

GOWER REMEMBERS

Private Frederick Thomas Noseworthy
(1892-1959)



*“I, No 527 Rank **Private** Name **F. Noseworthy** hereby undertake to supply myself with civilian clothing, consisting of one suit of clothes, one cap, one tie, one collar, one overcoat, within 14 days from date, in consideration of being issued with clothing allowance to the amount of \$60.00. Nov. 27th 1918.”* (from Frederick Noseworthy’s Royal Newfoundland Regiment personal file)

Frederick Thomas Noseworthy was born in St. John's on July 15, 1892, the son of Harriet and Thomas Noseworthy. He was the third of six children, along with William James (b. 1888), Ethel May (b. 1890), Henry Charles (b. 1896), Ida (b. 1897) and Harold (b. 1902). His father worked as a cooper. At the time, the family lived at 317 Water Street.

Young Frederick received some degree of schooling, as he was able to sign his own name when he enlisted in the Newfoundland Regiment in 1914; however, his name does not appear in class lists published regularly in *The Collegian*, the quarterly magazine of the Methodist College in St. John's. He first appears in the St. John's city directory for 1908-1909, where he is listed as a labourer; his father is listed as a cooper and the family living at 33 Carter's Hill. By the 1913 city directory he is a wharf assistant with Ayre & Sons Ltd., boarding at his father house at 6 Wickford Street. By the time he joined the Newfoundland Regiment, he had begun to follow in his father's footsteps: he was a cooper's apprentice with the well-known cooper James Boggan.

He was not engaged in apprenticeship for long: on September 16, 1914, he answered the call and enlisted in the Newfoundland Regiment. He received Regimental number 527, which made him one of the First Five Hundred (not all numbers were used) and a Blue Puttee. According to the Attestation Paper he completed on enlistment, he was single, 5 feet, 6 inches tall, weighed 150 pounds, with black hair and grey eyes. His salary as a cooper was \$8.00 per week.

Noseworthy left St. John's for England, along with the other members of the First Five Hundred, on board the SS *Florizel* on October 4, 1914. After rendezvousing with a Canadian convoy off the southern Avalon, they arrived at Plymouth Sound, on England's

south coast on October 14. Six days would pass before they were able to go ashore. Once on dry land, Noseworthy and his comrades marched to Salisbury Plain where they spent the fall of 1914 in makeshift tents. There they experienced constant rain and deplorable living conditions.

The Newfoundland Regiment was transferred to Fort George, Scotland, in early December. They would remain in Scotland, first at Fort George, then at Edinburgh Castle, and finally at Stobs Camp, near Hawick. Noseworthy, like many of his comrades, who were anxious to be part of war effort in the field and not just in the training camps, proved to be a bit of a handful for his commanding officers. During his time in Scotland, he was reprimanded on five separate occasions: once for not reporting to the Medical Officer when ordered to do so; twice for being absent from tattoo; and twice for being absent from parade. For each of these misdemeanors, he received either two days confined to barracks or two days confined to camp.

In August 1915 approximately 1,000 members of the Regiment went south to England, first to Aldershot for a few weeks of rest before travelling to Devonport where, on August 20, they boarded *SS Megantic*, which would take them to the Eastern Mediterranean and the war.

Their ship arrived in Alexandria, Egypt on August 31-September 1, 1914, and the men were immediately taken by train to Cairo for two weeks of acclimatization to the hot dry weather. Then most of the Regiment were shipped north to Gallipoli. Noseworthy was one of a small group stationed at Sidi Bishr Camp, near Alexandria until December when he was assigned to duties on the Western Egyptian Frontier as part of the Transport unit. Shortly after being assigned to those duties, on December 20, he was admitted to the 15th General Hospital at Alexandria suffering from rheumatism.

He spent the next three plus weeks there before being transferred to a convalescent camp at Mustapha on January 13, 1916. One week later, on January 20, he returned to duty at Sidi Bishr.

As part of the Transport unit, Noseworthy left Egypt ahead of the main body of the Regiment to prepare for their arrival in France. He departed Port Said on March 02, arriving in Marseilles on the 10th. He was not part of the fighting at Beaumont Hamel on July 1, the opening day of the Battle of the Somme, either because of his involvement with the Transport unit or because he was one of the ten percent who were held back to help rebuild the Regiment in case of the very type of tragedy that befell it that morning.

He joined the Battalion in the Field on July 04 and remained in active service until May of the following year, when he was admitted to a Camp Reception Station (CRS) on the 20th. He was diagnosed with myalgia, severe muscular pain, often the result of viral infections. Ten days later he was admitted to the 3rd General Hospital at Le Treport, remaining there until June 11, when he reported to the Base Depot. On July 02, he rejoined the Battalion in the Field, but on October 09 was admitted to the 14th CRS with a back injury. He was released to duty on October 16, in time for a major offensive involving the Regiment at Cambrai, France. There he received a gunshot wound to his right forearm on November 20 and was admitted to the 26th General Hospital at Étaples the following day. On the 26th he was transported by hospital ship to the Military Hospital in Richmond, England, where he remained for several weeks.

Upon his release from hospital, Noseworthy was first granted a short furlough, and then attached to the Regimental Depot on January 27, 1918. In the summer of 1918 he was granted Blue Puttee, a special extended leave available to members of the First Five Hundred. He embarked almost immediately for Newfoundland, arriving in St. John's on August 04. While he was still at home on leave the war ended on November 11, 1918.

He was examined by the Regimental Medical Board in December of that year and declared medically unfit for further military service of any kind and was discharged on December 07. The report issued by that board indicated that he had wound scars on both his right forearm and his left leg, that he had a tattoo on his left forearm, that he had grown three inches and was now 5 feet, 9 inches tall, and that his hair colour had gone from black to dark brown and eye colour grey to dark brown and brown.

Before his discharge from the Regiment, Noseworthy met with W. W. Blackall, the Vocational Officer of the Civil Re-establishment Committee “*who explained to [him] the provisions made by the Committee for the industrial re-training of disabled or partially disabled sailors or soldiers as well as the readiness of the Committee to assist any returned sailors and soldiers (whether disabled or not) to find employment.*” Noseworthy informed the Committee that he wished to continue his apprenticeship under the auspices of the Cooper’s Union.

He did just that following his discharge and eventually gained the knowledge and met the requirements necessary to become a cooper. He was involved in that trade for the 1920s and the first half of the 1930s, living in St. John’s. In the mid-1930s he took advantage of a Newfoundland Government scheme to establish an experimental farming community near Whitbourne on the Isthmus of Avalon in a place that became known as Markland. Ten ex-servicemen were given grants of land, which they and their families were then to settle and farm. Noseworthy was one of these ex-servicemen and he appears in the Newfoundland Census for Markland in both 1935 and 1945.

With Noseworthy in Markland was his wife, Mary Annie Snook, of Victoria, Conception Bay: they were married at the Gower Street Methodist Parsonage by Rev. E. W. Forbes on March 10, 1920. With the couple was their only child, Frederick Gordon. Noseworthy sold his land and the family left Markland in the latter half of the

1940s or early 1950s. He was certainly back living in St. John's in 1951 when he was resident at 65 Cashin Avenue Extension in the west of the city. After his return he was employed for a number of years with Bowring Brothers Ltd.

Despite his war wounds, Noseworthy was a member of several rowing teams in the post World War 1 era. In the 1919 St. John's Regatta, he was part of the winning Methodist Guards team, which won the Football Race in a time of 11:27.

Noseworthy died on June 30, 1959, at age 67, and was buried at Mount Pleasant Cemetery. His wife, Annie, outlived him by six years. She died on June 12, 1965, age 70. Their son, Frederick Gordon, died at the age of 91, in 2012: he left his wife of 60 years, Daisy, his daughter Barbara, sons Ronald, Carl and Tom, and six grandchildren.

All three of Frederick's brothers took part in World War 1: William and Henry were both members of the Newfoundland Regiment, while Harold joined the Newfoundland Forestry Corps. Their stories are yet to be told.

On Sunday, November 16, 2014, Gower Street United Church initiated a program of commemoration that will last for approximately the next four years. On roughly every second Sunday through to the end of 2018, a brief write-up on one of these individuals, similar to this one, will appear as an insert in the Bulletin and there will be a reference to that person in the service. In this way we hope to recognize their contribution to the war effort, the many sacrifices they made, some with their very lives, and the debt of gratitude we owe to each of them.

We also hope to learn more about them from their descendants or other relatives, thereby fostering a link between our past and our present as we begin our 201st year as a faith community.

If you know of any relatives of these servicemen and women please contact Bert Riggs at briggs@mun.ca or at 726-6169.