



Private George Abbott (Regimental Number 1242), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupation previous to his military service recorded as that of a cooper working for a weekly \$8.40, George Abbott presented himself at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's for medical examination on February 19, 1915. He then enlisted eight days later – engaged at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem - on February 27, before attesting a month later, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March.



Private George Abbott of 'E' Company embarked in St. John's on board the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Stephano* (right above – from the *Provincial Archives*) almost four weeks later again, on April 22, 1915.

The ship sailed to Halifax where his contingent took ship on His Majesty's Transport *Missanabie* (right) – likely with Canadian troops - for the crossing to Liverpool – the ship departed Halifax on April 25. From Liverpool they travelled by train to Edinburgh where the Newfoundlanders arrived on May 2. 'E' Company was to have but a few days to savor the charms of the Scottish capital.



Only nine days later, on May 11, the entire Battalion was posted for training from Edinburgh to a tented Stobs Camp near the Scottish town of Hawick.

(Right: *the Regiment on parade at Stobs Camp on June 10, the day it received its Colours* – courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo)



From Stobs, some thirteen weeks later again, in early August, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', the senior Companies now become 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Newfoundland Regiment, were

transferred to Aldershot in southern England. There they were to undergo final preparations – and a royal inspection – before departing on active service to the Middle East and to the fighting on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

‘E’ and ‘F’ Companies – the latter having arrived at Stobs Camp on July 10 - were to be posted to the new Regimental Depot and were to form the nucleus of the newly-formed 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion.

When he was apprised of his transfer seems not to be recorded, but Private Abbott was one of the few from ‘E’ Company who were to swell the ranks of the units posted to Aldershot - thus he became a soldier of ‘B’ Company. It was during the period while he was at Aldershot, and as was the case with the great majority of the Newfoundland troops, that Private Abbott was prevailed upon to re-enlist *for the duration of the war*. This he did on August 14\*.

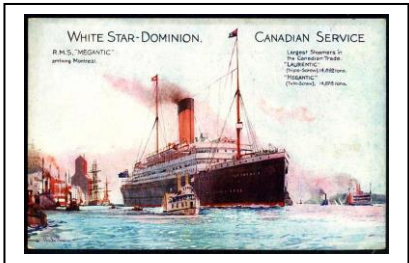
*\*At the outset of the War, perhaps because it was felt by the authorities that it would be a conflict of short duration, the recruits enlisted for only a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was obviously going to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist.*

On August 20, 1915, Private Abbott took ship on board the requisitioned passenger liner *Megantic* (right top) for passage to the Middle East and to the fighting in Gallipoli where, a month later – of which two weeks had been spent billeted at the British barracks at Abbassia, near the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion landed on the beach at Suvla Bay on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

(Right above black & white: Newfoundland troops on board a troop-ship anchored at Mudros, either *Megantic* on August 29, *Ausonia* on September 18, or *Prince Abbas* on September 19 – Whichever the case, they were yet to land on Gallipoli. – from Provincial Archives)

(Right above: ‘Kangaroo Beach’, where 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion landed on the night of September 19-20, 1915, is in the distance at the far end of Suvla Bay. The remains of a landing-craft are still visible in the foreground on ‘A’ Beach. – photograph from 2011)

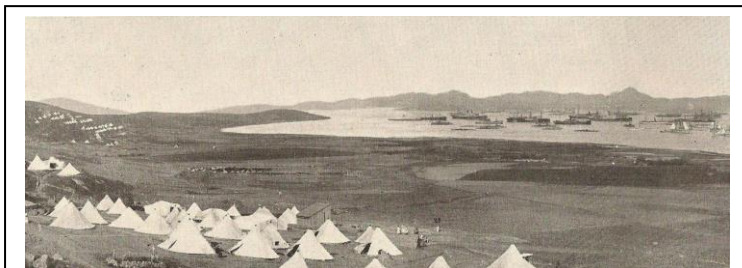
(Right: almost a century later, the area, little changed from those far-off days, of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla, and where Private Abbott served during the fall of 1915 – photograph from 2011)



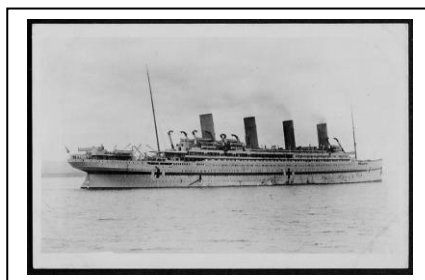
On December 4, some eleven weeks after his disembarkation, Private Abbott was admitted into the 26<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station at Suvla then evacuated from Suvla to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Stationary Hospital at Mudros on the Greek island of Lemnos, suffering from frostbite. From there just days later, on December 10, he was moved to the Lowlands Convalescent Depot, also at Mudros.

(continued)

(Right: *By the end of the autumn of 1915, Allied medical facilities – the majority of them under canvas - almost completely surrounded the crowded bay and the minuscule harbour of Mudros. – from Illustration*)



On January 3 of the New Year, 1916, he was taken on board His Majesty's Hospital Ship *Britannic*\* (right), sister ship to *Olympic* and the ill-starred *Titanic* for passage back to the United Kingdom. Six days later – January 9 – Private Abbott was back in the United Kingdom and being admitted into the 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital at Wandsworth.



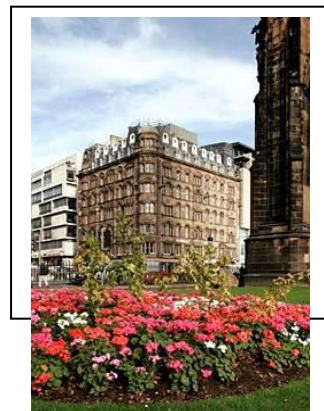
\**Britannic* was sunk – mined or torpedoed – in November of that same year.

(Right: *The main building of what became 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital during the Great War was opened, on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1859, as a home for the orphaned daughters of British soldiers, sailors and marines. – photograph from 2010*)



(Above far right: *Newfoundland patients, unfortunately unidentified, convalescing at 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital, Wandsworth – courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo*)

After two weeks of treatment and convalescence, Private Abbott was granted the customary ten-day furlough granted to military personnel upon release from hospital in the United Kingdom – in his case from January 26 until February 4 – a period of leave which he spent at the Waverley Hotel in Edinburgh (right – from *Wikipedia*). This was then followed by a posting to the Regimental Depot, where he reported *to duty* on that same February 4.



*\*The Waverley offered favourable rates to servicemen during the Great War.*

The Regimental Depot had been established during the summer of 1915 in the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland to serve as a base for the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion. It was from there – as of November of 1915 up until January of 1916 – that the new-comers from home were sent in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

(Previous page: *an aerial view of Ayr – probably from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough is to the right. – courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr*)

Private Abbott was a soldier of the 3rd Re-enforcement Draft that passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton on March 28 to embark onto His Majesty's Transport *Archangel* (right) en route to the Western Front. The draft disembarked in Rouen, capital city of Normandy and site of the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot on the 30<sup>th</sup>, two days later, proceeding to the Depot for several days of final training and organization\*.

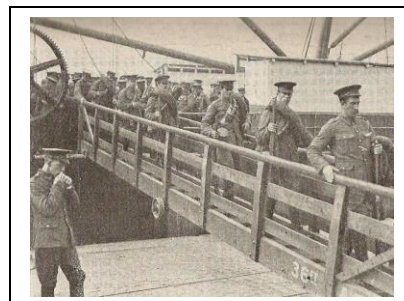
(Right: *British troops disembark at Rouen en route to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

*\*Apparently the standard length of time for this final training at the outset of the war had been ten days – although this was to become more and more flexible as the War progressed - in areas near Rouen, Étaples, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

On April 15, a detachment from Rouen of two-hundred eleven other ranks – accompanied by two officers – reported to duty with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion already billeted in the village of Englebelmer some three kilometres behind the lines of the *Western Front*. Private Richardson was among that number.

Only two days prior, on April 13, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had *itself* marched into the village of Englebelmer – thus completing a month-long transfer from Egypt to the western Front. There it was billeted, welcomed those re-enforcements from Rouen of the 15<sup>th</sup> and, on the evening of that same day, was ordered forward – accompanied by the the new-comers – into the nearby British lines, to work in the communication trenches.

The Newfoundlanders were also soon to be preparing for the British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for the languid, meandering river flowing through the region, *the Somme*.



(Right above: *part of the re-constructed trench system to be found in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2007(?)*)

Born in Wesleyville, the son of Henry Abbott, fisherman, and Emily Abbott of Battery Road (née *Howse?*) St. John's, he was also brother to William, to Stanley and to Annie - to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of fifty cents from his pay – and to as many as five other siblings.

(Preceding page: *The photograph of Stanley and George Abbott is from Provincial Archives.*)

Private Abbott was reported as *missing in action* at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, 1916, while serving with 'C' Company during the fighting of the first day of *the Somme*. Some six months later, on December 31, he was officially *presumed dead*.



Private George Abbott died on the same day, and in the same place, as his brother Stanley.

George Abbott had enlisted at the age of twenty years.

(Right above: *Beaumont-Hamel - looking from the British lines down the hill to Y Ravine Cemetery which today stands atop part of the German front-line defences - The Danger Tree is to the right in the photograph. – photograph taken in 2009*)



(Right: *a grim, grainy image purporting to be Newfoundland dead awaiting burial after Beaumont-Hamel – from ...*)

Private George Abbott was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, as well as to the British War Medal (centre) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

