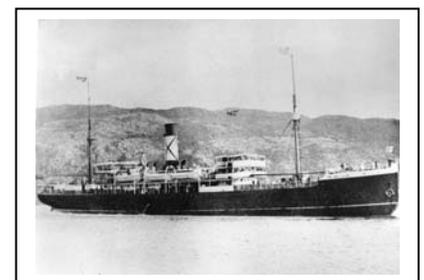




Private Henry Charles Dawe (Regimental Number 589) is believed to be interred in Ancre British Cemetery – Grave reference Special Memorial 2.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a farmer earning \$30.00 a month, Henry Charles Dawe enlisted at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's – engaged at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem - on September 24 of 1914. He was a recruit of the First Draft.

Attesting nine days later, on October 3, he embarked on that same date onto the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* (right – courtesy of *Admiralty House Museum*). The ship set sail on the following day, the 4<sup>th</sup>, in order to join the convoy carrying the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division overseas. The Newfoundlanders arrived in the south-coast English port of Devonport on October 14 and then sat on board the ship until the 20<sup>th</sup>.



(continued)

Having disembarked in the United Kingdom, Private Dawe trained with the Battalion: firstly in southern England on the Salisbury Plain; then in Scotland at Fort George (right); at Edinburgh Castle; and for some three months at Stobs Camp near the Scottish town of Hawick.



(Far right above: *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 August, Private Dawe was transferred with the four senior Companies, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', to southern England, to Aldershot, for some two weeks of final training and a royal inspection in preparation for *active service* at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea at Gallipoli.

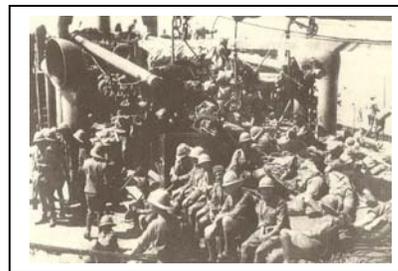
'E' and 'F' Companies, the last arrivals, were instead sent to the new Regimental Depot. There they were to form the nucleus of the newly-formed 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion.

It was while at Aldershot that, on August 13, Private Dawe was prevailed upon to re-enlist, on this occasion 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.*

On August 20, 1915, Private Dawe took ship on board the requisitioned passenger liner *Megantic* (right above) for passage to the Middle East and to the fighting in Gallipoli where, a month later – of which two weeks had been spent billeted at the British barracks at Abbassia, near the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion landed on the beach at Suvla Bay on the Gallipoli Peninsula.



(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)

(continued)

**(Right: ‘Kangaroo Beach’, where the men of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion landed on the night of September 19-20, 1915, is 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 from 2011)**



**(Right: a century later, the area, little changed from those far-off days, of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla, and where Private Dawe served during the fall of 1915 – photograph from 2011)**



On the night of December 19-20, the British abandoned their positions and withdrew from Suvla Bay, the Newfoundlanders, the only non-British unit to serve there, forming a part of the rear-guard for the occasion. Two days later, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was transferred to Cape Helles on the western tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula. They were soon, on the night of January 8-9, to be abandoning Cape Helles as well.



**(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)**

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



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



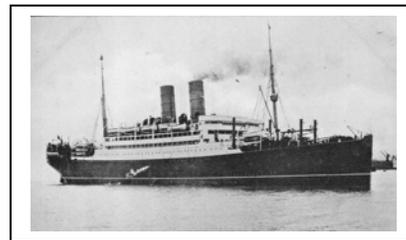
**(Right below: The British destroy their supplies during the final evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The Newfoundlanders, employed as the rear-guard, were among the last to leave on two occasions. – photograph taken from the battleship Cornwallis from Illustration)**



When the British evacuated the entire Gallipoli Peninsula in January of 1916, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was sent to Alexandria, arriving there on the 15<sup>th</sup> of that month. From there the Newfoundlanders were transferred, almost immediately, south to Suez where they were to await further orders. To that point it seems that the theatre of the future posting of 29<sup>th</sup> Division was still uncertain.

**(continued)**

On March 14, the officers and men of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion embarked through Port Tewfiq at the southern end of the Suez Canal onto His Majesty's Transport *Alaunia* for the voyage to the French Mediterranean port of Marseilles, en route to the *Western Front*.



(Right above: *The photograph of Alaunia - to be sunk after hitting a mine on October 19, 1916 – is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries Web-site.*)

(Right: *Port Tewfiq at some time just before the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)



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



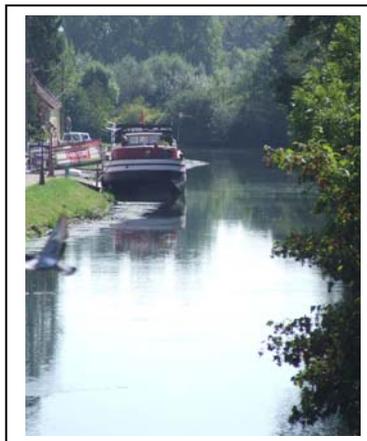
Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, the Battalion's train arrived at the small provincial town of Pont-Rémy.

It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for them travelling unused in a separate wagon. De-training at the station at two in the morning the Newfoundlanders still had a long march ahead of them before they would reach their billets at Buigny l'Abbé.

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

It is doubtful that any of those tired soldiers paid much attention to the slow-moving stream flowing under the bridge that they passed on their way from the station. Some three months later *the Somme* would be a part of their history.

On April 13, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion entered into the village of Englebelmer – three kilometres behind the lines and perhaps some fifty kilometres in all distant from Pont-Rémy – where the Newfoundlanders were billeted, welcomed re-enforcements on the 15<sup>th</sup> and, on the evening of that same day, were introduced into the British lines of the *Western Front*, there to be immediately set to work to improve 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 that same meandering river which flowed through the region, *the Somme*.

(continued)



(Preceding page: *part of the re-constructed trench system in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2007(?)*)

The son of John Dawe, labourer (deceased April, 1919), and Dorcas Dawe of Topsail, he was also brother to Mary-Jane-Stickland, to Eliza-Frances, and also to John-Chesley (known as *Ches*). Private Dawe was reported as *missing in action* at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, 1916, while serving with 'B' Company during the fighting on that first day of *the Somme*.



However, a subsequent letter dated September 28, 1916, from the Officer Commanding the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Grenadier Guards, reported the identification of his remains and their burial on September 22. Private Dawe's record was thus amended so as to read *killed in action 1/7/16*. At home it was the Reverend J. Nurse who was requested to inform his family.



Henry Charles Dawe had enlisted at the declared age of twenty-two years and five months of age: date of birth in Topsail, October 14, 1891.

(Right top: *at Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park, 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 at Beaumont-Hamel – from ...*)

(Right: *The War Memorial which today represents all of the community of Conception Bay South – here standing on a former site in Topsail - honours the sacrifice of Private Dawe. – photograph from 2010(?)*)

Private Henry Charles Dawe 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).



(continued)

(Right: *Beaumont-Hamel is a commune, not a village* (see below). – 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, where the Newfoundland Memorial Park is today, was on land that separated Beaumont from Hamel.*

