

War Begins for Newfoundland

- ▶ World War 1 started with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, in Sarajevo on June 28th, 1914 by a group of Serbian Nationalist.
- ▶ As a result a war escalated and on one side with Austria-Hungary being joined by Germany and Italy (Central Powers) while on the other side there was Russia, Britain, and France along with the States and Japan (Allies - friends). World War 1 during its time became known as the "**war to end all wars**".
- ▶ Canada and Newfoundland entered into the war as they were colonies of Britain. Other colonies who joined were Australia and New Zealand.
- ▶ Newfoundland joined because they felt that if harm came to Britain then their security and democracy would be threatened. (democracy: rule by the people where each individual has a vote)
- ▶ The United States joined the war officially on April 6th, 1917 due to attacks by unrestricted submarine warfare by Germany. This seriously threatened America's commercial shipping.
- ▶ The slogan of the Allies was "a war to make the world safe for democracy."
- ▶ World War I lasted from 1914 to 1918.

Enlistment and Recruitment

- In Newfoundland, young men of all classes were eager to join in the forces to make the sacrifice for the "mother country" (reference to Britain).
- Fisherman, woodsmen, merchants and trappers enlisted. Many young men showed great determination to enter the

forces – walking long distances, falsifying their age to enlist. (i.e. Tommy Ricketts; only 15 years of age.)

- WHY??? i) Join for adventure ii) a source of employment iii) felt the war would not last long iv) Many felt deep loyalty (patriotism) to Britain v) felt they would lose democratic government and security if the war was lost.
- **Patriotism:** a strong expression of love for one's country or nation. Patriotism is often expressed through poems, songs, recitations, flying the flag, singing the anthem etc.
- Some joined because the propaganda was very effective. For example, people were convinced of the importance to fight in order to save the world from the evil of the enemy.
- **Propaganda:** information used to promote a political cause or point of view. Both sides in the war used propaganda to promote their cause.
- Most propaganda was in poster form. The posters tried to persuade people to believe that the enemy was evil and wanted to destroy the "good guy".

Battles of World War 1

The Newfoundland Regiment fought in many battles throughout Europe. Here is a list of a few:

- Gallipoli
- Monchy
- Courtrai
- Cambrai
- Amiens
- ****Most famous battle: Battle of the Somme started at a place called "Beaumont Hamel"**.**

Beaumont Hamel

- Began in the early morning of July 1, 1916. It began at 9:15 and ended at 9:45, a total of 30 minutes.
- A huge explosion was set off at Hawthorn ridge. It was to have stunned the Germans. As noted on the Newfoundland Heritage site: "Promptly at 6:25 a.m. on July 1, the artillery bombardment began. At 7:20 a.m. the mines under Hawthorn Ridge exploded, warning the Germans that an attack was about to begin. The subsequent 10-minute delay in launching the offensive also allowed the Germans time to prepare for battle."
- A total of 801 members of the Newfoundland regiment went out of their trenches and attempted to move towards the German lines.
- Many were shot down by machine guns, trapped in barbed wire, or blown up by artillery shells.
- Many men crawled across No Man's Land (the space between their own trenches and those of the enemy) only to become entangled in barbed wire, where they were shot by German soldiers.
- When the battle was over, the wounded were gathered off of the battlefield, brought in to hospitals if wounded, and returned to their regiments if they were still able to fight.
- Only 68 men of the Newfoundland Regiment were available for roll call the next morning, out of the 801 who had gone "over the top" the morning before.

Losses of World War 1

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|------------------------|------|
| - Enlisted in Regiment | 6240 |
| - Died | 1291 |
| - Wounded | 2314 |
| Total returning | 2635 |

Approximately 1 out of every 5 Newfoundland soldiers did not return from WW1.

More on Beaumont Hamel

- The Battle of Beaumont Hamel was part of a larger battle: the Battle of the Somme.

- The Battle of Beaumont Hamel was, and still is, a very important part of the province's history.
- It was fought by Newfoundlander's on July 1st, 1916 in Beaumont Hamel, France.
- A huge explosion was set off at Hawthorn ridge. It was to have stunned the Germans. As noted on the Newfoundland Heritage site: "Promptly at 6:25 a.m. on July 1, the artillery bombardment began. At 7:20 a.m. the mines under Hawthorn Ridge exploded, warning the Germans that an attack was about to begin. The subsequent 10-minute delay in launching the offensive also allowed the Germans time to prepare for battle."
- That morning 801 soldiers from the Newfoundland Regiment were ordered to advance out of their trenches and across open land called "No Man's Land"
- No Man's Land: The space between the front lines of the opposing forces. To get to the enemy line, soldiers crossed over into "No Man's Land." Those who completed the task successfully were hailed as heroes; those who were not successful usually suffered injury or loss of life.
- The soldiers of the regiment did not have the machine guns that the Germans had and as a result they suffered heavy casualties.
- The Battle only lasted 30 minutes
- The next morning, only 68 of the soldiers answered the role call.
- 233 were dead.
- 386 were wounded.

- 91 were missing.
- July 1st was declared Memorial Day, national holiday to honor those who had died in the war.
- The national War Memorial downtown St. John's was opened July 1st, 1924.
- The Beaumont Hamel Memorial Park in France was opened on the site June 27th, 1925.

So why is this Battle so important?

- Loss of life: many families lost brother's, fathers' sons etc.
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- Incredible display of courage: pg. 131 for quote from General Beauvoir de Lisle.

The Home Front

People from all walks of life participated in the war effort in many ways.

The Women's Patriotic Association

- Formed in 1914
- Women in this group knitted scarves, socks and hats and also made bandages that would be sent to the troops overseas.
- They also raised funds, visited grieving families, and cared for injured veterans.
- There were 150 branches with 15,000 members.
- See picture 136.

Newfoundland Patriotic Association

- The Prime Minister handed over responsibility of the war effort to the NPA in 1914.
- This group started as 300 volunteers.
- The chair was Governor W. Davidson
- The NPA directly controlled the financial and administrative duties and was funded by the public. How was this different from other countries?
- The NPA was responsible for recruiting members for the Regiment, the Royal Naval Reserve, the Forestry Corps, as well as for getting equipment for the troops.
- Started out good but as the war went on problems increased for the NPA.

Conscription

- In the first few years many young men eagerly volunteered to enlist.
- As casualties increased and the war went on the number of people joining the service decreased, especially after Beaumont Hamel in 1916.
- To remain strong, the Regiment needed at least 1000 men to be outfitted, trained, and ready for action overseas.
- The government tried to get more to enlist through a recruitment drive and set up many stations where men could enlist. There was limited success.

- The government considered conscription or forced military service.
- In May 1918, the Military Service Act required all unmarried men (ages 19-25) to enlist for service.

See page 138 for reasons for and against Conscription.

The Right to Vote

- The war had a major positive impact on one group in Newfoundland....women!!
- Men had been allowed the full right, also known as suffrage, to vote since 1889.
- By the end of the war women still did not have the right even though their role had changed. However women in Britain and Canada were given the vote in 1918...but not in Newfoundland.
- Women's groups such as the WCTU and the WPA had laid the groundwork for obtaining for the vote for women in Newfoundland by creating awareness of gender issues.
- The women who pushed for the vote faced many obstacles such as negative attitudes from their husbands, boyfriends, fathers, the church etc. Prime Minister Squires was very much against it.
- By 1921, women could vote in municipal elections but only if they owned property.
- By 1925 all women ages 25 and older were allowed the vote as granted by Prime Minister Monroe.
- Know TimeLine 142 and page 143 primary source.

People in History – World War 1

Owen Steele (1887-1916)

- Born in St. Johns April 28th
- Worked with his father in a crockery store
- He was well liked, intelligent, athletic and a volunteer.
- He was a member of the Newfoundland Highlanders – a military training organization.
- Enlisted in the Regiment Sept. 1914.
- He was a member of the Blue Puttees(#326)
- Promoted to corporal, then to sergeant and finally to lieutenant within a short period of time.
- He died as a result of injuries sustained when a German shell exploded next to him.
- He passed away July 8th, 1916.
- He kept a diary of his war experiences that gave great insight into what war is like for soldiers.

John Shiwak (1889-1917)

- Born in Rigolet Labrador 1889
- He spent his life trapping, drawing and writing.
- He developed excellent hunting and shooting skills.
- Shiwak enlisted July 1st, 1915 and got to “The Front” July 1916.
- He became known as the best sniper in the British Army.
- He became a corporal and also served as a scout and an observer as well as being a sniper in the Regiment.
- He was killed in Masnières, France by a German shell that also killed 6 others.

John Bernard Croke (1892-1918)

- Born in Green Bay 1892.
- Was educated in Glace Bay Nova Scotia and was a miner.
- He joined the Canadian Corps.
- Croke was the first Newfoundlander to receive the Victoria Cross for his bravery in the Battle of Amiens.
- He was awarded the VC because even though he had been severely wounded in bombing a machine gun nest, he continued to fight.
- When his platoon encountered another enemy stronghold, he rushed forward, being wounded again and helped captured 3 machine guns and an entire German garrison.
- He later died of his wounds and is buried in France.

Tommy Ricketts (1901-1967)

- Born in Middle Arm White Bay in 1901.
- He enlisted in 1916, having lied about his age.
- He was only 15.
- By 1917, he was fighting on The Front in France and suffered a bullet to the leg in Cambrai, France.
- He returned to battle in 1918.
- He was also awarded a Victoria Cross- the youngest recipient!!
- During the Battle of Courtrai , Ricketts and Lance Corporal Brazil volunteered to clear out a German battery but ran out of ammunition during the attempt.
- Disregarding his own safety, he doubled back under heavy machine gun and got more ammo.
- He ran back to the Lewis gun and forced the enemy to retreat.
- His platoon captured four field guns, four machine guns, and eight prisoners.
- Upon his return he studied pharmacy and opened a successful business on Water Street.
- He died February 1967