



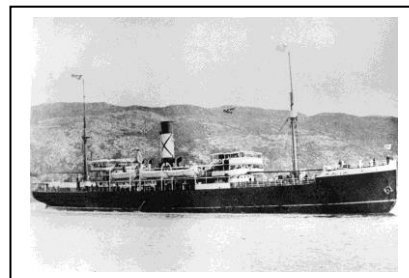
Private Andrew Burton (Regimental Number 3776), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a fisherman, Andrew Burton was a recruit of the Sixteenth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at Headquarters at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on May 14, 1917, he then enlisted - engaged *for the duration of the war* at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and also attested on that same day.



Private Burton was not to depart for overseas service for almost a further five months. By that time he had spent from July 23 to September 3 in the Military Hospital for Infectious Diseases in St. John's receiving treatment for venereal disease.

It was not to be until October 3 of 1917 that Private Burton took ship from Newfoundland. While some records say it was by train, certain others have it to be on board the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* (right) that the draft travelled for overseas service to Halifax, Nova Scotia, there to take a troop transport* across the Atlantic to the United Kingdom.



**Perhaps Metagama which sailed from Halifax with Canadian re-enforcements on October 6 to dock in the English west-coast port of Liverpool on the 17th.*

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 more than two years. It was from here – as of November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers from home had been despatched in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later to the *Western Front*, there 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*)

2nd (Reserve) Battalion was soon to move quarters 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 from there that Private Burton was to be ordered to France to join the British Expeditionary Force.

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

Private Burton was a soldier of the 40th Re-enforcement Draft of eighty *other ranks* which left Hazely Down on March 27, 1918, en route to the Continent. It disembarked on the 29th, two days later, almost inevitably spending some days, as was customary, at the British Expeditionary Force Base Depot at Rouen for last-minute training and organization* before proceeding to its rendezvous with 1st Battalion in Belgium.



(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.*

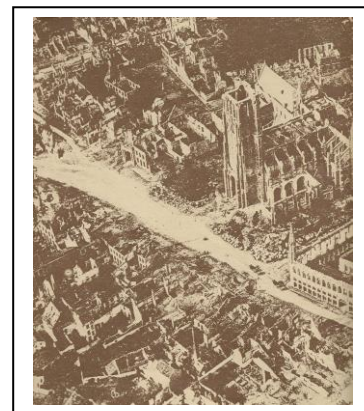
The Regimental War Diary makes no mention of any re-enforcements arriving either on or about April 4 – but this does not preclude Private Burton's records being correct. It was a day on which three of the four Companies of 1st Battalion, at the time posted to Haslar Camp to the rear, were providing work-parties to labour on defences in the *Divisional Reserve Line*.

By the evening of the next day the Newfoundlanders were back *in* the line, having relieved the 2nd Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment, near the remnants of the village of Passchendaele. And although he was not to know it, Private Burton had arrived just in time for the upcoming crisis.

Some four months before, at the beginning of January of 1918, having spent a snowy Christmas period spent to the south-west of Arras and withdrawn from the front, the Newfoundlanders of 1st Battalion had been ordered to return to Belgium, to the Ypres Salient, for a third time.

There, 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***)



(continued)

Meanwhile, while the Allies built their defences, by the beginning of 1918 the Germans were 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 the Germans would launch a spring offensive. While they were 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*)

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.



(Right above: *the area of La Crèche - 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.

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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 Burton played during this frantic time is not known – it does not even appear that the Company in which he was serving at the time is documented - 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 almost one-hundred years later, lying astride the Franco-Belgian frontier, and also 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 Burton, former fisherman, and Julia Burton of Beaumont North (formerly known as, and documented in his files as *Ward's Harbour*), District of Twillingate – his next of kin was recorded as Grandfather George Burton (and Grandmother Harriet?)*, also of Ward's Harbour, to whom he had allocated a daily sixty cents from his pay.



Private Burton was reported at first as having been *wounded* on April 13, 1918, and then as *wounded and missing*. Some thirty weeks later, on November 9, 1918, he was officially *presumed dead*.

He was later reported by a comrade-in-arms as having been taken by him to an advanced dressing station on April 13 but there is apparently no further information (see below).

Andrew Burton had enlisted at the age of nineteen years.

**Apparently Andrew Burton had been brought up from infancy by his grand-father (grand-parents?). Nothing seems to be known of his father - this according to his grand-father - and his mother had been re-married for a number of years by the time of his enlistment.*

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(Previous page: *The War Memorial in Beaumont North – formerly Ward's Harbour – honours the sacrifice of Private Burton.* – photograph from 2014)

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



J. R. Bennett Esq.
Minister of Militia
St. John's

Wards Hr
24/9/19

Sir:

Could you favour me with last information received by you as to whereabouts of condition of No. (blank) Pte Andrew Burton, Ward's Hr. Long Isld N.D. Bay. It may be surprising to you why I should ask such so I will explain Pte Burton was a friend of mine both in civilian & army life. We were together for some time in France well till the 13th of April 1918 he was severely wounded & I helped carry him to an advanced dressing-station being the last I ever saw of him. Now sir, there are certain conflicting rumours floating around as to what eventually happened to Pte Burton & his next of kin asked me to write you for reliable information to counteract against these rumours. Trusting that this will receive your personal attention

I remain

Your obedient servant

J. P. Paddock

Wards Hr

Long Isld

ND Bay