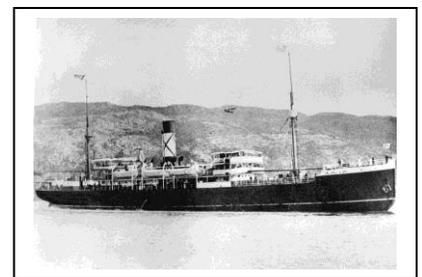




Private Allan Gordon White (Regimental Number 4109) is buried in Duhallow A.D.S. Cemetery – Grave reference IV. D. 2.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a carpenter, Allan Gordon White was a recruit of the Seventeenth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at Headquarters at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on November 14, 1917, he then enlisted - engaged *for the duration of the war* at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and also attested on that same day.



Private White did not embark for overseas service until some four weeks later again, the date December 11, when he boarded the Bowring Brothers' Red Cross Line vessel *Florizel* (right above) en route for Halifax.

(continued)

But it was not from Halifax that Private White sailed on His Majesty's Transport *Missanabie* (right) to the United Kingdom. The draft embarked in the port of St. John, New Brunswick, on or about December 18 before departure on the morrow. *Missanabie* then docked in Glasgow on December 31, New Year's Eve.



Having disembarked in Scotland, the Newfoundland contingent entrained for the short journey to the Regimental Depot. By this time, the Depot at Ayr had already been in existence serving as the base for the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment for well over two years, with a temporary move to the town of Barry in the summer of 1917. Private White was to be in Ayr for just some two weeks before being transferred southward to another camp.



(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*)

In the New Year of 1918, 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion moved quarters from the Royal Borough of Ayr in Scotland to southern England, to Hazely Down, Hampshire, not far distant from the cathedral city of Winchester. This transfer was finalized during the latter part of January, 1918, and it was to be from Hazely Down that Private White was to be despatched, in July, to join the British Expeditionary Force on the Continent.

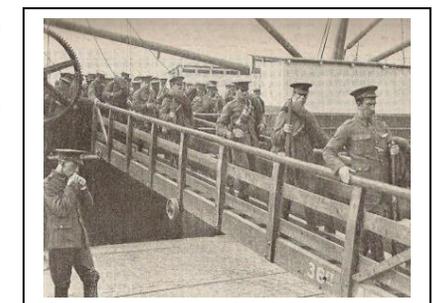


(Right above: *a bleak-looking Hazely Down Camp at some time during the winter of 1918 – from The War Illustrated*)

On or about July 2, either the 47<sup>th</sup> or the 48<sup>th</sup> Re-enforcement Draft – Private White one of this contingent - from Hazely Down, passed through the English port of Folkestone and, on the 5<sup>th</sup>, arrived at the French city of Rouen, for final training and organization\* at the British Expeditionary Force Depot there, before finding its way to 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

Only days afterwards, on July 8 – although *his* file says the 9<sup>th</sup> - he was surely one of the detachment of one-hundred twenty-eight *other ranks* from Rouen that reported *to duty* with the Newfoundland parent unit at Équihen on the French west coast.

(Right: *British troops disembark at Rouen en route to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)



(continued)

***\*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.***

Meanwhile, just days after the crisis of the German spring offensive had passed, on April 24 – and some eleven weeks before Private White’s arrival at Équihen - the Newfoundlanders of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion officially had said farewell to their comrades-in-arms of 88<sup>th</sup> Brigade and 29<sup>th</sup> Division and on the morrow had participated in a recessional parade attended by the officer commanding 88<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Brigadier Freyberg.

They were later to be deployed to another unit, but for the summer of 1918 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was to move a world away from Flanders where it had just fought, to be stationed on the west coast of France.

On April 29, the Newfoundlanders – 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion by now reduced to a total strength of just thirty officers and four-hundred sixty-four other ranks - took train in Belgium for the French coastal town of Étaples, where they arrived at eleven o’clock in the late evening. For now, for them, the fighting was a thing of the past.

The summer of 1918 was to pass peaceably enough for most of the personnel of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion. For the months of May, June and until early July, the unit was posted to Écuire, to the Headquarters of Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force in Europe.



***(Right: Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force at the time of the Battalion’s posting to GHQ – from Illustration)***

The cosmetic honour of this new role, however, masked the reality that the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the recently-proclaimed *Royal Newfoundland Regiment* was no longer capable of serving in the field.

***\*Although few at home cared to admit it publicly, the problem was that 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had run out of reserves and was unable to continue as a fighting entity. It was to be September before even a battalion of reduced strength could return to active service. At home, mandatory military service was initiated – conscription by another name – but with limited results.***

The posting to Écuire completed, for most of July and all of August the Newfoundlanders were encamped in much the same area, close to the coastal village of Équihen – itself not far removed from the large Channel port of Boulogne – and far to the rear of the fighting, of which there had been plenty elsewhere.



This was, of course, both the time and place of Private White’s reporting to duty in the field with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

***(Right above: a view of the sparsely-populated coastal community of Équihen at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card)***

Re-enforced, the Newfoundlanders returned to the fray on Friday, September 13, as one of the three battalions of the 28<sup>th</sup> Brigade of 9<sup>th</sup> Scottish Division. 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was once more to serve on the Belgian front where, some six weeks later, having advanced out of the *Ypres Salient*, it would finish its war on October 26 at a place called Inghoyghem (*Ingooigem*).

On September 28, the Belgian Army and the 2<sup>nd</sup> British Army broke out of their positions, overrunning the enemy lines. It was the start, for them, of the *Hundred Days Offensive*\*. On the following day, the Newfoundlanders were fighting at the Keiberg Ridge.

After almost four years of stalemate, it was once again to be a conflict of movement.



(Right above: *British troops and German prisoners in Flanders during the Hundred Days – from Illustration*)

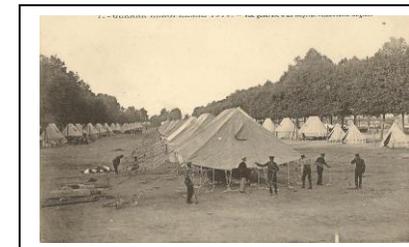
*\*This offensive would prove to be the final campaign of the Western Front and would terminate with the Armistice of November 11. It had begun further to the south on July 18 on the French front on the River Marne, followed on August 8 by an onslaught by British and Empire troops near Amiens in what would also become known as 3<sup>rd</sup> Somme.*

The advance, despite fierce resistance at times, was relentless. On October 14, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, having been rested for a week after heavy fighting near Ledeghem, returned to the front for a new drive to commence on that day. The Newfoundlanders were to push along the northern bank of the River-Canal Lys, itself north of the city of Courtrai (today *Kortrijk*) which they were to bypass. The advance of the 14<sup>th</sup> was successful - but the cost again high: only three hundred reporting for muster at dawn on the following morning.



(Right above: *the Lys – both canal and river – at a point not far from the crossing-place – right to left - of October 19-20, 1918 - The Harlebeke Caribou stands about at a distance of about one hundred metres behind the camera. – photograph from 2010*)

Private White was one of the many casualties of that October 14. He was almost immediately evacuated to the 44<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station at either Berques or Brielen for treatment to injuries to the thigh inflicted by gun-fire. His condition was complicated by a fractured femur.



(Right: *a British casualty clearing station – the one pictured here under canvas for mobility if and when the necessity arose – being established somewhere in France during the early years of the War – from a vintage post-card*)

The son of James White and Elizabeth Ann White (née *Campbell*, deceased June 6, 1919\*) – to whom he had allotted a daily sixty cents from his pay - of Little Bay Islands, Notre Dame Bay – he was also brother to Bertha-Violet, Rowena-Mary, Daniel-Herbert, Elsie, Minnie-Yulliana (sic), Blanch (sic) and Albert.



Private White was reported as having *died of wounds* at a quarter past ten on the morning of October 15, 1918, in the same 44<sup>th</sup> CCS.

Born on September 15 of 1890, according to the 1911 census and to district records, Allan Gordon White had enlisted at the age of twenty-seven years and two months.



*\*As per her grave-stone: another source has her passing away in 1952, at the age of one-hundred years.*

(Right above: *The Caribou at Harlebeke – commemorates the crossing of the Lys Canal and the sacrifices of the last campaign of the War. – photograph from 2012*)

(Right above: *This family monument which commemorates the sacrifice of Private White stands in the United Church Cemetery (4) on Little Bay Islands. – photograph from 2014*)

Private Allan Gordon White was entitled to the British War Medal (on left) and also to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

