

When Terra Nova's Sons Met the Might of Germany.

The Battle of Beaumont Hamel, July 1st, 1916.

(By No. 38 L.-C. John J. Ryan, Royal Nfld. Regiment.)

Those who lived and those who died. They were one in noble pride—Of desperate endeavour, and duty nobly done."

Three years have slipped by since Newfoundland planted her first big spoke in the wheel of fame, drenched with the blood of her youth, but surrounded with a halo of glory at Beaumont Hamel on the Somme. It was there her series of greater sacrifices took root, being afterwards crowned by such achievements and noble attempts as those witnessed at Guedecourt, Monchy, Ypres, Cambrai, Ledgehem and other parts of the battle line.

The Newfoundland Regiment was initiated in the hardships of trench life in France during the clean up, after a rainy winter, on the ground where the name of England's Oldest Colony will go down in history marked by the hundreds of little white crosses that forged for her a bond in the fellowship of freedom.

The warm spring sunshine came as a boon to the fighting forces, but the hard work of line reconstruction was unceasing. Rumour spoke in the trenches, camps and villages of a mighty battle, but men laughed, and gave expression to the feeling of all ranks that "it would be better to die in the open from the plunge of a German bayonet than to be murdered in a trench from the fire of a German shell." This was true. It has been proved so over and over again that the battle on the Hun parapet was less killing to the nerves than the long "wait and see" attitude so conspicuous during the latter part of 1915 and the opening months of the following year.



The main intentions of the big issue were camouflaged by the reticent methods of the staff. Though we expected a grand Franco-British attack, we were also prepared to think our fight was to be one of defence. Aeroplanes reported the arrival of vast quantities of building material behind the enemy lines. This proved the Hun was preparing for something unusual, and the contentions were various and many; but when great guns of tremendous calibre rolled through the villages under cover of night, the impression that an offensive was being contemplated became more popular.

During the month of June we were certain that the big battle was to be launched from the British side, and the rehearsal of an attack in the

semi-cultivated fields surrounding Louvecourt confirmed our expectations.

But a few days of June remained (we were quartered in this village) when an order from Divisional Headquarters commanded the concentration of the 88th Brigade at a certain meadow on the outskirts of our billets. At the appointed hour, General De Lisle of the 29th rode up and took the salute in front of the Newfoundlanders. Then in a few words he lifted the screen of secrecy and told us of the day we were to charge across No Man's Land and take the third system of German defences. He spoke of the confidence he placed in his men and the unlimited supply of shells at the disposal of our artillery, equal to forty miles of motor lorry loads, each having a capacity of three tons. The supply of guns were such as to be unable to place more on the front. Wishing us "good-bye and good luck" he went round to the other battalions and addressed them likewise.

The remaining days were spent in final preparation for the great event. Thousands of trench mortar bombs were conveyed to the front for use in the demolition of the German wire. Raiding parties were funged into the lines at night and the Hun nerves tested by the shock barrage that time and again deluged his trenches. The second raid of the Newfoundlanders was a crowning success, though attended by many casualties. The failure of the first caused a spirit of determination to push the second right to the German dugouts, but some of our men were killed, wounded or captured during the fight that was marked by illuminating flares, bursting shells and crackling machine guns. Private Phillips of "A" Company was killed in the German front line. He was awarded the Russian Cross of St. George and afterwards the Military Medal for gallant conduct in the raid, but was killed at Guedecourt before the Russian honour was presented him.

On the night of the 29th June, officers, non-commissioned officers, b-servers and runners grouped around the war map spread on the table at Company Headquarters. Captain Led-ingham pointed out the important parts of the German front line, to be stormed by the Division. I can well remember the instructions given us. We were to start from St. John's Road (the new trench built by ourselves) and cross two support trenches and the firing line, then pass through the gaps in our own wire and walk across No Man's Land. The first and second system of Hun defences were supposed to have been captured by the other brigades, we had to cross the first on foot bridges carried by the troops. Passing over Station Road and the second line, we would halt near Pusieux Road whilst our artillery hammered the third system, our objective; and then on lifting the barrage we were to go right in and fight for its possession. It looked easy on the map—quite easy.

A farewell concert was given at Brigade Headquarters, and on the last night of June when the sun had hidden its face from the horrors of the battle front, the Newfoundland Regiment, nine hundred strong, swung around the zig-zag roads from Louvecourt to the line. The French villagers watched us go. Some cried but others cheered and wished us the luck that France was hoping for. Never before did the battalion look finer: men fully equipped and cleared for action. Marching through the intervening villages, we reached the suburbs of Malloy at dark. In this hamlet the boys had many a good night's rest, but it was now in the melting pot of German destruction. A great shell screamed overhead as we trudged out across the fields so as to give the former communicating lines a wide berth. The Hun batteries were pouring showers of shrapnel on the main road, and our own "big luns" sent over an occasional leviathan to clear the atmosphere. On reaching the communication trench (Tipperary Avenue) we had to halt for quite a long while, as other regiments on their way in had blocked the entrance and it was impossible to get through for some time. This waiting in such a dangerous position was very trying to the nerves. At any moment the enemy was likely to start a bombardment and cause serious casualties, as shells were bursting none too far away. It was somewhere about midnight before we settled down to our jumping-off place in St. John's Road.

The night was cold, damp and extremely uncomfortable. The heavy artillery steadily shelled the communications of the enemy, but nevertheless an ominous silence was hanging over the men of the Newfoundland Regiment. No projectiles of any description touched St. John's Road during the night, yet we longed for the heat of the morning. A plentiful supply of water was brought in, and we took an occasional drink with bread and canned meat. Few of us were inclined to sleep. It was the last night on earth for hundreds.

With the break of the day small guns joined in the scrap and dropped some shells on the Hun's first system. Restless and impatient we waited for the hour to strike. At seven o'clock our artillery commenced to blow up the whole German front. At eight the fire had increased to a thunderous crashing of steel and explosives and the ground shook with the terrific cannonading. For sixty minutes this avalanche of death kept up its strength. At nine o'clock the Hun mine went skywards, taking with it a village and many yards of Hun trench. The Royal Fusiliers, who formed part of the attacking force on the left, moved forward with machine guns to occupy the crater, but were held up by a murderous fire from the enemy, and the Welsh Borderers, Iniskilling and Lancashire Fusiliers, with their supporting battalions, were practically annihilated by the deadly fire of the enemy.

An officer rushed back into our trench, his head and face mangled and blood. He told us the attack was a failure, that the regiments were wiped out, but the orders came down the line "Newfoundlanders Advance." We scrambled out and kept together as best we could. My eyes were fixed on the black burnt hillside where lay the German lines unconquered. I hardly noticed myself going over the ridge and crossing three trenches. Bullets were whizzing past and crackling round everywhere. I glanced to the left. The sections were going on in splendid formation. I was so excited that I didn't realize a wall of uncut wire was barring our path. I can remember the wire-cutters working like niggers to get through, but one died and hung on the wire. The others were peppered with bullets, and the sections came piling in, but we had no means of advancing. The "typewriters" were too quick. The men dropped like wheat to the scythe. The German artillery was now in the fray. A great projectile plunged into our group, and when the smoke cleared, but three or four of us lived to crawl out of the hell. They gave us to our right and left were choked with dead. The high grass was strewn with badly wounded men, and shell holes contained two, three and four. The spraying with shrapnel of No Man's Land was responsible for a great many of the killed.

I went through the firing line and met the Colonel. He told me to hang round in case of a counter stroke. Then the Germans gave us a taste of the gunfire we had been giving them for a week. Traverses went up and men who tried to get back with their wounds, never crossed that line of death. Life has never seemed so dear to me as it did at that hour, but there was no getting away from it. When the fire had decreased, some of our boys managed to find the lines and get through to a first aid station. Others reached part of the way and dropped, crying out for stretcher bearers. Lieut. Frost is credited with having gone out two or three times and carried in men on his back; whilst Private Jack Reardon worked like a trojan to get the badly wounded out of No Man's Land. All day the Huns shelled our lines making the rescue work hard and dangerous. A fleet of ambulances rushed through the villages with the more serious cases, but many died before help could be given them.

Capt. Bert Butler assembled the remnants of the battalion and put us in a dugout near Constitutional Hill. This trench was partly levelled by gunfire. Q.M.S. Cleary lay dead about half way through it, but nobody dared wait to remove his body as the shelling was perpetual. All night explosives were bursting in the saps and the front line, but a scattered unwounded straggler remained.

turned from the shell holes. Burying parties brought in a few of the dead and placed them in the trenches for identification. This work was continued for days. On the second and third, rain poured out of the heavens partly filling the lines and making our work of rescue a hardship.

The battle on the right was kept going strong, and when the sun again made its appearance the glittering bayonets were quite discernible a mile or two distant. With a pair of binoculars we could see the bombing fights between British and German, yet the artillery showed very little activity.

Quite a large number of our dead were still out in front when we were relieved by the 48th Division and sent back to Englebelmer. This village was evacuated by the inhabitants on the eve of the battle and now lay in ruins. Signs of a hasty departure of the inhabitants were quite evident, but one old gray-haired peasant refused to leave, though ordered to do so many times by the French police.

It was here Lieut. Owen Steele received his fatal wounds. A large shell having burst in a barn a few yards from where he was standing outside the officers' mess. Here also we were visited by Sir Almyer Hunter Weston, commanding the 8th Army Corps, who spoke about our day in the battle saying, "Newfoundlanders, you have done better than the best." Truly, we did what we could, but not a man expected such a glowing tribute after so terrible a failure. General De Lisle and staff are rumored to have said, "They went as if on parade until they could get no further." Though our English, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh friends did their utmost, the greatest praise was reserved for the Newfoundlanders. It is England's way of doing things. We suffered seventy-five per cent. of all casualties, yet we are lauded to the skies by her newspapers, and the home regiments worked silently for the cause victorious.

After being transferred to the huts at Malloy Wood, the remnants of the battalion were again sent into the line, reinforced by a small draft from Rouen. Remaining there a couple of days, we moved to Acheneux. The work of reorganization was quickly pushed, and in ten days the little body of Newfoundlanders marched back through Louvecourt, cheered by the villagers. We were leaving Beaumont Hamel for ever.

LANCE-CORP. JOHN J. RYAN.

Hero of Egypt, Gallipoli, France and Flanders. Fought at Fiers, Guedecourt, Ypres, Beaumont Hamel and Ginchy. Was one of the first to join up in 1914, his regimental number being 38. Member of the now famous Blue Puttees. Enlisted when 17 years of age, and was honorably discharged this year, having been wounded four times. When on active service, spent some time recovering from injuries, received in action, at the Malta and Wandsworth Hospitals. He also had the unique experience of being on board the s.s. Erik as Mascon operator, when that ship was sunk by a German submarine off St. Pierre, on August 25th, 1918. Lance-Corporal Ryan has marked literary talent, as his previous contributions to the local press, and his present article, which the Telegram is privileged to publish to-day, show.

True Domestic Economy.

Do you take a pride in your kitchen equipment? or are you still satisfied to grub along with your old coal range, with its attendant smoke, ashes, and dirt and inefficiency? Do you realize the saving in time and consequent leisure to be secured by an "ALL-GAS-KITCHEN"? Don't be behind the times! Equip your kitchen with modern Gas appliances, and thus eliminate all the drudgery and dirt of old-time methods. Phone 37, or call at our Showroom for full particulars.

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June 28, 21

Fads and Fashions.

Many of the evening gowns have severely cut bodices. The Summer hat uses the ostrich feather successfully. The wide feathered brim is almost universally becoming. "Caught fringe" appears as trimming on many mantles. The very short sleeve has made the long glove necessary. Anklet watches are one of the extreme novelties of Paris. Soft pongee makes delightful wool embroidered blouses. Soft cashmere wool is being used for English sweater coats. A pale gray tussore suit is lined with very dark blue chiffon. For the informal dance a black taffeta frock is very popular. The bird of paradise is seen on so many of the new big hats. The godet basque appears on some of the very latest skirts. The Greek sandal is so popular that it is worn upon the street. Little helmet hats are trimmed with lace and strings of bead. Taffeta hats in mushroom shapes are excellent for country wear. The wide tucks of skirts are sometimes made to stand up like cuffs.

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COAL.

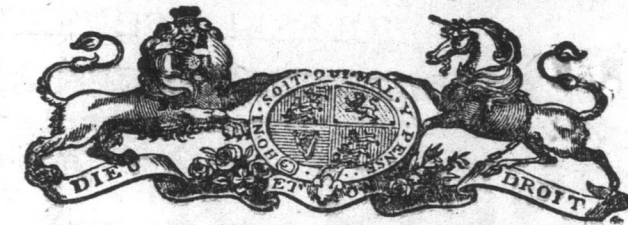
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June 28, 21



Department of Militia.

Disembarkation of Troops.

In order to expedite the disembarkation of troops on H. M. T. "CASSANDRA", only those officially connected with the disembarkation will be allowed on the wharf.

The Troops will disembark at Shea's wharf and proceed direct to the Prince's Rink Grounds.

Relatives and friends are asked to assemble at the Prince's Rink Grounds where they will be able to meet the Troops immediately on arrival there.

DISTRICT OFFICER COMMANDING.

June 28, 21

Rally Call!

JULY 1st.

**Great War Veterans
Association.**

Every member — returned Sailor, Soldier and Forester — is requested to be present, in uniform if possible, at

THE PRINCE'S RINK

AT 9 A.M. TUESDAY,

to attend the Memorial Service and to pay tribute to our brother comrades who have paid the price of Empire!

Remember your pal who "went west" and honour his memory that day!

HAROLD MITCHELL,

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F. P. LeGROW,

Secretary.

June 28, 21

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**Side Table
by Ruth C.**

HABITS OF THE



answering letters promptly, keeping appointments punctiliously, etc.

Likewise, when we speak of bad habits we think of such overt acts as sitting up too late of nights, being sloppy about personal cleanliness, being extravagant and careless about money matters, procrastinating, etc.

But besides these outward physical habits there is another set of habits, good and bad, which affect our lives just as deeply as those to which we are wonted to give more attention. I refer to the habits of the mind.

How Many of These Habits Have YOU?

What are your habits of mind? Did you ever take stock of them? If you haven't you might like to, and to facilitate such a process, I've jotted down a few mind habits that occur to me. You will doubtless be able to add others to the list.

The habit of concentration. The ability to control the mind, to regulate it, restrain it, direct it, as one does the body, is the foundation of all good mental habits.

The habit of refusing to fret one's self over future ills that may never materialize and that one cannot do anything to avoid or mitigate, anyhow. Who was it said, "The habit of looking on the bright side of things is worth a thousand pounds a year?"

A Habit All Executives Should Have.

The habit of making decisions after reasonable and careful consideration and then putting the matter completely aside and refusing to go back over the ground.

The habit of never letting yourself flummox and rage inwardly about

GOOD MORNING, MRS. MUTT, IS MR. MUTT AT HOME, MAY I ASK?

