



Newfoundland Government and the God of Abraham MIA at Mordor of Beaumont-Hamel
“Ye Forget”

Myself and three close friends, Bren Fahey (NFLD), Patrick Laracy (NFLD) & Carl Scofield (West Yorkshire) went on a pilgrimage known as [“The Trail of the Caribou”](#) for the Centenary of opening assault of the battle of the Somme. As an historical note 10th Battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment, attacking west of Fricourt village is the only battalion that lost more men (733 out of 800) on July 1st 1916 than the Newfoundland Regiment, but the talk of statistics dehumanizes the loss of those young men. It was a moving experience for all of us to be there, even though it was the fourth time I had visited the site, as I had visited once in the 1976 (60th Anniversary) before the [Entebbe Hostage rescue](#) occurred and again, twice when I lived in Paris in 1991-92 (75&76th Anniversary).

However, this was the first visit since the controversial landscaping and restoration contract had been given to a politically connected Quebecois group in the mid-1990’s, pushing side talented and capable Newfoundland and Labrador based companies like [Fred Hann and Associates](#). Had the tables been turned and a Newfoundlander been awarded the contract to landscape the Plains of Abraham, the howl from les lousps Canadiens de Québec would have been so loud that it would have awakened Charles de Gaulle from his simple grave at Colombey-les-Deux-Églises to cry [“Vivre le Québec Libre!”](#) atop the nearby cross of Lorraine. Alas, there was no outcry from Newfoundland as we have become little more than a crackie dog tied up in the back yard of CON-Federation after the cod moratorium (caused by the mismanagement of remote experts aka: Desk Captains of the Rideau Canal who knew more about the Newfoundland Fishery than any fishermen in his boat on White Bay) and only occasionally thrown a morsel of affection should we whimper too loud about our lot in life. The site was made the second National Historic Site of Canada located outside of Canada by the then Minister of Canadian Heritage [“Pass me the Tequila”](#) Sheila Copps on 10 April 1997. It and the other “Trail of the Caribou” monuments have since been severed from any proper Newfoundland and Labrador influence despite their enormous religious, historical and cultural importance and the Newfoundland blood sacrifice that consecrated this sacred hallowed ground or the money that our war destitute forefathers spent to buy the land and erect the 5 Caribou in Flanders Fields.

We had started our journey in Paris and had hoped to see the memorial plaque there that had the Newfoundland Coat of Arms on it in Notre Dame Cathedral but there was a major religious ceremony going on there at the time, with heightened security from the national police and army. This is one of thirty such plaques predominantly in France and Belgium that contain the words written by Rudyard Kipling. The most remote of these plaques is in [the Nave of St George's Church, Bagdad](#), on the banks of the Tigris river not far from [the recent suicide bombing that claimed 200 lives](#); one of the last bastions of Christians, in the lands where Jesus of Nazareth and his original apostles walked, where now the swords of Allah continues to rape and behead those peacefully heeding the word of Christ.

“TO THE GLORY OF GOD
AND TO THE MEMORY OF
ONE MILLION DEAD
OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE
WHO FELL
IN THE GREAT WAR
1914 – 1918
AND OF WHOM THE
GREATER PART REST
IN FRANCE”

The plaque contains the Coats of Arms of the Dominions of the empire in clockwise order: India, Australia, Newfoundland, New Zealand and Canada around the Royal Coat of Arms for the United Kingdom. It is of historical note that the [Newfoundland Coat of Arms](#) predates those of all the other dominions by more than 200 Years and includes the Motto "**Quaerite prime Regnum Dei**", quoting Matthew 6:33 from the Bible, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God".



Figure 1 Memorial Plaque inside the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris

[Lieutenant-Colonel Father Thomas Nangle](#), a St. Bon's boy, the beloved former Roman Catholic Padre of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment was in charge of the building of the Caribou memorials. As chaplain of the Regiment in the Great War, he played a major role working in the trenches, burying the dead, consoling the wounded, comforting families and motivating the troops. Padre Nangle received a wound to his shoulder on April 24, 1917. In the First World War, [the number of Chaplains in the Royal Forces increased from fewer than 200 in 1914 to more than 3,500 in 1919.](#)



Of those who served, records show that 179 of these Chaplains were killed in active duty before the Armistice, many died in no-man's land delivering the last rights or picking up a rifle to stick the bayonet into the muddy/bloody earth to mark the location of the living. One of my great uncles, private Beattie Simms, RNFLDR #4292, of St Anthony was one such soul saved by a Salvation Army Chaplain after being left for dead in the wasteland of Mordor by the regular stretcher bearers of the Red Cross 2 or 3 days earlier.

Figure 2 Private Beatty Simms, RNFLDR # 4292, of St Anthony

Likewise, there were also Jewish chaplains in addition to the various Christian sects, like [Reverend \(Rabbi\) Michael Adler](#) in the trenches on July 1 1916. Despite the differences in symbolism, the Cross of Christ versus the Star of David, or whether Yom Kippur/Hanukkah or Christmas/Easter was being celebrated in the trenches; there was no misunderstanding the fact they were praying to the same God of Moses and Abraham. Nor was there any misunderstanding of God between the German and Commonwealth soldiers during the Christmas Truce of 1914 when they sang ["Silent Night/Stille Nacht"](#) and exchanged gifts. It was however unacceptable by the higher command on both sides that any soldiers put their Christianity or Judaism before the art of war, denied Pope Benedict XV's request of Dec 7th 1914 and actively dissuaded any further fraternization after the [soldiers on both sides took matters into their own hands that Christmas.](#)

Perhaps it is somewhat serendipitous that our travel to Flanders Fields and the Trail of the Caribou should coincide with the Brexit vote and its initial financial aftermath. The people of Great Britain have spoken and the majority have indicated that they are fed up with remote experts and their do as I say and not as I do attitudes dictating their mandates from afar in what [Bernard Connolly](#) called "[The Rotten Heart of Europe](#)". The faceless and nameless bureaucrats in Brussels who have become the new colonial oppressors are little different in their Towers of Babel than Imperial Rome was at its height, when Jesus of Nazareth was nailed to a cross or John the Baptist beheaded for their teachings and beliefs. Or the Catholic Church in Rome before Martin Luther started the Protestant reformation aided and abetted by Guttenberg's Bible that allowed the common man to read The Word without engaging in the opulent indulgence practices of the experts in the Vatican dictating from afar. The formation of America was based on the concept of Liberty when "We the People" became fed up with "taxation without representation" via bureaucratic experts ruling from afar. Sadly, to put the whole thing in context, American Liberty in its classical context is withering on the vine as the American Colonies have gone from being colonies of Whitehall to colonies of Washington D.C., Newfoundland went from being a colony of Whitehall to a colony of Ottawa. The United Kingdom was rescued from the brink of the abyss of being a permanent colony of Brussels.

Experts, Technocrats, Politicrats and Technopoles ruling from afar, detached from the common man have wreaked most of the havoc on the human condition as we know it. John Ralston Saul in his work "[Voltaire's Bastards: The Dictatorship of Reason in the west](#)" summed it up best:

The technocrat, however, lives by the fictional reorganization of circumstances. Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig therefore undertook to complete the official version of history. After the peace he set up a friendly committee to report on staff organization during the war. Its report concluded "The outstanding feature of the evidence brought before us has been the success of the work of the Staff throughout the war. This points indubitably to the soundness of the general principles on which the Staff is organized"

It is difficult to assign any level of emotional value to this five-year reign of the staff officer. For example, between Haig, Foch and the German Commander general Erich Ludendorff seventy-five years ago, and Pol Pot today, there is remarkably little difference. In common they have their self-righteousness, their obsession with secrecy, their ambition, their conviction of the justice of their mission, their readiness to sacrifice any number of men and their honest belief in the necessity of other people's deaths. There was a time when English admirals were hung for losing battles. From 1914 on, Western nations instead took to hanging medals on the chests of incompetent commanders.

Before we left for Lille on the initial leg of our Trail of the Caribou we took a side trip to the Loire Valley, sometime following the old Roman ways or past intact aqueducts, built after Julius Caesar defeated Vercingetorix in his last desperate attempt to free Gaul from Roman enslavement. In the Roman Empire you could not vote like Brexit to leave and the Jews at Masada learned the same lesson 125 years later. We visited such sights as [Château de Chambord](#) and [Château de Chenonceau](#), having a traditional French country meal for lunch at the [Château de Nitray](#) which is only 18 KM from Tours where [Charles "the Hammer" Martel defeated the Muslim Moors](#) on 10 October 732 AD. The topic came up with several of the locals about The Battle of Tours and Charles Martel, the general consensus was that none of the sights we saw in the Loire Valley would exist today had Charles Martel lost and one person commented "les faux réfugiés sont la nouvelle armée de mousseline" and lamented that there were no Charles Martel's amongst the political elite of today.

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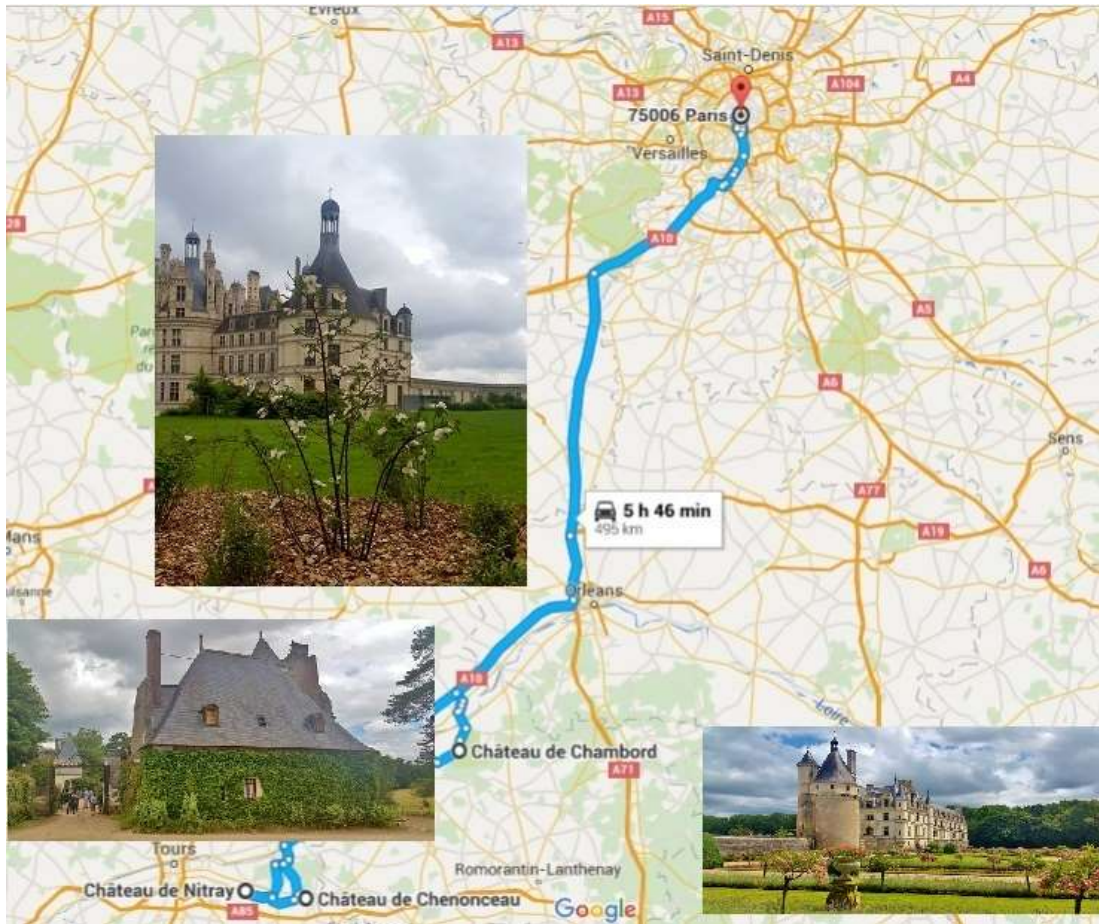
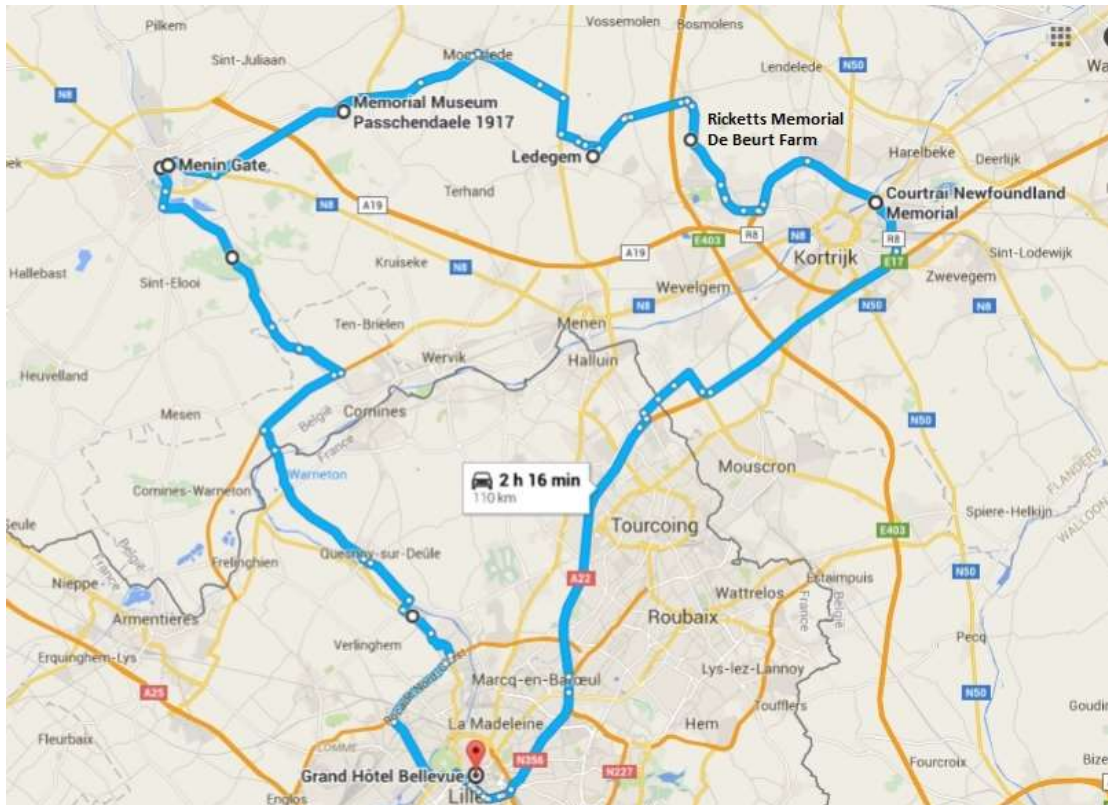


Figure 3 Chateau de Chenonceau

Our first day after Paris and the Loire valley we took the TGV to Lille checked into our hotel early in the main square, Hotel Bellevue. The symbolism was not lost on me as Bellevue was the name of the Cron Family home in Bears Cove, Harbour Grace where I would spend summers and holidays with my grandmother Alice Isabel (Cron) McGrath and her younger brother Robert's (uncle Bob) family who lived downstairs; where there were mementos of the two sisters and two brothers served during the Great War. The alternating rain showers and cooler temperatures were a poignant backdrop to the conditions that the soldiers endured in the trenches 100 years ago. Our first stop was the Ypres Town Square near the [YPRES \(MENIN GATE\) MEMORIAL](#) where numerous groups were milling about. What I found most touching were the locals coming up to us and mentioning that there were ceremonies being conducted each night at 8:00 pm in addition to the throngs of French and Belgian school children being brought around to tour the various battle fields so that they would not forget. One would think we were in an immaculately preserved medieval city until you looked at the [pictures of what the city looked like when the Armistice](#) was signed. I was reminded of [Monte Cassino in Italy](#) where my uncle Cyril "Shorty" Dawe in the 166th Field artillery regiment fought along Harold "Fish" Lake, Cam Eaton and Bill Hann and other Newfoundlanders. It too has been resurrected from the rubble of war.



Bookstore windows filled with a plethora of titles, many of them recent, displaying artifacts found amongst the rubble when Ypres was rebuilt. Many from afar in their early 20s to wheel chair captive veterans of more recent wars searching for names on the monument for an ancestor known only by name or some faded photograph of childhood innocence. Despite the jovial greetings of "hail fellow well met" there was a somber undertone of remembering the pains where the scars remain from the wounds that won the war, of those who were "Known only to God" and had no known grave. Shop windows full of postcards; images of the war and its aftermath and everywhere the words of "In Flanders Fields" written by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae during the second battle of Ypres May 3, 1915.

***In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row...***



Figure 4 Meensestraat



Figure 5 Finding a familiar name and countryman

We left Ypres and followed the Trail of the Caribou past the old Ledegem Train Station, where Richard RNFLDR # 2386 and Peter Power RNFLDR #1077 from Burnt Head Cupids fought with distinction to De Beurt farm, where Thomas Ricketts RNFLDR #3102 from Middle Arm, White Bay earned the Victoria Cross. It was touching to see a memorial there with a recently installed bronze likeness of Ricketts and an interpretative panel explaining his gallant actions that fateful day. As we would later find out it was not an official Canadian government memorial but was erected by the local council of Vichte, Belgium, Mr. D’Hont and owner of the farm while [the bronze likeness of Thomas Ricketts was donated by sculptor Morgan McDonald and author Frank Gogos](#). It was a moving experience to see an interpretive plaque there talking about the heroics that won the Victoria Cross and Croix de Guerre. Tommy Rickett's Pharmacy was one the stops my Grandfather Sgt. Walter G. “Pop” Dawe RNC, would make on his post retirement walks he called “the beat” that I occasionally accompanied him on, I remember saying “thank you Sargent Ricketts Sir!” when he gave me a candy once, to which he replied, “you can call me Tommy”!



Figure 6 Remembering Tommy Ricketts V.C.



Figure 7 Tommy Ricketts Memorial at De Beurt Farm

Leaving the De Beurt farm we headed to Courtrai to the First Caribou of our trip. While it was heartening to see it not far from the location of the midnight raft crossing of the River Lys by the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, there was nothing there to interpret the site, just the original bronze plaque from when the statue was erected and a big Government of Canada sign with the flag that our late compatriot Senator Eugene Forsey called a “Sivicultural” emblem. No Newfoundland crest or insignia at all, not even a note that it was a memorial to the Royal Newfoundland Regiment or details of the battle it commemorates!



Figure 8 Courtrai Caribou

The site is devoid of any interpretation and anyone visiting it for the first time would not know what it was and why it was there. Lest We Forget. The only real interpretation at the site were photos and mementos (including some screech) left by relatives of the departed who had visited the site before us.



Figure 9 Mementos left by Newfoundlanders

This was the last stop of the day and we returned a bit more somber to Lille, the subject that kept repeating was that other than “Newfoundland- Terre–Neuve” appearing on the base of the statue there was nothing to denote its raison d’être. The brick bulkhead as a rampart against the flood plain of the river Lys, was a talisman to the indecision as to where to place it originally less than a decade after the war. This conversation continued over our evening meal at what was once a Knights Templar headquarters in the heart of the ancient city of Lille; it was that conversation that was the germination of this article. Pat talked about meeting his third cousin Richard Power, in the 70’s, when a stroke had confined him to a wheelchair; I had also met Richard through a family friend, Alton Smith of Cupids. We talked about the privations and conditions that all the young men endured in the trenches, those who never returned, so many of whom have no known grave except “Known unto God” and those who returned in body and shell shocked mind but whose hollow empty souls still wandered aimlessly through the trenches of Mordor.

That night I reminisced on how, my cousin Chris Dawe and I were setting off a few firecrackers in the yard of our great uncle [Wilfred Dawe RNFLDR #184](#) then living in Whitbourne. He became highly agitated and drove us out of the yard and we ended up down by the pond, not knowing that the sand was mostly finely ground wood bark from the sawmill that eventually smoldered into a fire after we left for St. John’s. A year later I was in Pennsylvania at Chris’s home where he lived next door to his grandfather Beattie Simms. After a day of visiting the Gettysburg Memorial we set off a firecracker chain in the back yard only to find out that Beattie had been so traumatized by the machine gun like sound that he had taken cover under the nearby table. It was then that I realized that these men who never talked about the war had pain that remained from the wounds that won the war. What was then shell shocked has become PTSD of today. My other great uncle John Maxwell “Mungo Max” Cron RNFLDR #2090 was so traumatized by what he had experienced during the war that he [drank himself to death by Sept 26th, 1927](#).

I was 10 years old, and it was the 50th anniversary of the July drive when I witnessed great uncle Beattie Simms enduring trauma from WW1; and resolved myself to make a point of seeking out and respecting the WW1 Veterans before they were laid to rest in the earths cool breast and became nothing more than an almost familiar face staring from faded and wrinkled photographs.

The first WW1 Veteran I truly knew was “Uncle Bradbury” Cpl. Cecil Bradbury RNFLDR #3569, who lived just up across the road from our home in Deer Lake and was the corporate secretary for Bowater Power. He was often at our house and a gifted story teller who would read to me from my books, recite Kipling and other works from memory or tell tales of his time in the arctic about which he and his daughter Cecile later published when he was 93, [“Ten Years in the Canadian High Arctic”](#). Despite his gift of storytelling he never talked about the war. The only thing that my great uncle Wilf Dawe in Whitbourne would acknowledge was that he remembered my other great uncle James Mathew Cron RNFLDR #1585 and had seen him less than an hour before Wilf’s platoon members were encircled and [captured by Germans on April 14th 1917 thereafter spending nearly 20 months as a POW](#). One summer in Harbour Grace, I was quite young, I remember a gentleman originally from Western Bay, whom I believe was Sgt. Richard J. Crummey RNFLDR #2965, came by talking to great uncle Bob Cron about the last time that he had seen his older brother, that James Mathew was advancing from crater to crater when they came under heavy bombardment; he believed that the crater that James Mathew was seeking cover in was hit by an incoming shell.

My entire life, James Maxwell Cron has stared at me in his youthful innocence, tinged with melancholy from the crazed photograph taken with his sister Fran Cron Beverage while he was convalescing having been wounded in the hip at Mordor of Beaumont Hamel, on July 1st 1916.

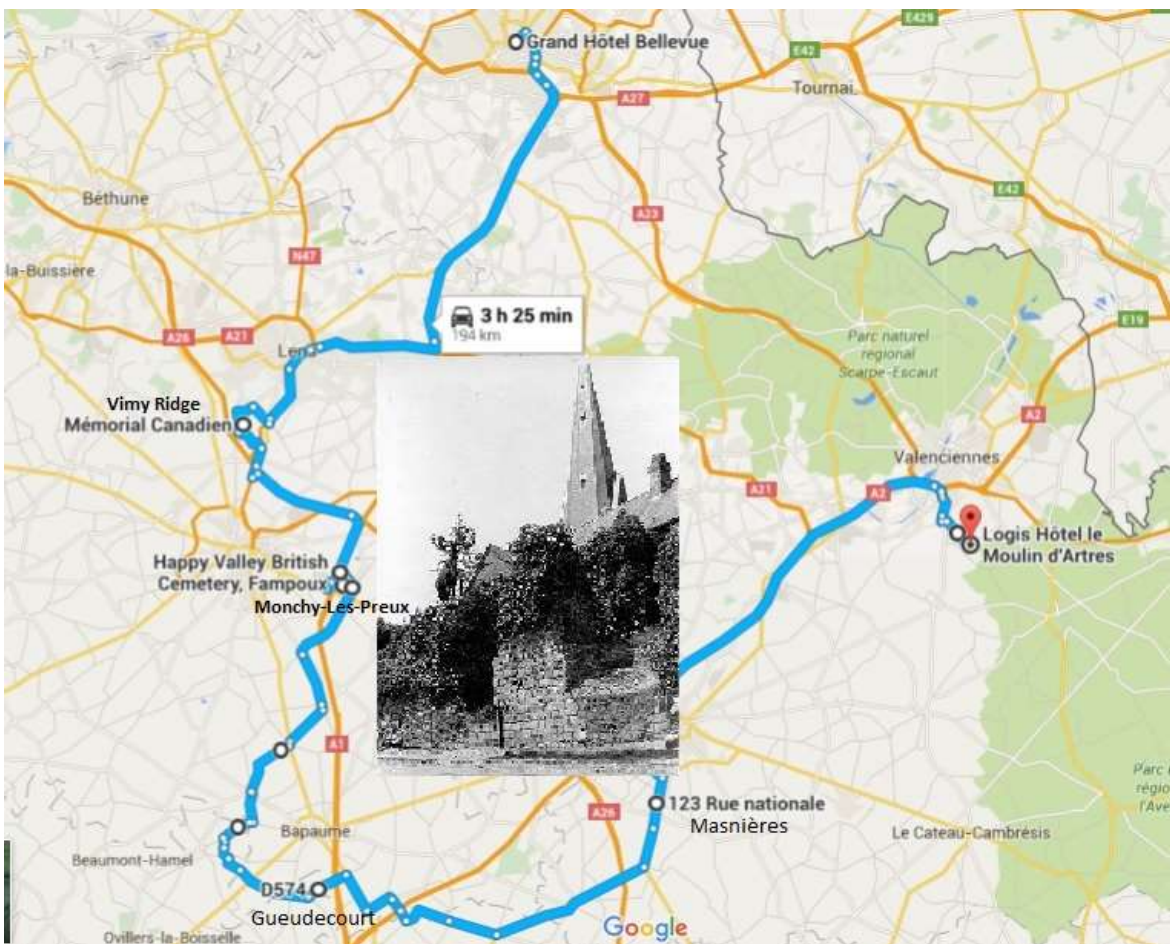


Figure 10 Great Aunt Fran Cron Beverage and Great Uncle James Mathew Cron MIA Monchy-Les-Preux April 14, 1917

I remember as a teenager, reading copies of the [impassioned letters](#) that his father James Maxwell Cron wrote seeking his whereabouts after news of his loss at Monchy-Les-Preux.

“It would be a satisfaction to us if we could only find out how he died? If his body was found? If he got a Christian burial? You see he was very dear to me. He was very young and we could at least have kept him back for eighteen months, had we tried, and so are apt to blame ourselves.”

The following soggy “capelin weather” morning, we checked out of our hotel and packed our vehicle to see the other sites starting with Vimy Ridge. It is a side note that our first family dog was adopted from “Auntie Carrie” (Caroline Fitzgerald Nee Pitman of Lamaline, Newfoundland), was a “Cockeyed Spaniard” named Byng, as I told my kindergarten teacher once; his full name was Lord Byng of Vimy Ridge the fifth, having a verified pedigree that linked him back to one of Sir Julian Byng’s prized dogs. Needless to say Byng was a temperamental sort and from recollection I was one of the few people he did not bite and biting my father for the last time hastened his departure for the Elysian Fields of Greek mythology.



Again it was my 4th time at Vimy Memorial, and little had changed, it stood as a somber Greco-Romanesque monument of masonry perfection replete of gothic imagery, devoid of any Judea-Christian iconography or any real symbolism of Canada or the “Canucks” who overwhelmed “Fritz” at that location 99 years before, as recorded in a letter from [Lieut. Jack Turner to his father](#). It has a commanding view of the plain below and was uniquely visible from all the roads that lead in that direction, the land upon which it rests was given to Canada by France. There were however many interpretive plaques and maps showing the progression and history of the famous battle.



Figure 11 Carl and Pat at the Vimy Memorial

We did meet one of the Canadian park interpreters who staff the site (and saw him again the next day helping out at Beaumont Hamel), a likeable chap with a tilly hat and red rain jacket protecting him from the misty squalls. When I asked him what province he was from, his reply was “Ottawa”; to which I replied in semi-jest “Oh, the province of Ottawa”. While my sarcasm went over his head, Pat chuckled at my implication that Ottawa was somewhat distinct and not associated with any Canadian province, as detached from Newfoundland, or Alberta, as Vercingetorix’s Gaul was from Julius Caesar’s Rome.

Our next stop was at Monchy-Les-Preux, subject of the book [“The Greatest Gallantry”](#), was one of the defining battles for which Regiment eventually received the designation “Royal” after Cambrai. the only such designation ever conferred during wartime. It is a shame that the heroics there were overshadowed by the Canadian assault in Vimy Ridge, as in any other country a movie would be made about Monchy that would eclipse the Australian movie Gallipoli! No wonder that when I talked to [Abraham Thomas “Abe” Mullet RNFLDR #437](#), the last Blue Puttee, shortly after the movie Gallipoli was in the Newfoundland theatres, that he was incensed at the historical inaccuracies it contained, insinuating that the ANZACS were the rear guard in the retreat from Gallipoli when it was the Newfoundland Regiment who were! I recall that in the CBC archives have transcripts and recordings of the attestations to his sincere umbrage.

It was 13 against 300, for the toughest 13 the “Bosche” had ever faced and when the day was done it was 9 who still stood between the German Army and Monchy-Les-Preux. Had they failed in their defense [“40,000 troops would have been required to retake it. Such is the measure of the achievement of the ten men who saved Monchy”](#)



**The men who saved Monchy.
Back - Cpl A S Rose, Sgt W Pitcher, A/Lt Col J Forbes-Robertson, Lt K J Keegan
Sgt C Parsons (1st Essex) & Sgt J R Waterfield.
Front - Pte F Curran, Cpl J H Hillier, Pte J Hounsell.**

Figure 12 Postcard of the Heroes of Monchy

There were a number of Newfoundlanders there, some of whom myself or Bren Fahey knew. Perhaps it is the most prominent of the Caribou Statues, being located in the center of the small commune near the church and the only such monument to have been built on top of German fortifications, of which a pill box remains. Pat and Carl went to go around back of the Caribou on the immaculately manicured lawn and trimmed hedge to look at where the statue was facing only to be driven out of the enclosed space by a very pedantic resident who was quite upset at them being in there. While Pat commented that he was “confident that the site was being well looked after”, I was dismayed that the native Newfoundland flora that had been planted around the statue 90+ years ago were all gone. They were there the previous 3 times I had visited the site. They are visible in all the photographs I have seen of the site up to 2006 and the 90th anniversary of the Battle of the Somme. Looking at the Google Street View images, I discovered that most of the Newfoundland Shrubbery had disappeared between Oct 2008 (top) and Aug 2014 (bottom). It was not the first nor the last time I noticed something out of place during our trip.



Figure 13 Google Street View Oct 2008 top, Aug 2014 bottom.



Figure 14 The author on the left 2016 and the site in 1938 on the right

It must be remembered that these Caribou survived WWII and the occupation of France by Nazi Germany when metal was in short supply and many things were smelted down. I have put in an access to information request for more details on how these monuments are cared for to the Dept. of Veterans affairs, as I am fearful that it has gone from being a monument site to being a person's yard.



The original stone statue for Aviators Charles Nungesser and Francois Coli near where they left French soil at Falaises of Étretat, Normandy, France was not so lucky and was blown up by the Germans in 1942 for fear it could be used as a navigational marker. The last place they were confirmed to be seen was flying over Harbour Grace on their ill-fated flight.

Figure 15 Postcard of the original monument for Nungesser and Coli

I had found an official war photograph of what Monchy-Les-Preux had looked like after the battle in which great uncles Wilf Dawe became a POW and James Mathew Cron went MIA, turning it into a post card. Unfortunately, I never had a chance to send them while on our pilgrimage as our schedule was so tight.



Figure 16 Postcard of Monchy after the battle



Figure 17 Back of Postcard

I had left several copies of them at all the sites we visited in hopes that my second cousin Jane Cron Lynch, James Mathew's niece, and others would find it, usually after thoughtful wreaths that were left by the Trail of the Caribou Research Group. Jane was on a different itinerary with her husband Kevin than we were and our paths did not cross. However, she did find the cards that were left at Monchy and messaged me a day later with a tearful response.



Figure 18 Wreath left by the trail of the Caribou Research Group

While at Monchy we visited several of the grave sites that are prominently marked with large crosses upon which are emblazoned the stylized sword of St Michael cast in bronze. They are sporadically placed surrounding the town in fields where crude graves were initially dug to bury the dead only later to be disinterred and moved to proper graves under the supervision of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and Padre Nangle. Given the fact that vanishingly few of the Newfoundlanders who died at Monchy have a known grave the whole area is a graveyard, the essence and life blood of the MIA; Commonwealth and German soldiers fertilizing the productive fields; with grain stalks waving in the willing wind like the final scene of the [movie Gladiator](#).



Figure 19 Happy Valley British Cemetery Monchy-Les-Preux

We then proceeded to the Gueudecourt memorial, where again we bumped into other Newfoundlanders on a similar pilgrimage. It is the most rural of the Caribou settings and still had the remains of a trench that the Newfoundland Regiment captured that day as they were one of the few units on the whole British Fourth Army front to capture and retain its objective, the furthest advance in the Battle of the Somme, but at the cost of another 239 Newfoundland casualties, of whom 120 had been killed or died of wounds.



Figure 20 Gueudecourt memorial

This was the same as the other monuments, devoid of the history and heroism of the young Newfoundlanders who lost their lives there that day. It was deeply troubling that nowhere were the words “Royal Newfoundland Regiment” or the nominal roll call of those who fought and died there. Timing the



Figure 21 Masnières memorial for the battle of Cambrai

gap between rain showers and boulangeries our next stop was Masnières, along a fairly well traveled public road neatly manicured and obviously well cared for but it too has seen changes over the years when you compare it to the photos that were taken in the late 1930's. Again no site interpretative panels, no insignia, no history. Perhaps this was not an issue in 1925 when the war was still fresh in everybody's mind; of the Newfoundlanders and their exploits for it was after this battle they received the designation “Royal Newfoundland Regiment”

We departed from Masnières for our nightly lodging at [Le Moulin d'Artres, Artres](#); arriving down a single lane cobblestone path, Rue d'Artres, with a smattering of macadam and cobblestone potholes meandering through waving stalks of wheat, barley and rye. It was as if we were leaving the war zone and entering a place relatively untouched by the ravages of the Great War.



Figure 22 Rue D'Artres

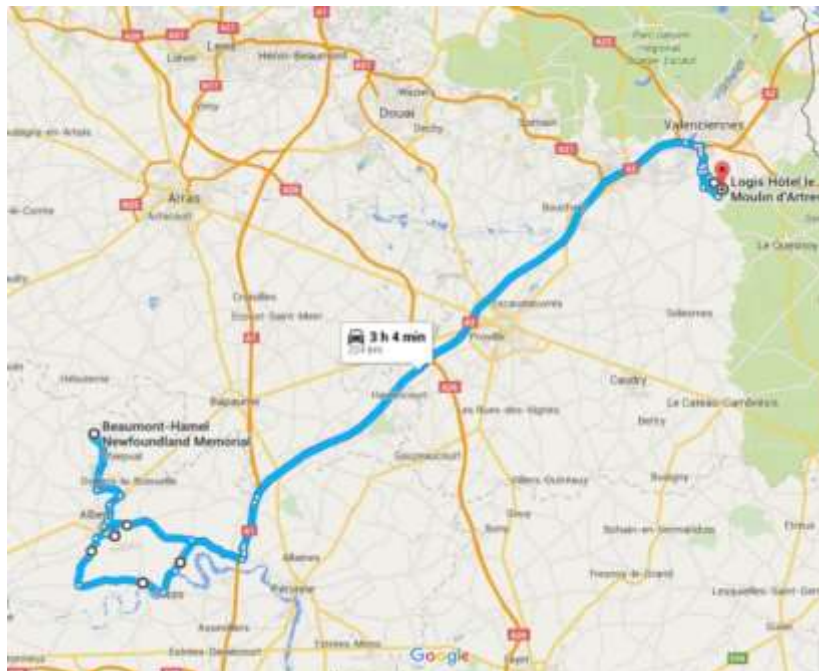


Figure 23 Les Moulin d'Artres

There were many guests the two nights we were there, families from Norway off to their French farmhouse for the summer, an Entertaining English teacher and his wife on a vacation, two charming Irish teachers heading to the Ulster Tower Memorial in the wee hours of July 1st, a couple from Denmark who had just sold their farm property in southern France and were downsizing. There were lively pre-dinner cocktail chats on the back veranda and equally scintillating conversation over the exquisite Ossobuco and locally produced red table wine. Followed by boisterous after dinner conversation on the veranda 'til the wee hours. It was one of those places that we all commented that we would have to stay again when not in such a tight schedule as the evening drew to a close in the eve of the 100th anniversary of the battle of the Somme.

Despite the comfort of the surroundings and the late hour of the actual Newfoundland memorial service at 16:00, it was a fitful sleep and I awoke before the birds to the sounds of the babbling stream by the mill and thought a thousand thoughts. I tried to imagine what was going through the minds of the young boys and men of the Newfoundland and other regiments as they lay in their lice infested cots contemplating the day that lay ahead. What prayers were prayed in their minds eye and never heard, what letters were written as the final word before the battle cry for field Marshall Haig “Buxom Bessie or a wooden leg” before so many with their last bloody breath wheezed “Is the colonel pleased?”.

To those of you who did not attend the ceremonies in France, merely applying to attend the ceremonies was a laborious affair. You had to apply online through the Canadian Embassy ~~https://form.amb-canada.fr/inscription_1_juillet_July_1_2016_Somme_Beaumont-Hamel-en.php~~ to get an E-ticket which you had to have in your possession to be scanned at the site before being permitted access. We had applied mid-April and did not get our e-ticket until June 10th. In my mind June 10th was a very late date to get confirmation that you could attend this ceremony given the requirements to book travel and accommodation. For example, our friend Carl Scofield did not get one at the same time on the basis that Canadians would be given first access and sent off an email on June 20th before finally receiving his. Given the distance and cost of arriving at Beaumont Hamel, how many Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans or the descendants thereof could not or did not attend this event because of the bureaucratic red tape? An Access to information act request that reported that only 2,015 applied online but 3,012 e-Tickets were sent out, for a variety of reasons from last minute registrations, junk mail folders and incorrect information. I was told that they had no idea as to how many attended because the manual verification was not recorded once people arrived onsite.



It should be noted that the Courcelette Canadian Memorial ceremony on Saturday July 2, 2016 at 14:00 did not require such a registration. Regardless you could apply for only one of the ceremonies on July 1st and while it was done for crowd control security purposes; it certainly prevented those attending only the Newfoundland Memorial from seeing the disparaging differences between there and the other services!

After the long circuitous route, avoiding all the roadblocks and security checkpoints to get to the parking lot, stopping to fertilize a local field and pick a wild poppy we arrived at the designated parking. There was a family who pulled in alongside us in a land rover, having driven there from the UK. After a brief chat I discovered that his mother's father was a Newfoundlander who fought and was wounded at Beaumont Hamel and had a cousin who died here; one of many Newfoundlanders who married UK war brides. He

had indicated that he had applied for an e-ticket back around Easter time and had never received one. Undaunted he and his family had made the pilgrimage and they were not very far behind us in the line at the initial security checkpoint before boarding the bus, our bus was a full 10 minutes before we left for the Newfoundland Memorial Park and they did not board the bus nor did I see them at the site later. Quite sad!



The bus was full of familiar faces like artist Grant Boland, Chris O'Neill-Yates and Linda Goodyear. When I arrived at the memorial service, I was able to take one photo with my camera before it was unceremoniously taken from me at the second security checkpoint after getting off the bus, because the lens would extend too far. There was no such warning on the emails received. Scandalous was the indifference by the Canadian bureaucrats at the ceremony while confiscating the cameras of so many Newfoundlanders.

Figure 24 Warning Plaque about this being Sacred Ground

Like the sign said this was a sacred site, the day was to be a memorial service and not to be disrespectful I wore a suit and tie with a Newfoundland Coat of Arms in my lapel. I also carried in my pocket a pair of regimental insignia NFLD badges that had been owned by "Mungo Max" Cron, who drank himself to death after the war. While I started walking around, quite a few people recognized me and said hello despite my dark military issue Wiley X sunglasses and suit, one person I knew jokingly asked if I was working for the Montreal Mob and another called me "The Godfather" when he saw me and came to shake my hand. My boiling blood had simmered down from the point of shooting out of my eyes while my camera was taken from me for this once in a lifetime event, and I could read the programme; perhaps I should have left well enough alone as it was also raising by ire.

Before reading my article any further and possibly having your perception influenced by my feelings I would suggest that you look at the programme below and think about it and try to compare it to programmes for other memorial services you may have attended, think of what this event actually is:



Figure 25 Programme for 100th Memorial of Beaumont Hamel July 1st Battle of the Somme

While the previous question was not a test, I would be curious as to what every Newfoundlander and Labradorean's first thoughts were after reading it. Here are my genuine first thoughts, in pretty much the order I noticed them while perusing it:

1. It says Canada remembers, no mention of Newfoundland remembering.
2. While it talks about playing the Ode to Newfoundland, it is not included under the National anthems, which it certainly was during the Great War and continues as the Provincial anthem.
3. The only person specifically identified was His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales.
4. No Newfoundland coat of Arms.
5. No mention of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment
6. No Regimental coat of arms
7. No mention of anyone speaking on behalf of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I believe those elements alone were selectively discriminatory against Newfoundland; 100th memorials afford lots of planning time and as far as I was concerned the Federal bureaucrats did not put a whole lot of effort into planning this event and appeared to fecklessly disregard the historical significance of July 1st and Beaumont Hamel to us. Perhaps this is what we get after we made no complaints about the Quebecois company getting the Landscaping contract over 20 years ago and then turning the site over to Sheila Cops. I can only imagine the pomp and ceremony that will accompany the Centenary of Vimy Ridge.

I walked past the petrified remains of what is believed to be the Danger Tree towards the Y Ravine Cemetery and it was heart rendering to see young Newfoundlanders dressed in the style of kit and uniforms that our lost forefathers wore that fateful day 100 years previously.



Figure 26 Uniformed Newfoundlanders

When I got to the Y Ravine Cemetery, I noticed an engraved stone that I had not noticed before.

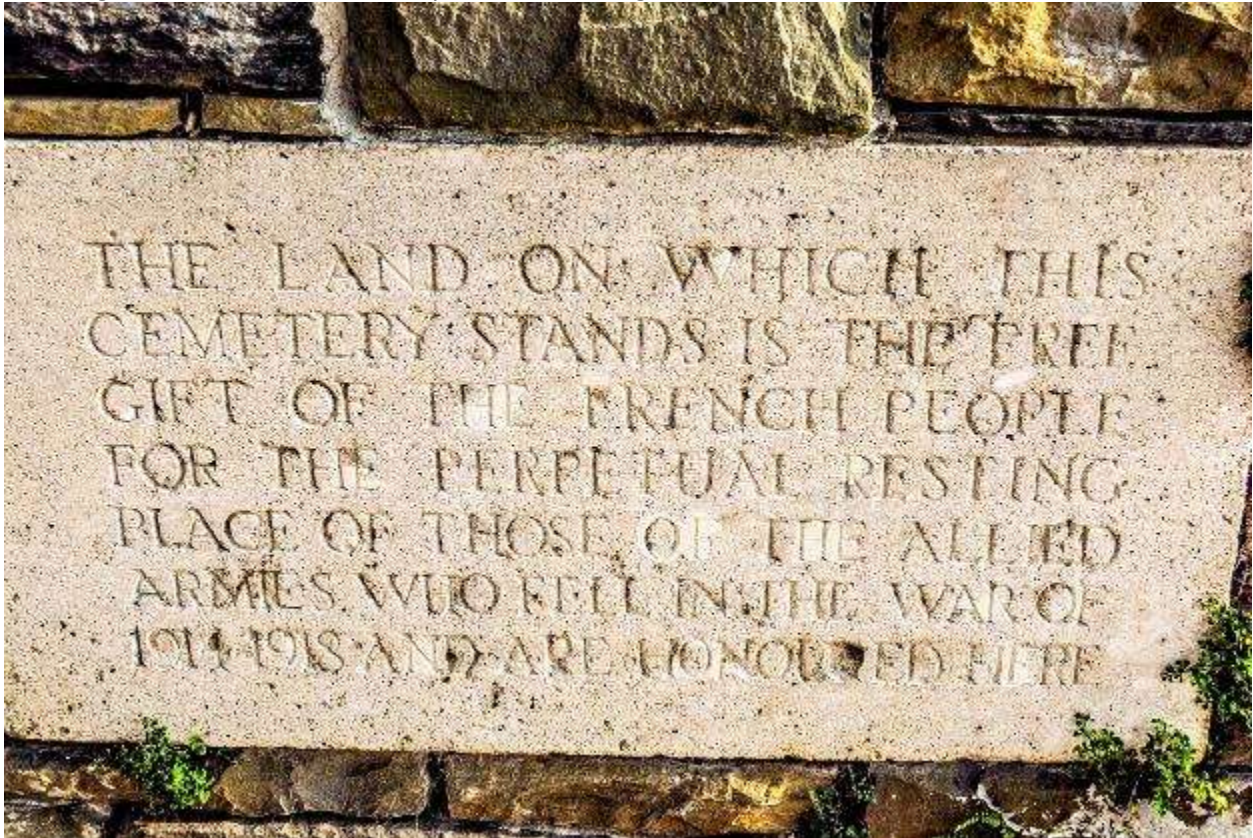


Figure 27 Plaque at the Y Ravine Cemetery



Having never noticed it before, sort of took me aback as I have a near photographic memory, and my attention to details is often so great that some friends; South African J.B. Smith for example, have convinced themselves that I must work for the CIA or some other spy agency; It certainly flew in the face of oft repeated fact that the land was purchased by the people of Newfoundland in 1921. It was Padre Nangle who negotiated with 250 French landowners for the purchase of the site and eventually gave permission to erect the memorial to the 51st (Highland) Scottish Division (La a'Blair s'math n Cairdean) overlooking the Y Ravine on the land he had acquired for Newfoundland because the land that the Highlanders had been given by the commune of Beaumont-Hamel was too unstable due to extensive underground works. I therefore wonder if the stone plaque was originally from somewhere else from another donated site, possibly the original location for the 51st Highlanders and ended up at the Beaumont Hamel memorial site by accident?

As I continued by solo somber stroll amid the intermittent showers I finally made my way to the Hunters Cemetery, walking by each grave one at a time reading the epitaphs.

Figure 28 51st Highland Memorial on land donated by Newfoundland



Figure 29 Known only onto God

While walking around the Hunter Cemetery I saw a Star of David; I remember seeing them at many of the other sites including this one and it reminded me of a touching story about the grave of private Harry Steinberg who was discovered to be Jewish and was buried in the Beaumont Hamel British Cemetery (which we could not visit this trip) under a Christian headstone for 90 years. The full story can be found [HERE](#). the short version of the story was that after the mistake was discovered it was rectified and replaced with a new headstone befitting his faith:

Rededication ceremony on May the 9th 2005, after the new headstone bearing the Star of David had been put in place. About 60 people were present at the ceremony, including local dignitaries, the military (including a Jewish French General), members of the WFA, members of the Association of Jewish Ex-Servicemen and Women (AJEX) Standard bearers, a bugler and a pipe player.



Photograph courtesy of Geoff Spring

The service consisted of a selection of prayers, hymns and short speeches in English, French and Hebrew. This was followed by the playing of the "Last Post", two minutes' silence, "Reveille", a piper's lament and wreath laying. The service concluded with the singing of the British and French National Anthems after which those attending were invited by the mayor of Beaumont Hamel to the town hall for a "Vin D'Honneur".

I meandered back along the path to the main event as the upper path was closed for the VIP's eventually meeting back up with Bren, Pat and Carl. The intermittent heavy showers punctuating the sorrow that was felt in so many now resettled and forgotten outposts a century before. We were told that the event was delayed due to the delayed arrival of HRH Prince Charles probably due to the rain squalls that had been coming through all day. There were many people milling about in anticipation of the start of the ceremony. When everybody was gathered up in appropriate viewing areas it was disappointing in some regards as to the actual number of people there, I had certainly expected much more and I wondered if the lack of numbers was somehow influenced by the all the rigmarole required to apply to come to the site and the fact that e-Tickets were not going to arrive until less than three weeks before the event, in Carl's case 10 days and in the case of the chap who parked next to us, it never did. Perhaps many simply chose to forgo the official ceremony because of this and paid their respects before or after the official event?



We milled about a bit and met other Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans some of whom we had met the previous two days. Teacher Abby Hynes from Corner Brook, who had taken a group photo of us at Gueudecourt came by and said hello. One of the VIP's took an opportunity between the rain showers to contemplatively walk the trenches from which the initial assault started 100 years earlier.

I was then looking at the way the cameras were set up, none really able to pan the crowds that I realized all the media attention was on the VIP's giving their speeches and none for the multitudes who had traveled so far, out of respect for some long lost relative and countryman. There were no roving reporters with cameras wandering through the crowds to collect the stories of where they had traveled from and their family connection to this 100th memorial service. Only a few in the very first row of standing spectators could actually see the podium and a huge Vidéotron was visible to make up for that fact.

Having attended the funerals for Tommy Ricketts with my Grandfather Sgt. Walter G. Dawe RNC, his brother Wilf, Blue Puttee & son Wilfred George, and more recently the funeral for [Lee Kwan Yew](#); the attention to detail by people who are genuinely connected to the event they are memorializing is abundantly evident.

Figure 30 Walking the Trenches

Perhaps it is from experiencing great uncle Beattie's reaction to the firecrackers bothering me so much or the constant reminder of James Mathews loss at Monchy that I was feeling that there was so much lacking even before the official ceremony began. If my late friend [Geoff Sterling](#) had still been alive, there would have been a major NTV presence at this event recording all the details, particularly the interviews with the attendees. A rainsquall came and went and there was an announcement that the Royal party had arrived and the event was to begin. Despite being on a relatively high knoll of ground we could not see Prince Charles directly except on the Vidéotron until he climbed the monument at the end of the service. There was an enormous deal of respect amongst the Newfoundlanders and Labradoreans present as the youngest and the oldest were given stations against the barricades facing the podium so they could see.

It was moving to have the Church Lads Brigade (CLB) band there, James Maxwell Cron, was an enthusiastic supporter of the brigade when he was alive, despite it being an Anglican Church organization and he being a staunch Scottish Presbyterian, perhaps influenced by his second wife Emma Martin who became principal of the Church of England High School in Harbour Grace in 1890, or equally spurred on by his own memories of serving in the British army (as an underage recruit having lied about his age) before immigrating to Newfoundland. CLB had a summer camp in Bears Cove, Harbour Grace from 1950 to 1966 and the first time I shot a rifle at the age of 6 was when the Commanding Officer, [William Blacklar Knight Coultas](#), affectionately known as “Da Left, Da Right”, taught me how to “Plink” at tin cans on Ugly Head with a 22. He had served in 57th (Newfoundland) Heavy Regiment during WWII and a good friend of my uncle Cyril “Shorty” Dawe when they merged with 166th; I remembered them meeting on Uncle Cyril’s visits to Newfoundland from Edinburgh, Scotland where he settled after the war with his Scottish bride Evelyn. One of Major W.B.K Coultas relatives, for whom his son was named, [William Norman Coultas RNFLDR #1058](#) was lost on July 1, 1916. Amongst the VIP’s was Brigadier-General Bruce Ploughman, whose grandfather Pte. John “Jack” Ploughman RNFLDR #890 was a CLB Officer who turned down a commission in the regiment to pursue his passion of being a sniper.

1 in 5 of the Blue Puttees were members of the Church Lads Brigade and two former CLB Officers, Lt. Col Adolph Bernard of 'C' Company, Bishop Field College and Capt. Arthur Raley of 'C' Company, St. John's, rode at the head of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment when it marched across Cologne Bridge into Germany; The Church Lads Brigade are the true inheritors of the tradition of the “Blue Puttees”!

The tragic fire in 1992 that leveled the CLB Armoury before what was supposed to be the 100th anniversary of the CLB in Newfoundland was still smoldering as the band assembled, with borrowed music and instruments, for the funeral of Major W.B.K. Coultas. It was that commitment to “Fight the Good Fight” that prompted me to assist in rebuilding their damaged field canon along with my friends Nelson Sherren, Jim Steinhauer, Paul Thornhill and others, once their armory was rebuilt.



Figure 31 Church Lads Brigade band “Fight the Good Fight”

Dying chords of the Ode to Newfoundland waltzed through the mist and stately trees, it was the last thing that really resonated of Newfoundland other than the thoughtful speech given by HRH Prince Charles.

While Prince Charles may not be everybody's favorite Royal; I think highly of him having met him in person at a function at the Crow's Nest club decades ago. He is a passionate individualist who takes great care in the speeches he makes and thinks long and hard about what he is saying, following through with deeds that follow his words, as evidenced by his recent Middle East tour and [his vociferous opposition to the influence of radical Islam and lack of assimilation into the British Culture](#). He is one of the few leaders today raising the warning flag about radical Islam in a Europe full of latter day Neville Chamberlain's proclaiming "peace for our time" ["While the bitter parties stifle every voice that warns of war"](#) denying the Islamists threat that I described in my article ["Ah, you don't believe we're on the eve of destruction?"](#)



Figure 32 Prince Charles on the Vidéotron

Following His Royal Highness, passion died in the ceremony despite being all inclusive and having young Newfoundlanders including First Nations speak. Most galling being there was not a single representative of the Government of Newfoundland speak, the only identifiable one there being Hon. Christopher Mitchelmore, MHA for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows, Minister of Business, Tourism, Culture and Rural Development; who later laid a wreath. The questions on my mind are; Did he decline speaking or was he never offered the opportunity? If no opportunity was offered why wasn't all bloody hell raised to do so!

While it was good to see that Trudeau the second's handlers made sure that he took time out from his orgy of spending (despite cancelling the airstrikes against ISIL who are actively recreating the Armenian Genocide) to theatrically present himself in a prerecorded message on the Vidéotron; it underscored the chasm that exists between Ottawa and Newfoundland and highlighted the complete lack of even a prerecorded message from Premier Dwight Ball MIA at Beaumont Hamel Centenary. Was this of Premier Ball's own oversight or was it a deliberate snub by the Department of Veterans Affairs to not have him or a designate come to this once in a lifetime event or offer a prerecorded message? We may never know, as the bureaucracy in Ottawa does much of its work ["darkly at dead of night, the sods with... ..bayonets turning"](#) Like the controversy that arose after [Veterans Affairs denied 94-year-old Royal Norwegian Naval Veteran Petter Blindheim a bed in Camp Hill, the Halifax extended care facility](#).

“A little swift mercy in a small matter often goes to the soul of things, and says more about the character of a nation than a thousand weary speeches that profess that theme.” [Rex Murphy](#)

Despite [the Somme: The battle that France forgot](#) had not been attended by a French head of state since 1932 when the long-forgotten Albert Lebrun helped inaugurate the Thiepval memorial alongside the future King Edward VIII; French President Francois Hollande was there earlier that day and there was an overnight candlelight vigil there from 10pm until 7.30 am the night before. Why not for Newfoundland!



Figure 33 Candlelight Vigil at Thiepval Photo Credit BBC

There were 4 prominent Irish Clerics at the Ulster Tower Ceremony and the Archbishop of Canterbury was at the Thiepval ceremony earlier in the day performing the memorial service and all of them offered a genuine sacrament of Christian blessing and hymns to these sacred sites, the listing thereof is here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/2511830/ww1resourcessomme.pdf>

Would it have been too much to have asked the Arch Bishop of Canterbury, to accompany HRH Prince Charles to the Ceremony at Beaumont Hamel? To understand his character, I humbly encourage you to read the Telegraph article [Archbishop Justin Welby: 'I was embarrassed. It was like getting measles'](#)

It should be noted that the Arch Bishop's service outline was finalized and published in May 17th 2016, while there is none to be found for the memorial service at Beaumont Hamel. There is not a misogynistic bone in my body, but the female "padre" reportedly from the Anglican Church, who delivered the prayer telling everybody that we should **"Pray to the god of your understanding"** and later apologized for offering a prayer is a waste of cloth. **It is because of ministers like her, drunk on the opiates of political correctness constantly throwing the baby Jesus out with the dirty bathwater of socialistic secular humanism, that churches are leaving their flocks behind and not the flocks leaving the Church!** I remember commiserating many times with my cousin Francis O'Leary at the Catholic book store he used to have in the Murray Premises over the changes in the Catholic Church and remember well my late friend [Ed Phillips of Columbus Mississippi](#) planning myriad road trips to experience the traditional Latin mass.

This is a sacred site; we came to honour the dead, not apologize to the easily offended living whose very freedoms were hard won by the supreme sacrifice of those memorialized here!

There are no Ottoman Turks and considering the efforts to replace the Christian Cross with the Star of David for Private Harry Steinberg, none of the Jewish soldiers would have been offended, nor would the MIA Germans whose remains may lay beneath this patch of Newfoundland Territory in France. I can only imagine that Padre Nangle was rolling over in his grave in Zimbabwe while she performed the sacrilege of a ceremony. I can imagine the kind of service that my late friend [Canon George Earle](#) could have given to commemorate this occasion, or the emotion that adopted Newfoundlander, [Anschutz survivor Phillip Riteman](#) could have delivered to the event as he always extols people **"It's better to love that to hate"** and constantly reminds us about WWII **"Twenty million Christians died, nobody talks about them."**

Father William Cummings during the Siege of Corregidor famously quoted: **"Life-and-death experiences prompt a reality check. Even the strongest of beliefs can change, and, I may add, can go both ways – people can be drawn to or away from 'faith.'... 'There is no such thing as an atheist in a fox hole.'"**

Records show that over 95% of those buried here were Christians from various denominations and yet there is more Christian dignity and respect in the [1969 cult film Easy Rider](#) than at this 100th Memorial!

When they lay dying waiting to be rescued for days on end in the no man's land of Mordor; they were not moaning the 1916 equivalent of Peggy Lees song "Is that all there is"

***That when that final moment comes and I'm breathing my last breath
I'll be saying to myself- Is that all there is?***

Considering my great grandfather James Maxwell Cron's extreme concern about his lost son James Mathew getting a Christian burial, the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs inclusion of an apologetic Christophobic excuse for a memorial service in this ceremony is reprehensible. I do not believe that amongst the minions who planned this event there is a single person with a fraction of the integrity of character as those who paid the supreme sacrifice and for whom we came to pay our respects.

Not even a mention of 23 Psalm of David embraced by both Jews and Christians in the service:

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Or instead of a Hymn they could have had the CLB band play ["Let me Fish of Cape St. Mary's"](#) while the crowd in attendance could sing along and even have the words and music included on the programme.

These young men for whom we came to pay tribute had few creature comforts as they lay in their bloody, muddy, lice and vermin infested trenches, sometimes huddling together on groups of three to use a single match to light three cigarettes to avoid snipers when scarce tobacco arrived. Perhaps the only diversion from the horror of war, the always present after smell of mustard gas and chlorine or rotting burning flesh were the words of men like Padres Nangle or Adler and others. Or for them to take fanciful flights in their minds eye watching the acrobatics of the knights of the air, like Baron Manfred von Richthofen and his "Flying Circus" or French Ace Charles Nungesser imagining the gulls hovering over the wharves in "that snug green cove, where the seas roll up their thunder" on their distant misty morning home shores.

The likes of which we shall never see again and the surviving character thereof is few and far between.

As a testament to the measure of the character of the Commonwealth forces, it should be remembered that the ANZAC's who took possession of Baron von Richthofen's body served as his pall bearers and guard of honour and ensured he was given the dignity of a proper Christian burial!



Figure 34 Baron Von Richthofen's Funeral

The Newfoundland Regiments first action, Suvla Bay in 1915 was against the Ottoman Turks, an Islamic Caliphate, who were simultaneously committing [the Armenian Genocide of 1.5 million innocent souls](#).



Figure 35 from the Movie Auction of Souls

100 Years of Devolution:

We in Newfoundland and Labrador lost our greatest generation, our country, our soul; bankrupted by the costs of raising a Regiment and the financial aftermath of war. Adding insult to injury, received nary a red cent of the Great War reparations from Germany, the [final payments thereof were on Oct 3rd 2010](#). The referenda that herded us to the lair of the Canadian Wolf was not a secret ballot as the ballots were serial numbered and the name of the person to whom they were given recorded. No territory was ceded in our Germs of Union, and the Beaumont Hamel Memorial remains as much a part of Newfoundland since its purchase from the French as the War Memorial on Water Street in St John's. The outports that voted for CON-Federation have been resettled or are withering and dying while the capital region who voted for a return to Responsible Government has been bought off and flourishes. Our Codfish, Newfoundland Currency, fecklessly squandered by the desk captains of the Rideau canal within 40 years after 450 years of pre-CON-Federation abundance. The same desk captains who now want us to pay for licenses and tags for what they deliberately mislabel a "recreational fishery" as we exercise an ancient inalienable right to forage and feed ourselves that predates the Magna Carta and lesser known Carta de Foresta that codified them on paper for the first time. We have more natural resources per capita than any other country in the world and our oil production per capita is on a par with Saudi Arabia, yet we are destitute. Now Muskrat Falls may bankrupt us again, thus loosing Churchill Power to Quebec. Destitute from the poverty of thought and political intrigues that emanates from Ottawa and sadly our own CON-Federation Building.

We now live in a world bombarded by Newspeak, "Voices of the Supermen", where the freedoms of press, speech and religion are the blood sacrifices on the altar of political correctness while Voltaire's bastards continue their chant "Crush the Wretch". Too few "perceive the evidence of calculating organization. The managers remain studiously concealed and masked"; so many are as blithely unaware of their ultimate plight as the sheep grazing the Y Ravine amongst the unexploded ordinance.



Children are no longer encouraged to excel, rather given participation medals, like Field Marshal Haig, so that they are not offended by their inferior efforts. References to God, the 10 commandments, Christian Crosses banned from sight; lest we offend, and what "*rough beast, its hour come round at last, slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?*" Our former foe, now ally, the Turks marching to global occupation are casting off [Ataturks dream](#), in favor of the Islamists Muslim Brotherhood. Waring Islamic factions burn captured Muslim pilots alive. Beheadings, rape, slavery, jihadist attacks increase exponentially; politically correct Christophobic apologists rearrange deck chairs on the Titanic, avidly promoting the wholesale importation of ISIS infiltrated refugees without proper vetting, while denying refugee status to the ancient Aramaic speaking communities of Christians who have existed since the time of the Apostles and are being exterminated like the Ottomans, we fought at Suvla Bay, did to 1.5 million Armenians 100 years ago!

The Judas Goats of Political Correctness could not even bear to include Major John McCrae's poem, "In Flanders Fields" in the service at Beaumont-Hamel Memorial service for fear that the line "Between the crosses, row on row" might offend someone!

***If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.***

With the service over we headed back to the get in the queue for the busses. The bureaucratic delay in returning the confiscated lenses and cameras left us too far back in the queue to catch the first set of busses and we endured a closing rain squall that was the most intense of all day. It was as if the Angels were crying over the stripping of the God of Moses and Abraham from the service.

Comfortably on the bus I scanned my phone for new reports of the day's events and one prominent one from the National comPost headline caught my eye: ["The myth of Beaumont-Hamel" by Joe O'Connor](#)

Beaumont-Hamel is no Myth!

JRR Tolkien, second lieutenant in the 13th Lancashire Fusiliers and battalion signaling officer, was safely ensconced in the distant reserve trenches on July 1st and did not see the aftermath until July 3rd, 1916. The visual barrage on Tolkien's eyes and mind was so great that the brutal reality of the carnage and landscape around Beaumont Hamel and the Somme in general was too horrific to be believed as fact and [became the mythical landscape of Mordor](#). So contaminated was much of this land is still off limits 100 years later and called ["Zone Rouge"](#) The Hobbits, with their extremities of character from devil may care frivolity to their heroic and tenacious pursuit of honour, could have equally described any one of the Newfoundlanders, and were invented from the diminutive English Tommy's like Sgt. C Parsons of the 1st Essex, who fought alongside the Royal Newfoundland Regiment at Monchy with the disciplined ferocity of a wounded badger.

Beaumont-Hamel and the Battle of the Somme is the brutal reality of war that became the myth "The Lord of the Rings"

Lest We Forget

J. Desmond McGrath Esq.

"It does not take a majority to prevail... but rather an irate, tireless minority, keen on setting brushfires of freedom in the minds of men."

Samuel Adams