



FIRST WORLD WAR

AU REVOIR AND A SAFE RETURN

1: Departures (CREATIVE WRITING)

Write a letter from the point of view of one of the “From” identities listed below. What would you say to the “To” person? Consider your hopes and fears. Think about how much of your real feelings you will want to share with your intended audience (and why?).

FROM	TO	FROM	TO
Departing Soldier	Friend	Friend	Departing Soldier
	Lover	Lover	
	Spouse	Spouse	
	Parent	Parent	

2: Going Overseas (VARIOUS EXPRESSIONS)

Imagine what it might have been like to travel on the *SS Florizel* from St. John’s to Halifax—the first leg of the journey to Scotland. Then imagine the novelty of joining with other soldiers sailing to Europe to join the war effort.

Write your observations and feelings during those first few hours or days. Consider these aspects of what you might do or see:

- You may be travelling far away for the first time without knowing anyone else sailing with you.
- Will you feel seasick or are you an old hand at travel by boat?
- The ship is big—with cooks and a galley—and there are so many new sights, smells, and sounds aboard . . . and the same is true in the places you touch land



- Do you watch how others behave, to find a new “social norm” and “fit in”? Or are you comfortable, confident, and at home?
- Is there another person heading abroad for the first time who might be feeling as you do?
- Could that person become a friend—or are you already feeling camaraderie with others you signed up with?

Use these musings to guide you as you choose an art form to express your ideas. Consider using a form that is new to you, such as the written word (drama, fictional narrative, poetry) or a visual medium.

VARIATION: *Begin creating the first of a series of comic art vignettes (these might later be used as the basis for a storyboard for a filmmaking project inspired by this exhibit).*

3: Landfall (CONSIDER)

Arriving at the Newfoundland Regiment Depot in Ayr, Scotland, what do you make of the landscape—both natural and built? Of the people and their ways of life? What interests you? Who interests you?

Use GIS software (such as ArcGIS or Google Earth) to explore the landscape. Compare the natural landscape and the built environment of your own hometown with those of Ayr, Scotland. Notice the differences and similarities.

Jot down your ideas and questions for further consideration.

Extension: Conduct a search of historical photos of your hometown and Ayr from the First World War years. Reach out to a school or other organization in Ayr or Newfoundland and Labrador (depending on your location) to collaborate and build a digital photo collage. This activity could be carried out as a class or in small groups.

4: Welcome, Boys! (DRAMA/MUSIC)

Imagine you are a person living in Ayr when the NFC soldiers arrive. As a local, how might you have gone about welcoming these newcomers, the Newfoundlanders?

Write a short skit that explores the various types of interactions that might have occurred. Maybe touch on the humour of misunderstood expressions, discoveries of ways you are alike, or your emerging acceptance of someone you would like to know better, whether as a chum or potential romantic partner.

Include in your research traditional Scottish music from this time period. For example, one popular song was “The Parting Glass,” often sung when friends were departing after a visit. Conduct an internet search of “Scottish folk music early 20th century” for more ideas.



5. Christmas 1917 (VISUAL ART)

Craft a diptych that illuminates the feelings of longing and loneliness within the context of Christmas festivities. Imagine a forester's family at home, in Newfoundland, and the soldier "celebrating" far away with his Company and new acquaintances in Scotland.

Make a lithograph of your work that could be used as a Christmas card next year.

6. A Ditty (SONG)

A "ditty" is a short song that has simple lyrics and tune. Imagine that you do one of the jobs below and craft a short ditty to sing or hum as you work:

- Tree feller cutting timber on the pristine estate of the Duke of Atholl
- Night watchman guarding a lumber mill
- Cook preparing meals for a hungry group of foresters

7. Determination (COLLAGE)

Use recycled paper (and/or other materials) to create a collage depicting the experience of Labradorians who volunteered for the NFC. Integrate these volunteers' expenses to get to an enlistment location and consider how to represent the distances they travelled and how much time it took.