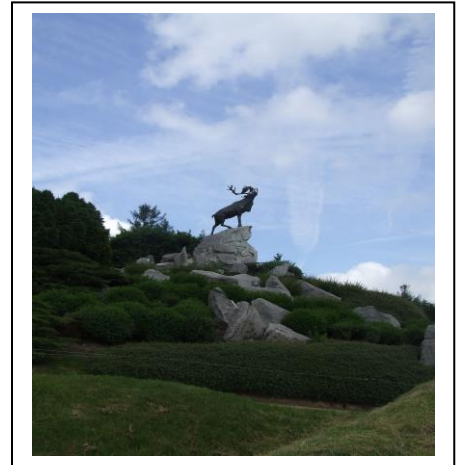


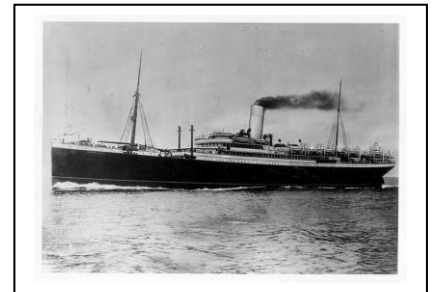


Private Gilbert Antle (Regimental Number 1899), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a clerk, Gilbert Antle was a recruit of the Sixth Draft. He enlisted at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 – on October 12, 1915, and then attested on the following day, October 13.



Private Antle and the other military personnel of 'G' Company – apparently in the company of several naval reservists and also some German prisoners (these latter presumably to remain in Canada) - left St. John's by train on October 27, to cross the island to Port aux Basques. The contingent then traversed the Gulf of St. Lawrence by ferry, and proceeded by train from North Sydney to Quebec City.



At Québec the Newfoundlanders boarded His Majesty's Transport *Corsican* (above) for the trans-Atlantic passage to the English south-coast naval establishment of Devonport where they arrived on November 9.

By the morning of the 10th the new arrivals had travelled by train and had gone north to Scotland. There they had been billeted in huts in a military camp at Gailles, not far removed from the new Regimental Depot where accommodation for the contingent was as yet not available.

That new 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 2nd (Reserve) Battalion. It was from there – as of November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers arriving from home were sent in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and then subsequently to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1st Battalion.

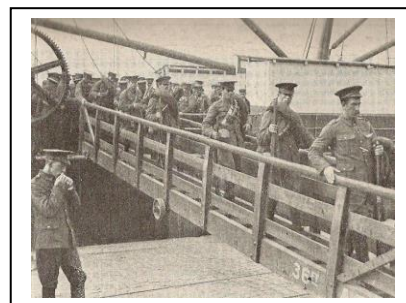


(Right above: an aerial view of Ayr – probably from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough is to the right. – courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr)

It was during this posting to the Regimental Depot that, on May 24, some three weeks before his departure to France on *active service*, Private Antle was prevailed upon to re-enlist *for the duration of the War**.

**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.*

The 6th Re-enforcement Draft – Private Butler among its ranks - passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton on its way to the Continent on June 14, 1916. It arrived in the Norman capital of Rouen on the following day, June 15, whereupon the contingent was received into the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot, there to continue final training* and to organize before moving onwards towards the front and to a rendezvous with 1st Battalion.



(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen on their way 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, Étapes, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

A detachment of sixty-six *other ranks* from Rouen, a draft which included Private Butler, arrived to join the parent unit in the community of Louvencourt on June 30.

At 9:15 that evening, the Newfoundlanders – including a goodly number of those new-comers – but with the exception of the fourteen officers and eighty-three *other ranks* assigned to remain behind with the Re-enforcement Company, marched from there to their assigned *forming-up place trenches i.e. rear line of trenches in our usual sector* (Regimental War Diary).



(Right above: *Just inside the entrance to the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel, this trench is reputed to be the (re-constituted) one where 1st Battalion spent the night before launching its attack from there on July 1. – photograph from 2009*)

The son of Thomas Antle*, fisherman, businessman (lumber, and collector for *HM Customs*) and Mary Jane Antle (née Mugford, deceased November 24, 1905) – to whom he had bequeathed the accrual of fifty cents per diem from his pay - of Botwood, he was also brother to Arthur-Nightingale, to Abram-Bussey, to Frank and to Susy - she had been adopted by Thomas and Mary.

**married again, to Mary Anne Payne*

(continued)

Private Antle was reported as having been *killed in action* at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, 1916, serving with 'B' Company during the fighting of the first day of *the Somme*.

At home it was the Reverend J. T. Newton of Botwood who was requested to bear the news to his family.

Gilbert Antle had enlisted at the age of twenty years and seven months.

(Right top: *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 Gilbert Antle was eligible for the British War Medal (on left) and also the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

