

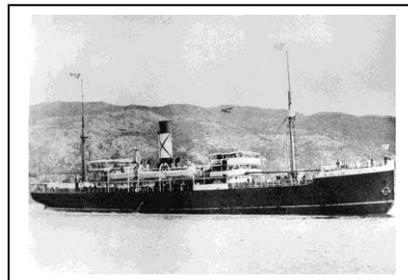


Private William Caines (Regimental Number 3045) lies in Artillery Wood Cemetery – Grave reference VII. F. 6.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as being that of a fisherman earning a weekly \$7.00, William Caines was a recruit of the Twelfth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on August 28 of 1916, he then both enlisted – *for the duration of the war* and engaged at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and attested on that same August 28.

(continued)

Private Caines was one of the approximately three hundred twenty *all ranks* to leave St. John's for *overseas service* on the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* (right), bound for Halifax, on January 31, 1917, from there to take ship to the United Kingdom.



Immediately upon its arrival in Nova Scotia, however, this detachment was forwarded to accommodation in the town of Windsor where it was soon to be quarantined because of an epidemic of measles and mumps.

It was not before a lapse of some two-and-a-half months after its arrival that transport could be arranged for the trans-Atlantic crossing to the United Kingdom for the so-called *Windsor Draft* – minus the twenty-five or so personnel still unable to travel.

On April 17, Private Caines embarked onto His Majesty's Transport *Ausonia* (right), one of three ships carrying the Newfoundlanders to sail on the next day in a convoy from Halifax. The vessels were also carrying Canadian reinforcements to the English west-coast port of Liverpool, where the ships docked on April 29.



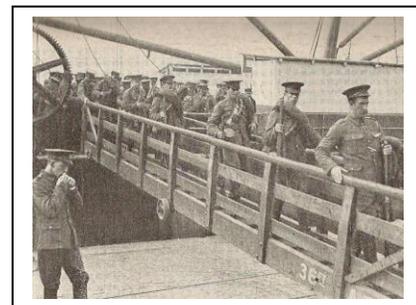
Arriving in England the contingent entrained for the west coast of Scotland. By this time, the Regimental Depot at Ayr had already been in existence to serve as the base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment for two years. It was from here – since November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers had been despatched in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1st Battalion.



By the time that the Windsor Draft arrived at the Regimental Depot, 2nd (Reserve) Battalion was becoming critically short of personnel.

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

On June 11, 1917, the 25th Re-enforcement Draft – Private Caines among its ranks - passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton on its way to France. On the following day, June 12, the contingent disembarked in the Norman capital, Rouen, where time was spent at the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot, to be organized and to undergo final training* before moving onward to its eventual rendezvous with 1st Battalion.

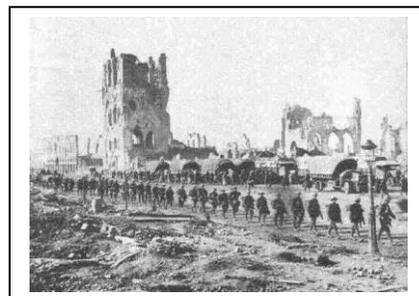


(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen on their way to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

**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.*

His records show that it was on July 2 – the *Regimental War Diary* says, in fact, on the day before - that Private Caines' contingent of two-hundred fifty *other ranks* reported to duty at Caribou Camp, behind the lines near Woesten in Belgium. For the next few days – and nights – 1st Battalion supplied working parties for road-mending and for the construction of infantry tracks.

Only days before, at the end of June, the Newfoundlanders of 1st Battalion had once again moved north into Belgium and once again to the area of Ypres. 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)

Like many of the other units in the British Army fighting at Passchendaele, 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment had spent some four weeks - the end of August and most of September – re-enforcing and re-organizing. The battle thus far had not been going as well as hoped for – it never really would. The Newfoundlanders returned to the front lines on September 25.

The entry in the *Regimental War Diary* for that September 25 includes the following: *Battalion moved up into the line for 4 days and relieved the 4/ Worcester Regt. in left Subsection... During tour in line there were 34 casualties viz: 7 killed & 27 wounded. Enemy aircraft were very active all the time. Gas shells were used by enemy frequently...*

The son of William Caines, fisherman, and Elizabeth Caines (deceased May 30, 1917) – to whom he had allotted a daily fifty cents from his pay - of Great Jervois, Pussthrough, he was reported as having been *killed in action* on September 28, 1917, a victim of enemy shelling while serving with 'B' Company in front-line trenches near the Belgian village of Elverdinghe.

Private Caines was buried in a grave just west of the village of Langemarck, his remains later transferred to where they repose today.

William Caines had enlisted at the age of nineteen years and four months.

(Right: *Artillery Wood Cemetery* – photograph from 2010)

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

