

Private James John Howard (Regimental Number 560), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a printer working at the *Evening Herald* for a weekly twelve dollars, James John Howard enlisted on September 16 at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury on Harvey Road in St. John's, recruited during the First Draft. Attesting on October 1, he embarked on October 3 onto the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* although the ship did not sail until the next day, the 4th, to join the convoy carrying the 1st Canadian Division overseas.

(Above right: *The photograph of Florizel is by courtesy of Admiralty House Museum in Mount Pearl.*)

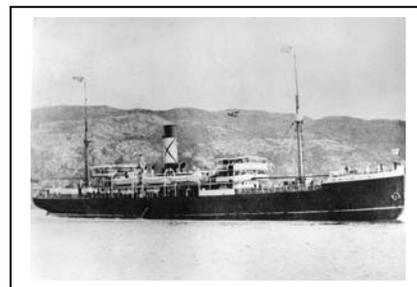
In the United Kingdom Private Howard trained with the Battalion: firstly in southern England on the Salisbury Plain; then in Scotland at Fort George; at Edinburgh Castle; and at Stobs Camp near the Scottish town of Hawick.

(Right above: *Fort George, close to the Scottish town of Inverness, was home to the Newfoundland Regiment during much of the winter of 1914-1915. – photograph from 2011*)

(Right: *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 Howard was transferred with the four senior Companies – 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' – from Stobs to southern England, to Aldershot, for some three weeks of final training in preparation for active service at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. The two junior Companies – 'E' and 'F' - were sent to the new Regimental Depot on the west coast of Scotland. While at Aldershot, on August 13, he re-enlisted, 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.*



(Previous page: *The photograph of Megantic is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries Website.*)

On August 20, 1915, Private Howard took ship on the liner-converted-to-troopship *Megantic* for the Middle East and for the fighting in Gallipoli where, a month later – of which two weeks had been spent at the British barracks at Abbassia, near the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, 1st Battalion landed on the beach at Suvla Bay.

(Right top: *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 - In whichever case, they were yet to land on Gallipoli. – from Provincial Archives)*



(Right above: *'Kangaroo Beach', where the men of 1st 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: *almost a century later, the area, little changed from those far-off days, of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla, and where Private Wight 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 on that occasion. 1st Battalion was transferred two days later to Cape Helles on the western tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The Newfoundlanders were soon, on the night of January 8-9, to be abandoning Cape Helles as well.



(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: *'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 to leave the beach: vestiges of the wharves in the black-and-white picture above are still to be seen – photograph from 2011)*



(Right: *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, 1st Battalion was sent to Alexandria, arriving there on the 15th 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 29th Division was still uncertain.



It was while at Suez that on February 19 a *Field General Court Martial* sentenced Private Howard to eighty-four days of Field Punishment No. 1, and to a fine of seven shillings and six-pence, for a number of related disciplinary offences: drunkenness; multiple unauthorized absences; and escape from lawful custody. The sentence was confirmed by the General Officer Commanding 88th Brigade.

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

On March 14, the officers and men of 1st 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 port of Marseilles, and from there to the *Western Front*.

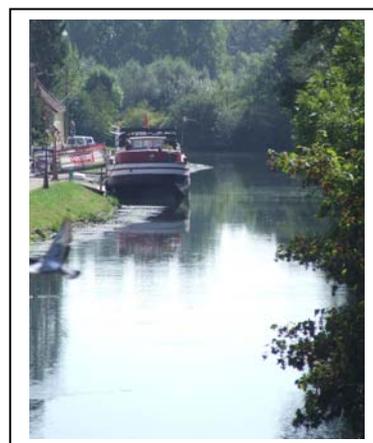


(Right above: *British troops march through the port area of the French city of Marseilles. – from a vintage post-card*)

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.



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On April 13, 1st Battalion entered into the village of Englebelmer – perhaps some fifty kilometres in all from Pont-Rémy – where it was billeted, received re-enforcements and, after two days’ time, was introduced to the trenches of the *Western Front*.



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, *the Somme*.

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

The eldest child of Captain Patrick J. Howard, a sea-going pilot, and Joan Howard of 52, Colonial Street, St. John's, he was brother to Esther (*Hetty*), to Paddy, to Daisy-Margaret and to Mary.



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



James John Howard had enlisted at twenty-two years of age.

(Right above: *at 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 from 2009*)

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



(Right: *A family memorial – right of centre – which stands in Belvedere Cemetery in St. John's to commemorate the sacrifice of Private James Howard. – photograph from 2015*)

Private James John Howard 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).



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(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, on which the Newfoundland Memorial Park lies partially today, was on land that separated Beaumont from Hamel.*

