



**Lance Corporal Oswald Raymond Goodyear (Regimental Number 2156) is interred in Bancourt British Cemetery – Grave reference VIII. M. 5.**

**His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a teamster, Oswald Raymond Goodyear was a recruit of the Eighth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on February 22, 1916, he then enlisted\* - engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 – on February 23, before attesting\*\* on the following day, the 24<sup>th</sup>.**

***\*Apparently he had tried to enlist on two previous occasions but his father had intervened both times.***

***\*\*Another source has him attesting on the day that he enlisted.***

**(continued)**

It was to be some four weeks before Private Goodyear was to embark for overseas service to the United Kingdom. It was as a soldier of the second contingent of 'H' Company that he took ship for overseas service on board His Majesty's Transport *Sicilian*\* (right) in St. John's Harbour on March 23-24. The ship did not sail from Newfoundland until the 25<sup>th</sup>.



*\*Some sixteen years previously - as of 1899 when she was launched – the vessel, originally built for the Allan Line, had been requisitioned as a troop-ship and transport carrying men, animals and equipment to South Africa for use during the Second Boer War.*

Private Goodyear did not disembark in the United Kingdom until April 9, at which time the contingent was transported to the Regimental Depot in Scotland\*.

*\*Two weeks was a long time for a trans-Atlantic passage from St. John's to the United Kingdom. Sicilian had apparently not been requisitioned as a troopship and was still being used on a regular service between England and North America – one might speculate that she put in to Halifax before making the crossing.*

The Regimental Depot had been established during the summer of 1915 in the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland, there to serve as a base for the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion. It was from there – as of November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers arriving from home were despatched 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*)

During the winter of 1915-1916 the men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion had been lodged in several venues, at a nearby military camp at Gales, but also as far afield as Paisley Barracks, some sixty-five kilometres distant. However, by the spring of 1916 the difficulty had been overcome by housing the men in a requisitioned school, in a tented community and in the Ayr Racecourse Grandstand, all in the district of Newton-upon-Ayr.



(Right above: *the new race-course at Ayr - opened in 1907 – where the men of the Regiment were sometimes billeted and where they replaced some of the turf with a vegetable garden; part of the present grandstand is original – photo from 2012*)

It was while at *the Racecourse* at Newton-on-Ayr, on June 30, that Private Goodyear re-enlisted, nine days before his departure for the Continent\*.

*\*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.*

July 9 saw the 8<sup>th</sup> Re-enforcement Draft – Private Goodyear among its ranks - pass through the English south-coast port of Southampton on its way to France. On the day following, the 10<sup>th</sup>, it disembarked in Rouen, capital city of Normandy, and made its way to the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot, there to undergo final training and organization\* before moving to a rendezvous with the parent unit.



(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen at the outset of the Great War, on their way 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, Étapes, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

There must have been a terrible sense of urgency at the time: the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment had suffered huge losses at a place called Beaumont-Hamel\* on the morning of July 1, 1916, and even on July 6 its depleted strength, as reported by the Regimental War Diarist, still numbered no more than one-hundred sixty-eight *other ranks*, less than twenty per cent of the regulation strength of a British battalion.



*\*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.*

Private Goodyear was one of the contingent of one-hundred twenty-six *other ranks* from Rouen to report to *duty* with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion on July 21 in the small community of Acheux. 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had marched to there from the trenches in front of Mailly-Maillet four days prior, and would continue this march as far as Beauval on the 23<sup>rd</sup> where they were to be billeted for only forty-eight hours before covering – still on foot – a further twenty kilometres to Candas on the 26<sup>th</sup> to board a train.

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On July 27-28 of 1916, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion - still under battalion strength at only five-hundred fifty-four strong, even after re-enforcement - moved north and crossed the frontier into 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.



It was also during the time of this posting to Belgium that Private Goodyear was elevated to the rank of lance-corporal: the date was August 24.

(Right above: *Different of course today, this is the entrance to 'A' Company's quarters in the ramparts of Ypres – and adjacent to the Menin Gate - when it was posted there in 1916. – photograph from 2010*)

*The Salient* was relatively quiet during the time of the Newfoundlanders' posting there, yet they nonetheless incurred casualties, a number of them fatalities. On October 8, after ten weeks in Belgium, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was to move south, back to France, back to the area of – and back to the *Battle of – the Somme*.



(Right above: *the city of Ypres towards the end of 1915 – and eight months before the Newfoundlanders were posted there for the first time – from a vintage post-card*)

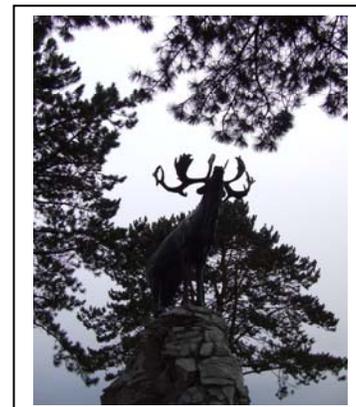
Only four days after its return to France, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was ordered to pass to the offensive, on this occasion on the outskirts of the ruined village of Gueudecourt perhaps a dozen kilometres or so to the south-east of Beaumont-Hamel. Here, on October 12 – and during a heavy enemy bombardment of the previous evening – the Newfoundlanders lost heavily – two-hundred thirty-nine on those two days alone - and again achieved little for their sacrifice.



(Right above: *This is the ground over which 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*)

The son of Josiah Goodyear, fisherman from Ladle Cove, and Louisa Highmore Goodyear (née *Wellon*) – to whom he had allocated a daily allowance of fifty cents from his pay - of Grand Falls – and brother to Daisy Margaret (also known as *Kate*), to Hedley, Roland, Kenneth, Joe and Stan\*, he was also recorded as originally being from Ladle Cove in the District of Fogo – the family had moved to Grand Falls in 1908.

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(Previous page: *the Caribou at Gueudecourt stands at the furthest point of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's advance of October 12, 1916* – photograph from 2012)

Lance Corporal Goodyear was reported as having been *killed in action* on October 11 or 12, 1916, while serving with 'C' Company at Gueudecourt. At home it was the Reverend W.T.D. Dunn of Grand Falls who was requested to bear the news to his family.

Originally buried at Gueudecourt, his remains were transferred to where they repose today, on or about February 20, 1920.

Oswald Raymond Goodyear had enlisted at the age of eighteen years and five months.

*\*Four of his brothers also served, two of whom made the supreme sacrifice: Lieutenant Stanley Charles Goodyear (see elsewhere in this document) of the Newfoundland Regiment was reported as having been killed in action on the night of October 9-10 at the Broembek, during Passchendaele\*; Captain Hedley John Goodyear, 102<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Canadian Infantry, was killed in action on August 22, 1918, during The Hundred Days. Lieutenant Harold Kenneth Goodyear and Captain Josiah Robert Goodyear\*, both of the Newfoundland Regiment, were wounded but survived the conflict.*

*\*He was later also of the Newfoundland Forestry Unit.*

(Right above: *the grave of Captain H.J. Goodyear in Hillside Cemetery (Le Quesnel)* – photograph from 2014)

(Right: *Lieutenant Stanley Charles Goodyear, having no known grave, is commemorated on the Bronze beneath the Caribou in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel.*)

(Right: *The War Memorial in Grand Falls honours the sacrifice of the Goodyear brothers.* – photograph from 2010)

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

Lance Corporal Oswald Raymond Goodyear was entitled to the British War Medal (left) and also to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

