

# NEWFOUNDLAND'S FIRST

## THE STORY OF STAN GREEN, NEWFOUNDLAND'S FIRST MILITARY PILOT

BY MIKE NAPIER

NEWFOUNDLAND, IN 1914, was very definitely not part of Canada: the hardy inhabitants of this rugged territory regarded themselves as the citizens of the westernmost of the British Isles. Their allegiance lay firmly eastward, across the Atlantic, rather than westward toward their nearest – and much larger – neighbour. So, when Britain declared war on Germany in August 1914, Newfoundland, too, found itself at war. Although there was no standing military force in the Dominion, Newfoundlanders were keen from the start to play their part in the defeat of Germany. The announcement, on 12 August, by Governor Sir W.E. Davidson<sup>1</sup> KCMG, that he intended to enlist and equip five hundred troops for service with the British Army was met with by patriotic cheers and overwhelming support.

Among the young men who reported to the recruiting offices over the next ten days was twenty-five year-old John Henry Stanley Green, known to his friends as



2Lt J.H.S. Green, Newfoundland Regiment, shortly after being commissioned in August/September 1916. Of interest are the Regimental badges which show a non-standard version of a whole caribou (perhaps used by the 2nd Battalion), rather than the head of the animal in the original version of the badge. :Author

'Stan'. Green lived in his native St John's, where he was an accountant with the local trading company, Steer Brothers. Standing just five feet five inches tall, with piercing blue eyes under a mop of dark hair, Green's wiry stature belied his tough and tenacious nature. He was already well-known in sports-mad St John's, after a heroic performance in a ten-mile road race in August 1911. According to a contemporary newspaper report, *the story of David and Goliath recurred, for compared with the big burly Duff<sup>2</sup> little Green was compared to the lad with the slingshot of old.* Green's dogged determination won him second place in a fiercely fought contest and with it the admiration of the spectators. An easy wit and a ready smile also served to make Green a popular character. He joined the newly-formed Newfoundland Regiment with the Regimental Number 108

After a month of training at Pleasantville, on the outskirts of St John's, the fledgling Newfoundland Regiment was

'Stick in the Mud' is a slang phrase, but it suits this snap, doesn't it? wrote Stan Green to Margaret Noble on the back of this card on 17 December 1914 after a day at the Noble house in Inverness. The photograph had been taken a month earlier on Salisbury Plain.

Stan Green in full fighting equipment, early 1915. He was armed with one of the Ross rifles, used by the Newfoundland Regiment before receiving SMLEs.

Stan Green getting ready for the seven-mile Harrier's Cross Country race just outside Edinburgh on 20 March 1915. Green came in 10th of the 250 runners, the first Newfoundlander to cross the finishing line.

