

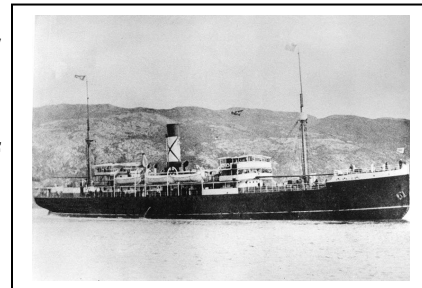


Sergeant Augustine (also found as *Augustan*) Joseph Manning (Regimental Number 177) is interred in Auchonvillers Military Cemetery – Grave reference II. B. 30.

His occupation prior to enlistment recorded as that of a *printer* working for a weekly wage of \$14.00, Augustine Joseph Manning was recruited during the First Draft, and enlisted at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland - at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 (including a daily ten-cent field allowance) - on August 29, 1914 – a second source has September 3.

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Having been promoted to the rank of lance corporal on September 21, he was then attested ten days later on October 1, before embarking on October 3 onto the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* for passage 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 1st 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 Lance Corporal Manning 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*)

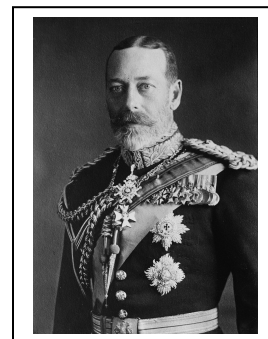
It was to be during the Newfoundland Contingent's posting to the Scottish capital that Lance Corporal Manning received a second promotion. He put up his corporal's stripe on April 23.

(Right below: *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 of the Regiment, '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 2nd (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 1st Battalion, Newfoundland Regiment, comprising those four Companies, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', was thereupon attached to the 88th Brigade of the 29th Division of the (British) Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.*

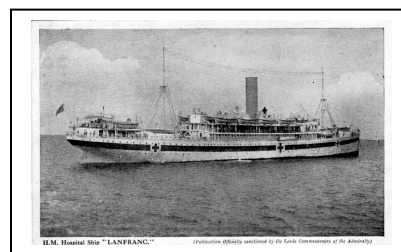
(Preceding page: A century later, the area, little changed from those far-off days, of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla, and where Sergeant Manning was to serve during the fall of 1915 – photograph from 2011)

The Middle East campaign was to be a debacle: Flies, dust, disease, frost-bite, floods – plus 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 soon afterwards 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.**

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Some six weeks after having landed at Suvla Bay, Sergeant Manning fell victim to those deplorable conditions. Having been diagnosed as suffering from *debility* - weakness due to some unrecorded medical condition – Sergeant Manning was evacuated from Suvla on November 1, 1915, on board His Majesty's Hospital Ship *Lanfranc* for medical attention in the Egyptian port-city of Alexandria.



(Right above: The image of HMHS Lanfranc seen here in her war-time white garb with red crosses, is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site. She was later torpedoed and sunk on April 17 of 1917 with a loss of forty-two lives, almost half of them German wounded.)

Having arrived in Alexandria, Sergeant Manning was admitted into the Bombay President Hospital on November 5, by then his condition having been attributed to dysentery. Some twelve weeks of treatment later, on the 26th of January of the New Year, 1916, he re-joined the 1st Battalion which by that time was also in Egypt (see further below).

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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 1st 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)

(continued)

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)

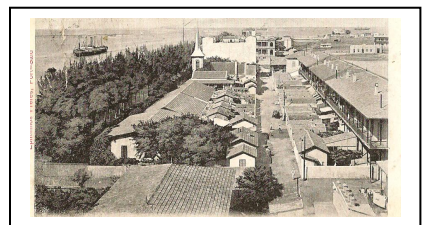


(Right: 'W' Beach almost a century after its abandonment by British forces and by the Newfoundlanders who were the last soldiers off the beach: vestiges of the wharves in the black-and-white picture are still to be seen. – photograph from 2011)



(Right: The British destroy their supplies during the final evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The men of the 1st 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)

When the British evacuated the entire Gallipoli Peninsula in January of 1916, the Newfoundland Battalion was ordered to Alexandria, arriving there on the 15th 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 1st Battalion's 29th 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.*

Suez had of course been where Sergeant Manning had rejoined the unit from hospital on January 26.

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(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)

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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, Sergeant Manning's 1st 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*.

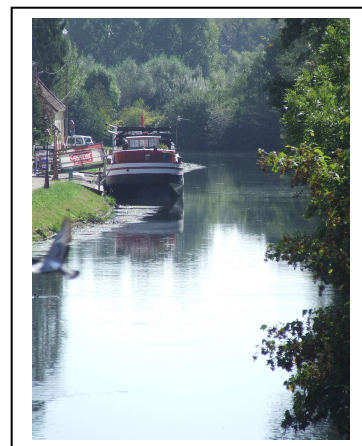
The Newfoundlanders would also soon be preparing for the British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for that meandering river, *the Somme*.

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

At the beginning of June, the 1st Battalion had been posted to a routine tour in the trenches, to a sector not far from the village of Mailly-Maillet where they were billeted, and thus close to the commune of Beaumont-Hamel. The Regimental War Diarist of the period merely remarked – for the entire period of June 1 until June 6 - that the Newfoundlanders... *Remained in billets at MAILLY MAILLET in Bge Reserve. Whole Bn. Employed on various wiring parties in trenches...*

The son of Captain James Manning, master mariner then later tidewaiter at His Majesty's Customs, and of Elizabeth (also recorded as both *Lizzie* and *Eliza*) Manning* (née *Lamb*) of Cochrane Street before Victoria Street before 31, Gower Street, in St. John's, he was also brother to at least Michael-Joseph, Patrick-Francis, Julia-Mary, James-Robert, Margaret-Mary and Raymond-Charles.

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**The couple are recorded in various sources as having been married in May of 1876 – in fact documented as on May 1, May 12 and May 14.*

(Preceding page: Shells from the Great War are still harvested in the area each year by the local farmers - this photograph taken in 2011 in Auconvillers about twenty metres from the gate to the Military Cemetery. It is about a kilometre from the Newfoundland Memorial Par. – photograph from 2010)

Sergeant Manning was reported as having been *killed in action* on June 1, 1916. Other sources have also June 2 and 3; however, a further report documents his burial on that June 1 by a Reverend J. A. Hagg.

His commanding officer, Captain Ledingham, had witnessed his death. Sergeant Manning had received the force of a high-explosive shell in the back of the neck while serving with 'A' Company...*in charge of a working-party in the trenches.*

Augustine Joseph Manning had enlisted at the *declared* age of twenty-one years: date of birth in St. John's, Newfoundland, February 27, 1894 (from Roman Catholic Parish Records).

(Right above: The sacrifice of Sergeant Manning is commemorated on this stele erected by his mother and which stands in Belvedere Cemetery in St. John's. – photograph from 2015)

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

Sergeant Augustine Joseph Manning 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. Last updated – February 12, 2023.

