



Private Orlando Brown (Regimental Number 2670), 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 earning an annual \$400.00, Orlando Brown was a recruit of the Ninth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on April 28, 1916, he then enlisted *for the duration of the war* – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 – a single day later, on April 29, before attesting three days later again, on May 2.

Private Brown sailed from St. John's on July 19 on board His Majesty's Transport *Sicilian** (right). The ship - refitted some ten years previously to carry well over one thousand passengers - had left the Canadian port of Montreal on July 16, carrying Canadian military personnel.

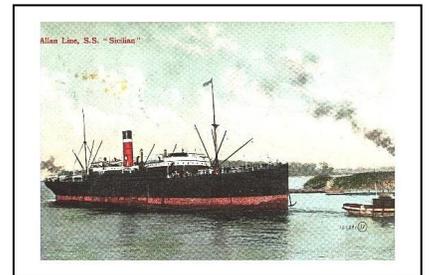
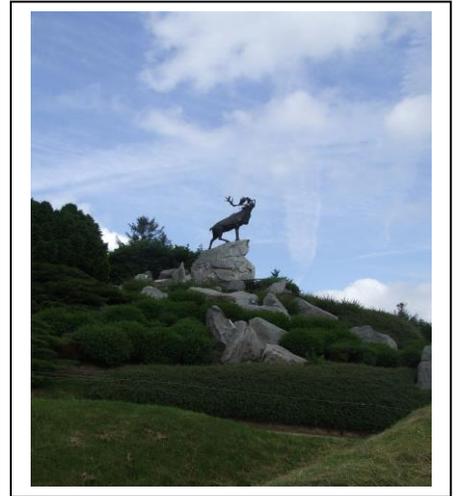
It is likely that the troops disembarked in the English west-coast port-city of Liverpool; however, it is *certain* that upon disembarkation the contingent journeyed north by train to Scotland and to the Regimental Depot.

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

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 the 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-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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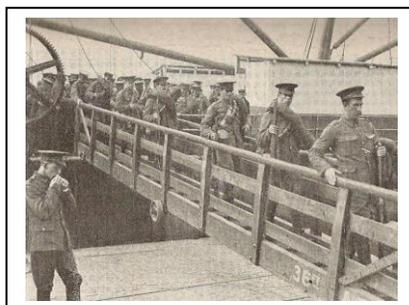
At the outset there had been problems at Ayr to accommodate the new arrivals – plus men from other regiments who were still being billeted in the area – but by the spring of 1916, things had been satisfactorily settled: the officers were in Wellington Square in Ayr itself, and the other ranks had been billeted at Newton Park School and either in the grandstand or in a tented camp at the racecourse in the suburb of Newton-upon-Ayr.



(Right above: *the new race-course at Newton-upon-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 – photograph from 2012*)

The 12th Re-enforcement Draft – Private Brown among its ranks - passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton on October 11 of 1916 on its way to the Continent and to the Western Front.

The contingent disembarked in the Norman capital of Rouen on the next day, October 12, 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: *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.*

Private Brown's contingent comprised a single officer and two-hundred twenty-six *other ranks* by the time it reported to duty at the Bernafay Wood Camp on October 22. Still in the area of Gueudecourt, 1st Battalion had been relieved in the front line three days before, on the 19th.



(Right: *Bernafay Wood a century later – not being close to the front lines, the wood may well have resembled what is seen here – photograph from 2014*)

After the episode of October 12 at Gueudecourt, 1st Battalion had remained in the same area of *the Somme* and was regularly into and out of the trenches. There were no infantry engagements, but the incessant artillery action ensured a steady stream of casualties.

The Newfoundlanders would be withdrawn from active service on or about December 12 and were to spend the following six weeks or so encamped well behind the lines and close to the city of Amiens.

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(Right: a *British encampment somewhere on the Continent, apparently during the winter season – from a vintage post-card*)



After that welcome six-week Christmas-time respite away from the front lines, the Newfoundlanders of 1st Battalion *officially* returned to *active service* on January 23, although they had been back in the trenches already by that date and had incurred their first casualties – and fatality – of 1917.



The only infantry activity involving 1st Battalion during that entire period – from the action in mid-October of 1916 at Gueudecourt, until Monchy-le-Preux in April of 1917 – was to be the sharp engagement at Sully-Saillisel at the end of February and the beginning of March, an action which brought this episode in the Newfoundlanders' War – in the area of *the Somme* - to a close.

(Above right: *The fighting during the time of the Battalion's posting to Sully-Saillisel took place on the far side of the village which was no more than a heap of rubble at the time. - photograph from 2009(?)*)

(Right: *A soldier of the Lancashire Fusiliers stands in the cold of the trenches at Sully-Saillisel apparently enjoying a cigarette, during the late winter of 1916-1917, just prior to the arrival there of the Newfoundlanders who relieved them. – from Illustration*)



But Private Brown was not to serve in that hand-to-hand infantry confrontation. On February 18, 1st Battalion had begun to march forward to the front lines. The Newfoundlanders relieved the 1st Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers, in the firing-line at Sully-Saillisel on February 23.

The Regimental War Diary report of February 25 is a short entry: '*Batt. In same position all day. Heavy bombardment on both sides. C Co withdrawn to allow bombardment by our heavies. Casualties: 3 killed, 3 wounded, 2 gassed. At night Batt. was relieved by 1st KOSBs and marched to HARDECOURT CAMP.*'

The son of William George Brown*, fisherman, and Sarah Brown (née *Fowlow*, deceased by the time of enlistment) – to whom he had allotted a daily sixty cents from his pay - of Trinity East, he was also brother to John, Jessie, Susannah, James and Delilah.

Private Brown was reported as having been killed in action on February 25, 1917, while serving with 'C' Company in the trenches near Sully-Saillisel, in the French *Département de la Somme*.

At home it was the Reverend A. Pittman of Trinity East who was requested to bear the news to his family.

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Orlando Brown had enlisted at the age of eighteen years and ten months: date of birth, August 22, 1898.

**He subsequently married Amy Ann Gosse in April of 1917.*

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

