

# beaumont hamel memorial park

## overview



On 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916, the opening day of the Battle of the Somme, the Newfoundland Regiment made a brave but unsuccessful attempt to take the German trenches ahead of them, which had been heavily fortified since 1914 and which additionally had the benefit of natural protection by being situated in a deep natural ravine (“Y Ravine”).

The Battle of the Somme was the regiment's first major engagement. To hasten their

advance, they climbed out of their support trenches in St. John's Road behind the British lines (the site of the present car park, pictured). They then marched towards the British support trenches and no-man's land beyond.

Clearly visible to the German machine gunners, many were killed before they had even reached the British lines. No troops got any further than the “danger tree” (the remains of which still stands in the field) and within 30 minutes the regiment had been obliterated by enemy machine-gun fire: of almost 800 troops, 90% became casualties and all 22 officers were killed.

The German trenches around “Y ravine” were attacked again and captured by the 51st (Highland) Division on the 13th November, 1916.



## independent tasks

### the caribou memorial

The memorial is in the form of a Caribou, the emblem of the Newfoundland Regiment. Designed by Basil Gatto, it faces the enemy trenches in a striking pose.

**Q. In your view, what appears to be the attitude of the Caribou (e.g. defiance, grief, anger, sorrow)?**

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