



THE ROYAL NEWFOUNDLAND REGIMENT MUSEUM

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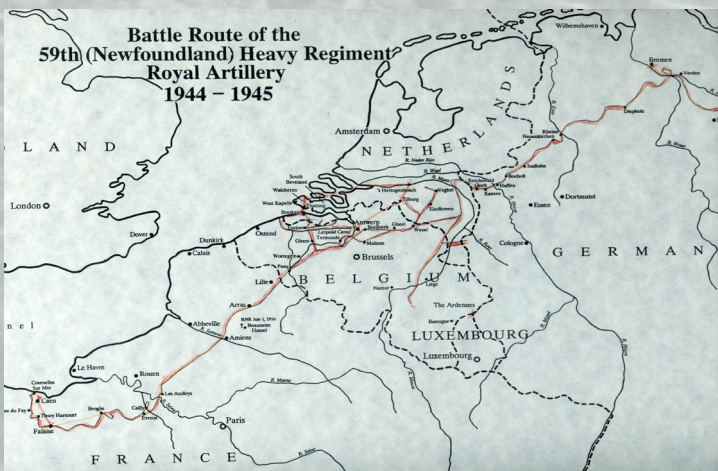
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Sgt. Alphonsus Harvey & Newfoundland Red Ensign



Alphonsus 'Al' Harvey was born on July 6th, 1922 in Gull Island, Newfoundland. He was educated and grew up in the capital city of St. John's. It was in June of 1940 that Al Harvey heard the call to service and enlisted with the Newfoundland Regiment, serving for a while as home defence. A short while later, he transferred over to the 59th Newfoundland Heavy Regiment, Royal Artillery, a sister regiment to the 166th, both corps belonging to the British Army. Al Harvey saw active service in England, France, Belgium, Holland and Germany. The 59th fought in all the major battles from the beaches of Normandy to the Rhine, ending up at Hamburg in May 1945. His post-war service included serving as the squadron Sergeant Major for the 56th Independent Field Squadron, Royal Canadian Engineers.

His service both during wartime and after led to him being awarded the 1945 Star, the France and Germany Star, Defence Medal, Newfoundland Volunteer Service Medal, War Medal (1939-1945), Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Medal, Canadian Centennial Medal, Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee Medal, 125th Anniversary of Confederation Medal, Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal and the Canadian Forces Decoration. Both his medals and the Red



Ensign were donated to the museum by his daughter Sandy Harvey after Al Harvey's passing in 2005.

Al Harvey's Red Ensign, pictured above, is one of the many eye catching items displayed in our museum. While the Red Ensign itself held no official status on land, it was significant at sea. The Red Ensign pictured above was the Newfoundland Dominion's variation of the flag and was flown on merchant and civil (non-military) ships to distinguish them as being from Newfoundland. After the

flag was introduced in 1904 however, many on land adopted it as an unofficial Newfoundland flag to distinguish themselves from the Union Jack that was flown by British dominions and colonies. The flag was regularly flown from many buildings, including some Labrador trading posts and mission stations, as well as many parades and public events pre-confederation.



Pictured in the badge on the right side on the ensign are three figures: Britannia, the personification of Britain and the United Kingdom; the Greek deity Hermes, the god of trade; and a Newfoundland cod fisherman. Hermes is pictured as presenting the Newfoundland fisherman to Britannia, along with a bounty of cod fish. Printed below the figures is a latin phrase “HAEC TIBI DONA FERRO”, meaning “These gifts I bring to thee”. Together, these point out the prominence of the Newfoundland fishing enterprises, something that will surely still resonate with many today.

The significance of this flag, in particular, is that Sgt. Al Harvey carried this flag overseas with him during the Second World War and flew it many times while over there. Those who look upon it can surely only guess at what the flag has seen during its lifetime, the wear and tear evident, with much of its character deriving from the fraying and tarnish. Upon returning from the war, Al Harvey hung the flag over his bar from the time he returned from war until his passing in 2005.



The 59th Newfoundland Heavy Regiment in Normandy, 1944



The 59th Newfoundland Heavy Regiment, Royal Artillery, is a prime example of Newfoundland history that is not often heard of today. The regiment fought alongside the Canadians and British in Normandy and throughout the campaigns to liberate France, Belgium, and the Netherlands. With Britain's declaration of war on Germany on September 3rd, 1939, Newfoundland was automatically drawn into the conflict. It was through the Act for the Defence of Newfoundland (1939) and the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act (1940), that the Commission of Government gained the extensive powers which allowed them to regulate the economy and society for the war effort. They were quick to establish the Newfoundland Militia as a defensive homeguard, which became the Newfoundland Regiment in 1943. This defensive homeguard allowed the Commission to avoid the expense of raising an overseas force. Instead, many Newfoundlanders went on to join British and Canadian forces to support the war effort.

The 59th Newfoundland Heavy Regiment, part of the British Royal Artillery, was formed in June of 1940 after the breakout of the Second World War. After leaving Newfoundland and up until they landed in France, the 59th, along with the 166th, had been posted in England and were tasked with providing coastal defence and live fire for various training exercises. After seeing their sister regiment,

the 166th, ship off to Northern Africa in January of 1943, the 59th were getting restless and awaited their turn to enter into real action. The success of Operation Overlord on June 6th, 1944 gave them the opportunity they had been waiting for.



Pictured to the left is a Royal Artillery badge, which would have been worn by members of the 59th Newfoundland Heavy Regiment.

Nearly a month after D-Day, on July 5th, 1944, the 59th landed on Juno Beach. The Newfoundlanders had been 'late' in arriving because the fire support role had been handled by the battleships and cruisers offshore. Although July 5th is recorded as the 59th's official arrival, some members had actually been in France since D-Day. One such member of the regiment was Lt. Rupert Jackson who had been one of only nineteen men picked to train with the British 6th Airborne Regiment as a Forward Observation Officer. Jackson trained for three months with the 6th in preparation for the pre-invasion assault. Sure enough, in the early hours of June 6th 1944, Jackson and another driver were dropped behind enemy lines with their jeep. Lt. Jackson would spend the next six weeks standing guard on the Bois de Bavent, eventually pushing out the Germans who had reinforced their positions in the commune of Bavent. The skill and bravery that Lt. Jackson displayed would later bring him the well-merited award of the M.B.E. (Member of the Order of the British Empire). Jackson would not rejoin the 59th until after they had advanced into Holland later that year. The 59th would later earn praise from one British officer, who reported the Newfoundlanders were "never satisfied, no matter how many targets are given to them."

Following the Allied victory in August of 1944, the 59th advanced east and continued fighting in both the Netherlands and Belgium before advancing into Germany. Gunners with the 59th would fire their last rounds of the war in the German city of Hamburg on May 2nd, 1945, just two days before the Germans city's forces surrendered.

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About us

Where

CFS St. John's
Anthony Paddon Building
The Boulevard, St. John's, NL
Photo ID is required upon entry

When

June 1st - August 31st
Tuesday 10-9
Wednesday 10-6
Thursday 12-9
Friday 9-4
Saturday 10-4

Other Times by Appointment

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Compiled by: Paige Brennan, Museum Assistant

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