



Richard Lewis Newell
Actually, Louis Frederick Newell
World War I
Royal Newfoundland Regiment
Regimental No. 1821

Born: January 6th, 1900

Place of Birth: Bareneed

Parents: John and Susannah Newell

For the purposes of writing this biography, Richard Newell will be used but in reality, it is Louis Frederick Newell whose biography that is being penned here. Read on to find out how and why this occurred.

The enlistment notes for Richard (really Louis) paint a picture of an 18-year-old who enlisted in Royal Newfoundland Regiment on September 10th, 1915. He is described as being 5 feet 4 ³/₄ inches tall, weighing 148 lbs and as having light brown hair with blue eyes and of fair complexion. He gives trade or calling as farmer and is Methodist by faith.

The service record for “Richard” is basically in two separate parts. First from 10 Sep 1915 to 24 Jun 1916 when he was discharged on 08 Mar 1918.

His service record contains the following entries by date:

1. Embarked St. John’s by train to Quebec 27 Oct 1915
2. Admitted to camp hospital with tonsillitis 18 Dec 1915
3. Tonsillitis was followed by Rheumatism, followed three weeks later by Diphtheria. He was sent home in June with “weakness of heart due to a leaky valve.”
4. Discharged hospital 12 Jan 1916.
5. Promoted to Lance Corporal and sent home to Newfoundland and attached to depot at St. John’s 11 Jun 1916.
6. Discharged as being medically unfit for service on 24 June 1916.
7. Richard then reattested for special duty on 19 Oct 1917 with the Forestry Unit. He was accepted, spent time in Scotland but was again discharged on 08 Aug 1918.

Complaining of ill health, Richard had several medical board sessions and was awarded a pension. He is provided the means through his military pension to take and pass a Telegraph Operators course from The Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company of Canada.

1920 sees Richard as the Wireless Telegraph Operator aboard the S/S Baleine, a vessel owned by Leonard Fisheries out of Port Hawkesbury, N.S., Canada.

1925 brings another significant change, now in Verdun, Quebec, he met Florence Beatrice Gardener (born July 1906) and they

were married on 04 Aug 1925. They had two children, Helen Joyce born 1926 and Edna Florence born 1929.

At some point in the mid 1930's (around 1935) Richard's name changing becomes an issue. It is discovered that on his marriage certificate and the children's birth records, he signed his name as **Louis Frederick Newell not Richard Lewis Newell.**

This comes about because he uses the correct signature on a Life Certificate completed by him. The difference in name is questioned by the military Pensions Board and after some correspondence the matter is essentially clarified in a letter addressed to J.A. McGrath, clerk, for the Department of War Pensions at St. John's Newfoundland from a J. Herwig of The Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League, Dominion Headquarters Service Bureau, Ottawa, Canada. In that letter, the following explanation is provided. Mr. Herwig states:

"I had branch #4 get in touch with the above-mentioned man and he came in to see me. He was able to produce documents to prove that he was the man referred to in your letter. He states that he enlisted under the same name of Richard Lewis Newell, because as his brother had enlisted, he did not want his mother to know that he had joined up.

His name is Louis Frederick Newell. His mother is alive and living at 713 Godin Ave. Verdun and she can verify if necessary.

It seems the explanation is accepted, since there is no further correspondence on the matter in his official service file.

There is a potential gravesite for Louis in Edmonton, Alberta at the Beechmount Cemetery, Plot 0204, 0024. There may be a

mistake in the inscription because instead of "Royal Newfoundland Regiment", the inscription reads "179th Battn. C.E.F.". There is no confirmed person with the name Louis F. Newell in the CEF but there is in the R.N.R. With this information, we are convinced that this is the grave site of Louis Frederick Newell. If new information becomes available, this biography will be updated.