

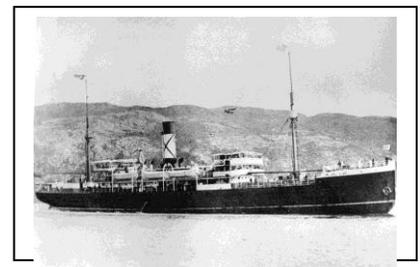


Corporal George Henry (Harry) Bishop (Regimental Number 3559) lies in Marcoing British Cemetery – Grave reference II. G. 17.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a student, unemployed at the time but with a recorded annual income of \$700.00, George Bishop had apparently also spent some time with the Newfoundland Royal Naval Reserve although there seems to have been no service number assigned to him.

A recruit of the Fourteenth Draft, having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on March 22, 1917, he then enlisted - engaged *for the duration of the war* and at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and attested on that same day. One month later, on April 24, Private Bishop received a first promotion, to the rank of lance corporal.

Lance Corporal Bishop was not to depart from Newfoundland for overseas service 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*)

**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.*

During the summer interlude spent at Barry (see immediately above), Lance Corporal Bishop was promoted for a second time, on this occasion to the rank of (acting) corporal, on August 24.

It was then not to be until November 6, 1917, that Corporal Bishop took ship again; on this occasion he was on his way to the Continent, passing through the English south-coast port of Southampton as a non-commissioned officer among the one-hundred eleven *other ranks* of the 32nd Draft from Ayr. The Newfoundlanders disembarked in Rouen on the following day and made their way to the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot there for a few days of final training and organizing* before making their way to a rendezvous with 1st Battalion.



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

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**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.*

By that time, 1st Battalion had been withdrawn from the *Passchendaele* campaign, on October 17, in order to prepare for yet another upcoming offensive: *Cambrai*. It had been ordered back south from Belgium into northern France to re-enforce, to organize and to train in the vicinity of Berles-au-Bois, a rural community a dozen or so kilometres to the south-west of Arras.

It was there that, on November 14, four officers and one-hundred forty-one *other ranks* – one of them Corporal Bishop – reported from Rouen *to duty* with 1st Battalion.

That new offensive, 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 Henry Bishop, printer and book-seller, and Mary Elizabeth Bishop (née Rowe, she later Mrs. Edward Bulley) of St. John's then she of Pass Island, Hermitage Bay, he was also brother to Olive Bishop – later to become a well-known nurse and mid-wife - to whom he had willed his all. His mother had two further children with Edward Bulley.



Corporal Bishop was reported as having been *killed in action* on November 20, 1917, while serving with 'B' Company on the first day of the fighting near the French villages of Marcoing and Masnières.

At home, it was the Reverend W. R. Courage of Hermitage who was requested to bear the news to his family.

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Buried in Marcoing Copse Cemetery, Corporal Bishop was later re-interred to where his remains repose today.

George Henry Bishop had enlisted at the *declared* age of nineteen years and six months (born in October of 1897).

(Previous 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 ever achieved is at best controversial. – photograph from 2012*)

Corporal George Henry Bishop was entitled to the British War Medal (on left) and also to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

