

Towards the end of that summer of 1915, the once-Royal Borough of Ayr on Scotland's west coast was to begin to serve as the overseas base for the soon to be formed 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment from where – as of November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 - re-enforcement drafts from home were to be despatched to bolster the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's numbers, at first to the Middle East and then later to the *Western Front*.



(Right above: *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.

He was elevated to the rank of corporal while still at Ayr on December 6, having in the meantime seen the First Re-enforcement Draft leave for *active service* in mid-November. The Second Re-enforcement Draft was also to be dispatched – on a journey to France via Egypt - before it was to be the turn of Corporal Leudy.

On March 28, as a non-commissioned officer of the 3rd Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr, he was to pass through the English south-coast port of Southampton and board His Majesty's Transport *Archangel* on the way to join the Newfoundland Battalion by that time returned to the Continent.

Disembarking two days later, on the 30<sup>th</sup>, in Rouen, capital city of Normandy and site of the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot, the contingent made its way to the aforementioned Depot for several days of final training and organization\* before leaving to seek out the parent unit.

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(Right below: *The photograph of a troop-laden 'Archangel' leaving port – likely Southampton – is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site.*)

(Right below: *British troops at an earlier date in the War disembark at Rouen en route to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

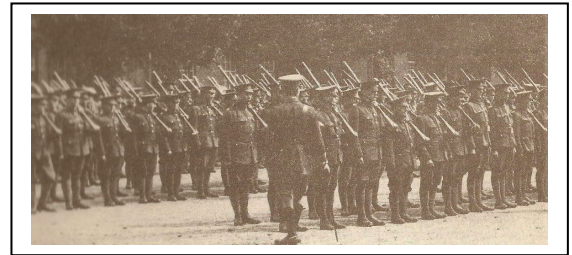
*\*Apparently the standard length of time for this final training at the outset of the war had been ten days – although this was to become more and more flexible as the War progressed - in areas near Rouen, Étaples, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

On April 15, a detachment from Rouen of two-hundred eleven *other ranks* – accompanied by two officers – reported to duty with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion already billeted in the village of Englebelmer some three kilometres behind the lines of the *Western Front*. Corporal Leudy is documented as being among that number, a contingent comprising not only personnel from Ayr, but also others from Egypt who, for divers reasons, had been detained there.



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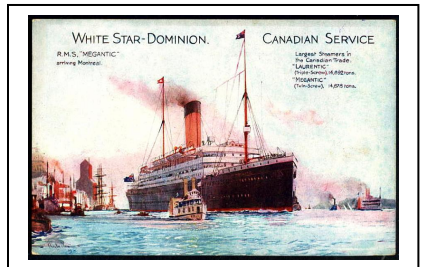
In the mean-time, while Lance Corporal (later Corporal) Leudy had been accustoming himself to life at the new Regimental Depot, the personnel of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Newfoundland Regiment, at *Camp Aldershot* had been preparing for the voyage to the other end of the Mediterranean Sea.



(Right above: *Some of the personnel of 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment at Aldershot in August of 1915, prior to its departure to 'active service' on the Gallipoli Peninsula – from The Fighting Newfoundlander by Col. G.W.L. Nicholson, C.D.*)

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

On August 20, 1915, the Newfoundland Battalion had 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. There, a month later – having spent some two weeks billeted in British barracks in the vicinity of the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was to land at *Suvla Bay* on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.





(Preceding page: *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: 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)



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



When the Newfoundlanders had landed from their transport ship at *Suvla Bay* on that September night of 1915 they were to disembark into a campaign that was already on the threshold of collapse.

Not only in the area where the Newfoundland Battalion was to serve but, even ever since the very first days of the operation in April of 1915, the entire *Gallipoli Campaign*, including the operation at *Suvla Bay*, had been proving to be little more than a debacle:



(Right: *No-Man's-Land* at *Suvla Bay* as seen from the Newfoundland positions – from Provincial Archives)

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 their allies, the French, and it would finally be decided to abandon not only *Suvla Bay* but the entire *Gallipoli* venture.

*\*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.*



(Right above: An un-identified Newfoundland soldier in the trenches at *Suvla Bay* – from Provincial Archives)

(continued)

**(Right: This is Anzac Bay in the fore-ground with the Salt Lake in the centre further away. The bottom of Suvla Bay is just to be seen on the left and adjacent to the Salt Lake, and further away again. The hills in the distance and the ones from which this photograph was taken were held by the Turks and formed a horse-shoe around the plain surrounding the Salt Lake - which was where the British and Newfoundlanders were stationed. – photograph from 2011)**



November 26 of 1915 had seen what was perhaps the nadir of the Newfoundland Battalion's fortunes at Gallipoli; there was to be a freak rain, snow and ice-storm strike the Suvla Bay area and the subsequent floods 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, had been those afflicted by trench-foot and by frost-bite.

In the days that had followed the cataclysmic storm, the situation of the British - and thus of the Newfoundlanders – had been daily becoming more and more untenable; thus on the night of December 19-20, the British had abandoned the entire area of Suvla Bay – the Newfoundlanders, the only non-British unit to serve there, to form a part of the rear-guard. Some of the Battalion personnel would be evacuated to the nearby island of Imbros, some to Lemnos, further away, but in neither case was the respite to be of a long duration; the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion would be transferred only two days later to the area of Cape Helles, on the western tip of the...*Gallipoli Peninsula*.

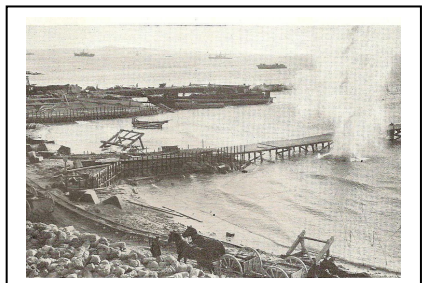
**(Right: Cape Helles as seen from the Turkish positions on the misnamed Achi Baba, positions which were never breached: The Newfoundland positions were to the right-hand side of the picture. – photograph from 2011)**



The British, Indian and Anzac forces – the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was also to serve at Gallipoli – had by now only simply been marking time until a complete withdrawal of the *Peninsula* could be undertaken.

This final operation had taken place on the night of January 8-9, the Newfoundland Battalion to furnish part of the British rear-guard on this second occasion also.

**(Right: 'W' Beach at Cape Helles as it was only days before the final British evacuation – from Illustration)**



**\*Lieutenant Owen Steele of St. John's, Newfoundland, is cited as having been the last soldier of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force to step into the final small boat to sail from the Gallipoli Peninsula.**

**(Right: 'W' Beach almost a century after its abandonment by British forces in that January of 1916 and by the Newfoundlanders who were to be the last soldiers off the beach: Vestiges of the wharves in the black-and-white picture are still to be seen. – photograph from 2011)**



Immediately after the British evacuation of the *Gallipoli Peninsula*, the Newfoundland unit had been ordered to the Egyptian port-city of Alexandria. On January 14, the Australian Expeditionary Force Transport *Nestor* had arrived there with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion on board. The vessel was to sail just after mid-day on the 16<sup>th</sup>, on its way southwards down the Suez Canal to Port Suez where she had arrived on the morrow and where the Newfoundlanders had landed and marched to their encampment.



There they were to await further orders since, at the time, the subsequent destination of the British 29<sup>th</sup> Division had yet to be decided\*.

**(Right above: The photograph of the Blue Funnel Line vessel 'Nestor' is from the Shipspotting.com web-site. The vessel was launched and fitted in 1912-1913 and was to serve much of her commercial life until 1950 plying the routes between Britain and Australia. During the Great War she served mainly in the transport of Australian troops and was requisitioned once again in 1940 for government service in the Second World War. In 1950 she was broken up.)**

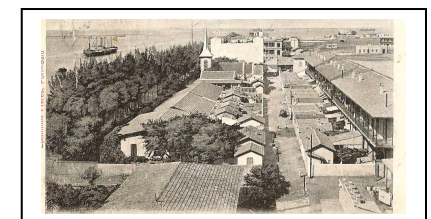
**\*Bulgaria had entered the conflict on the side of the Central Powers, and Salonika was already becoming a theatre of war.**

**(Right: The British destroy their supplies during the final evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment were among the last to leave on two occasions, at both Suvla Bay and Cape Helles. – photograph taken from the battleship *Cornwallis* from Illustration)**



**(Right below: Port Tewfiq at the south end of the Suez Canal just prior to the Great War – from a vintage post-card)**

After that two-month interim spent in the vicinity of Port Suez the almost six-hundred officers and *other ranks* of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion were to board His Majesty's Transport *Alaunia* at Port Tewfiq, on March 14 to begin the voyage back up through the *Suez Canal* en route to France.



The Newfoundlanders would disembark eight days afterwards in the Mediterranean port-city of Marseille, on March 22.

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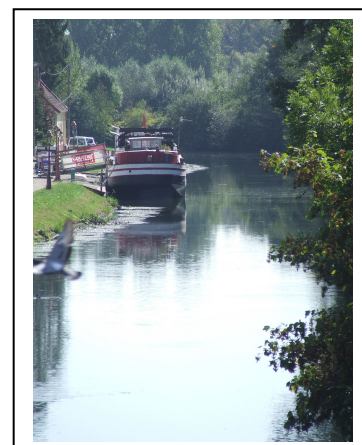
(Right: *British troops march through the port area of the French city of Marseille. – from a vintage post-card*)



Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, the Newfoundland Battalion's train had found its way to the small provincial town of Pont-Rémy, a thousand kilometres to the north of Marseille. It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for the troops having inexcusably travelled unused in a separate wagon.

Having de-trained at the local station at two o'clock in the morning, the Newfoundlanders were now still to endure the long, dark march ahead of them before they would reach their billets at Buigny l'Abbé.

It is doubtful if many of those tired soldiers were to pay much attention to the slow-moving stream flowing under the bridge which they had then traversed on their way from the station. But some three months later *the Somme* was to become a part of their history.



(Right: *A languid River Somme as seen from the bridge at Pont-Rémy – photograph from 2010*)

On April 13, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had subsequently marched into the village of Englebelmer – perhaps some fifty kilometres in all from Pont-Rémy - where it would be billeted, would receive re-enforcements from Scotland via Rouen and, in two days' time, would be introduced into the communication trenches of the *Western Front*.

And as seen in an earlier paragraph, among those...*re-enforcements from Scotland via Rouen*...had been Corporal Leudy arriving to report...*to duty*...with the Newfoundland Battalion.

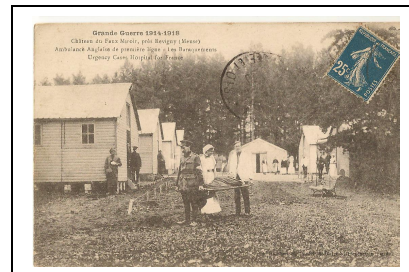
\* \* \* \* \*

Just days following the Newfoundland Battalion's arrival on April 13 in the area of Englebelmer after transfer from the Middle East, two of the four Companies – 'A', and 'B' – were to take over several support positions from a British unit\* before the entire Newfoundland unit was to then be ordered to move further up for the first time into forward positions on April 22.

*\*It should be said that the Newfoundland Battalion and two-hundred men of the Bermuda Rifles who were serving at the time in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lincolnshire Regiment Battalion, were then the only units at the Somme from outside the British Isles - true also on the day of the attack on July 1.*

It was only days after his *own* arrival at Englemelmer that Corporal Leudy was admitted into the 87<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance on April 26 and diagnosed as suffering from impetigo. He was discharged...*to duty*...on May 5, but whether he reported back to the Newfoundland Battalion...*in the field*...or was ordered directly to the Base Depot at Rouen is not clear.

**(Right: A British field ambulance, of a much more permanent nature than some, somewhere in France – from a vintage post-card)**

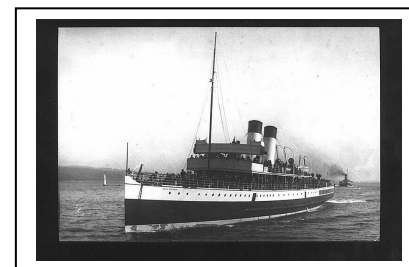


**(Right below: A part of the re-constructed trench system to be found in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2009(?))**



Having then been withdrawn at the end of that April to the areas of Mailly-Maillet and Louvencourt where they would be based for the next two months, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was soon to be preparing for the upcoming British campaign of that summer of 1916, the battle to be fought on the ground named for the languid, meandering river, *the Somme*, that flowed – and still does so today – through the region.

After his release from medical care, Corporal Leudy was then not to be further documented until July 6 – six days after that episode at Beaumont-Hamel - when he was recorded as having embarked onto His Majesty's Transport *Queen Alexandra*, on his way back from the Continent to the United Kingdom: he had enlisted one year previously and he was now due for discharge. For this to come about, he had been ordered back to the Regimental Depot at Ayr.



***\*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. Most had done so before leaving for active service either in Gallipoli or the Western Front. Later recruits would sign on for the 'Duration' at the time of their original enlistment.***

**(Right above: The image of the *Queen Alexandra* is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site. She was a new, fast vessel built in 1912 to replace a previous ship of the same name and was requisitioned in 1915 to be a troop-carrier. She operated between England and France and on May 9, 1918, rammed and sank a German U-boat off the French coast near Cherbourg. She survived the Great War, served as an accommodation ship in the Second, and was finally taken out of service in 1958.)**



**(Right above: The new race-course at Ayr - opened in 1907 – where the men of the Regiment were sometimes billeted and where they replaced some of the turf with a vegetable garden: a part of the original grandstand survives. – photo from 2012)**

**(continued)**

Upon arrival in England Corporal Leudy – with a number of other personnel in the same situation - was transferred north to Scotland, to the Regimental Depot at Ayr to await passage home. There the pressure to re-enlist was likely applied because, on August 17 while still at Ayr, he re-enlisted – on this occasion *for the duration of the war* – and received his third stripe six days later, on August 23. On the following day, as Sergeant Leudy of the 10<sup>th</sup> Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr, he was again passing through Southampton and Rouen – the latter on the 25<sup>th</sup> - on his way to join his unit...*in the field*...after those inevitable days of final preparation at the Base Depot.

*\*It was not an easy decision for those in Corporal – later Sergeant – Leudy’s position to make. Many of these young soldiers from Newfoundland were irreplaceable fishermen whose families were absolutely dependent on them and whose service in the Army increased hardship on those at home. The position in which the death of one of these men left those dependent on them, is literally beyond description and to judge them as cowards or shirkers, as has been done, shows only an ignorance by these critics of Newfoundland’s history.*

The Regimental War Diary records a draft of thirty-nine *other ranks* arriving to report...*to duty*...in Belgium on September 3; the personal file of Sergeant Leudy cites the 4<sup>th</sup> as the date. Only days later he appeared before a court martial, on September 6 – perhaps the result of his extensive charge sheet - and was...*reduced to the ranks*...by order of the General Officer Commanding 8<sup>th</sup> Corps, as being...*unfit for duties in the field*.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the meantime, of course, while Corporal Leudy had been awaiting in Rouen for transfer back to the United Kingdom, his Battalion had played its tragic part on the first day of the...*First Battle of the Somme*.

If there is one name and date in Newfoundland history which is etched in the collective once-national memory, it is that of Beaumont-Hamel on July 1 of 1916; and if any numbers are remembered, they are those of the eight-hundred who went *over the top* in the third wave of the attack on that morning, and of the sixty-eight unwounded present at muster some twenty-four hours later\*.



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

(Right: *A view of Hawthorn Ridge Cemetery Number 2 in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2009(?)*)



(continued)



*\*Perhaps ironically, the majority of the Battalion's casualties was to be incurred during the advance from the third line of British trenches to the first line from where the attack proper was to be made, and while struggling through British wire laid to protect the British positions from any German attack.*

There are other numbers of course: the fifty-seven thousand British casualties incurred in four hours on that same morning of which nineteen-thousand were recorded as having been *killed in action or died of wounds*.

It was to be the largest disaster ever in the annals of the British Army...and, perhaps just as depressing, the butchery of *the Somme* was to continue for four and a half months.

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

*In fact, Beaumont-Hamel was a commune – it still exists today – at the time comprising two communities: Beaumont, a village on the German side of the lines, and Hamel which was behind those of the British. No-Man's-Land, on which the Newfoundland Memorial Park lies partially today, was on land that separated Beaumont from Hamel.*



(Right: *A grim, grainy image purporting to be Newfoundland - dead awaiting burial after Beaumont-Hamel – from...?*)

After the events of the morning of July 1, 1916, such had then been the dire condition of the attacking British forces that it had been feared that a German counter-assault might well annihilate what had managed to survive of the British Expeditionary Force on *the Somme*.



The few remnants of the Newfoundland Battalion – and of the other depleted British units - had thus remained in the trenches perhaps fearing the worst, and at night searching for the wounded and burying the dead. It was to be July 6 before the Newfoundlanders were to be relieved from the forward area and to be ordered withdrawn to Englebelmer.

It had then been a further two days before the unit had marched further again to the rear area and to billets in the village of Maily-Maillet.

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



(continued)

There on July 11, a draft of one-hundred twenty-seven re-enforcements – a second source cites one-hundred thirty – had reported *to duty*. They had been the first to arrive following the events at Beaumont-Hamel but even with this additional man-power having arrived, the Regimental War Diary records that on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July, 1916, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had still numbered only...*11 officers and 260 rifles*...after the holocaust of Beaumont-Hamel, just one-quarter of establishment battalion strength.

On July 27-28 of 1916, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion - still under establishment battalion strength at only five-hundred fifty-four strong, even after further re-enforcement – had moved north and entered into the *Kingdom of Belgium* for the first time.

It had been ordered to the *Ypres Salient*, one of the most dangerous pieces of real estate on the entire *Western Front*, there to continue to re-enforce and to re-organize after the ordeal of Beaumont-Hamel.

(Right: *The entrance to 'A' Company's quarters – obviously renovated since that time - in the ramparts of the city of Ypres when it was posted there in 1916 – photograph from 2010*)



This then, and as related in a previous paragraph, was the time and the place – on September 3 or 4 – of Sergeant Leudy's return to...active service...with the Newfoundland Battalion.

\* \* \* \* \*

*The Salient* – close to the front lines for almost the entire fifty-two month conflict – where the Newfoundland unit and Sergeant (but soon Private, see above) Leudy would serve, was to be relatively quiet during the time of the Newfoundlanders' posting there; yet they nonetheless incurred casualties, a number – fifteen? - of them fatal.

Then on October 8, after having served in Belgium for some ten weeks, the Newfoundland Battalion was ordered to return south, back into France and back into the area of – and the battle of – *the Somme*.

(Right above: *An aerial view of Ypres, taken towards the end of 1916: it is described as the 'Ville morte'. – from Illustration*)

Four days after that return to France, on October 12, 1916, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was again to be ordered to the offensive; it would be at a place called Gueudecourt, the vestiges of a village some dozen or so kilometres to the south-east of Beaumont-Hamel.

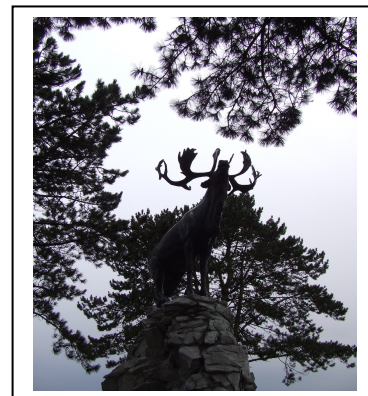


The encounter would prove to be another ill-conceived and costly affair – two hundred and thirty-nine casualties all told - for little gain.

(Preceding page: *This is the ground over which the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion advanced and then mostly conceded at Gueudecourt on October 12. Some few managed to reach the area where today stand the copse of trees and the Gueudecourt Caribou, on the far right horizon. – photograph from 2007*)

(Right: *The Caribou at Gueudecourt stands at the furthest point of the Newfoundland Battalion's advance of October 12, 1916. – photograph from 2012*)

The son of Philip Leudy (originally spelled *Luidi*), former farmer deceased July 13, 1921, and of Elizabeth Leudy (née *Gendreaux* or *Boudraux* (sic)) – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of sixty cents from his pay - of Little River, Codroy, in the west coast District of St. George, he was brother to Mary-Margaret and to Charles-Philip.



Private Leudy was reported as having been...*killed in action*...on October 12, 1916, while serving with 'C' Company during the fighting at Gueudecourt. At home it was the Reverend Sears of Searston who was requested to inform his family.

Joseph Leudy\* had enlisted at a *declared* twenty-one years of age (born March 8, 1894).

*\*Some correspondence referred to him as the late L/Corp Leudy but there seems to have been no further appointment of him as such recorded in the files.*

Private Joseph Leudy was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, as well as to the British War Medal (centre) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).



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 6, 2023.