Newfoundland at War

* World War One started with the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28th, 1914.
* Soon the war escalated and involved on one side Austria-Hungary, Germany while on the other side there was Russia, Britain, and France along with the States and Japan (Allies) . Italy later joined the Allied side although she was bound by treaty to our enemies.
* Canada and Newfoundland entered into the war as they were colonies of Britain. Other colonies who joined were Australia and New Zealand.
* They joined because they felt that if harm came to Britain then their security and democracy would be threatened.
* The United States joined the war in 1917 due to submarine attacks.
* The slogan of the Allies was “a war to make the world safe for democracy. “

Enlistment and Recruitment

* In Newfoundland, young men of all classes were eager to join in the forces to fight for their mother country.
* Fisherman, woodsmen, merchants and trappers enlisted.
* Many young men showed great determination to enter the forces – walking long distances, falsifying their age to enlist.
* WHY??? Some joined for adventure, some joined as it was a source of work. Many felt deep loyalty to Britain. This is known as patriotism.
* Patriotism: a strong expression of love for one’s country or nation. Patriotism is often expressed through poems, songs, recitations, flying the flag, singing the anthem etc.
* Some joined because the propaganda was very effective.
* Propaganda: information used to promote a political cause or point of view. Both sides in the war used propaganda to promote their cause.
* Most propaganda was in poster form. The posters tried to persuade people to believe that the enemy was evil and wanted to destroy the “good guy”

Those Who Served

* All around Newfoundland and Labrador there are reminders of the men and women who served their country.
* Memorial University is named in honour of those who died in battle. At MUN and in the Confederation Building, there is a *Book of Remembrance* in which the names, branches, and date of death are recorded for those who passed on.
* Newfoundlanders served in: the Royal Naval Reserve (2050), the Royal Newfoundland Regiment (6240), the Volunteer Aid Detachment (40), the Forestry Corps (500), the Merchant Marine (5000) and the Canadian and other Allied forces (3100).
* These enlistees came from a population of only 230, 000 people.
* The Royal Naval Reserve, formed in 1902, was the only military group when the war started.
* There were 30 naval ships such as HMS New Zealand and the HMCS Niobe on which these men served.
* The Royal Newfoundland Regiment was formed in 1914 and the first 500 enlistees sailed out of St. John’s Harbour Oct. 4th, 1914.
* The VAD was composed of female nurses and health care workers who went overseas to work in military hospitals.
* The Forestry Corps traveled to Scotland to cut wood because there was such high demand for it.
* The Merchant Marine manned ships that escorted cargo ships through dangerous waters. Only recently have they been recognized as veterans. There names are not in the *Book of Remembrance*.

Beaumont Hamel

* The Battle of Beaumont Hamel was part of a larger battle: the Battle of the Somme.
* The Battle of Beaumont Hamel was, and still is, a very important part of the province’s history.
* It was fought by Newfoundlander’s on July 1st, 1916 in Beaumont Hamel, France.
* That morning 801 soldiers from the Newfoundland Regiment were ordered to advance out of their trenches and across open land called “No Man’s Land”
* No Man’s Land: The space between the front lines of the opposing forces. To get to the enemy line, soldiers crossed over into “No Man’s Land.” Those who completed the task successfully were hailed as heroes; those who were not successful usually suffered injury or loss of life.
* The soldiers of the regiment did not have the machine guns that the Germans had and as a result they suffered heavy casualties.
* The Battle only lasted 30 minutes.
* The next morning, only 68 of the soldiers answered the role call.
* 233 were dead.
* 386 were wounded.
* 91 were missing.
* July 1st was declared Memorial Day , national holiday to honor those who had died in the war.
* The national War Memorial downtown St. john’s was opened July 1st, 1924.
* The Beaumont Hamel Memorial Park in France was opened on the site June 27th, 1925.

So why is this Battle so important?

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

The Home Front

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

The Women’s Patriotic Association

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

Newfoundland Patriotic Association

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