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## COMMEMORATING THE CENTENARY OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND REGIMENT LANDINGS, SUVLA BAY, 19/20 SEPTEMBER, 2015

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Members of the Gallipoli Association and regular readers of *The Gallipolian* will know from previous articles submitted to their journal by Newfoundlanders, including Dr. David Parsons and Dr. Philip E. L. Smith, that the Newfoundland Regiment was called upon to reinforce the bridgehead established in August of 1915 at Suvla Bay. The Newfoundlanders came there by tragic default. Originally that final landing in the Gallipoli campaign was to have involved the Royal Scots, but en route from Scotland to embark, their train was involved in a terrible accident that became known as the Quintinshill Rail Disaster, in which over 200 troops lost their lives. That loss was the trigger that compelled Field Marshal Lord Kitchener to announce to the assembled Newfoundlanders at Aldershot on 12 August 1915, that he was sending them, not to France as expected, but rather to the Dardanelles.

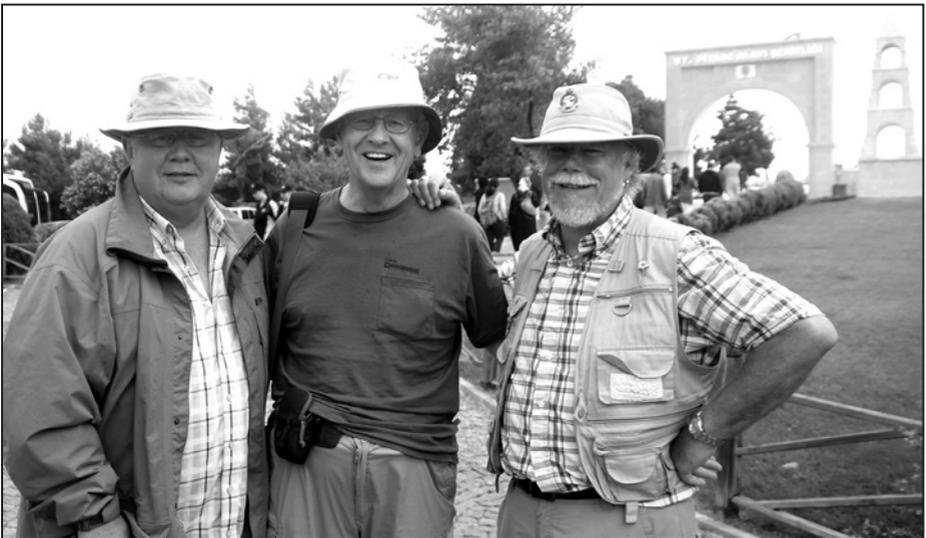
The Dominion of Newfoundland was not then a part of Canada. Newfoundland (now the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador) joined with the rest of Canada in Confederation at the stroke of midnight on 31 March 1949. So it is perhaps not surprising that the majority of Canadians have no knowledge of the fact that these Canadians (albeit latter-day members of that nation) were the only fighting unit from North America to serve at Gallipoli. This fact is somewhat better known amongst the population of Newfoundland and Labrador, primarily due to efforts of groups like the Royal Newfoundland Regiment Advisory Council to keep alive the memory of those brave men who fought, and many of whom died, in WWI. During this centenary of the events of WWI, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador has also raised public awareness of significant events in the Royal Newfoundland Regiment's history through its public education programme known as Honour 100. And of course today's Royal Newfoundland Regiment, a Militia unit in the Royal Canadian Infantry Corps, needs no reminder of their valiant history. They celebrate these events independently at every opportunity and especially on Newfoundland and Labrador's Memorial Day, 1 July. This was the date of the tragic Battle of Beaumont Hamel, which for Newfoundlanders serves as the baptism of fire that formed an important part of their nation building as Gallipoli did for the Australians and New Zealanders.

So it was then that in September 2015 a group of some 60 Newfoundlanders and friends of the Regiment from Britain travelled to Turkey to commemorate the landing at Kangaroo Beach, Suvla Bay, on the night of 19/20 September 1915. The trip was planned by the Royal Newfoundland Regiment Advisory Council, a group comprised almost exclusively of civilians who support the present day regiment and the honouring of its illustrious history. Quite apart from this planning process, with the full support of the Canadian Department of National Defence and the Government of Canada, the Regiment had been planning to travel to Gallipoli for this same purpose, and of course the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, through its Honour 100 programme, also intended to be there on this historic occasion.

It was only natural that these three bodies should come together as one. I was fortunate enough to have been permitted to participate as a member of the group organised by the Royal Newfoundland Regiment Advisory Council, though I am not a member of that

august body of Newfoundland leaders from all fields of endeavour. I was invited because I had recently published the memoirs of my grandfather, Howard Leopold Morry (Private Howard Leopold Morry, Regt. No. 726), who was one of those who landed at Kangaroo Beach that fateful night.<sup>2</sup> Others amongst the participants also had relatives who fought in Gallipoli.

Coincidentally, several of the men whose sons and grandsons or grandnephews attended carried regimental numbers that were close in sequence to one another. They signed their attestation papers between December 15 and 18, 1914. Consequently they all became a part of 'C' Company and were close friends. In his memoirs, Howard Morry referred to one of these, Chas Parsons, as "the bravest and luckiest man" he had ever known. Chas was later awarded the Military Medal for bravery at Monchy. The Newfoundlanders, like the other 'colonials,' especially the Anzacs, were a somewhat unruly crowd. In one story my grandfather tells, he was assigned to guard a rations dump near Kangaroo Beach and accidentally stumbled upon several bags of whisky intended for the officers. It didn't take him long to make good use of his discovery and when his sergeant heard him singing at the top of his voice, he sent Tom Harvey, father of another participant, and another soldier, to find out if he had lost his head. As my grandfather put it, they were "sent to relieve me, but it 'twas I relieved them when I produced the jar." Later, he tells us that the night before the Battle of Beaumont Hamel, Joe Penney, grand uncle of the head of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment Advisory Council, Ron Penney, who was engaged to Howard's sister Trix, came to give him a letter and a ring for her. He was certain that he would die in battle the following morning; a fatally accurate premonition.



Ken Gatehouse, grandson of Chas Parsons; Neil Harvey, son of Tom Harvey; and Christopher Morry, grandson of Howard Morry, at Turkish 57th Regiment monument, The Nek.

Photograph by Michelle Boriel, courtesy of Christopher Morry.

The group also included many others who have had a close association with the Regiment over the years. These included the Honourable John Crosbie, a former Minister in the federal cabinet and the former Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland and Labrador. It was

in this latter capacity that he acted as the Honorary Colonel of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment on behalf of the Colonel-in-Chief, Her Royal Highness The Princess Anne The Princess Royal. Sir Idris Pearce, Kevin Regan and Ralph and Rosie French formed the British delegation and all had associations in one way or another with Newfoundland and the Regiment. Ralph French, a former member of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, was of course also keenly interested in visiting the grave site of Lieut. Col. Charles Doughty-Wiley at Seddülbahir.

For the civilians who attended under the auspices of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment Advisory Council, the trip lasted 10 days, which was sufficient time to visit all the sites of importance to the Newfoundland Regiment. This included not only the Suvla Bay area, but also Cape Helles, where the Newfoundlanders had been chosen to assist in the evacuation as a result of their successful role in a similar capacity two weeks earlier at Suvla Bay. Not a life was lost in either strategic withdrawal. As the opportunity presented itself, the significant sites and monuments of other nations taking part in the Peninsula Campaign were also visited. Unfortunately, the schedule only permitted the honour guard of 25 soldiers and officers of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment to attend on September 19th and 20th, the actual days on which the landings took place.



Dale Hutchings and Christopher Morry lay a wreath at Hill 10 cemetery in honour of Davey Carew, of the Newfoundland Regiment, who is buried here and who was a friend of Mr Morry's grandfather.  
Photograph by Michelle Boriel, courtesy of Christopher Morry.

Following a well-attended memorial service at Cape Helles at which representatives of the Turkish government, Australia and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission took part, the Royal Newfoundland Regiment honour guard and the civilian group travelled together to the cemeteries where Newfoundland soldiers who died in battle or due to the prevalent diseases that plagued this theatre of war are buried. At each cemetery a small remembrance ceremony, including the laying of wreaths, took place. At Hill 10 Cemetery, I was honoured to be permitted to lay a wreath along with Dale Hutchings on behalf of

the Royal Newfoundland Regiment Advisory Council and, in my case more specifically, in honour of Davey Carew, a young friend of my grandfather whose grave is found in this cemetery.

As mentioned above, the landings took place under cover of darkness on the night of 19 - 20 September 1915 and so it was that a small group of those attending, myself included, resolved to be on Kangaroo Beach at sunrise to see the area in much the same way as our relatives had 100 years ago. It was an overpoweringly emotional experience. Later, the remainder of the group and the members of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment joined us on the beach for a small service of remembrance led by regimental Chaplain Major Clarence (Shawn) Samson and presided over by Lieut. Col. Paul Furlong and Lieut. Col. Clarence Bond. Somewhat ironically, and yet at the same time appropriately, a small group of Turkish men had camped out on the beach overnight in order to fish for the plentiful local fin-fish, squid and octopus, oblivious to the significance of the date or place to those of us from Newfoundland.

One additional highlight of the combined tour of the civilian and military visitors was the opportunity afforded to them by Frank Gogos (co-author with Morgan MacDonald of *Known unto God – In Honour of Newfoundland's Missing During the Great War* and author of *The Royal Newfoundland Regiment in the Great War*) to visit the site of Caribou Hill. This name does not appear on any of the official battle maps of the era. But it is nonetheless the site of one of only a few successful engagements during the Gallipoli Campaign. The allied soldiers at Suvla Bay had been pinned down every night, with the loss of many lives, as a result of a Turkish sniper nest on a knoll overlooking their positions. Thanks to the imagination and gallantry of Lieut. James Donnelly and a small group of volunteers from the Newfoundland Regiment, these snipers were outfoxed and the position taken after their routine withdrawal from the site before dawn. This little platoon held what became known to the regiment as Caribou Hill against fierce attack by the Turks when they discovered their prized sniping post was now in the hands of the enemy. Not only was this significant in the saving of many lives that would have otherwise been taken by these snipers, but it also permitted the allies to consolidate their forward line in a position that was much stronger and more enforceable.

For several years now it has been the plan of the governments of Canada and the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador to erect a monument at Suvla Bay in the form of a massive and majestic bronze caribou, like those that exist at all the important battle fields in Europe. Sadly this has not yet come to pass, but we live in hope that one day this plan will be carried to completion.

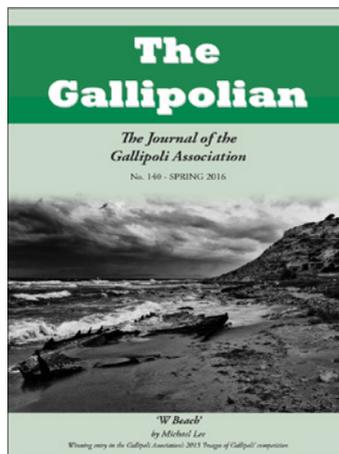
1. The honour of having the prefix 'Royal' attached to the name of the Regiment has been bestowed more than once during its long history. The first instance was occasioned by their valorous service primarily as dispersed marine units in the War of 1812. However, some years later the Regiment was stood down and remained so until the commencement of WWI. Then they were known simply as the First Newfoundland Regiment until after a number of particularly valiant encounters, notably at Gueudecourt and Monchy-le-Preux when on 28 September 1917, King George V once again bestowed upon them the right to proclaim themselves as the Royal Newfoundland Regiment. The current title including the 'Royal' honour dates from March 1, 1961 when the Regiment became a part of the Royal Canadian Infantry Corps. For this reason the actions of the Newfoundlanders at Gallipoli refer to the Newfoundland Regiment without the honorific 'Royal' attached. This fine technical

detail has been missed in the mention of the regiment as ‘Royal’ on the Cape Helles Monument, the only mention they receive anywhere on the Gallipoli battlefields (see photos, pages 35-36). Another error on that entry is that it is listed with the ‘Unallotted troops’ when in fact they were attached to the 29th Division from the moment that they arrived in Suvla Bay until late in the war.

2. *When the Great Red Dawn is Shining* – Howard L. Morry’s Memoirs of Life in the Newfoundland Regiment. Nov. 2014. Breakwater Books, St. John’s.



Extracted from the Spring 2016 edition of *The Gallipolian*, the journal of the [Gallipoli Association](#)





Christopher Morry with the only mention of the Newfoundland Regiment on Gallipoli. See pages 10-14. Photograph by Michelle Boriel, courtesy of Christopher Morry.



Ken Gatehouse, Ean Parsons, Frank Gogos, Neil Sherren, Melanie Martin, Neil Burgess, Michael Pretty, Christopher Morry & Gala Maria Sherren unfurl the Newfoundland Regiment Flag, Kangaroo Beach, 20 Sept 2015. See pages 10-14. Photograph by Michelle Boriel, courtesy of Frank Gogos.