



Private James Atwill (Regimental Number 1914) is...*believed to be buried*...in Ancre British Cemetery: Grave reference Special Memorial 37.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *labourer*, James Atwill was a recruit of the Seventh Draft. He presented himself at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on October 13 of 1915 for a medical examination. It was a procedure which was to pronounce him as being...*fit for Foreign Service*.

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On the same day as that medical assessment, October 13, and at the same venue, the same venue, the *CLB Armoury* on Harvey Road, he was then to enlist*. James Atwill was thereupon to be engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of a single dollar, to which was to be added a ten-cent per diem Field Allowance.

Only a few hours were then to pass before there came the final formality of his enlistment: attestation. It was on that same October 13 that he pledged his allegiance to the reigning monarch, George V, at which moment James Atwill became...*a soldier of the King*.

A long waiting-period was now in store for the recruits of this draft, designated as 'H' Company*, before they were to depart from Newfoundland for...*overseas service*.

**In fact, 'H' Company was to depart from Newfoundland in two detachments: the first one-hundred recruits, Private Atwill among that number, would be the first to leave in that December of 1915. The second part of 'H' Company would not follow until the fourth week of the upcoming month of March. It was to make the journey on board the SS Sicilian and report to Ayr on April 9.*

Until as late as that spring of 1916 it had been the intention to form a 2nd Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment to fight on the Continent. In fact it would seem that the one-hundred sixty-three recruits of the second contingent, 'H' Company, were to form a part of the nucleus of that unit, while the personnel already at the Depot by this time would form a reserve battalion to serve as a re-enforcement pool for both the Regiment's fighting units.

It could not have been long before a change of plan came about as, very soon, men of the second half of 'H' Company were being sent to strengthen the 1st Battalion already on the Continent – maybe Beaumont-Hamel had something to do with it.

Private Atwill, Regimental Number 1914, would be one of the one-hundred men who comprised the first detachment of 'H' Company to travel for...*overseas service*. He was now to wait sixty-six days after attestation before being called, but where he was to spend this time is not certain: he may have temporarily returned to work and almost certainly was to spend time with family and friends at his home on Mundy's (sic) Pond Road in the city.– all of the above of course is only speculation*.

**It is likely that some of the recruits, those whose home was not in St. John's or close to the city, or those who had no friends or family to offer board and lodging, were quartered in the curling rink at Fort William in St. John's, a building which was to serve as a barracks.*

This first detachment of 'H' Company left St. John's by train to cross the island to Port aux Basques on December 18, 1915. After the short sea-voyage to traverse the Gulf of St. Lawrence the detachment entrained once again, in North Sydney, for Saint John, New Brunswick.

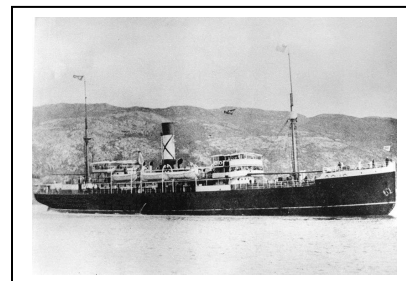
The Atlantic crossing was to be effected from there on board the Royal Mail Ship *Corinthian* and the draft reported to the Regimental Depot at Ayr on January 4 of the New Year, 1916.



(Preceding page: *The Allan Line Ship ‘Corinthian’ was built in 1899 and was to serve mainly on trans-Atlantic routes between Great Britain and Canada. At the beginning of the Great War she formed a part of the convoy carrying the Canadian Expeditionary Force to the United Kingdom although after that it appears that she resumed her commercial work, transporting troops only if and when it suited her schedule. In December of 1918 she was driven ashore in the Bay of Fundy and although there was no loss of life, the ship was wrecked.*)

* * * * *

Some sixteen months prior to that January 4 of 1916, in the late summer and early autumn of 1914, the newly-formed Newfoundland Regiment’s first recruits had undergone a period of training of five weeks on the shores of *Quidi Vidi Lake* in the east end of St. John’s and elsewhere in the city, and were formed into ‘A’ and ‘B’ Companies.



During that same period the various authorities had also been preparing for the Regiment’s transfer overseas.

(Right above: *The image of ‘Florizel’ at anchor in the harbour at St. John’s is by courtesy of Admiralty House Museum.*)

This first Newfoundland contingent was to embark on October 3, in some cases only days after a recruit’s enlistment and/ or attestation. To become known to history as the *First Five Hundred* and also as the *Blue Puttees*, on that day they had boarded the Bowring Brothers’ vessel *Florizel* awaiting in St. John’s Harbour.

The ship had sailed for the United Kingdom on the morrow, October 4, 1914, to its rendezvous with the convoy carrying the 1st Canadian Division overseas, off the south coast of the Island.

(Right below: *Fort George, constructed in the latter half of the eighteenth century, still serves the British Army to this day. – photograph from 2011*)

Once having disembarked* in the United Kingdom this first Newfoundland contingent was to train in three venues during the late autumn of 1914 and then the winter of 1914-1915: firstly in southern England on the *Salisbury Plain*; then in Scotland at *Fort George* – on the *Moray Firth* close to Inverness; and lastly at *Edinburgh Castle* – where it was to provide the first garrison from outside the British Isles.



**It was to do so at Devonport through which ‘G’ Company was to pass eleven months later.*

Only days after ‘A’ and ‘B’ Companies had taken up their posting there, on February 16 of 1915, ‘C’ Company – the first re-enforcements for the original contingent - would arrive directly – through Liverpool of course - from Newfoundland. On the final day of the month of March it had been the turn of ‘D’ Company to arrive – they via Halifax as well as

Liverpool – to report...to duty...at Edinburgh, and then ‘E’ Company five weeks less a day later again, on May 4*.

**These five Companies, while a contingent of the Newfoundland Regiment, was not yet a battalion and would not be so for a further five months – as will be seen below.*

(Right: *The venerable bastion of Edinburgh Castle dominates the Scottish capital from its hill in the centre of the city. – photograph from 2011*)



Seven days after the arrival of ‘E’ Company in the Scottish capital, on May 11 the entire Newfoundland contingent had been ordered elsewhere. On that day, seven weeks into spring – although in Scotland there was apparently still snow - the unit had been dispatched to *Stobs Camp*, all under canvas and south-eastwards of Edinburgh, close to the town of Hawick.



(Right: *The Newfoundland Regiment marches past on the training ground at Stobs Camp and is presented with its Colours on June 10, 1915. – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and of Mrs. Lillian Tibbo*)

Two months less a day later, on July 10, ‘F’ Company would march into *Stobs Camp*.

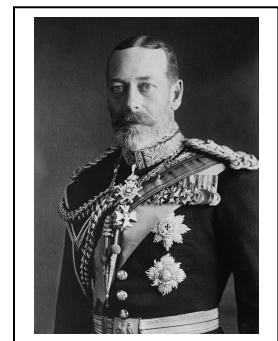
This had been an important moment: the Company’s arrival was to bring the Newfoundland Regiment’s numbers up to some fifteen hundred, establishment strength* of a battalion which could be posted on...active service.



**A number sufficient for four ‘fighting’ companies, two re-enforcement companies and a headquarters staff.*

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

From *Stobs Camp*, some three weeks after the arrival of ‘F’ Company, in early August ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’, the four senior Companies, having now become the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment, had been transferred to *Aldershot Camp* in southern England. There they were to undergo final preparations – and a royal inspection – before the Battalion’s departure to the Middle East and to the fighting on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



The later arrivals to the United Kingdom, ‘E’ and ‘F’ Companies, were to be posted to the new Regimental Depot and some of the personnel were eventually to form a part of the nucleus of 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment.

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(Preceding page: *George V, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India* – the photograph is from *Bain News Services* via the *Wikipedia* web-site.)

(Right: *An aerial view of Ayr, likely from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr, where were quartered the ‘other ranks’, is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough, where were housed the officers, is to the right.* – by courtesy of the *Carnegie Library at Ayr*)



(Right below: *The High Street in Ayr as shown on a postcard of the time, the imposing Wallace Tower – it stands to this day (2017) - dominating the scene* – by courtesy of Reverend *Wilson Tibbo* and Mrs *Lillian Tibbo*.)



The Regimental Depot had been established during the summer and the early autumn of 1915 in the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland, there to serve as a base for the newly-forming 2nd (Reserve) Battalion. It was from there – as of November of 1915 – that the new-comers were sent in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and then subsequently to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1st Battalion*.

****The first such re-enforcement draft was, in fact, to depart from Ayr for service on the Gallipoli Peninsula on November 15, some seven weeks before the arrival in Scotland of Private Atwill’s ‘H’ Company.***

That November 15 of 1915 (see immediately above) was to see not only the departure of the 1st Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr to the Middle East and to the fighting of the *Gallipoli Campaign* but also, only five days prior, the arrival from Newfoundland of ‘G’ Company which would be obliged to take up quarters at *Gailes Camp*, some sixteen kilometres up the coast from Ayr itself – but just over sixty if one went by road.

A further seven weeks plus a day were now to pass before Private Atwill and the first one-hundred of ‘H’ Company were to present themselves at the Regimental Depot.

* * * * *

Transferred upon their arrival in Scotland on January 4 to serve with ‘G’ Company, the new-comers of ‘H’ (now ‘G’) Company were to be quartered in the barracks of the Royal Scots Fusiliers; they, however, had not yet vacated the aforesaid premises, due to an epidemic of measles at the time. It was not long before the disease had also taken its toll on the Newfoundlanders amongst whom there would be fatalities.

However, Private Atwill was not to be one of those affected.

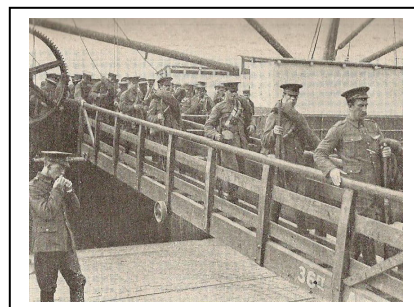
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Some twenty weeks after having reported to the Regimental Depot those several months before in early January of 1916, on May 24 of that spring - and three weeks before his eventual departure on *active service* – he was prevailed upon to re-enlist...*for 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 a limited period of a single year. As the War progressed, however, this would likely cause problems and they were encouraged to re-enlist. Later recruits signed on for the 'Duration' at the time of their original enlistment.*

By the time that he, Private Atwill, was eventually to sail from the United Kingdom to...*active service*...the Regimental Depot had witnessed the departure of five re-enforcement drafts from Ayr: In mid-November of the previous autumn the First – already cited in an earlier paragraph - had sailed for the Middle East to serve at *Suvla Bay* on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*; the Second had been a convoluted adventure – the draft had taken ship in mid-March for Egypt but upon arrival there had been obliged to turn around for a return voyage as far as the French Mediterranean port-city of Marseille. From that time on, however, the drafts were all to proceed directly across the English Channel to France.

It was on June 14 of 1916, that the Sixth Re-enforcement Draft – with Private Atwill among its ranks - passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton en route to the Continent. On the following day, the 15th, it disembarked in Rouen, the capital city of Normandy and the site of the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot where the contingent was now to spend time in final training and organizing* before moving on to a rendezvous with the parent 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment.



(Right above: *British troops disembark at an earlier time in the War 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, Étapes, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

A draft of sixty-six men from Rouen would arrive to join the parent unit at Louvencourt on June 30*. At 9:15 on that same evening, most of the Newfoundlanders – minus the ten per cent Reserve Company but including many of the new-comers - marched from there to their assigned...*forming-up place trenches i.e. rear line of trenches in our usual sector* (from the 1st Battalion War Diary).



(continued)

(Preceding page: *Just inside the entrance to the Newfoundland Memorial Park is to be found the re-constituted forming-up trench from where the 1st Newfoundland Battalion attacked on the morning of July 1. – photograph from 2010*)

**Had the attack gone ahead on June 30 as initially had been planned, those men might not have been flung into the imminent maelstrom. Bad weather – fog which had restricted aerial surveillance – had decided the High Command to postpone the attack for one day.*

This contingent of that day from the Base Depot at Rouen had comprised a majority of the personnel of the above-cited Sixth Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr. Among that number had been Private Atwill.

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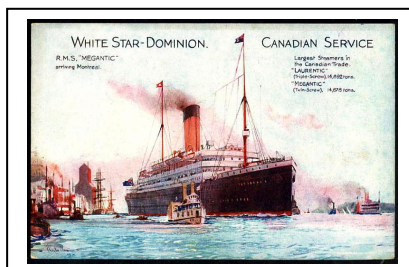
A year prior to this juncture, in the early summer of 1915, the Regimental Depot in Scotland had only just been beginning to evolve: both ‘E’ and ‘F’ Companies had only then been beginning their time of training at Ayr; as for James Atwill, he had still been waiting at home for enlistment and attestation, after which he would still have those sixty-six days to wait before the call was to come to sail overseas to the United Kingdom.

The aforementioned four senior companies, ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’, of the Newfoundland Regiment, having now become the 1st Battalion had at this same time been attached to the 88th Infantry Brigade of the 29th Division of the (British) Mediterranean Expeditionary Force and had been dispatched to...*active service.*

(Right: *Some of the personnel of ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’ Companies of the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment awaiting the King’s inspection at Aldershot in August of 1915, prior to its departure from the Camp to active service on the Gallipoli Peninsula – from *The Fighting Newfoundlander* by Col. G.W.L. Nicholson, C.D.)*



On August 20 of 1915, the Newfoundland Battalion had embarked in the Royal Navy Harbour of Devonport onto the requisitioned passenger-liner *Megantic* for passage to the Middle East and to the fighting against the Turks. There, a month later – having spent some two weeks billeted in British barracks in the vicinity of the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, the 1st Battalion was to land at *Suvla Bay* on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



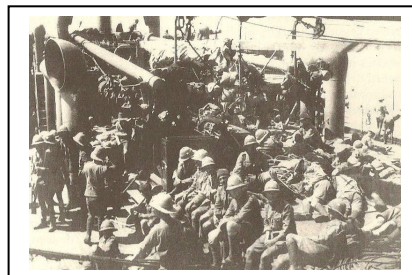
(Right above: *The image of Megantic, here in her peace-time colours of a ‘White Star Line’ vessel, is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site.)*

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(Preceding page: Kangaroo Beach, where the officers and men of the 1st Battalion, Newfoundland Regiment, landed on the night of September 19-20, 1915, is to be seen 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 taken in 2011)

(Right: 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)



(Right: A century later, the area, little changed from those far-off days, of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla, and where the 1st Battalion was to serve during the fall of 1915 – photograph from 2011)

When the Newfoundlanders had landed from their transport ship at Suvla Bay they were to disembark into a campaign that was already on the threshold of collapse.



Not only in the area where the Newfoundland Battalion would now serve but, even ever since the very first days of the operation in April of 1915, the entire Gallipoli Campaign, including the operation at Suvla Bay, had been proving to be little more than a debacle:

(Right: No-Man's-Land at Suvla Bay as seen from the Newfoundland positions – from Provincial Archives)

Flies, dust, disease, the frost-bite and the floods – and of course the casualties inflicted by an enemy who was to fight a great deal better than the British High Command* had ever anticipated – were eventually to overwhelm the British-led forces and those of their allies, the French, and it would finally be decided to abandon not only Suvla Bay but the entire Gallipoli venture.



(Right: This is Anzac Bay in the fore-ground with the Salt Lake in the centre further away. The bottom of Suvla Bay is just to be seen on the left and adjacent to the Salt Lake, and further away again. The hills in the distance and the ones from which this photograph was taken were held by the Turks and formed a horse-shoe around the plain surrounding the Salt Lake - which was where the British and Newfoundlanders were stationed. – photograph from 2011)



***Many of the commanders chosen were second-rate, had been brought out of retirement, and had little idea of how to fight – let alone of how to win. One of the generals at Suvla, apparently, had handed in his resignation during the Campaign and had just gone home.**

(Right: *An un-identified Newfoundland soldier in the trenches at Suvla Bay – from Provincial Archives*)



November 26 would see what perhaps was to be the nadir of the Newfoundland Battalion's fortunes at *Gallipoli*; there was to be a freak rain, snow and ice-storm strike the *Suvla Bay* area and the subsequent floods had wreaked havoc amongst the forces of both sides. For several days, survival rather than the enemy was to be the priority.

There were to be many casualties on both sides, some of them, surprised by the sudden inundation of their positions, fatalities who had drowned in their trenches – although no Newfoundlanders were to be among that number. Numerous, however, had been those afflicted by trench-foot and by frost-bite.

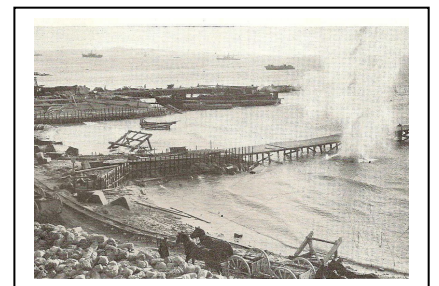
By this time the situation there had daily been becoming more and more untenable, thus on the night of December 19-20, the British had abandoned the entire area of *Suvla Bay* – the Newfoundlanders, the only non-British unit to serve there, to form a part of the rear-guard.

Some of the Battalion personnel had thereupon been evacuated to the nearby island of *Imbros*, some to *Lemnos*, further away, but in neither case was the respite to be of a long duration; the 1st Battalion would be transferred only two days later to the area of *Cape Helles*, on the western tip of the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



(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*)

The British, Indian and *Anzac* forces – the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was also to serve at *Gallipoli* – had by now simply been marking time until a complete withdrawal of the *Peninsula* could be undertaken.



This final operation would take place on the night of January 8-9, the Newfoundland Battalion to furnish part of the British rear-guard on this second occasion also.

(Right above: *'W' Beach under shell-fire at Cape Helles as it was only days before the final British evacuation – from Illustration*)



**Lieutenant Owen Steele of St. John's, Newfoundland, is cited as having been the last soldier of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force to step into the final small boat to sail from the Gallipoli Peninsula.*

(Preceding page: 'W' Beach almost a century after its abandonment by British forces in that January of 1916 and by the Newfoundlanders who were to be the last soldiers off the beach: Vestiges of the wharves in the black-and-white picture are still to be seen. – photograph from 2011)

Immediately after the British evacuation of the *Gallipoli Peninsula*, the Newfoundland unit had been ordered to the Egyptian port-city of Alexandria - and beyond. On January 14, the Australian Expeditionary Force Transport *Nestor* had arrived there with the 1st Battalion on board. The vessel was to sail just after mid-day on the 16th, on its way southwards down the Suez Canal to Port Suez where she had docked early on the morrow and where the Newfoundlanders had landed and marched to their encampment.

There they were to await further orders since, at the time, the subsequent destination of the British 29th Division had yet to be decided*.

(Right: The image of the Blue Funnel Line vessel *Nestor* is from the *Shipspotting.com* web-site. The vessel was launched and fitted in 1912-1913 and was to serve much of her commercial life until 1950 plying the routes between Britain and Australia. During the Great War she served mainly in the transport of Australian troops and was requisitioned once again in 1940 for government service in the Second World War. In 1950 she was broken up.)



(Right: The British destroy their supplies during the final evacuation of the *Gallipoli Peninsula*. The men of the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment were among the last to leave on two occasions, at both *Suvla Bay* and *Cape Helles*. – photograph taken from the battleship *Cornwallis* from *Illustration*)



*Bulgaria had entered the conflict on the side of the Central Powers, and Salonika was already becoming a theatre of war.

(Right: *Port Tewfiq*, adjacent to *Port Suez* at the south end of the *Suez Canal*, at a time just prior to the *Great War* – from a vintage post-card)



After a two-month interim spent in the vicinity of *Port Suez*, the almost six-hundred officers and other ranks of the 1st Battalion were to board His Majesty's Transport *Alaunia* at *Port Tewfiq*, on March 14 to begin the voyage back up through the *Suez Canal* en route to France. The Newfoundlanders would disembark eight days afterwards in the Mediterranean port-city of *Marseille*, on March 22.



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

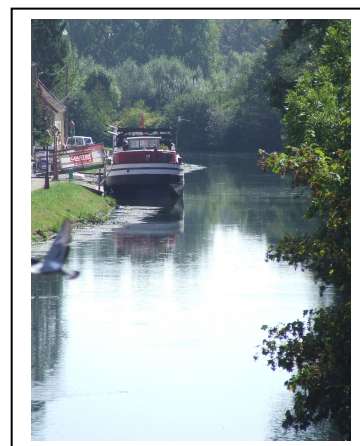
Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, the Newfoundland Battalion's train was to find its way to the small provincial town of Pont-Rémy, a thousand kilometres to the north of Marseille.

It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for the troops having inexcusably travelled unused in a separate wagon. Having de-trained at the local station at two o'clock in the morning, the Newfoundlanders were now still to endure the long, dark march ahead of them before they would reach their billets at Buigny l'Abbé.

It is doubtful if many of those tired soldiers were to pay much attention to the slow-moving stream flowing under the bridge which they had then traversed on their way from the station. But some three months later *the Somme* was to have become a part of their history.

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

On April 13, the 1st Battalion had subsequently marched into the village of Englebelmer – perhaps some fifty kilometres in all from Pont-Rémy - where it would be billeted, would receive reinforcements from Scotland via Rouen and, in two days' time, would be introduced into the communication trenches of the *Western Front*.



Just days following the Newfoundland Battalion's arrival on the *Western Front* in mid-April, two of the four Companies – 'A', and 'B' – were to take over several support positions from a British unit* before the entire Newfoundland unit was to then be ordered to move further up for the first time into forward positions on April 22.

**It should be said that the Newfoundland Battalion and two-hundred men of the Bermuda Rifles who were serving at the time in the 2nd Lincolnshire Regiment Battalion, were then the only units at the Somme from outside the British Isles - true also on the day of the attack on July 1.*



(Right: *A part of the re-constructed trench system to be found in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2009(?)*)

Having then been withdrawn at the beginning of that month of May to the areas of Mailly-Maillet and Louvencourt where they would be based for the next two months, the Newfoundlanders were soon to be preparing for the upcoming British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for the languid, meandering river, *the Somme*, that flowed – and still does so today – through the region.

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And it was, as related in an earlier paragraph, on the very eve of the onset of that campaign that a certain draft of sixty-six men dispatched from the Base Depot at Rouen, arrived to report to the 1st Battalion at Louvencourt.

If there is one name and date in Newfoundland history which is etched in the collective once-national memory, it is that of Beaumont-Hamel on July 1 of 1916; and if any numbers are remembered, they are those of the eight-hundred who went *over the top* in the third wave of the attack on that morning, and of the sixty-eight unwounded present at muster some twenty-four hours later*.



(Right above: *Beaumont-Hamel: Looking from the British front lines down the hill towards the Y Ravine Cemetery visible in the distance and which today stands atop a part of the German front-line defences of the time: The Danger Tree is to the right in the photograph. – photograph taken in 2009)*

(Right: *A view of Hawthorn Ridge Cemetery Number 2 in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2009(?)*)



**Perhaps ironically, the majority of the Battalion’s casualties was to be incurred during the advance from the third line of British trenches to the first line from where the attack proper was to be made, and while struggling through British wire laid to protect the British positions from any German attack.*

There are other numbers of course: the fifty-seven thousand British casualties incurred in four hours on that same morning of which nineteen-thousand were recorded as having been...*killed in action...or...died of wounds.*

It was to be the greatest disaster ever in the annals of the British Army...and, perhaps just as depressing, the carnage of *the Somme* was to continue for four and a half months.



(Right: *Beaumont-Hamel is a commune, not a village*.* – photographs from 2010 and 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 separating Beaumont from Hamel.*



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(Preceding page: *A grim, grainy image purporting to be Newfoundland - dead awaiting burial after Beaumont-Hamel – from...?*)

The son of Samuel Atwill (former carpenter, deceased August 24, 1913) and of Charlotte Ellen Atwill (née *Bartlett**, deceased August 29, 1914)) of Mundy's (sic) Pond Road, St. John's, he was also brother to sisters Florence Arnott of Mundy Pond Road, Katie Arnott of Mundy Pond Road, Helen Halleran of Military Road, and Nellie Atwill (nurse in training by 1919) of 120 Cornwall Avenue – his own given address at the time of enlistment - and then later of Mundy Pond Road; and to two brothers, Richard-John, and Duncan**.



**The couple had married in St. John's on August 13, 1881.*

Private Atwill was at first reported as...*missing in action...at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, 1916, while serving with 'D' Company during the fighting of the first day of the...First Battle of the Somme. However a subsequent report resulted in his record being amended on March 22, 1917, so as to read...killed in action 1/7/16 (see below).*

James Atwill had enlisted at the age of twenty-five years and three months: likely year of birth, 1891 (*from Ancestry.ca*).

***His brother, Private Duncan Atwill, Regiment Number 1833, was later to be reported as having been killed in action on March 11 of 1918 in the course of an enemy bombardment while posted in Belgium (see elsewhere in these documents).*

(Right above: *The grave of Private Duncan Atwill in Oxford Road Cemetery on the outskirts of Ypres – photograph from 2011(?)*)

1914, Private J. Atwill

Previously reported missing 1/7/16, Now unofficially reported killed.

Authority:- Letter to Officer i/c Records from 2/Lt. R. T. Smith, 1/6 Seaforth Highlanders, who stated that he found the body of the above man and buried him in a shell-hole 22/11/16. He was in charge of a burying party at the time. Date of letter 22/11/16*

As Private Atwill is reported as having been buried, it may have been that the exact site of the grave was either forgotten or the co-ordinates lost. However, it is perhaps more likely that the grave was destroyed in the later heavy fighting of 1916 or that of 1918, thus the wording of the Special Memorial: **Believed to be Buried.*

Private James Atwill was entitled to the British War Medal (on left) and also the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).



The above dossier has been researched, compiled and produced by Alistair Rice. Please email any suggested amendments or content revisions if desired to criceadam@yahoo.ca. Last updated – February 4, 2023.