

Lance Corporal Joseph Samuel (known as *Sam*) Moores (Regimental Number 943 but found at times, incorrectly, as 941), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated on the bronze beneath the Caribou in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel.

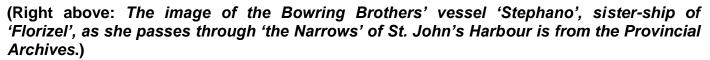


His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *fisherman* earning an annual five-hundred dollars, Sam Moores presented himself for medical examination at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* on Harvey Road in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on January 28 of the year 1915. It was a procedure which was to pronounce him as... *Fit for Foreign Service*.

It was then on the day following his medical assessment, on January 29, that he would enlist – engaged at the private soldier's rate of a single dollar per diem plus a daily tencent *Field Allowance*.

However, whereas attestation for others had come about on the day of enlistment, he was now to await a further seven days, until February 5, before *that* final formality would come to pass.

Now for Private Moores, Number 943, there was now to be yet another waiting period, this of six weeks. How he occupied himself during that time is not recorded among his papers; he may, of course, have temporarily returned to work — and perhaps almost certainly travelled back home to Freshwater, Bay de Verde - but this is only speculation.



Unlike the two previous contingents to have departed Newfoundland (see below) for...overseas service, Private Moores' 'D' Company was not to sail directly to the United Kingdom. On March 20, this unit embarked onto the Bowring-Brothers' vessel Stephano for the short voyage to Halifax, capital city of the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, where it was thereupon to board a second vessel, the newly-launched Orduña for the trans-Atlantic crossing\*.



(Preceding page: The image of Orduña is from the 'Old Ship Picture Galleries' web-site. The vessel was not to be requisitioned during the Great War but would be used by the Cunard Company to operate on its commercial service between Liverpool and New York.)

Having then sailed from Nova Scotia on March 22 for Liverpool, Private Moores and his draft landed there eight days later, on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Once disembarked in Liverpool, the two-hundred fifty men and officers of 'D' Company were thereupon transported on the same date by train directly to Edinburgh, the Scottish capital, to join the Newfoundland Regiment's 'A', 'B' and 'C' Companies.

These units were by this time stationed at the historic Castle, 'A' and 'B' having recently been posted from Fort George and 'C' having arrived directly from home (see further below). After 'D' Company's arrival at the end of that month of March, the Newfoundlanders were now to remain at Edinburgh for the following six weeks.

(Right above: From its vantage point on Castle Hill, the venerable fortress overlooks the city of Edinburgh where in 1915 the Newfoundlanders were to provide the first garrison to be drawn from outside the British Isles. – photograph from 2011)

\* \* \* \* \*

Five to six months before that time, in the late summer and early autumn of 1914 there had been a period of training of some 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.

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

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





In the United Kingdom 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 'C' Company – the first re-enforcements for the original contingent\* - would arrive directly from Newfoundland.

\*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.

\* \* \* \* \*

As seen in a previous paragraph, for the month of April and the first days of May of 1915, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies, now united, were to furnish the garrison – the first troops from outside the British Isles to do so - of the guardian of Scotland's capital city. Then, during the first week of May, 'E' Company was to report there... to duty...from home. Four days later again, on May 11, the Newfoundland contingent was ordered elsewhere.

On that day, three weeks into spring – although in Scotland there was apparently still snow - the entire Newfoundland unit was dispatched to *Stobs Camp*, all under canvas and southeastwards 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\*. The nowformed 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was thus rendered available to be sent on 'active service'.

(Right: 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 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 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.

Meanwhile the two junior Companies, 'E' – 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.



(Preceding page: 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.)

It was while the Newfoundland Battalion was in training during those weeks at Aldershot, on August 15 that Private Moores would be prevailed upon to enlist for the duration of the conflict.

\*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 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, Private Moores and his Newfoundland unit 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*.

(Right above: Kangaroo Beach, where the officers and men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Newfoundland Regiment, landed on the night of September 19-20, 1915, is to be seen in the distance at the far end of Suvla Bay. The remains of a landing-craft are still clearly visible in the foreground on 'A' Beach. – photograph taken in 2011)

(Right above: Newfoundland troops on board a troop-ship anchored at Mudros: either Megantic on August 29, Ausonia on September 18, or Prince Abbas on September 19 – Whichever the case, they were yet to land on Gallipoli. – from Provincial Archives)











(Preceding page: 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 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*, was proving to be little more than a debacle:

Flies, dust, disease, the frost-bite and the floods – and of course the casualties inflicted by an enemy who was to fight a great deal better than the British High Command\* had ever anticipated – were eventually to overwhelm the British-led forces and those of the French, and it would finally be decided to abandon not only *Suvla Bay* but the entire *Gallipoli* venture.



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

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

\*Many of the commanders chosen were second-rate, had been brought out of retirement, and had little idea of how to fight – let alone of how to win. One of the generals at Suvla, apparently, had handed in his resignation during the Campaign and had just gone home.

November 26 of 1915 would see 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 had wreaked havoc amongst the forces of both sides. For several days, survival rather than the enemy was to be the priority.



There were to be many casualties on both sides, some of them, surprised by the sudden inundation of their positions, fatalities who had drowned in their trenches – although no Newfoundlanders were to be among that number. Numerous, however, were those afflicted by trench-foot and by frost-bite.

It would appear that Private Moores was one of them.

\* \* \* \* \*

On December 2, the day after the arrival of the 1<sup>st</sup> Re-enforcement Draft from the 2<sup>nd</sup> (*Reserve*) Battalion, by this time stationed at Ayr in Scotland, Private Moores was evacuated from *Suvla Bay*, ferried to and admitted into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Hospital at Mudros on the Greek island of Lemnos some seventy kilometres distant, suffering from the aforementioned frost-bite and trench-foot.

After treatment, Private Moores was forwarded to the *Lowland Convalescent Camp*, also established at Mudros, on December 13, there to recover from a further medical complaint, a case of rheumatism.

(Right: By the end of the year 1915, the Bay of Mudros and its minuscule harbour were almost entirely surrounded by various Allied medical establishments, many of them as seen here under canvas. – from Illustration)



Private Moores was discharged *to duty* to the Base Depot on Mudros on St. Stephen's Day, December 27. When he was then transferred from Mudros back to Egypt appears not to be recorded but it was apparently sooner rather than later as he is documented as re-joining the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion in Alexandria on January 16 of the New Year, 1916, upon the Newfoundland unit's return from service on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.

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In the meantime, during the first days of Private Moores' departure for medical care, the British positions at *Suvla Bay* had been becoming more and more untenable and thus on the night of December 19-20, the area was to be abandoned – the Newfoundlanders, the only non-British unit to serve there, to form a part of the rear-guard.

Some of the Battalion personnel were to be evacuated to the nearby island of Imbros, some to Lemnos, further away; but in neither case had the respite been of a long duration; the Newfoundland Battalion would be 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)





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

The British, Indian and *Anzac* forces – the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was also to serve at *Gallipoli* – had by then only 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.

\*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 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 had evacuated the entire *Gallipoli Peninsula* in January of 1916, the Newfoundland Battalion was to be ordered to the Egyptian port-city of Alexandria, to arrive there on the 15<sup>th</sup> of that month. The Newfoundlanders would then on the morrow be transferred southward by ship to the vicinity of Suez, a port at the southern end of the Canal which bears the same name, there to await further orders since, at the time, the subsequent destination of the British 29<sup>th</sup> Division had yet to be decided\*.



And it was to be during this time, of course, as recounted in a previous paragraph, that Private Moores had reported back... to duty...with the Newfoundland Battalion, on January 16, as it had passed through Alexandria.

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

(Right above: 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)

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After a 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 boarded His Majesty's Transport *Alaunia* at Port Tewfiq, on March 14 to begin the voyage through the *Suez Canal* en route to France.



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

The Newfoundlanders would disembark eight days afterwards in the Mediterranean portcity of Marseilles, on March 22.

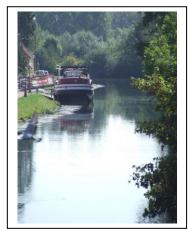
(Right: British troops march through the port area of the French city of Marseilles. – from a vintage post-card)

Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, the Newfoundland Battalion's train was to find its way to 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 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 over which they then marched on their way from the station. But some three months later the Somme was to have become a part of their history.

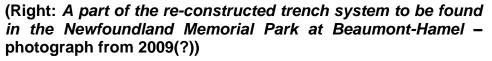


(Right: A languid River Somme as seen from the bridge at Pont-Rémy – photograph from 2010)

On April 13, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion 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*.

Just days following the Newfoundland Battalion's arrival on the *Western Front*, 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 then ordered to move further up for the first time into forward positions on April 22.

\*It should be said that the Newfoundland Battalion and twohundred 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.





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 Newfoundlanders were soon to be preparing for the upcoming British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for the languid, meandering river, *the Somme*, that flowed – and still does so today – through the region.

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(?))

\*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.

(Right: Wounded at the Somme being transported in handcarts from the forward area for further medical attention – from Le Miroir)







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 carnage of *the Somme* was to continue for the next 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 below: A grim, grainy image purporting to be Newfoundland - dead awaiting burial after Beaumont-Hamel – from...?)

On July 1, 1916, Private Moores was one of the many wounded at Beaumont-Hamel during the fighting of the first day of *the Somme*.

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Private Moores, having been evacuated from the field, was admitted two days later into the 87<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance on July 3, suffering from slight injuries incurred by shell-fire to his back, and from where he was transferred on the same day to an unspecified casualty clearing station. On the 4<sup>th</sup> he was next forwarded to the 1<sup>st</sup> Stationary Hospital in Rouen, and on the following day onwards to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Convalescent Depot, also in Rouen.





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

(Right: A British casualty clearing station – the one pictured here under canvas for mobility if and whenever the necessity were to arise – being established somewhere in France during the early years of the War: Other such medical establishments were often of a much more permanent nature. - from a vintage post-card)



Private Moores was to report back...to duty...with the Newfoundland Battalion on August 8 – according to his personal papers – but perhaps one of a small re-enforcement draft of only nine...other ranks...recorded by the Battalion War Diarist as having arrived from the Base Depot at Rouen five days afterwards, none having been reported on August 8.

But at the time, even small numbers of re-enforcements were more than welcome.

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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 Mailly-Maillet.

(Preceding page: 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 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 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.

And it was there, in the Salient, at a time during which the Newfoundland unit was busy building trench-works and avoiding enemy shell-fire – not always successfully – that Private Moores returned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion in August, then to be promoted to the rank of lance corporal on September 14.



(Right above: 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)

\* \* \* \* \*

The Salient – close to the front lines for almost the entire fifty-two month conflict - 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 had been 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 had again been ordered to the offensive; it was to be at a place called Gueudecourt, the vestiges of a village some dozen or so kilometres to the southeast of Beaumont-Hamel.

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

(Right: 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 Joseph Jeffers Moores, fisherman – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of fifty cents from his pay - and of Mary Charlotte Moores (deceased August 7, 1904)\* of Freshwater in the District of Bay de Verde, he was also brother to William-Hayward and to Aseneth (sic).



\*Curiously, both Joseph and Mary appear to have died within days of each other: Joseph on August 5 of 1904 (from Ancestry.ca) and Mary, at the age of forty-four years, on August 7 of the same year as seen above (from Newfoundland Vital Statistics).

A caveat to the reader: the author erred in an earlier file and incorrectly reported a second marriage and the likely incorrect maiden name of Mary Charlotte as having been 'Penney'. He has been advised by family members that the name was most probably 'Kelloway'. As yet no marriage record has come to light to confirm or refute this. The author would like to apologize to the family for these inaccuracies.

Lance Corporal Moores was reported as having been *killed in action* while serving with 'D' Company during the above-mentioned action of October 12, 1916, at Gueudecourt. At home it was the Reverend Ezra Broughton of Freshwater who was requested to bear the news to his family.

Joseph Samuel Moores had enlisted at a *declared* twenty-one years of age: date of birth in Freshwater, District of Bay de Verde, Newfoundland, November 8, 1893 (from the Newfoundland Birth Register as is his first name, *Joseph*).

Lance Corporal Samuel Joseph Moores 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) (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 8, 2023.