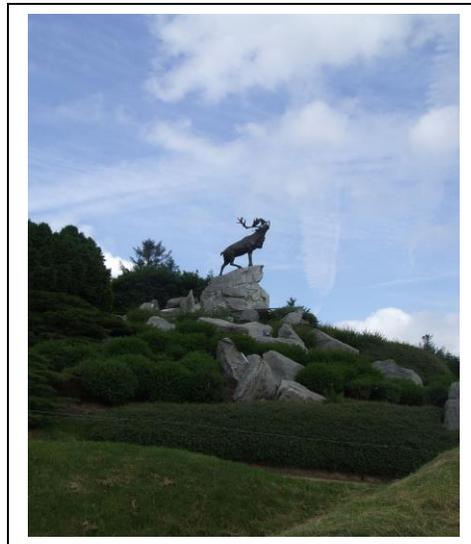




Private Angus Perry Brinston (*Brinstone* in some sources) (Regimental Number 2851), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a fisherman, Angus Perry Brinston was a recruit of the Tenth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on May 31 of 1916, he then enlisted *for the duration of the war* – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 – on the following day, June 1, before attesting four days later again, on June 5.



It was the 28th of August when Private Brinston embarked for passage to the United Kingdom and it was on board His Majesty's Transport *Sicilian** (right) that he was to make the trans-Atlantic crossing to the United Kingdom.

This was the third such voyage that the ship was to make in 1916, the Newfoundlanders likely sharing the vessel with Canadian personnel**. Private Brinston was a soldier of Section 6, Platoon 10, 'C' (Reserve) Company of 3rd Battalion (see *** below), and one of a draft of two-hundred forty-two personnel from Newfoundland in all.



**Some sixteen years previously - as of 1899 when she was launched – the vessel had served as a troop-ship and transport carrying men, animals and equipment to South Africa for use during the Second Boer War.*

***Sicilian had been re-fitted in 1906 to carry just under twelve-hundred passengers, thus her journey to St. John's in March of 1916 was likely followed by the short passage to Halifax to embark Canadian military personnel. Likewise, in July, she had sailed from Montreal on July 16 with Canadians to embark the Newfoundlanders awaiting passage overseas.*

****3rd Battalion was based in St. John's, whereas 2nd (Reserve) Battalion – 'E', 'F', 'G' and 'H' Companies - was stationed in the United Kingdom. 1st Battalion was the edge of the sword – 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies – and was posted to the front.*

Upon arrival in the United Kingdom, the ship docked in the south-coast naval port of Devonport from where the Newfoundlanders entrained for the journey north to Scotland and to the Regimental Depot where each newcomer was delegated to one of the four resident companies - and the where the somewhat confusing title of 'C' Company was abandoned.

The Regimental Depot had been established during the summer of 1915 in the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland, there 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 despatched in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1st Battalion.



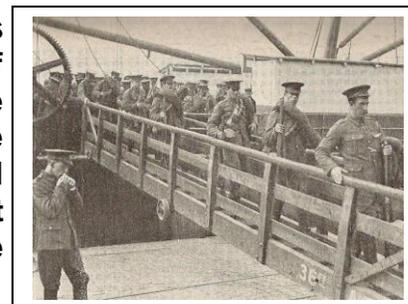
(Right above: *an aerial view of Ayr – probably from the period between the Wars: Newton-upon Ayr is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough is to the right. – courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr*)

During the winter of 1915-1916 the men of the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion had been lodged in several venues, at a nearby military camp at Gailles, but also as far afield as Paisley Barracks, some sixty-five kilometres distant. However, by the spring of 1916 the difficulty had been overcome by housing the men in a requisitioned school, in a tented community and in the Ayr Racecourse Grandstand, all in the district of Newton-upon-Ayr.



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

The 14th Re-enforcement Draft – Private Brinston among its ranks - passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton on November 30 of 1916 on its way to the Continent and to the Western Front. It disembarked in the Norman capital of Rouen on the next day, December 1, and spent time at the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot located there, in final training and organization*, before making its way to a rendezvous with 1st Battalion.

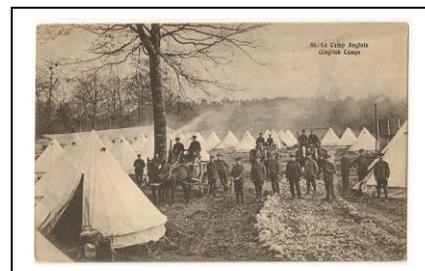


(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen on their way to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

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

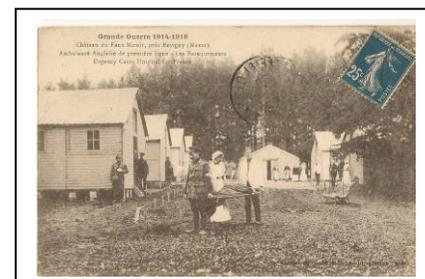
When that rendezvous was effected it was late in the day of December 11 – which is likely why it is recorded in the Regimental War Diary as occurring on the 12th. The parent unit had retired from the front on December 8, but many of the men had been seconded for work at Carnoy and Fricourt.

Those spared had marched on to Méricourt l'Abbé which is where the one-hundred seventy-three *other ranks* from Base Depot – Private Brinston among that number - reported to *duty*. The newcomers were just in time for the six-week Christmas period to be spent well behind the lines in *Corps Reserve*, encamped near the city of Amiens.



(Right: a typical British Army Camp during a winter period somewhere in France – from a vintage post-card)

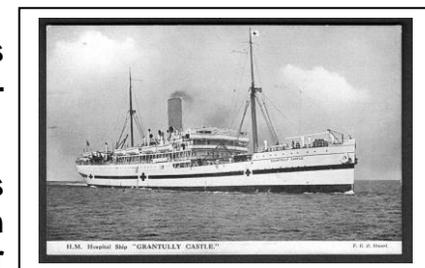
1st Battalion had still a week to spend in *Corps Reserve* when Private Brinston reported sick on January 16 of the New Year, 1917. Evacuated to the 53rd Field Ambulance, he was there diagnosed as suffering from enteritis and/ or gastritis.



(Right: a British field ambulance, of a more permanent nature than some – from a vintage post-card)

Where he may have spent the succeeding two weeks seems not to be documented but on February 2 he was admitted into the 1st Australian General Hospital at Rouen for further treatment.

A month later, on March 3, he was placed on board His Majesty's Hospital Ship *Grantully Castle* (right) for the cross-Channel journey to the United Kingdom.



Having arrived back in England, Private Brinston was transferred to the 3rd London General Hospital in the Borough of Wandsworth (right) on March 4. He was to remain there for some three weeks, until March 26.

(Right: The main building of what became 3rd London General Hospital during the Great War was opened, on July 1st, 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 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth – courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo)

On that March 26, Private Brinston was released from Wandsworth and thereupon was granted the customary ten-day furlough accorded to military personnel discharged from hospital in the United Kingdom. Immediately afterwards he was posted back to the Regimental Depot in Scotland, reporting to *duty* with 'E' Company on April 4.



(Preceding page: *the High Street in Ayr, dominated then as it still is today by the imposing Wallace Tower, as shown on a postcard of the time sent home by a Newfoundland soldier – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs Lillian Tibbo*)

Two months following, on June 3, the 24th Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr embarked in the English Channel port of Folkestone en route to Boulogne and the Continent where it landed only hours later. Having then travelled south to Rouen, it next spent the usual organizational period at Base Depot it then turned and moved northwards to re-join 1st Battalion on June 19 in the community of Bonneville.

The parent unit at the time had withdrawn from the line and the single entry of the day in the Regimental Diary simply notes... *Draft of 118 O. R. arrived.*

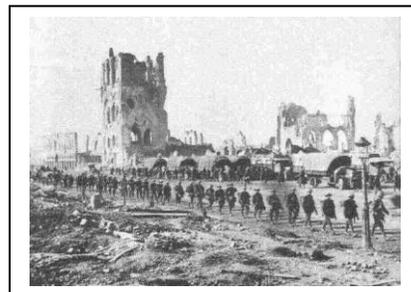
In contrast to the hard fighting at Monchy-le-Preux in April, May of 1917 had been a period when the Newfoundlanders had been ordered hither and thither on the Arras front, in and out of the trenches. Apart from the ever-present artillery, had been little infantry activity – except for the marching.

(Right: *Newfoundland troops on the march in the community of Berneville in early May of 1917 – from *The War Illustrated**)



At the beginning of June, 1st Battalion had retired from the line to Bonneville and was there to spend its time re-enforcing – witness the arrival of Private Brinston - re-organizing and training for the upcoming British offensive of the summer – and as it transpired, the autumn as well.

The Newfoundlanders of 1st Battalion were once again ordered north into Belgium – at the end of June - and once again to the area of *the Ypres Salient*. 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.



(Right above: *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**)



(continued)

The son of Nelson Brinston, (fisherman, deceased May 22, 1918) and Hannah Brinston (née Eddy) – to whom he had allotted a daily sixty cents from his pay - of Sound Island, Placentia Bay (she possibly of Black River after her husband's death), he was also younger brother to Malcolm, John and Melinda.

Private Brinston was reported as having been *killed in action* on August 16, 1917, while serving with 'D' Company in the fighting at the *Steenbeek*.

Back at home, it was the Reverend Cater Winsor of Sound Island who was requested to bear the news to his family.

Angus Perry Brinston had enlisted at the age of eighteen years and six months.



(Right above: *This is the area of the Steenbeek – the stream runs close to the trees - and also close to where 1st Battalion fought the engagement of August 16, 1917. It is some eight kilometres distant from a village called Passchendaele. – photograph from 2010*)

Private Angus Perry Brinston was entitled to the British War Medal (on left) and also to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

