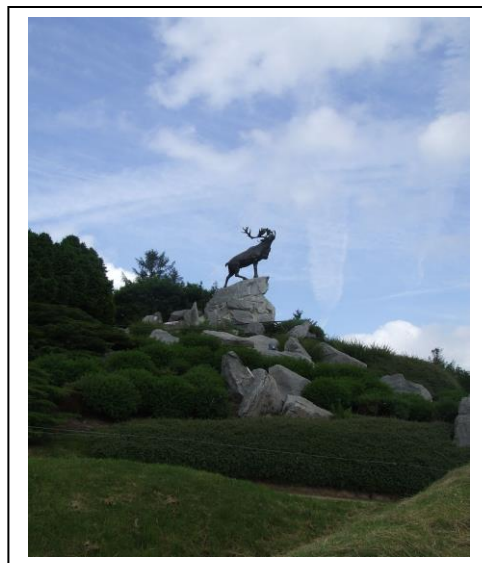


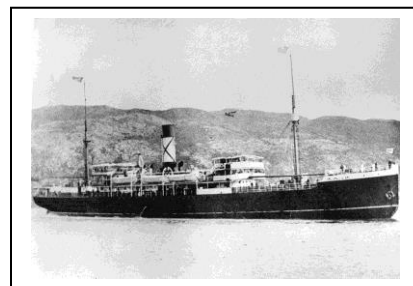


Private Arthur George Ballam (Regimental Number 3031), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a student and with an annual income of six hundred dollars, Arthur George Ballam was a recruit of the Twelfth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on August 17 of 1916, he then also enlisted – *for the duration of the war* and engaged at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and attested on that same August 14.



Private Ballam* was one of the approximately three hundred twenty *all ranks* to leave St. John's for *overseas service* on the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* (right), bound for Halifax, on January 31, 1917, from there to take ship to the United Kingdom.

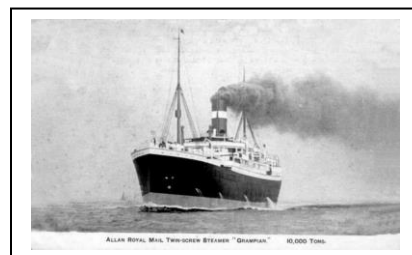


**He is recorded as having been promoted to the rank of lance-corporal on January 24, 1917, and on other documentation is referred to variously as lance corporal or corporal; but elsewhere at the same time he is referred to in his file as Private Ballam.*

Immediately upon its arrival in Nova Scotia, however, this detachment was forwarded to accommodation in the town of Windsor where it was soon to be quarantined because of an epidemic of measles and mumps.

It was not before a lapse of some two-and-a-half months since its arrival that transport could be arranged for the trans-Atlantic crossing to the United Kingdom for the so-called *Windsor Draft* – minus the twenty-five or so personnel still unable to travel.

On April 17, Private Ballam embarked onto His Majesty's Transport *Grampian* (right), one of three ships carrying the Newfoundlanders to sail on the next day in a convoy from Halifax. The vessels were also carrying Canadian reinforcements to the English west-coast port of Liverpool, where the ships docked on April 29.



(continued)

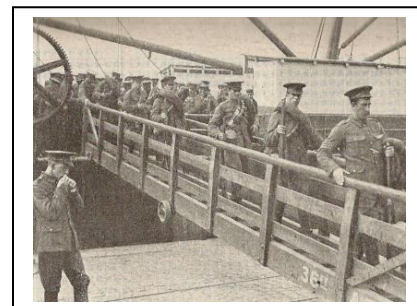
Arriving in England the contingent entrained for the west coast of Scotland. By this time, the Regimental Depot at Ayr had already been in existence to serve as the base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment for a year. It was from here – since November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers from Newfoundland had been despatched in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1st Battalion.



By the time that the Windsor Draft arrived at the Regimental Depot, 2nd (Reserve) Battalion was becoming critically short of personnel.

(Right above: *the new race-course at Ayr – opened in 1907 – where men of the Regiment were billeted and where they replaced some of the turf with a vegetable garden; part of the present grandstand is original – photo from 2012*)

On June 11, 1917, the 25th Re-enforcement Draft – Private Ballam among its ranks - passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton on its way to France. On the following day, June 12, the contingent disembarked in the Norman capital, Rouen, where time was spent at the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot, to be organized and to undergo final training* before moving onward to its eventual rendezvous with 1st Battalion.

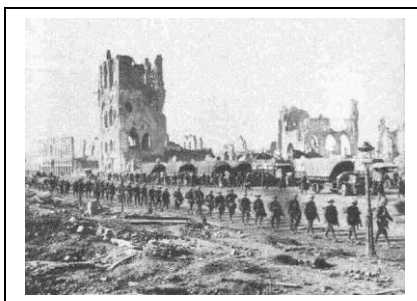


(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen on their way to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

**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, Étaples, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

His records show that it was on July 2 – the *Regimental War Diary* says, in fact, on the day before - that Private Ballam's contingent of two-hundred fifty *other ranks* reported to duty at Caribou Camp, behind the lines near Woesten in Belgium. For the next few days – and nights – 1st Battalion supplied working parties for road-mending and for the construction of infantry tracks.

Only days before, at the end of June, the Newfoundlanders of 1st Battalion had once again moved north into Belgium and once again to the area of Ypres. This had been selected by the High Command to be the theatre of the British summer offensive of 1917. Officially named the *Third Battle of Ypres*, the campaign came to be known to history as *Passchendaele*, taking that name from a small village on a ridge that was one of the British Army's objectives.



(Previous page: *Troops file through the rubble of the medieval city of Ypres on their way to the front in the late summer of 1917. – from Illustration*)

1st Battalion remained in Belgium until October 17, a small cog in the machinery of the British Army which floundered its way across the sodden countryside of Flanders. Notably it fought in two major engagements, at the *Steenbeek* on August 16, and at the *Broembeek* on October 9.

(Right: *an unidentified – perhaps unidentifiable – part of the Passchendaele battlefield in the autumn of 1917 – from Illustration*)



A week after the encounter of October 9 at the *Broembeek*, the Newfoundlanders were withdrawn from the *Passchendaele* campaign in order to prepare for yet another upcoming offensive: *Cambrai*. They were ordered back south from Belgium into northern France on October 17 to re-enforce, to organize and to train in the vicinity of Berles-au-Bois, a small rural community a dozen or so kilometres to the south-west of Arras.

The so-called *Battle of Cambrai* was to officially last for just two weeks and a day, from November 20 until December 4, the Newfoundlanders directly involved at all times during that period.

The battle began well for the British who used tanks on a large scale for the first time; but opportunities were squandered and by its close the British had relinquished as much territory as they had gained.



1st Battalion was again dealt with severely, at Marcoing and at Masnières - where a Caribou stands today: of the total of five-hundred fifty-eight officers and men who went into battle, two-hundred forty-eight had become casualties by the end of the second day.

(Above right: *the Canal St-Quentin at Masnières, the crossing of which and the establishment of a bridgehead being the first objectives for the Newfoundlanders on November 20, the first day of the Battle of Cambrai – photograph from 2009*)

The son of Manoah Ballam, fisherman and general dealer, and Alice J. Ballam – to whom he had allotted a daily sixty cents from his pay - of Curling (formerly Birchy Cove), Bay of Islands, he was also brother to Samuel Robert (Private, Regimental Number 1440, who survived the conflict), May, Samuel, Charles – who was to become very well known in business and politics - to John, Ada, Nellie, Reginald-Kitchener, and to Jessie.



Private Ballam was at first reported as *wounded and missing in action* on December 3, 1917, while fighting near the French villages of Marcoing and Masnières during the *Battle of Cambrai*.

However, due to later evidence, perhaps that first noted below, on or about June 10, 1918, his record was subsequently amended so as to read *killed in action 3/12/17*.

George Ballam had enlisted at the age of eighteen years and six months.

(Preceding page: *The Caribou at Masnières stands on the high ground to the north of the community. The seizure of this terrain was the final objective of 1st Battalion on November 20; however, whether this was achieved is at best controversial.* – photograph from 2012)

Excerpt from the files of Private Ballam: **...the German list forwarded with this soldier's disc from Berlin gave the information that 'the Disc was sent in by a Lower Alsatian Infantry Regiment on 18/12/17. The owner is fallen and buried. No further details.'** – Found dead on the battlefield.

A memorandum and a letter from the files: **When I was captured on 3/12/17 I was with 3031 pte. A. G. Ballam who was wounded in the right shoulder (slightly) Ballam was also taken prisoner but I do not think he was killed.**

Sgd 846 pte. G. McWhorter

his X mark

Witness H. A. Anderson Lieut.

Major W. F. Rendell
Dept. of Militia
St. John's

Humbermouth
July 2nd/20

Dear Sir

Mrs Ballam of Curling has asked me if I would send in any information I know concerning her son George Ballam.

He was taken prisoner at Cambrai on December the 3rd 1917 out of a strong point when I was taken. He was slightly wounded in the shoulder. He, being a walking case, and I a stretcher case we were separated at the trench and I never saw him after.

After returning to London I made enquiries for him & I was informed that his Disc was there and that he had fell in action. He was captured however. I think this is about all I can say concerning him. I remain

Yours Respectfully

George McWhorter

(continued)

Noted on file: Question of enquiry – quashed

Private Arthur George Ballam was entitled to the British War Medal (on left) and also to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

