

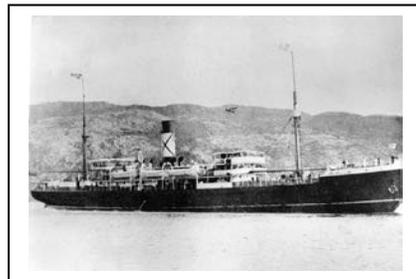


**Corporal Harold Lidstone (also found as *Lidston*), MM, (Regimental Number 163) lies in Marcoing British Cemetery – Grave reference II. G. 18.**

**His occupation prior to enlistment recorded as that of a *dry-goods clerk* working for *J. McGregor, Gents Furnishings*, in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, and earning \$30.00 per month, Harold Lidstone, a recruit of the First Draft, enlisted on September 3, 1914, at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 (including a daily ten-cent field allowance).**

**(continued)**

It was to be four weeks after his enlistment before Private Lidstone then attested at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's, on October 1, before embarking for England on October 3, two days later again, onto the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* en route to the United Kingdom. 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 above: *The image of Florizel at anchor in the harbour at St. John's is by courtesy of Admiralty House Museum.*)

In the United Kingdom Private Lidstone 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: *Fort George, constructed in the latter half of the eighteenth century, still serves the British Army to this day. – photograph from 2011*)

(Right: *The Newfoundland Regiment parades at Stobs Camp and is presented with its Colours on June 10, 1915. – 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. 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.*

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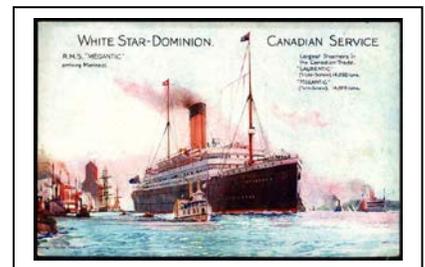
It had then been during that period spent at Aldershot that Private Lidstone of 'A' Company – he was not alone in doing so - had been prevailed upon, he on August 14, to re-enlist *for the duration of the war*\*.

*\*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 Lidstone and his comrades-in-arms embarked 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: *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)*

It was to be a debacle: Flies, dust, disease, frost-bite, floods – and 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 it would be decided to abandon not only *Suvla Bay* but the entire *Gallipoli* venture.



(continued)

***\*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.***

***(Preceding page: A century later, the area, little changed from those far-off days, of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla, and where Private Lidstone was to serve in the fall of 1915 – photograph from 2011)***

On the night of December 19-20, the British abandoned the 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 was 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 was transferred only two days later to the area of Cape Helles, on the western tip of the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



***(Right above: 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 and the *Anzac* forces – the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps also served at *Gallipoli* – were now only marking time until a complete withdrawal of the *Peninsula* was undertaken. The operation took place on the night of January 8-9, the Newfoundland Battalion providing some of the rear-guard for this second occasion as well\*.



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

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



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



(continued)

When the British evacuated the entire *Gallipoli Peninsula* in January of 1916, Private Lidstone and the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion were ordered to the Egyptian port-city of Alexandria, arriving there on the 15<sup>th</sup> of that month. The Newfoundlanders were then immediately transferred southward to Suez, one of the ports at the southern end of the Canal which bears the same name, there to await further orders as, at the time, the subsequent destination of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's 29<sup>th</sup> Division had not yet been decided\*.



*\*Bulgaria had entered the conflict on the side of the Central Powers and Salonika was soon to become a theatre of war.*

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

(Right above: *British troops march through the port area of the French city of Marseilles. – from a vintage postcard*)

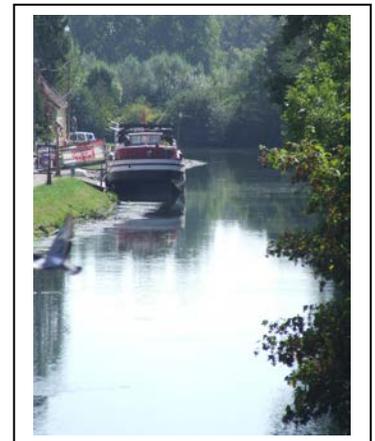
After a two-month interim, on March 14, the Newfoundlanders embarked through Port Tewfiq, also at the southern end of the *Suez Canal*, for the French port of Marseilles, and disembarked there on March 22, en route to the *Western Front*.

Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, the Newfoundland Battalion's train arrived at the small provincial town of Pont-Rémy, a thousand kilometres to the north of Marseilles. It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for the troops having travelled unused in a separate wagon. De-training at the local station at two in the morning, the Newfoundlanders still faced a long march ahead of them before they would reach their billets at Buigny l'Abbé.

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

It is doubtful if many of those tired soldiers paid much attention to the slow-moving stream flowing under the bridge over which they were marching on their way from the station. Some three months later *the Somme* would become a part of their history.

On April 13, Private Lidstone's 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion paraded into the village of Englebelmer – perhaps some fifty kilometres in all from Pont-Rémy - where its personnel would be billeted, would receive re-enforcements and, in two days' time, would be introduced into the trenches of the *Western Front*.



The Newfoundlanders would also soon be preparing for the British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for that meandering river, *the Somme*.

(continued)

(Right: A part of the re-constructed trench system in the Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2007(?))



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\*.

*\*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 killing of *the Somme* was to continue for the next four and a half months.



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



On July 1, 1916, Private Lidstone would figure at Beaumont-Hamel in the fighting of that first day of *the Somme*. On July 2, the following day, he was one of those rare few – sixty-eight in all (see above) - who were to be present at muster, unscathed following the previous day's battle\*.



(continued)

*\*At the same time his file also has him recorded as 'with Battalion' on July 4. However, this is apparently the date on which that first roll call following the battle of July 1 was reported, not the day on which it was taken.*

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

Such had then been the dire condition of the attacking forces after the slaughter of July 1 that it was feared a German counter-assault might well annihilate what had survived of the British Expeditionary Force on *the Somme*. The remnants had thus remained in the trenches, at night searching for the wounded and burying the dead. It was to be July 6 before the Newfoundlanders were to be ordered back to Englebelmer and a further two before the unit had marched to Mailly-Maillet.



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

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 disaster 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 still numbered only...*11 officers and 260 rifles...*after the holocaust of that morning of July 1, just one-quarter of establishment battalion strength.

On July 27-28 of 1916, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion - still under 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. The unit 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\*.



*\*At the same time the Canadians, some of whom had been serving in Belgium for as long as eighteen months, were being withdrawn from the area to train before then moving southwards to serve at 'the Somme'.*

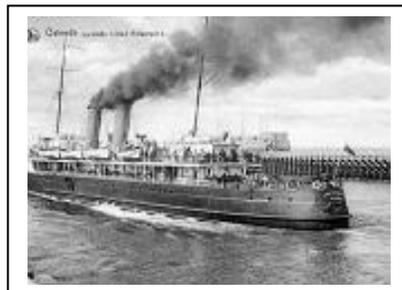
*(Right above: The entrance – obviously rebuilt - to Private Lidstone's 'A' Company's quarters in the ramparts of Ypres when it was posted there in 1916)*

The Regimental War Diary entry of August 8 offers the following: *Big enemy gas attack delivered against Division on our left. Gas was fairly thick in Ypres. This unit suffered no casualties.*



(Preceding page: *The battered city of Ypres as it was already towards the end of 1915 – and eight months before the Newfoundlanders were posted there for the first time – from a vintage post-card*)

Perhaps there were no casualties on August 8 but, if not, there were to be some soon afterwards; Private Lidstone fell victim to the German gas and was eventually admitted into the 35<sup>th</sup> General Hospital in Rouen. There it was decided to invalid him back to the United Kingdom and, accordingly, on August 12, he was embarked onto the Belgian hospital ship *Stad Antwerpen* for the cross-Channel journey.



(Right above: *The image of the hospital ship Stad Antwerpen – in peace-time a ferry-boat – is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site.*)

\* \* \* \* \*

Having arrived in England on that same August 12, Private Lidstone was admitted for treatment for *gas poisoning* into the 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital in the southern Borough of Wandsworth. On September 23, after convalescence – and presumably after the customary ten-day furlough allowed military personnel upon discharge from hospital in the United Kingdom - he was posted to ‘H’ Company at the Regimental Depot in Scotland.



(Right: *The main building of what became 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital during the Great War was opened, on July 1, 1859, as a home for the orphaned daughters of British soldiers, sailors and marines. – photograph from 2010*)



(Right: *Newfoundland patients convalescing at the 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital, Wandsworth – courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo*)

The Newfoundland 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 at the time newly-forming 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion. It was from there – as of November of 1915 until January of 1918 – that the new-comers from home were despatched in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later to the *Western Front*, to bolster the numbers of the four fighting companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

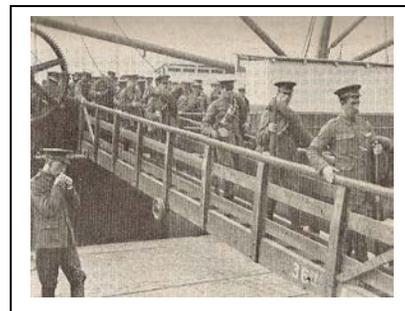


It was there at Ayr that Private Lidstone received his first promotion, to the rank of lance corporal, on January 17, 1917.

(continued)

(Right above: *An aerial view of Ayr – probably from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr where the ‘other ranks’ resided is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough with its officer’s quarters is to the right. – courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr*)

On April 25, 1917, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Re-enforcement Draft – Lance Corporal Lidstone one of its non-commissioned officers - passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton to join the British Expeditionary Force on the Continent. On April 25 he disembarked in the French city of Rouen, proceeding to the British Expeditionary Force Base Depot there for ultimate training\* and organization.



(Right: *British troops disembark at Rouen en route to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

*\*Apparently the standard length of time for this final training 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 as the Bull Rings.*

Lance Corporal Lidstone reported to duty with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment on June 7, one of the draft of fourteen officers and ninety-two other ranks to arrive in the community of Bonneville on that day.



(Right above: *The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment parades through the town of Berneville – not Bonneville - in early May – perhaps the 7<sup>th</sup> - of 1917. – from The War Illustrated*)

\* \* \* \* \*

As seen in earlier paragraphs, Private Lidstone had served with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland on *active service* from the time of the unit’s departure for the Middle East until the time when he had been hospitalized after having been gassed while serving in the *Ypres Salient*, Belgium, some six weeks subsequent to the action of July 1 at Beaumont-Hamel which he had survived unmarked.

The Newfoundland Battalion was to remain in Belgium for two months after the evacuation of Private Lidstone to hospital on or about August 9.

*The Salient* – it was to exist for some four years, for almost the entire conflict – would prove to be relatively quiet during the time of the Newfoundlanders’ posting there; yet they had nonetheless incurred casualties, a number – fifteen? - of them fatal. Then on October 8, after having served at Ypres for some ten weeks, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had been ordered to return south, back into France and back into the area of – and the battle of – *the Somme*.

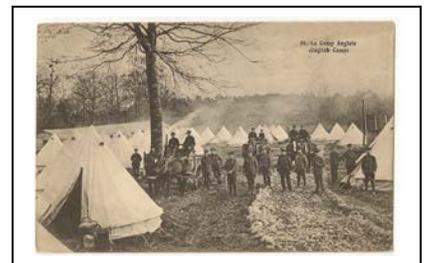
Four days later, on October 12, the Newfoundlanders had passed to the attack on the outskirts of the community of Gueudecourt – a dozen or so kilometres removed and to the south-east of Beaumont-Hamel.

One of the many small farming villages of the area, by that October of 1916 Gueudecourt had been reduced to little more than an uninhabited heap of rubble. The attack of that day was to be a second ill-planned advance and the Newfoundlanders would once again lose very heavily – two-hundred thirty-nine casualties, all ranks, on the day and also on the preceding evening - and were to achieve very little.



(Right above: *The fields at Gueudecourt across which the Battalion advanced towards the trees on the right horizon: A Caribou stands there today. - photograph from 2009.*)

After Gueudecourt, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had continued its watch in and out of the trenches of *the Somme* – not without casualties – during the late fall and early winter, a period broken only by six weeks spent in *corps reserve* during the Christmas period.



(Right: *A British encampment somewhere on the Continent in wintry weather – from a vintage post-card*)

The Newfoundlanders were to *officially* return to *active service* on January 23, although they had been back in the trenches already by that date and had incurred their first casualties – and fatality - of the New Year. The only concerted infantry activity to involve the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion during that entire period – from Gueudecourt in mid-October of 1916, until April of 1917 – would be the sharp engagement at Sailly-Saillisel of several days' duration at the end of February and beginning of March.



That action would bring this episode in the Newfoundlanders' War – in the area of *the Somme* - to a close.

(Right above: *The fighting during the time of the Battalion's posting to Sailly-Saillisel took place on the far side of the village, now reconstructed, which was no more than a heap of rubble at the time. - photograph from 2009(?)*)

After Sailly-Saillisel the month of March was to be a quiet time for the Newfoundlanders; having departed from the trenches, they now would spend their time near the communities of Meaulté and Camps-en-Amienois, re-enforcing, re-organizing, and training for upcoming events. They had even had the pleasure of a visit from the Regimental Band, and also one from the Prime Minister of Newfoundland, Sir Edward Morris, the latter having presented himself behind the lines on March 17, St. Patrick's Day.



(Right above: *Sir Edward Morris here pictured during his visit of the Newfoundland Contingent at the camp at Meaulté on St. Patrick's Day – from *The War Illustrated**)

(continued)

On March 29, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had begun to make its way – on foot – from Camps-en-Amienois to the north-east, towards the venerable medieval city of Arras and eventually beyond, a march that was to terminate amid the vestiges of the village of Monchy-le-Preux.

(Right: *The remnants of the Grande Place in Arras as it was already by the spring of 1916, less than two years after the onset of the Great War: The first bombardments had begun in October of 1914. – from Illustration*)



On April 9, 1917, the British had launched an offensive in the area to the north of *the Somme* battlefields; this was to be the so-called *Battle of Arras* intended to support a French effort elsewhere. In terms of the daily count of casualties it would be the most expensive operation of the entire *Great War* for the British, its only positive episode to be the Canadian assault of *Vimy Ridge* on the opening day of the battle, Easter Monday.



While the British campaign was to prove an overall disappointment, the French offensive of *Le Chemin des Dames* had been yet a further disaster.

(Right above: *The Canadian National Memorial which since 1936 has stood on Vimy Ridge – photograph from 2010*)



The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment had played its part in the *Battle of Arras*, a role that would begin at a place called Monchy-le-Preux on April 14 and which would finish ten days later, on April 23, perhaps a single kilometre distant, at *Les Fosses Farm*. After *Beaumont-Hamel*, April 14 at Monchy-le-Preux was to prove the most costly day of the Newfoundlanders' war – four-hundred eighty-seven casualties, including those taken prisoner, all told.



(Right above: *The village of Monchy-le-Preux as seen today from the western – in 1917, the British – side of the community. The Newfoundlanders advanced, out of the ruins of the place, to the east, away from the camera. – photograph from 2013*)

(Right above: *Newfoundland troops just after the time of Monchy-le-Preux. – from The War Illustrated*)



May of 1917 had then a period when the Newfoundlanders were to be moving hither and thither on the *Arras Front*, marching in and out of the trenches. While there was to be the ever-present artillery-fire, there had been little infantry activity – apart from the marching.

(continued)

At the outset of June of 1917, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion retired from the line to Bonneville, there to spend its time re-enforcing, re-organizing and training for the upcoming British offensive of the summer – and as it was to transpire, the autumn as well.

And it had been there at Bonneville, of course, on June 7, that the draft from Ayr with Lance Corporal Lidstone among its ranks would report *to duty*.

(Preceding page: *Newfoundland troops on the march in the community of Berneville – not Bonneville - in early May (the 7<sup>th</sup>?) of 1917 – from The War Illustrated*)

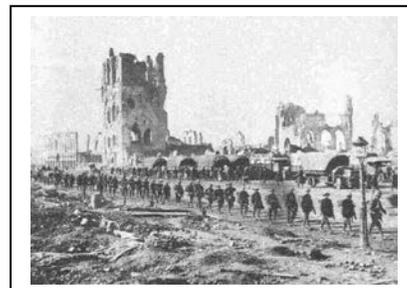
\* \* \* \* \*

During the weeks following Lance Corporal Lidstone's return, the Newfoundlanders once again moved north into Belgium – by the end of June - and once again into the area of Ypres and *the Salient*. At the outset the unit was to serve in the area to the north where the *Yser Canal* begins to exit the city from south to north.



(Right: *The Yser Canal at a point in the northern outskirts of Ypres almost a century after the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Newfoundland Regiment, manned its eastern bank: East is to the right – photograph from 2014*)

The area to the east of Ypres – again *the Salient* - had long before, even prior to the *Battle of Arras*, been selected by the British High Command to become the theatre of the British summer offensive of 1917. Officially named the *Third Battle of Ypres*, the campaign has come to be known to history as simply *Passchendaele*, having adopted that name from a small village on a ridge that had been – at least *ostensibly* - one of the British Army's main objectives.



(Right above: *Troops file through the rubble, and past the historic Cloth Hall, of the medieval city of Ypres on their way to the front during the late summer of 1917. – from Illustration*)

The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was to remain in Belgium until October 17, a small cog in the machinery of the British Army which floundered its way across the sodden countryside of Flanders. Notably Lance Corporal Lidstone and his unit fought in two major engagements, at the *Steenbeek* on August 16, and at the *Broembek* on October 9.



By the end of the Newfoundlanders' campaign at *Third Ypres* – in fact on September 17 - Lance Corporal had been once more promoted, to become *Corporal* Lidstone.

(continued)

He had also presumably played his anonymous role at each of those two infantry actions but, moreover, had also been cited for his conduct on one other occasion.

Lance Corporal Lidstone became a recipient of the Military Medal for his part in a raid in the Yser Canal sector (see photograph on preceding page) on the night of July 17/18, 1917, during the opening stages of the Battle of Passchendaele: *'He took a leading part in entering a dug-out, killing one German and taking another prisoner. His work contributed in a great measure to the success of the raid. (Strength of raiding party, 2 officers 50 O. ranks).'* - London Gazette, 17<sup>th</sup> September, 1917



A week after the encounter of October 9 at the *Broembeek*, the Newfoundlanders were withdrawn from the *Passchendaele* campaign in order to prepare for yet another upcoming offensive. They were moved back south from Belgium into northern France on October 17 to re-enforce, organize and train in the vicinity of Berles-au-Bois, a community a dozen or so kilometres to the south-west of Arras.

The so-called *Battle of Cambrai* was to last for barely three weeks, from November 20 until December 4, the Newfoundlanders directly involved at all times during that period. The battle was to begin well for the British who used tanks on a large scale for the first time; but opportunities were squandered and by its close the British had relinquished as much territory as they had gained.



The Newfoundland Battalion was again dealt with severely, at Marcoing and at Masnières - where a Caribou (see below) stands today. Of the total of five-hundred fifty-eight officers and men who went into battle, two-hundred forty-eight had already become casualties by the end of the second day.

(Right above: *The Canal St-Quentin at Masnières, the crossing of which and the establishment of a bridgehead on its north bank having been the first objectives for the Newfoundland battalion on November 20, the first day of the Battle of Cambrai* – photograph from 2010(?))

The son of Nathaniel Lidstone, engineer with *Job Brothers*, and of Elizabeth Lidstone\* (née *Sheppard*, deceased June 2, 1918) of 35, Young Street in St. John's – his father's later address recorded as 26, Gordon Avenue, Verdun, Québec\*\* - he was also brother to Gertrude, Woodley (or *Woodland*) and Thomas-Sheppard.

*\*The couple married in Cupids on January 27, 1879. By 1890 the family was living on LeMarchant Road in St. John's and then by 1894 on Young Street where they remained until as late as 1917.*



(continued)

(Preceding page: *The Caribou at Masnières stands at the furthest point of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's first-day objective, an objective possibly in fact never realized.* – photograph from 2012)

**\*\*After Elizabeth's passing, Nathaniel married Eva Piercey in 1919 in St. John's and in 1921 the couple moved to the above address (elsewhere recorded as Number 28) in Montreal, having travelled there on the steamship Rosalind.**

Corporal Lidstone was reported as having been *killed in action* on November 20, 1917, while serving with 'A' Company on the first day of the fighting near the French villages of Marcoing and Masnières. Originally interred in Marcoing Copse Cemetery, his remains were later moved to where they rest today.

Harold Lidstone had enlisted at the *declared* age of twenty-two years; other sources cite 1894 and 1896 as the year of his birth apart from the logical one of 1892.



(Right: A family memorial – front left in the photograph – which stands in the General Protestant Cemetery in St. John's, commemorates and honours the sacrifice of Corporal Lidstone. – photograph from 2015)



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

Corporal Harold Lidstone, MM, 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).

