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[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

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# The Right Course, The Best Course, The Only Course: Voluntary Recruitment in the Newfoundland Regiment, 1914-1918

CHRIS MARTIN

“THE RIGHT COURSE, THE BEST COURSE, the only course” was a line used in a 1917 proclamation issued by the Patriotic Association of Newfoundland in an attempt to persuade men to enlist. The phrase unwittingly summarized the history of voluntary recruitment during World War I. In the initial call for men in 1914, the “right course” was to enlist in service to King and Empire. By 1917, as the colony witnessed mounting casualties and a deteriorating economic situation, the “best course” was for men to leave their positions within the intricate sphere of community and family production to enlist. By 1918, an enlistment rate which did not match casualties resulted in the colony’s beloved and distinguished regiment being removed from the frontlines. The “only course” they could now follow was that of conscription. Historians have argued that recruitment was limited by poor communications in a country with an isolated population,<sup>1</sup> or that high returns from the city in the first year of the war lulled city officials in to a false belief that the regiment could be staffed entirely by St. John’s men,<sup>2</sup> or even that high wartime fish prices kept many outport men from enlisting.<sup>3</sup> While there is truth to these arguments, I suggest that the system failed to produce a sufficient number of volunteers to maintain the Newfoundland Regiment at full strength because those responsible for recruitment, chiefly Governor Walter E. Davidson and the Patriotic Association, did not understand the socioeconomic reality of Newfoundland.

Between August 1914 and May 1918 the Patriotic Association and Department of Militia faced the increasingly difficult task of drawing volunteers from a geographically diffuse population for the Newfoundland Regiment, Royal Newfoundland Naval Reserve (RNNR), and Newfoundland Forestry Corps. To maintain

the Regiment the colony had to draw men from all areas of the country, while working within a social and economic setting in which a large percentage of the country's male population was involved in the production of the colony's staple resource, fish. Failure to understand the importance of the individual in community and family production in areas outside of St. John's led to an overestimation of the colony's available manpower. By 1917, as the Department of Militia took over control of the war effort from the Patriotic Association and as the Regiment continued to take a high level of casualties, recruitment became a matter of urgency. But years of believing that there was a large body of idle outport men who remained home because they were uneducated or unpatriotic, meant that little could now be done to increase voluntary recruitment.

In-depth study of recruitment is a relatively recent trend within the historiography of World War I. Historians now go beyond the notion that the call to "King and Country" was the primary impetus to enlistment, and explore a wide and interconnected web of motivations that caused men to join the military. Fortunately, we have Chris Sharpe's 1988 study "The Race of Honour: An Analysis of Enlistments and Casualties in the Armed Forces of Newfoundland 1914-1918" and Mike O'Brien's recent work "Out of a Clear Sky: The Mobilization of the Newfoundland Regiment, 1914-1915," which question older notions of blind faith and unquestioning loyalty. This essay examines the recruitment system in greater depth in an attempt to understand the social and economic factors that limited its effectiveness. This work also continues in the direction set by Sharpe, by exploring the "geography" of Newfoundland's war effort and builds on O'Brien's important assessment of how officials handled the war effort and supports his argument that the lack of military structure in Newfoundland prior to the outbreak of hostilities had serious consequences on the effective administration of the regiment. Where this essay differs from their work is in the importance it places on the difference between actual levels of manpower available and what officials thought should be available. It also places greater weight on the effect of casualties on the voluntary recruitment system. Furthermore, I suggest that a fundamental lack of understanding of the socio-economic life outside the capital city led to serious problems throughout the war. These problems, identified too late, remained uncorrected during the period of voluntary recruitment and coloured the way in which conscription was carried out under the Military Service Act in 1918.

Finally, I attempt to shed light on those who volunteered for service and on those who did not. Too often these men's motives have been ignored by historians. The decision not to enlist was as important as the decision to join up, and a discussion of enlistment must attempt to understand both those who went overseas and those who stayed home. Newfoundlanders internalized the official stance on the war and decided whether or not to enlist based on their role within family and community production. For some, service in the King's army was a viable route, for others, even though they displayed great patriotism, it was not. Some men weighed

options and held off volunteering until an appropriate time, such as after a fishing or lumber season, while others waited to leave their communities until the need for men was absolutely certain. Whatever their reason for volunteering or staying home, events in the late summer of 1914 affected all Newfoundlanders in some way.

## 1914: OVERSEAS THERE CAME A PLEADING. THE CALL TO ARMS AND THE FIRST 500

On 4 August 1914, the *Daily News* proclaimed “The British Empire is at war and all Europe ablaze.”<sup>4</sup> The Newfoundland government’s response was quick and decisive. Within four days Governor Davidson pledged Newfoundland’s support for Britain, offered to raise a detachment of 500 men for overseas service, and increased the Naval Reserve from 500 to 1000 men.<sup>5</sup> The colony then scrambled to enlist, equip, and train the 500 soldiers. Though the public was patriotic and enthusiastic, recruitment efforts were confused in the early days of August 1914. The colony faced a challenge not encountered by other parts of the Empire. Newfoundland was, since the removal of British forces in 1870,<sup>6</sup> devoid of any formal military organization through which it could raise, train, equip, and support the proposed 500 men destined for service as infantrymen.<sup>7</sup> The absence hindered the colony from Davidson’s initial commitment of men, to the fractured and limited system of recruitment that developed in the first few months.

What the colony lacked in established military organization, it made up for in enthusiasm for Empire. The St. John’s elite greeted the war with a determination to offer a “Newfoundland” contingent as opposed to providing manpower for the Canadian and British armies.<sup>8</sup> On 12 August, Davidson addressed an enthusiastic group of citizens crowded into the Harvey Road Church Lads Brigade (CLB) armory in St. John’s. The gathering endorsed a resolution authorizing the establishment of a committee of 25 citizens tasked with raising and equipping the contingent for overseas service.<sup>9</sup> In an unusual move, the Newfoundland government placed the country’s war effort under the control of Davidson’s newly formed Newfoundland Patriotic Committee.<sup>10</sup> This committee, later renamed the Newfoundland Patriotic Association, held its first meeting at the CLB armoury on the evening of 17 August. It established six sub-committees composed of local city leaders and officials to take charge of the recruitment, equipment, and transportation of the men.<sup>11</sup> When the Patriotic Association held its third meeting, 16 days after the declaration of war, the colony had yet to begin recruiting, even though the government and Association had already received telegrams and letters from men throughout the island declaring their intention to join up.<sup>12</sup> The Recruiting Committee blamed the delay in opening general enlistment on the lack of an official proclamation calling on men to volunteer. It reported that it had taken things as far as it could and had cre-

ated a sub-committee headed by Doctor Cluny Macpherson to see to the medical examination of volunteers. The Proclamation Committee then submitted a draft which was amended and given to the Colonial Secretary, J.R. Bennett. During this meeting a solid framework for enlistment and recruiting began to take shape.<sup>13</sup>

The Nominating Committee wrote to the magistrates of all 18 electoral districts compelling them to form branch offices of the Patriotic Association, to hold public meetings to explain the country's objective, and to compile and send forward the names of willing citizens. Bennett sent 75 copies of the proclamation to Inspector General John Sullivan of the Newfoundland Constabulary, and 100 copies to H.W. LeMessurier, Assistant Collector, requesting them to have their respective constables and sub-collectors to post the notices in prominent places outside the city.<sup>14</sup> The Association also sent announcements to be posted in outport postal and telegraph offices, and implored clergymen to encourage their congregations to enlist.<sup>15</sup> Davidson made personal note of two responses made by clergymen on the Avalon Peninsula in the first weeks of the war. Cannon White of the Anglican Cathedral in St. John's gave a sermon on the duty of all loyal British men to support the Empire in its time of need. Farther down the coast Father Larry, parish priest of Ferryland, emphatically told his congregation to rise to the occasion by exhorting his parishioners: "These Germans, Shoot them! Go to the meeting and get ready to fight. Kick them to blue blazes!"<sup>16</sup>

By the end of August it was clear that the message had reached a majority of the colony's outlying towns. District magistrates telegraphed the Patriotic Association informing it of the progress in establishing local branches of the Association. By 29 August, 20 branches had been formed and the response indicated that "a great wave of patriotic enthusiasm is sweeping throughout the land."<sup>17</sup> Letters written by men expressing their desire to enlist further showed how far the message had spread in the first few weeks.<sup>18</sup> But, since men had to make their way to St. John's to sign up, and the population was spread over a large geographic area, the colony had to overcome the major barrier of distance. The Reid Newfoundland Company, Bowring Brothers Company, and the Newfoundland Produce Company all offered to transport volunteers to St. John's free of charge.<sup>19</sup>

The physical requirements also affected the numbers of those who could enlist. The recruiting committee set a minimum standard of 5 foot 4 inches in height with a chest expansion of 35 inches and a weight of 140 pounds,<sup>20</sup> standards similar to those set by the British Army in 1914.<sup>21</sup> The large portion of volunteers rejected as undersized proved that the initial standard was unrealistic for the Newfoundland population, and it was drastically reduced in early 1915. In 1914, however, Davidson was proud of this standard and he suggested to the British Secretary of State, Andrew Bonar Law, that the Newfoundlanders be attached to the Foot Guards and sent to the Guards Depot upon arrival in England.<sup>22</sup> The Newfoundlanders were, he claimed, "specially selected men, hardy and handy, enduring and disciplined and crack shots."<sup>23</sup> Not only were the men of the first contingent "hardy and handy,"

they were overwhelmingly single. Financial considerations weighed heavily for the government. Men with dependants posed a larger financial risk should they die while in service to the country. On 18 September 1914 the Colonial Secretary reminded Davidson:

I have no doubt that your Excellency will use your best endeavors with the committee so as to ensure so far as may be possible that the five hundred volunteers, who will eventually be sent forward to represent the first Newfoundland Regiment, may be all unmarried men or men without dependants upon them.<sup>24</sup>

Davidson's endeavors proved successful, on 28 September he announced the decision to keep "only sons" and married men with families from active service.<sup>25</sup>

Once recruitment began on 21 August, men flocked to the C.L.B Armoury in St. John's to enlist.<sup>26</sup> It was no surprise that the young men of the four St. John's cadet brigades, the CLB, Catholic Cadet Corps, Methodist Guards, and Newfoundland Highlanders, formed a large percentage of the early enlistments. They were, as one historian has aptly stated, "perhaps the nearest thing to a military force in Newfoundland in 1914."<sup>27</sup> The CLB, for example, taught youth to embrace the ideals of Christian manliness and to embody their motto "fight the good fight." The training they received ranged from physical and gymnastic exercise, to musical endeavors, to a number of basic militaristic skills such as marksmanship, drill, signaling, and first aid.<sup>28</sup> As of the 25th only 45 of the 285 men then enrolled in the regiment lacked previous experience with military drill.<sup>29</sup>

By 11 September, 880 men had been enrolled, with 520 deemed fit for service. Of those volunteers 150 were men from outside the city, prompting the Patriotic Association to suspend city recruitment in an effort to increase outport representation.<sup>30</sup> On 28 September, 970 men had officially been enrolled, 565 of whom were training at the Pleasantville camp.<sup>31</sup> Once the number of men enrolled surpassed Davidson's original commitment, the Financial Committee decided to stop recruiting throughout the Colony.<sup>32</sup> The five weeks of active recruitment had netted more than a thousand volunteers, and produced a contingent of 537 men. Furthermore, of the 32 magistrates contacted in the colony's 18 electoral districts, 45 branch offices of the Patriotic Association had been formed.<sup>33</sup> With recruitment closed, residents of St. John's lined the streets on the afternoon of 3 October to watch as 500 ill clad, proud men of the Newfoundland Regiment made their way through the city amid cries of "God Bless" and "Ye'll be back in six weeks." They marched towards the Furness Withy Company wharf to board the *S.S. Florizel*, the hastily converted steamer turned troopship designated to carry them to Britain.<sup>34</sup>

Having raised, trained, and dispatched the promised 500 men, the Patriotic Association met on 23 October. It had no intention to raise additional men. The Financial Committee estimated it would cost the colony \$520,000 to keep the men on active service for one year. They did not account for funds for reserves, replace-

ments, or new recruits to increase the size of the regiment. Towards the end of the meeting, Prime Minister Edward Morris announced that a further draft of men might be required to keep the regiment at its current strength. He then requested the Association resume recruiting. Morris and Davidson established guidelines requiring volunteers to attend the CLB armoury in St. John's four nights a week for a period of unpaid training. This included all outport volunteers, except where a sufficient number from one locality offered themselves for service. In such cases, an instructor might be sent to train the volunteers. Morris stated that "although justified in the policy of preparing and training these men," the government hoped they would not be called to the front. The Patriotic Association then established the Reserve Force Committee, headed by Sir Joseph Outerbridge and the commanding officers of the cadet brigades, to take control of future recruiting efforts.<sup>35</sup> The new recruits were intended to keep the regiment at its original strength.

In mid November the British informed the colony that it had to raise a reserve force that consisted of no less than 50 per cent of the unit before the Regiment could be put into the field. These 250 recruits would replace potential casualties.<sup>36</sup> The British Army Council also informed the colony that the regiment needed to be increased to the British standard of 1080 men with an additional 250 man reserve for it to be put into service.<sup>37</sup> Though the colony knew the manpower standards of regiments in the British army, by late December it had not developed any plan to increase the size of the contingent. When recruitment resumed on 30 November the Association intended to raise only the 250 men. As with the call to form the first contingent, the days following the reopening of enlistment saw a renewed patriotic fervor. Ten days after the call for men, 607 (68 from outports) had been enrolled, but only 170 were found fit to serve.<sup>38</sup>

The Patriotic Association continued to be concerned by the poor return from outport communities. Most historians have recognized that the number of outport men available in August of 1914 was significantly reduced by the summer fishery and as such they were naturally under-represented, but did not examine the number who were actually fishing. The 1911 Newfoundland census listed 43,795 males involved in the catching and curing of fish, out of a total male population of 122,542.<sup>39</sup> Assuming men worked between 10 to 65 years of age, Newfoundland had a total male workforce of 86,230.<sup>40</sup> Thus, just over 50 per cent of the male workforce was in the fishery and not in a position to enlist in the summer of 1914. Since fishing was largely conducted outside the city, outport men were overwhelmingly unable to enlist. In 1914, 78 per cent of all 202 outport volunteers worked in an industry other than fishing. In mid August, the Nominating Committee received a number of telegraphs from magistrates outlining the local situations. Many told the same story. The magistrate in Wesleyville reported he had not held a recruitment meeting "owing to men being on Labrador and elsewhere and with advice of others thought it advisable to let meeting stand over ... will hold meetings shortly so as to meet men returning home." In Harbour Breton it was noted that "most all of

our young men are on the Banks those at home are mostly too old to volunteer,” while the magistrate in Brigus regretted that “unfortunately most of our young men are away on the Labrador and elsewhere at the present time and we may not be able to get many volunteers until their arrival.”<sup>41</sup>

The Patriotic Association paid little attention to the reasons why men did not enlist. When the call to form the second contingent went out in the end of November, the Association and its Reserve Force Committee had not taken steps to encourage outport volunteers. In fact, the system of recruitment established in October 1914 restricted the enlistment of outport men. The Patriotic Association further complicated outport enlistment when it decided that an area had to have no less than 50 volunteers to justify sending a training officer. The editor of a city newspaper criticized the new system of recruitment by pointing out “it will not be possible for a young man of Pouch Cove to walk into town for Monday night’s drill, return home that night and walk in again for Tuesday night’s drill.”<sup>42</sup> While enlisting was impractical for men within walking distance of St. John’s, it was impossible for men of outlying districts. It was unrealistic to expect an individual to leave home to live in the city paying all expenses out of pocket while attending unpaid training. The Reserve Force Committee admitted as much when it abandoned the system in favour of volunteers receiving continuous paid training.<sup>43</sup> Although that eased the financial concerns for outport volunteers, and had the desired effect,<sup>44</sup> outport communities were still limited in the number of men they could send. One person in Hearts Content wrote that the elimination of the Home Service, in which men enlisted but remained in their communities until needed, restricted the number of volunteers that could be drawn from the area. He believed that his community should train recruits.<sup>45</sup> Though Dr. Wilfred Grenfell of St. Anthony raised similar concerns in early 1915, the training of all volunteers continued to be conducted in St. John’s. Other factors also limited the number of outport volunteers. Writing in February 1916, Caleb Tuck of Shoal Harbour outlined what he felt had been a major obstacle to outport enlistment, the inadequate pass system set up to transport men from the outports to the city. Under this system men were provided for only while in transit. Delays and stopovers often resulted in men going hungry or being stranded overnight without lodging. The situation was much the same across the island and as such, he stated, it was no wonder that more men did not volunteer.<sup>46</sup>

At the end of 1914 the Newfoundland Regiment was stationed in Scotland training and waiting for the reinforcements that would allow it to be placed on the frontlines. In the two months of active recruitment the colony had raised 779 men for the first two contingents.<sup>47</sup> Of those, 202 were from districts other than St. John’s East and West while 19 men listed areas other than Newfoundland and Labrador as their home town on their attestation papers.<sup>48</sup>

Davidson’s original offer of 500 men for overseas service had caused a number of problems. The “first five hundred” became iconic in Newfoundland, but that arbitrary number was not based on an understanding of the structure of the British



army. Davidson had also not considered the effect sustained conflict could have on a combat unit. It is hard to say what the impact of a wildly patriotic recruitment campaign combined with an extremely limited quota of men had on the attitude of the population, but it is possible to draw a correlation with what occurred in Britain. By early September 1914, the British Army found itself struggling to deal with an unexpected number of volunteers. Recruitment depots were swamped with men who waited hours for their chance to join up. In an attempt to stem the flood and gain some measure of control, the War Office instituted a system whereby men were examined and attested, and placed into a reserve to be called up when the army was ready for them. The council also increased the minimum physical requirements to 5 foot 6 inches with a chest expansion of 35.5 inches. While these measures brought recruitment under control, they also had an unexpected result. Many potential volunteers felt that since the War Office was picking and choosing men for service, it might not need the number of recruits that had originally been suggested.<sup>49</sup>

In the early stages of recruitment in Newfoundland the Patriotic Association too had carefully selected men, motivated by the concern to limit financial obligation to dependents. Moreover, its decision to stop recruiting and then resume a limited system of recruitment in the late fall, restricted the number of outport men enrolled. Many patriotic young men were unable to enlist in a regiment and cause they supported. The unwillingness to increase the size of the regiment beyond the minimum required, motivated by a desire to minimise cost and the lack of understanding of the need to replace casualties, affected recruitment in the following year.

## 1915: FALL IN THE FIRING LINE. CONTINUOUS RECRUITMENT AND GALLIPOLI

Recruitment in 1915 was marked by an atmosphere of confusion and uncertainty within both the Government and the Patriotic Association. Debates ranged over the appropriate level of commitment and the period for which recruitment would continue. By mid year, this uncertainty affected other areas of the war effort, forcing the head of the Equipment Committee to demand that Newfoundland set a goal for recruitment to purchase items needed to clothe the regiment. That the regiment remained out of active service for most of the year fostered uncertainty about the number of recruits required. That changed by October, after the regiment's arrival in Gallipoli when Davidson announced the first combat casualties. The government quickly abandoned its recruitment quotas and resolved to send its last man in aid of the Empire.

Even after the restrictions on the number of men accepted were dropped, the Patriotic Association overestimated the level of manpower available, which led to an unrealistic view of what the colony could commit. The year opened with a repeat

of the earlier call for 250 men to form a reserve. By 14 January 1915, 300 had reported for drill at the armoury, with 245 of those on parade already sworn in.<sup>50</sup> The Governor made it clear that the second contingent was a reserve only. Its arrival in Britain was significant only in that it allowed the first contingent to be placed on active service. Davidson recognized the British Army's concern over this irregular sized unit, but stated that there had never been a formal proposal to raise a full regiment. He suggested that there was no present need for such an increase, as any future thought of doing so depended on the number of volunteers who presented themselves for service.<sup>51</sup> There is some indication that the government and the Patriotic Association had finally given in to Army Council requests. Regimental Quarter Master Captain Outerbridge queried the total number of men to be enlisted so that he could order equipment. The Association told him to procure equipment for 1330 men, a full battalion of 1080 plus a 250 man reserve.<sup>52</sup>

During the first three months of 1915 the Patriotic Association targeted outpost communities through a recruiting party that toured various sections of the island's coast.<sup>53</sup> While heralded as a success in late March, in hindsight the tours highlighted several problems with the campaign. These problems, however, were not fully recognised until late 1917, by which time little could be done. The Patriotic Association conducted three outpost recruitment tours that winter. The *Evening Telegram* published "Notes on Patriotic Tour" and ran between 13 February and 1 March 1915. The author, I.C. Morris, a well known St. John's businessman, praised community leaders and listed the number of men who volunteered for each branch of service after the presentations. His 18 February report, however, showed a marked departure. A man in the Bay of Islands area confronted the recruiting party over the merits of the conflict. Morris stated that,

the man was representative of others of his class which are to be met with in every community ... they apparently forget that the Empire has been built up by the sacrifice and blood of its sons.

Recruiters felt that the inhabitants of Bay of Islands had room for a "greater public spirit."<sup>54</sup> At Channel, the group was again surprised by the level "carelessness and indifference." Morris felt the situation could be alleviated by regularly reminding and educating people on Newfoundland's position within the Empire. "There has been serious neglect in this aspect of our public life and it should be the duty of those in authority to give the matter some little consideration."<sup>55</sup>

While not recognized at the time, weariness to enlist among people on the west coast may not have been the product of a lack of education. The Naval Reserve had long had trouble recruiting in the region, due to the Navy's past involvement in enforcing treaty rights on the French Shore by expelling Newfoundlanders who had encroached on French fishing grounds.<sup>56</sup>

Morris highlighted what he saw as three factors that affected recruitment in the colony. First, there was a lack of “public spirit” in the outports and without some form of education as to the war and the Empire’s role, recruitment in rural areas would be a constant struggle. Secondly, the Patriotic Association relied heavily on community leaders in outports to pave the way for their recruiting parties. Finally, was that although there was an air of uncertainty, men in outport areas were willing to leave their homes to enlist. W.C. Job echoed Morris’s findings when he pointed out that government had provided little in the way of support for recruitment.<sup>57</sup> Morris and Job both indicated that the government and the Patriotic Association needed to take a visible and active roll in outport recruitment. They could not afford to continue to sit back and compel local community leaders to take responsibility for volunteers. Furthermore, given the geographic distribution of people, recruiters could not assume that the high level of patriotic sentiment that existed in the city was matched everywhere. Their concerns seem to have been lost in the wake of a sharp increase in total enlistments that occurred in March of that year.

On 30 March, the Reserve Force Committee reported that since the first contingent, an additional 1,460 men had volunteered and over 690 had been sworn in. A second and a third contingent had left for overseas, with a fourth ready to go. Based on what appeared to be a high level of volunteers and given that they had not as of yet reached their quota of 1,330 men the Prime Minister extended recruitment.<sup>58</sup> Recruitment seemed to be progressing well, but the quota and centralization of training limited the number of men that could join the regiment. Grenfell, for example, requested permission to form a small company to train and drill the volunteers in St. Anthony, which he thought would “create great enthusiasm” within the area and encourage more men to step forward.<sup>59</sup> Davidson replied that the Reserve Force Committee advised against such a plan and all volunteers had to be sent to the city.<sup>60</sup> The situation was much the same for Labrador. On 1 April 1915, Mr. Swaffield of Cartwright contacted the Governor to enquire if volunteers were still needed in St. John’s as he had 15 men wanting to enlist. Davidson, who admitted to knowing little of conditions in Labrador, requested help from the Reserve Force Committee in drafting his reply. He informed Swaffield that the men would gladly be welcomed but urged Swaffield not to “denude the coast of Labrador or leave families without adequate support.”<sup>61</sup> Dr. Paddon, of the Grenfell mission, spoke of a general ignorance of the area in a letter he wrote in 1917. More than just physical distance from St. John’s limited the number of Labrador men who volunteered, he thought. Enlistment from Labrador remained well below the average throughout the war.

Captain Outerbridge explicitly pointed out that extending recruitment served to further confuse the situation. In April he again demanded to know what the government’s recruitment goal was, since extending recruitment at the last moment caused problems in his ability to obtain kit. For Outerbridge, the system of ad hoc extensions based on the number of men volunteering had to stop. He warned the

Reserve Force Committee that if it did not adopt a definite program of recruitment it would be impossible to make contracts with the various companies supplying kit.<sup>62</sup> The colony continued to raise a series of contingents, in the form of lettered companies, without knowing if each company raised would be the last. By 5 August 1915 the Reserve Force Committee had enlisted 145 men into the ranks of G Company.<sup>63</sup> Fifteen days later, 1,076 men of the Newfoundland Regiment, who had spent ten months in Britain, embarked at Devonport aboard *HMS Megantic* to begin their active service in the Mediterranean. A month later, they landed in Suvla Bay.

The first regimental casualties changed attitudes. The first fatality came on 22 September when Private Hugh McWhirter was killed by a shell, the second happened the following day, when Private W.F. Hardy was shot by a sniper.<sup>64</sup> As the regiment grew accustomed to the routine of cycling through the front, reserve, and rest areas, its casualties mounted. On 13 October 1915 Davidson announced that they had just received word that the regiment had suffered 27 men wounded, 3 killed in action, and 5 who had died from disease. Morris announced that Newfoundland should be prepared to give its last man and dollar in defense of the Empire, and recommended the continuation of recruitment for as long as necessary. The leader of the opposition, J.M. Kent, agreed and for the first time the colony had a recruitment program that was not limited by financial concerns.<sup>65</sup>

Throughout the remainder of the year, as the British Expeditionary Force held on to its section of Turkish coast, the regiment continued to take casualties. Although the Patriotic Association received updates, few understood that the regiment was losing men despite not yet being involved in a major battle. By 15 November, a month and a half after arriving in Gallipoli, the Newfoundlanders had taken 103 casualties including 20 fatalities.<sup>66</sup> The continued flow of volunteers in Newfoundland combined with a battalion reserve higher than the minimum 250 men had fostered an overconfidence about the number of recruits the colony could mobilize. Talk of forming a second battalion for active service had started.<sup>67</sup> Major Whitaker, the commander of the Newfoundland reserve force in Scotland, had written Davidson advising that his unit be officially designated the 2nd Battalion to allow it to function more efficiently within the British army system. The Reserve Force Committee accepted establishment of the 2nd Battalion under the condition that it remain a reserve for the 1st Battalion. Davidson, unrealistically, believed that if the war continued the colony would need to raise three or four battalions to ensure it did its fair share in saving the Empire.<sup>68</sup>

Amid the discussion of establishing another battalion of 1,330 men, few people, not even Davidson, made mention of Major Whitaker's 11 October 1915 letter in which he raised concern over enlistment. Whitaker warned that unless he soon received men and trained them, they would be unable to keep 1st Battalion at full strength.<sup>69</sup> In the four fractured months of recruitment in 1914 the colony produced 779 recruits. In 1915 after a full year of hesitant, yet continuous, recruitment 1,418 men had signed up. By the time the Newfoundland regiment left Turkey it had suf-

fered 517 casualties. The regiment's time in the lines resulted in 45 fatalities, 80 wounded, and 392 in hospital not yet discharged.<sup>70</sup> Although many of those in hospital returned to active service, by the time the regiment left Gallipoli it had lost half the men that landed at Suvla, and 27 per cent of its overall strength. The new determination that followed news of the first casualties in October, however, remained unchecked as the regiment prepared to enter the Western Front.

## 1916: INTO BATTLE. BEAUMONT HAMEL AND THE WESTERN FRONT

1916 proved to be watershed year for Newfoundland. The casualties suffered near Beaumont Hamel marked the largest loss of life in a single day, but continuous time in the trenches and further combat resulted in casualties that far outweighed those taken on 1 July. That year also marked the point in the war in which concerns arose about the ability to maintain an effective fighting force through voluntary recruitment. Attitudes within the government and Patriotic Association changed greatly. The Association's, and Davidson's, optimism faded by the fall as the level of volunteers shrank and they realized that replacement of casualties consumed a large percentage of all recruits.

As the Newfoundland regiment rested, trained, and refit in their camp outside Suez, Egypt,<sup>71</sup> the Patriotic Association implemented new strategies to raise 2000 recruits that year.<sup>72</sup> While it optimistically expected to double the previous year's recruitment, it failed to correct problems within its system that limited the number of men that came forward. The early months of 1916 saw a continued interest in the formation of the 2nd Battalion. On 1 February the British Secretary of State approved of establishing the 2nd Battalion with the proviso that it remain a reserve for the 1st Battalion until the Newfoundland government could guarantee it had sufficient reinforcements to sustain both battalions in the field.<sup>73</sup> Davidson responded that 2nd Battalion would be kept in reserve in case "the young men available in Newfoundland do not care to volunteer," but it was the colony's ultimate goal to raise two full strength battalions for the frontlines. He believed that by doing so Newfoundland would not fall behind the other Dominions who had all increased their original offer ten fold.<sup>74</sup> Davidson informed the Secretary of State that the Patriotic Association had been authorised to recruit "without limit." The establishment of the 2nd Battalion meant an increase of their contingent abroad from 2,000 to 5,000 men.<sup>75</sup>

Others were less optimistic about fielding a second battalion. Colonel A.L. Hadow, commanding officer of 1st Battalion, voiced his objections to the official designation of 2nd Battalion. Hadow argued that 2nd Battalion would quickly lose sight of its role as reserve force thereby drawing much needed reinforcements away from the 1st in its attempt to establish themselves as a frontline unit.<sup>76</sup>

Meanwhile, Colonial Secretary Bennett worried about the ability to draw the required recruits from the country's population. He reported that as of 31 December 1915 Newfoundland had, between Army, Navy, those rejected, and those who joined other empire forces, offered up 4,552 men. Bennett noted that 1/10th of the total "manhood" of a nation was capable of service, so about 24,000 Newfoundland men could potentially enlist. While that number seemed large, it had to be understood that "in the case of a sparsely populated country such as Newfoundland where the staple industry of fishing is carried on by young and able-bodied men the number available for active service can only reach a comparatively small proportion of this total." Bennett went on to argue that despite this, ministers continued to hold the opinion that a larger number would volunteer if they could be made to understand the importance of the Empire and their place within it.<sup>77</sup> Although ignored, Bennett's report highlighted the major difficulty of voluntary recruitment in Newfoundland, geographic distribution of population and labour. The bulk of the colony's male population of service age lay outside St. John's, yet the city had the highest concentration of men between 18 and 35 years old. The populations of the outlying districts were dispersed throughout a number of small towns many of which had populations numbering less than 100 people.

Excluding the districts that comprised the area of Conception Bay, Fortune Bay is representative of the population distribution of outlying districts.<sup>78</sup> In 1911 the district consisted of 107 towns, of which 56 had populations under 100, while 13 had populations under 10. A further 32 towns had total populations between 101 and 300. Only 6 had a total population over 300 people, the highest of which, Garnish, had 640 residents (for a comparison to other outlying districts see Table 1). Fortune Bay had 5,209 males, of which 2,351, 45 per cent, were fishermen. Of the total male population, 1,775 ranged between the ages of 15 and 35. By breaking it down further one can see the heavy reliance on young men for the fishery. Of the 318 males in Garnish, 91 were 10 years of age or younger. Out of a total potential male work force of 227, the 164 involved in the fishery accounted for 72 per cent. At the other end of the spectrum, Long Harbour Beach had a total population of six, of whom half were male. Two men were between the ages of 20 and 30 while the other was between 75 and 80, and not surprisingly Long Harbour Beach had two men listed as fishermen.<sup>79</sup> In many cases it was not, as Davidson had stated, that young men did not care to volunteer, rather they were unable to enlist due to their position within the economic structure of their towns. Many telegrams and letters support this fact. By 1916 the government received a considerable number of requests to release young men who had volunteered for service. Many asked for the return of under age boys, but a sizable portion requested the return of sons as old as 24. Regimental officials declined the release of most men. The case of Noah Mullett of Wesleyville was typical. The regiment informed him that although his son George was the only help he had, once attested, a man could not be released

**Table 1**  
**Electoral District Population Distribution<sup>1</sup>**

District	Total Male Population	Males 15-35	Number of Towns	Population			
				Under 10	11 to 100	101 to 300	301+
<i>Bonavista</i>	11,972	4,064	109	8	34	48	19
<i>Twillingate</i>	11,875	4,181	198	14	121	48	15
<i>Trinity</i>	11,372	3,717	146	9	79	36	22
<i>Placentia</i>							
<i>St. Mary's</i>	8,368	2,758	139	11	74	41	13
<i>St. Georges</i>	6,225	1,961	113	14	64	27	8
<i>Burin</i>	5,850	1,824	77	7	34	29	7
<i>St. Barbe</i>	5,578	1,899	177	37	114	22	4
<i>Fortune Bay</i>	5,209	1,775	107	13	57	32	5
<i>Fogo</i>	4,388	1,579	72	10	37	20	5
<i>Burgeo-La</i>							
<i>Poile</i>	4,095	1,345	56	7	24	19	6
<i>Ferryland</i>	3,029	866	30	0	16	6	8
<i>Labrador</i>	2,052	693	110	41	57	11	1

<sup>1</sup>Based on 1911 Newfoundland Census. Excluding the districts of Harbour Main, Port de Grave, Bay de Verde, Harbour Grace, Carbonear, St. John's East and St. John's West. Though not an electoral district, this table includes Labrador.

from service.<sup>80</sup> The picture throughout the outlying districts is in sharp contrast to that of St. John's.

In 1911 the city had a total population of 45,685 with a total male population of 22,233, of whom 7,469 were of serviceable age.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, close to half of the city's labour force was employed in trade and manufacturing.<sup>82</sup> By 1914 labourers made up the single largest group of workers in the city.<sup>83</sup> Labour in St. John's, particularly that of dockworkers, was characterized by "sporadic employment, a stratified work force, and an oversupply of labour." In 1914 only 19 per cent of dockworkers were considered permanent employees, the rest subsisted on a day-by-day basis and few worked more than nine months out of the year.<sup>84</sup> Thus, unlike in the outports, a considerable body of men who were not integrally woven into family and community production existed.

Other industries could not spare young men either. In Harbour Grace, Archibald Brothers Ltd. telegraphed the Governor requesting that Stephen Payne, the factory's shoe cutter, be released from his military obligation until he could train

his replacement.<sup>85</sup> Davidson addressed concerns in Hearts Content where the Anglo Telegraph Company was harmed by recruitment in the town. The problem, according to the manager, was that it took time and effort to train a new operator and nine company employees had already broken their contract to enlist.<sup>86</sup> The Governor also received letters from men such as Joseph Evans of Grand Bank, who requested help enlisting.<sup>87</sup> Many of the young men in the outports were too tightly woven into the economic production of the area to enlist. While the Patriotic Association called on all men to enlist immediately and worry about the cost later, the colony never found a way to overcome these obstacles.

There were further problems that limited the number of enlistments. By 1916 the colony had long abandoned its strict physical standards. In March 1915 the standard was drastically reduced from 5 foot 4 inches, 140 pounds to 5 feet, 112 pounds.<sup>88</sup> Even under the reduced physical standard a large number of men were rejected for being under sized. In 1916, 352 of the 996 men rejected were excluded for "Poor Physique," a category that included men too light, too small, and underage. In fact nearly half of all volunteers were rejected in 1916.<sup>89</sup> The rejection rate prompted the medical staff of the Association to allow men with a minor defect to be taken on strength and sent for corrective medical procedures after which they would be posted to full duties and pay.<sup>90</sup> Unlike in 1914, the continuous need for men to fill two battalions meant that the colony could no longer afford to pick the best candidates. Even with relaxed standards nearly half of all recruits were rejected (see Table 2).

The Patriotic Association realized that enlistment rates did not support its ultimate goal; few understood why and chalked it up to lack of enthusiasm of the young men. The Association hoped to induce a sense of patriotism and loyalty among the men through intensified recruitment campaigns. On 10 April 1916 Davidson announced that once the men under training in St. John's were dispatched their obligation to 1st and 2nd Battalion would be well met and the colony could then turn its attention to a third battalion. He advocated a "whirlwind" recruiting campaign with the goal of netting 1,000 to 1,200 more men that year.<sup>91</sup>

With the regiment in France recruitment could not keep pace with losses. Between 1 February and 26 May 1916, 712 men had been added to the regiment, though a large number of these men had volunteered in 1915.<sup>92</sup> By mid summer the regiment's three months on the Western Front had resulted in devastating casualties. The fighting on 1 July 1916 had resulted in 710 casualties, which included 233 fatalities.<sup>93</sup> Four month's reinforcements did not offset the losses of one month. After Beaumont Hamel, the Regiment was pulled off the line to a reserve area in France to be refit. Men from 2nd Battalion replaced the casualties, but these reinforcements were themselves offset by casualties taken in October when the regi-



**Table 2**  
**Voluntary Enlistment Rates**  
**August 1914-April 1918<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Accepted</b>	<b>Rejected</b>	<b>Percent Rejected</b>
1914 <sup>2</sup>	1,005	757	248	24.6 <sup>3</sup>
1915 <sup>4</sup>	2,744	1,418	1,326	48.3
1916	2,210	1,087	1,123	50.8
1917	2,005	1,031	974	48.5
1918	868	411	457	52.6
<i>Military Service Act Passed 11 May 1918</i>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,832</b>	<b>4,704</b>	<b>4,128</b>	<b>46.7</b>
Total for War				
Including Conscripts	12,461	6,277	6,184	49.6

<sup>1</sup>Based on Department of Militia Report. Government of Newfoundland. *Report of the Department of Militia*. (St. John's: Harold Print, 1919) 14-15.

<sup>2</sup>The number for 1914 is not exact given that the Department of Militia included men recruited in December 1914 in their yearly totals for 1915.

<sup>3</sup>The sizable difference in rejection rates between 1914 and the rest of the war may be explained by the fact that a large number of original volunteers were men and boys from the denominational cadet brigades, who placed great importance on physical well being and exercise.

<sup>4</sup>As noted above the numbers for 1915 are not exact. The report listed December 1914 and January-February 1915 as one total thus making an amendment to the totals not possible based on the data presented.

ment was placed back in the line. In the battle of Gueudecourt losses totalled 120 fatalities and a further 119 wounded.<sup>94</sup>

It was not until mid winter, however, that the casualties affected the perception of recruitment in Newfoundland. Despite the fact that the average for 1916 was 90 men per month, in early November Davidson optimistically resolved to secure 150 recruits per month.<sup>95</sup> By December, however, Major Whitaker informed Davidson that based on current levels 2nd Battalion could only provide the 1st Battalion with 100 men per month for four months after which the number would drop to 50 per month.<sup>96</sup> By now the colony realized it was facing a serious problem and a directive issued on 9 December 1916 highlighted the situation. The Patriotic Association resolved that all government employees between 18 and 35 who were fit and single, would be given notice to the effect that "they must volunteer or in consequence of failure to do so, forfeit their positions with the government. These positions to be filled by those of our boys incapacitated and honourably discharged."<sup>97</sup> The optimism of early 1916 had faded and talk of fielding a second combat battalion disap-

peared. Despite the earlier optimism, 1916 witnessed a significant drop in the total enlistments. 2,210 men volunteered for service in the regiment that year of which 1,087 were accepted. Compared to 1915 this was a decline of 534 total volunteers and a 331 man decrease of those taken on strength.<sup>98</sup>

The colony was left with the increasingly difficult task of drawing recruits from a population which, for the most part, could not enlist. Failing to realize that the lack of volunteers was anything other than the result of unpatriotic, uninterested, or uneducated young men, the Patriotic Association maintained that an appeal to their sense of Empire was needed to induce men to enlist. Although the Newfoundland Regiment continued to serve with distinction on the Western Front, 1917 marked a low point for recruitment and the beginning of the end of the voluntary recruitment system.

### 1917: THE THIN LINE. HEAVY CASUALTIES AND MANPOWER CRISES

When in January 1917 it was clear that the number of volunteers was inadequate, the idea of mandatory service gained support even as fear that conscription would undermine support for the government hardened the Patriotic Associations resolve that a patriotic call to duty would suffice. The belief in the existence of a large untapped source of manpower was encouraged by reports that looked at total population rather than the section of the population able to serve. Despite difficulties maintaining the regiment, Davidson and the Association proposed forming a Forestry Corps in mid year, compounding the recruitment problems. Davidson exacerbated the situation further when he offered to form three independent labour units for active service. The formation of the Department of Militia that summer did little to alleviate the situation.

On 19 January 1917 the Recruiting Committee reported that between 7 November 1916 and the first day of the New Year it had received 372 volunteers, only half of whom were accepted. Furthermore the strength of those training in St. John's caused concern as of the 459 men present, 25 were unfit for active service, having been returned home from Europe. The Patriotic Association debated the establishment of a system of registration, which ended in a resolution that "there be an instruction to the Recruiting Committee to take into consideration some effective scheme for the purpose of stimulating enlistment in the King's Army and Navy."<sup>99</sup>

The recruitment tactics remained markedly similar to those established in 1915. On 27 February Colonial Secretary Bennett and some returned soldiers and sailors toured the south coast of Newfoundland.<sup>100</sup> By the end of March the standing of the 1st Battalion had been increased from 899 to 1,125 men, while the 2nd Battalion stood at 606, of whom 171 were not qualified for active service. W.W. Blackall reported that a relatively small percentage of men in all districts had volunteered, leading Mr. MacNab to call for men of "light and leading" in outport communities to encourage recruitment.<sup>101</sup> While the Association made yet another emotional ap-

peal to the outports, it failed to realize that community leaders could do little to change the fact that there was not a large body of men available for service. Blackall had calculated his percentages based on all volunteers, rejected and accepted for the regiment as a proportion of the total population of each district. This was inherently misleading as it failed to recognize that only a limited portion of the population in any district could enlist. A comparison of Blackall's returns with those calculated using percentages based on men between 15 and 35 years of age as listed in the 1911 census and men enlisted in the regiment as calculated in 2008 provides a clearer picture. While Blackall's work included men who volunteered up to 17 March 1917, the comparative figures only include men up to 31 December 1916 (See Table 3). Blackall's report showed that St. John's had offered 8 per cent of its population, Trinity approximately 4 per cent, and St. Georges 3 per cent. Among males between the ages of 15 and 35, St. John's offered 17 per cent, Trinity 7 per cent, and St. Georges 6 per cent. These figures undercount those serving since they do not include men who were rejected, volunteered for the Naval Reserve, enlisted in other Allied forces, or were ineligible to enlist due to a pre-existing medical condition or injury.<sup>102</sup>

By mid winter, the government and the Patriotic Association were discussing mandatory service, but Davidson felt that conscription was not politically viable.<sup>103</sup> While the war had brought a measure of cooperation between political parties, it had not put an end to partisan hostilities. Tension between the government and the opposition had increased in the wake of the Legislative Council's refusal to pass the Sealing Bill in 1914.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, after wartime profiteering scandals and an increase in taxation, Morris' 1914 concern over his ability to win the next election was proving to be justified.<sup>105</sup> A "conscription election" had the potential to be disastrous to the incumbent party.<sup>106</sup> Davidson decided conscription should not be imposed, but instead he would accompany a recruitment tour to the districts of Bonavista, Trinity, Carbonar, and Bay de Verde, in an attempt to put some weight to the recruiting appeal.<sup>107</sup>

The newest campaign called on men's duty to support the empire, but also spoke of a deteriorating economic crisis within the colony. In 1915 the Water Street merchants who dominated both the export and coastal trade of the colony, sold many of their steel steamers. Only two steamers, the *S.S. Florizel* and the *S.S. Stephano*, remained in service, which limited supply and increased the price of fuel and food, and seriously restricted the export of fish.<sup>108</sup> By mid 1917 Davidson informed the British Secretary of State warning that unless steamers were made available the country could not export that season's catch. Davidson feared the situation would result in the "financial collapse of the colony."<sup>109</sup> The new recruiting proclamation played on this growing sense of urgency by directly relating shortages experienced to the war. It implored men to enlist before year's end as it was doubtful that ships could bring the food and fuel required for the next year. Appealing to the patriotic sentiment of

**Table 3**  
**A Comparison of Blackall's 1917 District Recruiting Returns:**  
**Total Population vs. Male Population 15-35**

District	Returns Calculated in 1917 Based on Total Population <sup>1</sup>		Returns Calculated in 2008 Based on Male Population 15-35 <sup>2</sup>	
	Total Population	Percent Enlisted <sup>3</sup>	Males 15-35	Percent Enlisted <sup>4</sup>
<i>St. John's</i> <sup>5</sup>	45,685	8.36	7,469	17.3
<i>Bonavista</i>	22,895	2.56	4,064	4.9
<i>Twillingate</i>	22,705	2.81	4,181	7.3
<i>Trinity</i>	21,788	3.79	3,717	6.9
<i>Placentia &amp; St. Mary's</i>	16,099	2.02	2,758	4.3
<i>Harbour Grace</i>	11,925	4.07	1,922	5.3
<i>St. George</i>	11,861	2.78	1,961	6.3
<i>Burin</i>	11,616	2.53	1,824	4.6
<i>St. Barbe</i>	10,481	2.45	1,899	3.1
<i>Bay de Verde</i>	10,215	1.56	1,696	2.7
<i>Fortune Bay</i>	9,989	1.46	1,775	3.4
<i>Harbour Main</i>	9,471	2.65	1,638	5.1
<i>Fogo</i>	8,257	2.89	1,579	5.5
<i>Burgeo-La Poile</i>	7,793	1.36	1,345	4.3
<i>Port de Grave</i>	6,986	2.81	1,087	3.21
<i>Ferryland</i>	5,793	1.81	866	4.5
<i>Carbonear</i>	5,114	2.05	816	2.9

<sup>1</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland Meeting, 23 March 1917.

<sup>2</sup>Census of Newfoundland and Labrador 1911, Table 1. *Population, Sex, Denomination, Profession & c.* (St. John's: J.W. Withers, 1914); and PANL *Index of Surnames of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment 1914-1918*.

<sup>3</sup>Blackall's report represents accepted and rejected volunteers up to 17 March 1917.

<sup>4</sup>Represents accepted volunteers only up to 31 December 1916.

<sup>5</sup>Includes both St. John's East and St. John's West districts.

mothers and fathers the proclamation stated “the right course, the best course, the only course is for the young men to leave their work for others to do this year and go help to win the war.”<sup>110</sup>

A letter received from Albert J. Hallett of Musgrave Harbour caused Davidson to proclaim that there was such “a State of ignorance in relation to this great war and the principles that are underlying the struggle that one cannot wonder why so few recruits came from the North.” He responded to the letter by outlining action that needed to be taken to bring the outports into line.<sup>111</sup> Another letter spoke to the growing fracture between city and outport. Mr. Dubordieu of Port-au-Port wrote Morris complaining of the treatment of outport men who enlisted. After his son was passed over for promotion, Dubordieu believed there was validity in the notion “daily gaining credence” in the outports that their men were continually passed over for promotion and distinction. He believed this sentiment played a part in limiting the number of men volunteering.<sup>112</sup> Dr. Paddon echoed this when he commented on the lack of response from Labrador men by citing familial obligations and a growing feeling that the city failed to understand the social and economic demands of life in that area.<sup>113</sup> When informed of Paddon’s letter Davidson replied that “early in the war and before the operation of the recruitment committee, I laid it down as a rule that we would not receive as recruits for the regiment, married men living in Labrador or others having women and children dependent on them. I think that this is a sound principal still. The other parts are not relevant.”<sup>114</sup> The Patriotic Association gave little attention to understanding why men chose not to enlist. This changed by the end of 1917 when the Department of Militia requested recruiters provide feedback on why men refused to enlist, but by then it was too late. The Colonial Secretary instructed the Recruiting Committee to correct attitudes in the area and give the people a chance to “redeem” their reputation.<sup>115</sup>

As of February 1917 2,802 men had signed up, of whom 435 were killed in action, 212 had been discharged, 40 transferred to other units, 33 were listed as ineffective, 12 were prisoners of war, and a further 300 were in hospital. 782 men were on active service, with three drafts totalling 467 men forthcoming. Despite these stark facts, Davidson proposed forming a Newfoundland Forestry Corps of up to 1500 men.<sup>116</sup> The men were to be dispatched by 15 May 1917, but recruitment proved to be much harder than he had anticipated.<sup>117</sup> What is most surprising about formation of the Forestry Corps is that it followed Davidson’s report that 37 per cent of the total standing of the regiment were no longer on active service (including 732 men permanently removed from strength). The only real opposition to the formation of the corps was the members of the Association who preferred that wood be cut in Newfoundland and shipped to Britain. Davidson and John Harvey,<sup>118</sup> pointed out that the extreme demand on shipping made such an effort impossible.<sup>119</sup> Few initially realised that the Corps placed an added strain on the colony.<sup>120</sup> The same socioeconomic dynamic that affected men eligible for the regiment, affected those sought by the corps. The failure to meet estimated goals for the corps placed added pressure on the Patriotic

Association and its successor the Department of Militia as the colony now had two units committed, in addition to the Naval Reserve, both struggling to meet required levels of man power. In this light, it is hard to understand Davidson's attempts in the fall of 1917 to raise a further three Newfoundland service battalions, a mining company, an inland waterways transportation unit, and a railway construction company. While plans for the waterways and railway units were hazy, the mining company received Davidson's full support. On 6 June 1917 Davidson put the Secretary of State's request to form a 250 man company of miners before the Executive Committee of the Foresters.<sup>121</sup> He displayed a lack of understanding of the manpower situation when he commented that "I only wish it were possible to impress upon the men who readily work at Bell Island or Sydney the facts that the pay in the King's service is as good, the risk is not greater and the value of service rendered to the British flag are infinitely high if they enlist for a years work in uniform."<sup>122</sup> It was not lack of enthusiasm or patriotism that kept miners from volunteering; it was the need to keep essential industries functioning. Based on the 1911 census, there were 2,260 miners.<sup>123</sup> By 1917, 74 of those serving in the Newfoundland regiment had listed their occupation as miner. The requirement to keep the industry viability should have been clear to Davidson, as the shipping crises had led to a coal shortage.<sup>124</sup> By early 1915 the British found that industries were being crippled by the enlistment of skilled workers and coal output had declined 10 per cent. That country banned the enlistment of skilled workers from essential industries including mining.<sup>125</sup> In Newfoundland such provisions were only instituted for cable operators. On 5 November 1917, the Minister of Militia Bennett stated they would not attempt to recruit miners.<sup>126</sup>

By summer 1917 the political situation had changed. Morris' fear of losing the upcoming election prompted him to prolong the government's life. After four weeks of debate, on 16 July, the all parties amalgamated to form the National Government. One of its first acts was to remove control of the war effort from Davidson and the Patriotic Association. From that point, the government's newly formed Department of Militia held direct control of regimental affairs and recruiting.<sup>127</sup> The Patriotic Association's "unofficial" status rendered it unable to enact mandatory service, and that impediment was now gone.<sup>128</sup> But widespread opposition led the Department of Militia to refrain from doing so until they had exhausted all attempts to raise men voluntarily.<sup>129</sup>

Recruitment returns showed a worsening situation. From May to July only 190 men had volunteered and less than half were accepted. Both the Newfoundland Regiment and Forestry Corps struggled to recruit men. Fighting around Monchy-le-Preux that spring saw the staggering loss of 523 men, killed, wounded, missing, or captured. In addition, fighting at Langemarck that summer and at Poelcappelle and Cambrai in the fall exacted a further 679 casualties.<sup>130</sup> 1917 ended with recruiting returns dropping below those of the previous two years (see Table 4). The incoming enlistees did not match the level of casualties. From spring to the end of the year the major engagements of the regiment had resulted in a total of 1,202 casualties, not including casualties received during the daily grind of life in the trench (see Table 5).

**Table 4**  
**Yearly Voluntary Enlistment Rates<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Enlisted</b>	<b>Rejected</b>	<b>Total</b>
1914 <sup>2</sup>	757	248	1,005
1915	1,418	1,326	2,744
1916	1,087	1,123	2,210
1917	1,031	974	2,005
1918 <sup>3</sup>	411	457	868

<sup>1</sup>Government of Newfoundland. *Report of the Department of Militia* (St. John's: Harold Print, 1919), 14-15.

<sup>2</sup>Totals for 1914 not exact as the Department of Militia included returns for December 1914 in the yearly returns for 1915.

<sup>3</sup>Encompasses totals for January-April only.

**Table 5**  
**Enlistment vs. Casualties<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Enlistments</b>	<b>Casualties<sup>2</sup></b>
1914	757	0
1915	1,418	517 <sup>3</sup>
1916	1,087	949
1917	1,031	1,202
1918 <sup>4</sup>	411	474

<sup>1</sup>Based on information in Government of Newfoundland, *Report of the Department of Militia* (St. John's: Harold Print, 1919), 14-15; and G.W.L. Nicholson. *The Fighting Newfoundlander: A History of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment* (London: Thomas Nelson Printers, 1964).

<sup>2</sup>With exception of 1915, this figure only includes casualties received during major engagements and does not account for men returned to active service during the course of the war.

<sup>3</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland, Meeting 4 February 1916. Casualties received by the regiment in Gallipoli were overwhelmingly caused by disease and exposure to the elements, in particular the intense storm of 26 November 1915.

<sup>4</sup>The total for 1918 does not include men drawn into service under the Military Service Act. Newfoundland conscripts did not receive combat casualties as the war ended prior to their departure from England.

Recruitment for the regiment that year had produced 2,005 volunteers, but only 1,031 men were accepted. Reinforcements were needed if the Newfoundland Regiment were to be kept in the front lines. Though the Department of Militia renewed its recruitment drive, conscription seemed inevitable to many.

## 1918: THE ELEVENTH HOUR. FAILURE AND CONSCRIPTION

The situation in 1918 was desperate. The regiment had lost more men than it could replace, threatening to prematurely end their active service. The Colonial Secretary made clear that qualified men were in short supply:

In the case of physical fitness combined with poor mentality, Major Macpherson states that the best course would be to pass the man as Medically Fit. Then if the Officer in charge of his training finds that his mentality is not sufficient to take in the rudiments of training, he would be sent before the Medical Board with a report of his defects, and if necessary, discharged. Unless a man is almost an idiot, it would be hard to turn him down on ordinary examination.<sup>131</sup>

The last ditch attempt to raise the men needed through the voluntary system prompted the Department of Militia to ask for Canadian help in getting Newfoundlanders living in that county home so they could enlist.<sup>132</sup> This request arose from the mistaken belief that the Canadian Military Service Act restricted the movement of Newfoundlanders working there. The fact that the government now discussed paying for the return of Newfoundlanders abroad stood in stark contrast to the number of men they turned down in 1914 who had requested fares for passage home to enlist. In February, Bennett also suggested hiring some “attractively impressive and interesting lecturer” from Canada or the United States to “rouse the people.”<sup>133</sup>

Bennett also prepared a report on the standing of the regiment and the enlistment rates of each district as of 23 February 1918. The 1st Battalion had a total strength of 648 men, of which 544 were on active duty. The others were listed as being in various hospitals, base depots, and convalescent depots. The standing of the 2nd battalion was much worse. Of its 1,288 men, 250 were newly arrived and underage, 50 of previous drafts were underage, two were in isolation, 224 were under training, 136 were “hardening,” 175 were temporarily unfit, 349 were undergoing treatment, while six men were unfit for six months.<sup>134</sup> Bennett provided an inaccurate picture of the available manpower, measuring total enlistments against the total male population of the district. When compared with a calculation based on males of serviceable age the results differ significantly. Bennett showed that St. John’s had a total male population of 45,685 men of whom 6 per cent enlisted in the regiment. St. Barbe showed 10,481 men and a rate of 2 per cent, and Burgeo-La Poile



7,793 men and a rate of 2 per cent. When limiting analysis to men between 15 and 35 the results are St. John's 7,469 men, or 19 per cent, St. Barbe 1,899 men and 6 per cent, Burgeo-La Poile 1,345 men and 6 per cent (for a complete comparison to all districts see Table 6). Bennett's flawed results, coupled with the belief that many outport men were unpatriotic, encouraged conscription.

By March, as recruiting returns slipped below previous levels, officials voiced recognition of the importance of working within the established patterns of economic life. Bennett informed Morris that men would soon be coming out of the lumber woods, so they should concentrate their efforts near Grand Falls, Millertown, and other areas where men logged. Any delay in recruiting these men would result in poor returns as they would soon start preparing for the upcoming fishing season and other various summer vocations.<sup>135</sup> This pattern of life was evident in the recruiting returns for the three month period of March, April, and May. From 1915 to 1917 the largest number of men enlisted during these three months. After the influx of men in late winter and early spring, there was a marked decline in volunteers. Levels remained significantly low until the fall when they began to increase again.

While support for conscription grew, the National Government postponed its implementation.<sup>136</sup> By 9 April 1918, however, all hopes to avoid the establishment of the Military Services Act had died. The British Army Council informed Davidson's replacement, Governor Harris, that 1st Battalion was 170 men short of its official establishment and 2nd Battalion did not have that many men available. The colony needed to produce 300 men immediately and maintain a minimum of 60 men per month thereafter to replace expected casualties. This provoked an intense recruitment campaign, but the new recruits did little to help the situation as the regiment suffered more than 200 casualties in the fighting at Lys during the first half of April. On 29 April 1918 the day many feared had finally come — the Regiment was removed from its place within the 29th Division on the front lines.<sup>137</sup>

What happened in Newfoundland was similar to what had happened earlier in Britain. When the British government announced a last ditch recruitment effort, dubbed the "trial of volunteerism" by *The Times*, a large number of men, not wanting to be labelled conscripts, enlisted, the results were encouraging but ultimately futile.<sup>138</sup> In Newfoundland the threat of conscription had loomed for some time and the events of April prompted many to enlist. Recruitment officers noted that many men stated "they would not go until they had to, and when they had to then they would go."<sup>139</sup> While the trial of volunteerism lasted for eight weeks in Britain, in Newfoundland it had lasted much longer. By the end of 1917 recruiting campaigns made clear that they would be the last such campaign before mandatory service was implemented, and they repeated the same ominous warning in early 1918. This indecisiveness and continuation of the "final" call for volunteers attracted the criticism of a number of soldiers involved in the various recruitment campaigns of 1917 and 1918.

**Table 6**  
**Report on Enlistments per District as of 23 February 1918<sup>1</sup>**  
**Total Male Population vs. Male Population 15-35**

District	Enlisted	Returns Based on Total Male Population		Returns Based on Male Population 15-35	
		Total Male Population	Percent Enlisted <sup>2</sup>	Males 15-35	Percent Enlisted <sup>3</sup>
<i>St. John's</i> <sup>4</sup>	1,428	22,233	6.4	7,469	19.1
<i>Bonavista</i>	285	11,972	2.4	4,064	7.0
<i>Twillingate</i>	528	11,875	4.4	4,181	12.6
<i>Trinity</i>	401	11,372	3.5	3,717	10.8
<i>Placentia &amp; St. Mary's</i>	163	8,368	1.9	2,758	5.91
<i>Harbour Grace</i>	72	5,987	1.2	1,922	3.7
<i>St. George</i>	165	6,225	2.7	1,961	8.4
<i>Burin</i>	118	5,850	2.0	1,824	6.5
<i>St. Barbe</i>	121	5,578	2.2	1,899	6.4
<i>Bay de Verde</i>	60	5,289	1.1	1,696	3.5
<i>Fortune Bay</i>	116	5,209	2.2	1,775	6.5
<i>Harbour Main</i>	107	4,940	2.2	1,638	6.5
<i>Fogo</i>	92	4,388	2.1	1,579	5.8
<i>Burgeo-La Poile</i>	81	4,095	2.0	1,345	6.0
<i>Port de Grave</i>	122	3,601	3.4	1,087	11.2
<i>Ferryland</i>	66	3,029	2.2	866	7.6
<i>Carbonear</i>	30	2,567	1.2	816	3.7

<sup>1</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 21(e), Prime Ministers Office 1918, Report Minister of Militia to Prime Minister, 23 February 1918.

<sup>2</sup>Calculated using Bennett's 23 February 1918 report.

<sup>3</sup>Calculated using Bennett's returns and Census of Newfoundland and Labrador 1911, Table 1. *Population, Sex, Denomination, Profession & c.* (St. John's: J.W. Withers, 1914).

<sup>4</sup>Includes both St. John's East and St. John's West districts.

On 8 April 1918 Bennett wrote the newly appointed Newfoundland Prime Minister W.F. Lloyd reporting that the Regimental officers involved in the recruiting campaign believed that unless the government provided “some new and strong backing” to the endeavour, the results would be poor. Furthermore, they warned it would be folly to not follow through on the preceding year’s commitment that it would be the last effort to solicit volunteers.<sup>140</sup> The problems in the operation of the voluntary recruitment system had begun under the direction of Davidson and the Patriotic Association, but despite having been established to bring the war effort under full control of the government, the Department of Militia did little to make recruitment a national endeavour.

On 11 May 1918 the government enacted the Military Service Act. Though conscription had considerable support in the city, it was unpopular in the outports. Rural residents felt that mandatory service threatened their livelihood and that the government unjustly placed the burden on their shoulders. The Military Service Act prohibited men of serviceable age from leaving the country, even by participating in the offshore fishery. The Act, instituted in time to ensure that young men could not leave for the summer, hurt those who had already obtained the upcoming season’s supplies on credit. Joseph Serviouer of Gaskiers wrote that his crew included men of serviceable age and given their restriction of movement he could not participate in that season’s fishery. Without a catch, he would be unable to repay the debt for the \$7,000 worth of equipment he had purchased. He also criticized the government for overestimating the number of men available in his area. Serviouer raised a valid point. Many men were away from the island working or serving in British and Canadian units, yet the absence of these men had not been taken into account when the government made its calculations. The Rules and Regulations also dictated that men who had been previously rejected, even those who had been issued an official rejection badge, were eligible for draft and it was their responsibility to “report for service or apply to the Tribunal for exemption.”<sup>141</sup>

The belief that the outports were unfairly targeted through the Military Service Act led John J. Roberts of Vallyfield, Badgers Quay, to telegraph Lloyd shortly before its implementation, to inform him that “if conscription passes no votes election time, half schooners won’t get fishing.”<sup>142</sup> The Patriotic Association’s long held belief that the outports lagged behind because of disinterest in Empire matters, along with the Department of Militia’s recognition that the extra inducements put forward to persuade outport men to enlist had failed,<sup>143</sup> was made evident in the distribution of men called forward under the Military Service Act. From 11 May 1918 through to the end of the war the Department of Militia called a total of 1,470 men into active service. The three districts that produced the largest number of men were Bonavista 230, Twillingate 194, and Trinity with 156 men each. By comparison, both city districts produced a combined total of 136 men.<sup>144</sup> The three rural districts also had a higher percentage of conscripts per eligible male population than the city. St. John’s had 2 per cent of its males conscripted while Bonavista had nearly 6

**Table 7**  
**Conscription by District<sup>1</sup>**

<b>District</b>	<b>Total Male Population</b>	<b>Number of Men Conscripted</b>	<b>Percent of Eligible Population</b>
<i>Bonavista</i>	11,972	230	5.6
<i>Twillingate</i>	11,875	194	4.6
<i>Trinity</i>	11,372	156	4.2
<i>St. John's</i>	22,233	136	1.8
<i>Fortune Bay</i>	5,209	120	6.8
<i>Placentia &amp; St. Mary's</i>	8,368	110	4.0
<i>St. Georges</i>	6,225	83	4.2
<i>Fogo</i>	4,388	78	4.9
<i>Burin</i>	5,850	66	3.6
<i>Harbour Grace</i>	5,987	58	3.0
<i>Burgeo-La Poile</i>	4,095	51	3.8
<i>Bay de Verde</i>	5,289	41	2.4
<i>Harbour Main</i>	4,940	40	2.4
<i>Ferryland</i>	3,029	35	4.0
<i>Port de Grave</i>	3,601	32	3.0
<i>St. Barbe</i>	5,578	16	0.8
<i>Carbonear</i>	2,567	30	3.7
<i>Labrador<sup>2</sup></i>	2,052	14	2.0

<sup>1</sup>Based on information presented in Sharpe. *The Race of Honour*, 39; and Census of Newfoundland and Labrador 1911, Table 1. *Population, Sex, Denomination, Profession & c.* (St. John's: J.W. Withers, 1914).

<sup>2</sup>Labrador was not an electoral district in 1911.

per cent, Twillingate 5 per cent, and Trinity 4 per cent. It is no coincidence that these three districts were the area Davidson and the Patriotic Association thought lacked patriotism. Except for St. Barbe, all outlying districts had a higher percentage than St. John's, the highest of which was Fortune Bay with nearly 7 per cent of its eligible male population conscripted (see Table 7).

## CONCLUSION

Since 1916, officials in St John's increasingly criticised outport communities' commitment to the war effort. When conscription was finally introduced these areas

were specifically targeted and a disproportionate number of conscripts were drawn from areas such as the north coast. The districts of Twillingate, Fogo, Bonavista, and Trinity accounted for about 45 per cent of conscripts. National and regional enlistment rates show that St. John's commitment to the regiment was significant. 15 per cent of the island's male population between 15 and 35 were accepted for service in the Newfoundland Regiment. St. John's enlistment rate was well above the national as 24 per cent of eligible men enlisted, while the outport commitment was slightly below the national rate at 13 per cent. Though the disparity between urban and rural enlistments led many individuals during and after the war to criticize the outport men, such views do not take into account the fact that the bulk of the colony's population was spread out over a large geographic area and that the Newfoundland fishery was dominated by household production. An outport fishing family dependent on the labour of all its members could not easily compensate for the absence of its young men, whereas a clerk in St. John's could be replaced.<sup>145</sup>

While outport populations changed little during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the demographics of St. John's had changed considerably. Increasing dominance in the colony's industry and commerce caused a marked population increase. Between 1900 and 1910 the city's population increased by 15 per cent, which resulted in a 72 per cent increase in the city's labour force. Many of these labourers found employment in the secondary manufacturing sector; employees in this sector rose from 18 to 26 per cent over the decade.<sup>146</sup> For most St. John's residents, household production had long since been replaced by wages. Similar patterns are evident in the United Kingdom. Voluntary enlistments in rural areas dropped while urban enlistments rose in a manner that was directly contradictory to pre war patterns. The average enlistment rate for Britain from August 1914 to May 1915 was 30 per cent. Urban counties averaged above that number while rural counties averaged below. The counties of Cornwall, Yorkshire and Cheshire had the largest percentage of rural workers in England and no major urban centers. Their combined enlistment rate of 25 per cent was below the national.<sup>147</sup>

By April 1918 the voluntary recruitment system had failed to maintain the Regiment at strength. Low enlistments and heavy casualties had seen to that. Though some historians have argued that high cod prices, poor communication and over confidence of city officials were responsible for the poor enlistment rate, I argue that it was unrealistic to expect the colony to support a combat unit with the exemplary service record of the Newfoundland Regiment. The numerous distinctions and honours bestowed upon the regiment came at a heavy price. During four years the Regiment suffered 3,564 casualties, including 1,232 fatalities. The Patriotic Association's ad hoc management of recruitment and limited understanding of life outside the capital led to the belief that the colony could field many units. Their conviction that all Newfoundlanders should offer themselves up based on their duty to King and Empire, overlooked the nature of the labour force. Rather than figuring out how to draw men from a country dominated by household production, the Asso-

ciation believed the call to duty would be enough. The Department of Militia continued to believe this when it took over in the summer of 1917. Though the Department made an attempt to understand the reasons behind the poor returns, the voluntary recruitment system had already failed and conscription was the only option.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>G.W.L. Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander: A History of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment* (London: Thomas Nelson Printers, 1964).

<sup>2</sup>Patricia R. O'Brien, "The Newfoundland Patriotic Association: The Administration of the War Effort, 1914-1918" (MA Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1982).

<sup>3</sup>Ian McDonald, *To Each His Own: William Coaker and the Fishermen's Protective Union in Newfoundland Politics, 1908-1925*, ed., J.K. Hiller (St. John's: ISER Books, 1987).

<sup>4</sup>David R. Facey-Crowther, *Lieutenant Owen William Steele of the Newfoundland Regiment: Diary and Letters* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 12.

<sup>5</sup>Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, 102.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>7</sup>For a discussion of Newfoundland's military preparedness in 1914 see Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*; and Mike O'Brien's "Out of a Clear Sky: The Mobilization of the Newfoundland Regiment, 1914-1915," *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies*, 22 (Fall 2007) 405-431.

<sup>8</sup>O'Brien, "Out of a Clear Sky," 408.

<sup>9</sup>Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, 103.

<sup>10</sup>S.J.R. Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 121. For a discussion of the NPA See O'Brien, "The Newfoundland Patriotic Association" and O'Brien. "Out of a Clear Sky."

<sup>11</sup>Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, 104.

<sup>12</sup>For examples of such declarations of intent, such as a letter from Allan Mallin (Heart's Content), requesting to join the Regiment, see Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador (PANL), Patriotic Association Collection MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Committee of Newfoundland Third Meeting, 20 August 1914. See also Ambrose Conway (St. Bride's) to Colonial Secretary, 20 August 1914, Colonial Secretaries Office Collection GN 2.14.90.

<sup>13</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Committee of Newfoundland Third Meeting, 20 August 1914.

<sup>14</sup>PANL, GN 2.14.90, Colonial Secretary to John Sullivan, 22 August 1914, and Colonial Secretary to H.W. LeMessurier, 22 August 1914.

<sup>15</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 5, Reserve Force Committee second Meeting, 3 November 1914.

<sup>16</sup>Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, 105.

<sup>17</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland Fourth Meeting, 29 August 1914.

<sup>18</sup>See PANL, GN 2.14.149, Rennie L. White to Colonial Secretary, 31 August 1914, in which White, of Englee indicated that he had read the proclamation and wanted to fight for “King and Country.” Likewise Francis Kelly of Tickle Cove, Bonavista wrote that although he was prevented from volunteering due to a leg injury, his heart was with the British army and that he believed all men should fight for the “preservation of the noble English flag.” PANL, GN 2.14.153, Francis Kelly to Colonial Secretary, 26 August, 1914.

<sup>19</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Committee of Newfoundland Third Meeting, 20 August 1914.

<sup>20</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Committee of Newfoundland Third Meeting, 20 August 1914.

<sup>21</sup>Peter Simkins, *Kitchener’s Army: The Rasing of the New Armies, 1914-1916* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 104.

<sup>22</sup>In the British Army the Guards Battalions who comprised the Guards Division were very distinguished units traditionally composed of the largest men. Richard Holmes, *Tommy: The British Soldier on the Western Front 1914-1918* (London: Harper Perennial, 2005), 86.

<sup>23</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Committee of Newfoundland Third Meeting, 20 August 1914

<sup>24</sup>PANL, GN 2.14.90, Colonial Secretary to Davidson, 18 September 1914.

<sup>25</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland Sixth Meeting, 28 September 1914.

<sup>26</sup>Facey-Crowther, *Lieutenant Owen William Steele*, 13.

<sup>27</sup>O’Brien, “Out of A Clear Sky,” 408.

<sup>28</sup>Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, 92-97.

<sup>29</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland Fourth Meeting, 29 August 1914.

<sup>30</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland Fifth Meeting, 11 September 1914.

<sup>31</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland Sixth Meeting, 28 September 1914.

<sup>32</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 8, Report of Financial Committee of Patriotic Association, 28 September 1914.

<sup>33</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland Sixth Meeting, 28 September 1914.

<sup>34</sup>Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, 115-116

<sup>35</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland Seventh Meeting, 23 October 1914.

<sup>36</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland Ninth Meeting, 19 November 1914.

<sup>37</sup>This was important given that the British Army was composed of a complex system of Armies, Corps, Divisions, Brigades, and Battalions. An infantry brigade was composed of four battalions while a Division was composed of three brigades, consisting of approximately 12,000 men. Holmes, *Tommy*, 174. Thus, to be effectively placed within the system the Newfoundland Regiment needed to be of minimum battalion standard. For a detailed discussion on British Army structure, see Holmes, *Tommy*, 169-223.

<sup>38</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland, Meeting, 11 December 1914.

<sup>39</sup>Census of Newfoundland and Labrador 1911, Table 1. *Population, Sex, Denomination, Profession & c.* (St. John's: J.W. Withers, 1914), xxxviii. Data used in this work is taken from the 1911 census. There were two censuses taken in the years surrounding World War I, the second being 1921. The author has chosen to work solely with the 1911 census because the electoral districts during the war were the same as in 1911. By 1921 they had changed, making a comparison between the two difficult given that the creation of new districts shifted numerous towns from one district to another. As such the numbers presented are not exact representations.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, 484-487.

<sup>41</sup>PANL, MG632, File 24, Patriotic Association Letters and Telegrams from Outside St. John's.

<sup>42</sup>Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, 199.

<sup>43</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 5, Reserve Force Committee Sixth Meeting, 2 December 1914.

<sup>44</sup>Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, 199.

<sup>45</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 22(a), Governors Office 1914. Letter to Davidson, 8 December 1914.

<sup>46</sup>PANL, GN.2.14.151, Recruitment 1915-1917.

<sup>47</sup>PANL, *Index of Surnames of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment 1914-1918*.

<sup>48</sup>The breakdown of regional enlistments for 1914 is not exact owing to problems encountered when men filled out their paper work upon enlistment. Regimental officials, responding to a request for a break down on men from the Harbour Grace area, stated that "in a good many cases the recruits volunteered at St. John's and gave their address as St. John's, whereas in many cases they belonged to the outlying districts." PANL, MG 632, File 25(a), Regimental correspondence. Letter 1st Newfoundland Regiment to Oke, 30 October 1914.

<sup>49</sup>Simkins, *Kitchener's Army*, 72-75.

<sup>50</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 5, Reserve Force Committee Tenth Meeting, 14 January 1915.

<sup>51</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 6, Davidson to the Reserve Force Committee, 15 January 1915.

<sup>52</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 5, Reserve Force Committee, Sixteenth Meeting, 18 March 1915.

<sup>53</sup>The first tour was headed by two St. John's businessmen, T.A. MacNab and Levi Curtis, along with MHA's J.G. Stone and G. Grimes. They canvassed the Trinity District. The second tour which campaigned in the Bay de Verde district consisted of V.P. Burke, W.A. Munn, and W.W. Blackall. The final tour covered the south coast of the island and was lead by St. John's columnist and businessman I.C. Morris along with MHA's W.A. Piccitt, R.J. Devereaux, and C.H. Emerson, as well as several members of the Newfoundland Highlanders band. O'Brien, "The Newfoundland Patriotic Association," 110-111.

<sup>54</sup>*Evening Telegram*, 19 February 1915, 5.

<sup>55</sup>*Evening Telegram*, 20 February 1915, 6.

<sup>56</sup>Bernard Ransom, "A Nursery of Fighting Seamen? The Newfoundland Naval Reserve, 1901-1920," in *A Nation's Navy: In Quest of Canadian Naval Identity*, eds. Michael L. Hadley, Rob Huebert, and Fred W. Crickard. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press. 1996), 242.

<sup>57</sup>*Evening Telegram*, 19 February 1915.

<sup>58</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland, Meeting, 30 March 1915.

<sup>59</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 6, Telegram No. 354, St. Anthony, 26 March 1915.

<sup>60</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 5, Davidson to Grenfell, 5 April 1915.



<sup>61</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 6, Telegram No. 360, 1 April 1915.

<sup>62</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 6, Outerbridge to Reserve Force Committee, 5 April 1915.

<sup>63</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland, Meeting, 5 August 1915.

<sup>64</sup>Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, 155-172.

<sup>65</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland, Meeting, 13 October 1915.

<sup>66</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland, Meetings, 8 November 1915 and 15 November 1915.

<sup>67</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 5, Reserve Force Committee, Forty-Third Meeting, 16 November 1915.

<sup>68</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 5, Reserve Force Committee, Fifty-Fifth Meeting, 14 December 1915.

<sup>69</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 5, Whitaker to Davidson, 11 October 1915.

<sup>70</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland, Meeting, 4 February 1916.

<sup>71</sup>Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, 233.

<sup>72</sup>PANL, GN 2.14.146, Letter from Newfoundland Patriotic Association Recruiting Committee, 22 February 1916.

<sup>73</sup>PANL, MG 632, Prime Ministers Office 1916, Telegraph Bonar Law to Davidson, 1 February 1916.

<sup>74</sup>PANL, MG 632, Prime Ministers Office 1916, Telegraph Davidson to Bonar Law, 2 February 1916. By way of comparison with the increase of other Dominions, Canada's original contingent was officially 25,000 men. By January 1916 there were 50,000 Canadian Troops in the field. G.W.L Nicholson, *Canadian Expeditionary Force 1914-1919* (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1962), 18, 134.

<sup>75</sup>PANL, MG 632, Coded Telegram No. 33 Davidson to Secretary of State, 7 February 1916.

<sup>76</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 21(c), Prime Ministers Office 1916, Letter Prime Minister to Davidson, 28 February 1916.

<sup>77</sup>PANL, GN 2.14.193, Correspondence with Governor Relating to the Newfoundland Regiment, Report by Colonial Secretary J.R. Bennett, 4 February 1916.

<sup>78</sup>By the mid nineteenth century the Labrador fishery in conjunction with the seal fishery provided Conception Bay with a large concentration of population. By the end of the century steamers enabled St. John's to take over the sealing industry and transportation of stationers to the Labrador fishery. This reduced the size of the larger centers in Conception Bay. Shannon Ryan, *Fish Out of Water: The Newfoundland Saltfish Trade 1814-1914* (St. John's: Breakwater, 1986), 54. In 1914, however, the five electoral districts that formed Conception Bay still consisted of large concentrated populations over a limited geographic area.

<sup>79</sup>Census of Newfoundland 1911, 332-361.

<sup>80</sup>PANL, GN 2.14.90, Recruits and Volunteers, Noah Mullett to Newfoundland Regiment 26 May 1916, and Colonial Secretary to Noah Mullett, 7 June 1916.

<sup>81</sup>Census of Newfoundland 1911, 492-493.

<sup>82</sup>Christopher Sharpe, "The Race of Honour: An Analysis of Enlistments and Casualties in the Armed Forces of Newfoundland: 1914-1918," *Newfoundland Studies*, 4 (Spring 1988), 38.

<sup>83</sup>Jessie Chisholm, "Organizing on the Waterfront: The St. John's Longshoremen's Protective Union (LSPU), 1890-1914," *Labour/ Le Travail*, 26 (Fall 1990), 51.

<sup>84</sup>*Ibid.*, 39

<sup>85</sup>PANL, GN 2.14.151, Recruitment 1915-1917, Telegraph Archibald Bros Ltd. to Davidson, 26 April 1916.

<sup>86</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 3, Recruiting Committee 1916, Letter Davidson to Recruiting Committee, 18 November 1916.

<sup>87</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 22(b), Governors Office 1915, Letter Joseph Evans to Davidson, 22 October 1915. Evans informed Davidson that he wanted to enlist but his employer Thomas Garland of Gaultois, threatened to withhold his wages given that he would not complete his contract.

<sup>88</sup>PANL, GN 2.14.193, Colonial Secretary to Dr. Paddon, 3 September 1917.

<sup>89</sup>PANL, File 25(a), 1st Newfoundland Regiment, Table D Statement of Enlistments in 1916.

<sup>90</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 21 (c), Prime Minister's Office 1916, Report to Captain A. Montgomerie on Medical Examinations, 2 April 1916.

<sup>91</sup>PANL, MG 632, Reserve Force Committee Agenda and Correspondence 1916, Letter Davidson to Reserve Force Committee, 10 April 1916.

<sup>92</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Newfoundland Patriotic Association, Meeting, 26 May 1916.

<sup>93</sup>Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, 274.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid.*, 315.

<sup>95</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 21 (c), Prime Minister's Office 1916, Telegram No. 265 Davidson to Secretary of State, 11 November 1916. Excluding 1914, no year in which voluntary recruitment existed witnessed an average enlistment rate that came close to 150 men per month. The closest was 1915 which averaged 118 men, but this was still well short of the mark and the numbers for 1915 are not exact given that the Department of Militia report from which the data was taken included enlistments from December 1914.

<sup>96</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 3, Agenda Standing Committee, Telegram No. 61, 2 December 1916.

<sup>97</sup>PANL, GN 2.14.193, Correspondence with Governor Relating to the Newfoundland Regiment, Letter from Patriotic Association to Colonial Secretary, 9 December 1916.

<sup>98</sup>Government of Newfoundland. *Report of the Department of Militia* (St. John's: Harold Print, 1919), 14-15.

<sup>99</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland, Meeting, 19 January 1917.

<sup>100</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland, Meeting, 27 February 1917.

<sup>101</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland, Meeting, 23 March 1917.

<sup>102</sup>Census of Newfoundland and Labrador 1911; and PANL *Index of Surnames of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment 1914-1918*.

<sup>103</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 22(d), Governor's Office 1917, Telegram No. 398, 15 February 1917.

<sup>104</sup>Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*, 123.

<sup>105</sup>Ian McDonald, "W.F. Coaker and the Balance of Power Strategy: The Fishermen's Protective Union in Newfoundland Politics," in *Newfoundland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: Essays in Interpretation*, eds. James Hiller and Peter Neary (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 165.

<sup>106</sup>Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*, 124.

<sup>107</sup>PANL, GN 2.14.153, General Regimental Matters 1915-1920, Memo from Davidson to Colonial Secretary, 15 February 1917.

<sup>108</sup>O'Brien, "The Newfoundland Patriotic Association," 235-265.

<sup>109</sup>PANL, GN 2.14.15, Carriage of Fish to European Markets, and Local Shipping, Telegram No. 713 Davidson to Secretary of State, 21 September 1917.

<sup>110</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 22(d), Governor's Office 1917, Draft Proclamation.

<sup>111</sup>PANL, GN 2.14.90, Recruits and Volunteers, Letter Colonial Secretary to Recruiting Committee, 25 May 1917.

<sup>112</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 18(d), V.P. Burke 1917, Letter Dubordieu to Morris, 24 May 1917.

<sup>113</sup>PANL, GN 2.14.146, Patriotic Association Recruiting Committee, Letter Paddon to Patriotic Association, 10 July 1917.

<sup>114</sup>PANL, GN 2.14.146, Patriotic Association Recruiting Committee, Letter Davidson to Recruiting Committee, 23 July 1917.

<sup>115</sup>PANL, GN 2.14.90, Recruits and Volunteers, Letter Colonial Secretary to Davidson, 25 May 1917.

<sup>116</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland, Meeting, 1 April 1917.

<sup>117</sup>Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, 467-469. Nicholson's work remains the most comprehensive discussion of the Newfoundland Forestry Corps during 1917-1918.

<sup>118</sup>Harvey was made chair of the Tonnage Sub-committee by the Board of Trade in February 1916 when it established the committee in the wake of the government's intervention in the coal trade and the departure of the last steel steamer. O'Brien "The Newfoundland Patriotic Association," 247.

<sup>119</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 1, Patriotic Association of Newfoundland, Meeting, 1 April 1917.

<sup>120</sup>The Patriotic Association stated that men between 18 and 35 who were in good health volunteering for the corps were to be transferred to the regiment.

<sup>121</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 21(d), Prime Minister's Office 1917, Letter Davidson to Chairman Executive Committee of Foresters, 6 June 1917.

<sup>122</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 3, Agenda Standing Committee, Report of the Chairman of the Standing Committee, 6 June 1917.

<sup>123</sup>Census of Newfoundland 1911, xxvii.

<sup>124</sup>O'Brien, "The Newfoundland Patriotic Association," 235-245.

<sup>125</sup>David Silbey, *The British Working Class and Enthusiasm for War, 1914-1916* (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 30.

<sup>126</sup>PANL, GN 2.14.14, Proposed Enlistment of Miners and Sailors, Letter from Colonial Secretary, 5 November 1917.

- <sup>127</sup>Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*, 123-125.
- <sup>128</sup>O'Brien, "Out of a Clear Sky," 424.
- <sup>129</sup>Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*, 125.
- <sup>130</sup>Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, 355-420.
- <sup>131</sup>PANL, GN 2.14.193, Correspondence with the Governor Relating to the Newfoundland Regiment, Letter Colonial Secretary to Dr. Paddon, 3 September 1917.
- <sup>132</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 21(e), Prime Minister's Office 1918, Report Minister of Militia to Prime Minister, 1 February 1918.
- <sup>133</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 21 (e), Prime Minister's Office 1918, Letter Minister of Militia to Prime Minister, 27 February 1918.
- <sup>134</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 21(e), Prime Minister's Office 1918, Report Minister of Militia to Prime Minister, 23 February 1918.
- <sup>135</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 21(e), Prime Minister's Office 1918, Letter Minister of Militia to Prime Minister, 15 March 1918.
- <sup>136</sup>Noel, *Politics in Newfoundland*, 125-126.
- <sup>137</sup>Nicholson, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, 438-459.
- <sup>138</sup>Silbey, *The British Working Class and Enthusiasm for War*, 36.
- <sup>139</sup>Department of Militia report, 34.
- <sup>140</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 21(e), Prime Minister's Office 1918, Letter Minister of Militia to Prime Minister, 8 April 1918.
- <sup>141</sup>PANL, GN 2.12.105, Military Service Board Conscription and Exemption, Rules and Regulations, 1918.
- <sup>142</sup>PANL, MG 632, File 21(e), Prime Minister's Office 1918, Telegraph John J. Roberts to Prime Minister, 25 April 1918.
- <sup>143</sup>Inducements such as a larger separation allowance. Department of Militia Report, 34.
- <sup>144</sup>Sharpe, "The Race of Honour," 39.
- <sup>145</sup>McDonald, *To Each His Own*, 69.
- <sup>146</sup>Peter McInnis. "All Solid Along the Line: The Reid Newfoundland Strike of 1918." *Labour/Le Travail*, 26 (Fall 1990), 65.
- <sup>147</sup>Silbey, *The British Working Class*, 39-40.

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