



Private Samuel Bambury (Regimental Number 3571), 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 trader earning a monthly \$25.00, Samuel Bambury was a recruit of the Fourteenth Draft. He presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on April 4, 1917, also enlisting - engaged for *the duration of the war* at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and attesting on that same day.

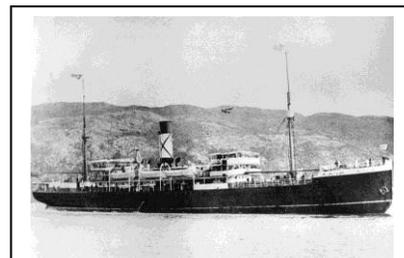
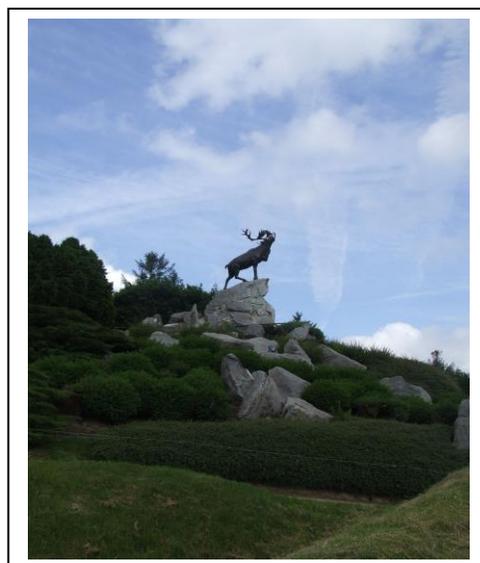
Private Bambury was not to depart from Newfoundland until May 19, when the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* (right) left en route to Halifax. His contingent of three officers and one-hundred eighty-two *other ranks*, and also ninety-nine recruits of the newly-formed Newfoundland Forestry Unit, then left Nova Scotia for the United Kingdom on board an unspecified* vessel, on May 29.

**The ship in question may well have been the White Star liner Olympic (right) – sister ship to Titanic – requisitioned as a troop transport during the war, which sailed on June 2 from Halifax with Canadian military personnel as well – there are no other departures on or about this date. May 29 may have been the date of embarkation by the Newfoundland contingent.*

Arriving in the English west-coast port of Liverpool on June 9 the contingent entrained for the west coast of Scotland. By this time, the Regimental Depot at Ayr had already been in existence as the base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment for some two years. It was from here – since November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers from home were being despatched in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later 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)

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It was towards the end of June, on the 25th, that Private Bambury was admitted into Heathfield Hospital at Ayr, having been diagnosed as suffering from diphtheria. He remained hospitalized for almost two months, until August 17, when he was discharged to duty at Barry*.

**During the summer months of 1917, 2nd (Reserve) Battalion was transferred from Ayr to not-so-distant Barry in the region of Dundee. Initially intended to be a permanent move, the protest from several quarters was so great that the Newfoundlanders were back in Ayr by the third week of September.*

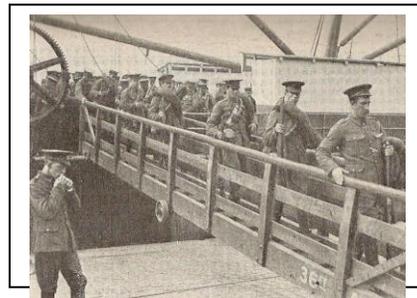
Back in Ayr for some four months, 2nd (Reserve) Battalion was soon again to be ordered to move its quarters, on this second occasion from the Royal Borough of Ayr in Scotland to southern England, to Hazely Down, Hampshire, not far distant from the historic cathedral city of Winchester.

This transfer was finalized during the latter part of January, 1918, and it was while at Hazely that Private Bambury received his orders to join the British Expeditionary Force.

*(Right: a bleak-looking Hazely Down Camp at some time during the winter of 1918 – from *The War Illustrated*)*



On March 27, the 40th Re-enforcement Draft of eighty *other ranks*, from Hazely Down, with Private Bambury one of its number, passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton to take ship for the Continent. Two days later, on the 29th, the contingent disembarked in Rouen and made their way to the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot there for a number of days of final training and organization* before continuing to its rendezvous with 1st Battalion.



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

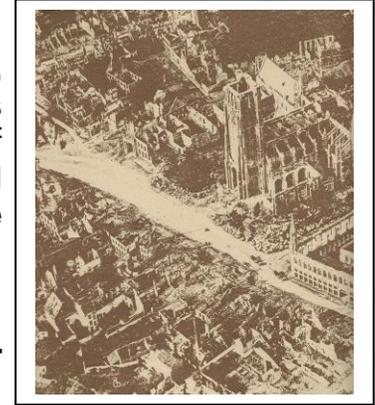
**Apparently, the standard length of time for this final training at the outset of the war had been ten days – although this was to become more and more flexible as the War progressed - in areas near Rouen, Étaples, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

Private Bambury is recorded as having reported *to duty* with 1st Battalion on April 4 while the Newfoundlanders were out of the line at Hasler (*Haslar*) Camp near St-Jan, just to the north-east of Ypres. Men of three Companies were at the time strengthening strong-points in the area. However, by the evening of the next day, the Newfoundlanders had moved up, back into the line, in a defensive sub-sector near to the village of Passchendaele, relieving the 2nd Battalion, Hampshire Regiment.

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Some three months previous, at the beginning of January of 1918, after a snowy Christmas period spent to the south-west of Arras and withdrawn from the front, the Newfoundlanders of 1st Battalion had returned to Belgium, to *the Ypres Salient*, for a third time. Upon arrival there, and as with the other British and Empire troops in the area, they were to spend much of their time building and strengthening defences.

(Right: *an aerial view of Ypres, taken towards the end of 1916 – from Illustration*)



In the meantime, the Germans had been preparing for a final effort to win the War: the Allies were exhausted and lacking man-power after their exertions of 1917 - the British had fought three campaigns and some units of the French Army had mutinied - and the Germans had available the extra divisions that their victory over the Russians in the East now allowed them. It was expected that they would launch a spring offensive.



And during this period of waiting, the Newfoundlanders continued to dig.

(Right above: *countryside in-between Zonnebeke and Passchendaele (today Passendale) in the vicinity of where the Newfoundlanders were stationed in March and early April of 1918 – photograph from 2011*)

Then the Germans did as was expected of them. Ludendorff's armies had already launched a powerful thrust on March 21, striking at first in the area of *the Somme*, overrunning the battlefields of 1916 and beyond; for a while the advance seemed unstoppable. Then a second offensive, *Georgette*, was launched in the northern sector of the front, in Flanders, where the Newfoundlanders were stationed: the date was April 9. Within two days the situation of the Allies was desperate.



(Right above: *British troops on the retreat in Flanders in April of 1918 – from Illustration*)

On the day after the first heavy bombardments, April 10, as the Germans approached the towns of Armentières and Nieppe, troops were deployed to meet them. The Newfoundlanders, due to come out of the line and move back to the Somme, boarded buses at three o'clock in the afternoon and were suddenly directed southward, towards Nieppe. They were in action, attempting to stem this latest offensive, three hours later.



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(Preceding page: *the area of La Crêche - the buildings in the background - where the Newfoundlanders de-bussed on April 10 to meet the Germans in the area of Steenwerck and its railway station – photograph from 2010.*)

The British were pushed back to the frontier area of France and Belgium. On the 12th of April 1st Battalion, fighting in companies rather than as a single entity, was making a series of stands.

On April 13, during the defensive stand near the De Seule crossroads on the Franco-Belgian border, one platoon of 'C' Company was obliterated while trying to check the German advance. The remainder of 'C' Company took up defensive positions along a light railway line and, with 'A' Company, stopped a later enemy attack. 'B' and 'D' Companies – in a failed counter-attack on that evening - were equally heavily involved.



(Right above: *ground just to the east of Bailleul where 1st Battalion fought during the period April 12 to 21 – photograph from 2013*)

What exact role Private Bambury played at the time is not known - it is only recorded that he was a soldier of 'B' Company - but from April 10 to 21 was to be a difficult eleven days for all of 1st Battalion's personnel. Nevertheless, somehow, the German breakthrough never materialised and the front finally stabilised.



(Right above: *These are the De Seule crossroads, lying astride the Franco-Belgian frontier, the scene of fierce fighting involving 1st Battalion on April 12 -13, 1918. Today there are several houses and a convenience store. – photograph from 2009(?)*)

The son of George Bambury, fisherman, and Elvina Bambury – to whom he had allotted a daily seventy cents from his pay - of Poole's Cove, Fortune Bay, he was oldest brother to Harold, Alfreda, Herbert, Levi-George, Lillian-Maude, Lillian-Maude*, Rhoda, Cecil and Ethel*.

Private Bambury was reported as having been *killed in action* on April 12-13, 1918*, while serving with 'B' Company in fighting to the south of the Belgian town of Neuve-Église.

Samuel Bambury had enlisted at the age of nineteen years.

**All this comes from a single source – unconfirmed. The two apparent Lillian-Maudes were seemingly born in two consecutive years – perhaps the first died in infancy and the second named for her – again no confirming information has been found.*

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Private Samuel Bambury was entitled to the British War Medal (on left) and also to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

