



Private Patrick Richardson (Regimental Number 1234), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupation prior to his military service recorded as that of a *'book assistant'*, earning a monthly \$20.00, Patrick Richardson enlisted at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's – engaged at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 daily - on March 17, 1915. He then attested eight days later, on March 25.



Private Richardson embarked on board His Majesty's Transport *Calgarian* (right – original photograph from the *Provincial Archives*) on June 20 in St. John's Harbour and sailed (*almost\**) directly to the United Kingdom. He was one of the two-hundred forty-two men of 'F' Company and eighty-five naval reservists to take passage on that day.

*\*Apparently the ship took nineteen days to make what was usually the journey of about a week. Not only was Calgarian escorting three submarines, but she sailed by way of the Portuguese Azores and then Gibraltar – some of the Newfoundlanders apparently even having the time to cross the straits to spend a few hours in North Africa. She reached Liverpool on July 9.*



(Right above: *the Crown Colony of Gibraltar in pre-War days: The Spanish mainland is in the background. – from a vintage postcard*)

On the day after its arrival in the United Kingdom, 'F' Company marched from the railway station and reported *to duty* at Stobs Camp near the Scottish town of Hawick on the evening of July 10. It was an important moment: the Newfoundland Regiment, as of that day counting fifteen hundred personnel, was now at fighting strength and could be posted on *active service*.



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

(continued)

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

'E' and 'F' Companies – the latter having arrived at Stobs Camp on July 10 - were to be posted to the new Regimental Depot and were to form the nucleus of the newly-formed 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion. The Depot was to be Private Richardson's home for the next eight months.

The Regimental Depot was being established during that summer of 1915 in the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland to serve as a base for the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion. It was from there – as of November of 1915 up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers from home were to be sent in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.



(Right above: *an aerial view of Ayr – probably from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough is to the right. – courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr*)

It was during this posting to Ayr that Private Richardson was prevailed upon to re-enlist. Having originally signed on for a year, on February 2, 1916 he was re-engaged *for the duration of the war*.\*

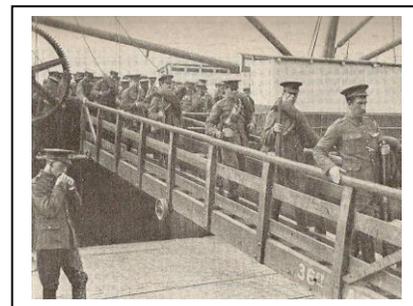
*\*At the outset of the War, perhaps because it was felt by the authorities that it would be a conflict of short duration, the recruits enlisted for only a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was obviously going to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist.*

It was not until March 28 of the following year, 1916, that the large 3<sup>rd</sup> Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton, the first such contingent to embark for the Continent. Two days later, on the 30<sup>th</sup>, His Majesty's Transport *Archangel* (right) docked at Rouen, capital city of Normandy and site of the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot where the draft spent some days in final training and organization before moving on to its rendezvous with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.



(continued)

(Right: *British troops 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*. Private Richardson was among that number.

Only two days prior, on April 13, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had *itself* marched into the village of Englebelmer – thus completing a month-long transfer from Egypt to the western Front. There it was billeted, welcomed those re-enforcements from Rouen of the 15<sup>th</sup> and, on the evening of that same day, was ordered forward – accompanied by the the new-comers – into the nearby British lines, to work in the communication trenches.



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

(Right above: *part of the re-constructed trench system to be found in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2007(?)*)

The son of John Richardson and Jane Richardson (née *Kennedy?*) – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of sixty cents from his pay - of 165 (16½) Duckworth Street in St. John's, he was likely brother to Mary Ellen, Annie Clare and Edward.



Private Richardson was reported as *missing in action* at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, 1916, while serving with 'C' Company during the fighting of the first day of *the Somme*. Some six months later, on December 31, he was officially *presumed dead*.

Patrick Richardson had enlisted at twenty years of age.

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

Private Patrick Richardson was entitled to the British War Medal (left) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).



44 Coll's Avenue

Ayr

2<sup>nd</sup> August 1916

Dear Sir

I wrote to you before regarding Private Patrick Richardson and I am pleased to state I got your reply. I was glad at the time to hear what you told me but I have recently got word from France that he is killed. I should be very glad if you would furnish me with the particulars of his death as you told me I could write to you for any information I may desire regarding him. I should be very thankful for your earliest reply and very glad to receive it. Thanking you very much for your kind attention with my last desire.

§ oblige

Noted on letter: *Missing*

Miss J. Earl