

Lt. Hedley Goodyear M.C.

Doctorate Candidate - University of Toronto
Unit: Cdn. Infantry, Central Ontario Regiment
Parents: Josiah and Louisa Goodyear, 36 High St. Grand Falls, Nfld.
Date of Death: August 22, 1918
Burial: Hillside Cemetery, Le Quesnel, France, reference, II.B.3

Because Lt. Hedley Goodyear was not a member of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, detailed information is not available at The Rooms, St. John's. However, the book The Danger Tree, by David Macfarlane (Toronto: Macfarlane Walter and Ross, 1991) provides much about Lt. Hedley Goodyear as an individual.

Physically, Macfarlane says he was "tall and sandy haired" and the wearer of "vast black shoes ... always carefully shined." Lt. Goodyear was a scholar and an idealist and according to Macfarlane, "was a moral being who studied with diligence, but was by no means a bookworm." A quotation from Lt. Goodyear's college yearbook, reproduced by Macfarlane, is illustrative:

His victories with Latin, and Lit., and the ladies are duly recorded ... Prominent in the Literary Society, ... An outstanding debater. During his college course he was one of the best-liked members of his class (Macfarlane, p. 203)

In his Master's thesis, Lt. Goodyear deplored many aspects of Newfoundland's economic, political, educational and social life, and saw the nation's only salvation as being confederation with Canada. This in 1914.

A letter written to his mother on August 6, 1918, on the eve of a battle near Amiens, in which he played a significant role, became famous under the title, "The Last Letter Home of a Hero" and was even read in the House of Commons in honour of Remembrance Day. (Macfarlane, p.201) It wasn't his last letter home. The title was bestowed in error by the Newfoundland poet, E.J. Pratt. The letter is a clear and frank expression of Lieutenant Hedley's idealist hopes that the sacrifices made during the war would count for something worthwhile and that those who would lead after the war would prove worthy of the fallen.

In Macfarlane's book, there is a photograph of Lieutenant Hedley Goodyear taken by his fiancée, Betsy Turnbull, of Hawick, Scotland.

Betsy Turnbull clicked the shutter, and later placed the photograph on her mantelpiece in Hawick. It stayed there and she remained his fiancée until her death more than a half century later. (Macfarlane pp. 182-183)

Betsy mourned; the Goodyear family mourned. How much more could we, as Newfoundlanders, mourn at the thought of all that was lost on August 22, 1918 with the passing of one of our finest? How much different and how much better, could things have been for Newfoundland had he, and other Newfoundlanders who fell in the Great War, remained with us.

Lieutenant Hedley Goodyear was the last of the soldiers from our church to fall in battle during the Great War, 1914-1918. Lance Corporal George Goudie died on November 6, 1918 of chest problems while hospitalized during internment in Switzerland.