

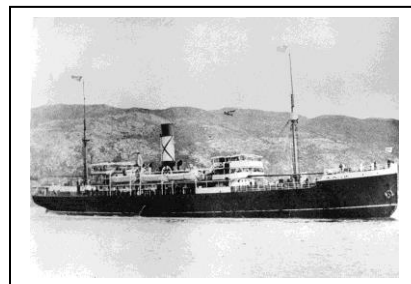


Private Charles Chaytor (his mother wrote *Cheater*) (Regimental Number 3168), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a labourer earning a monthly \$50.00, Charles (*Charley*) Chaytor was a recruit of the Twelfth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on October 20 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 October 20.



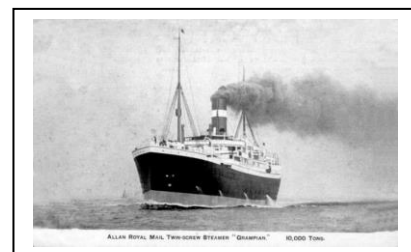
Private Chaytor was one of the approximately three hundred twenty *all ranks* to leave St. John's for *overseas service* on the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* (right), bound for Halifax, on January 31, 1917, from there to take ship to the United Kingdom.



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 16, Private Chaytor embarked onto His Majesty's Transport *Grampian* (right), one of three ships carrying the Newfoundlanders to sail two days later, 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.



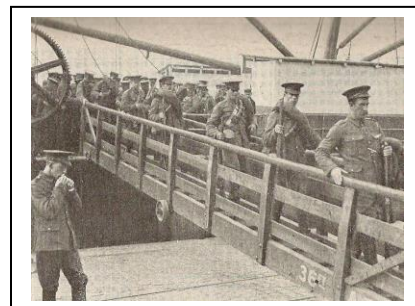
Arriving in England the contingent entrained for the west coast of Scotland. By this time, the Regimental Depot at Ayr had already been in existence to serve as the base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment for two years. It was from here – since November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers from Newfoundland were to be 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.

(Previous page: *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 Chaytor 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.



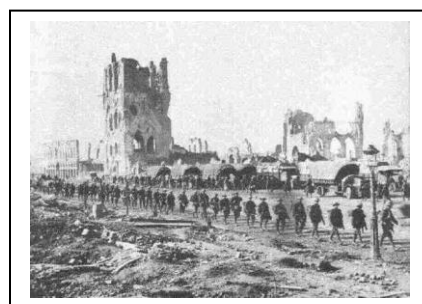
(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen on their way to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

**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.*

The records show that was on July 2 – the Regimental War Diary says, in fact, on the day before - that Private Chaytor's contingent of two-hundred fifty *other ranks* reported to duty at *Caribou Camp*, behind the lines near Woesten – to the north-west of Ypres - 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 prior to Private Chaytor's arrival, at the end of June, the Newfoundlanders of 1st Battalion had once again moved north into Belgium 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*)

(continued)

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. But Private Chaytor was to serve at neither.



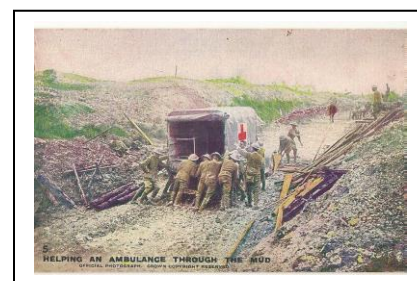
(Right: *an unidentified – perhaps unidentifiable – part of the Passchendaele battlefield in the autumn of 1917 – from Illustration*)

On August 12 the Newfoundlanders relieved the 2nd Hants (*Hampshire Regiment*) in the right support trenches about two kilometres to the south-west of the occupied village of Langemarck. The Regimental War Diary entry for the following day, the 13th, is brief... *Heavy shelling during afternoon. Casualties – 1 O.R. killed, 12 wounded.*

Six of those casualties were the Lewis Gun team in which Private Chaytor was serving*. **Memo – 10 PM 13/8/17 Steinbeck. Was twice buried in the trench (6 killed) Dug out and taken to the Dressing Station unconscious.**

**One of the records says as many as six of the men in that one trench were killed – the Regimental War Diarist, of course, could not foresee how many of those that he had reported as wounded would survive or not.*

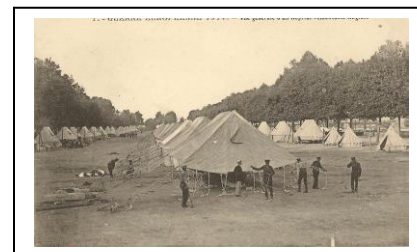
Private Chaytor was evacuated from the field to the 89th Field Ambulance before being forwarded to the 62nd Casualty Clearing Station at Bandagehem* and diagnosed as NYD (*Not Yet Determined*), often a euphemism for shell-shock, a condition which was finally recorded in his case on August 28.



(Right: *transferring sick and wounded from a field ambulance to the rear through the mud by motorized ambulance and man-power – from a vintage post-card*)

It was next reported that he was *progressing well*, this apparently from the 62nd CCS on September 6, two days after his supposed release *to duty* somewhere behind the lines on September 4 – the records seemingly just a little convoluted.

(Right: *a British casualty clearing station – the one pictured here under canvas for mobility if and when the necessity arose – being established somewhere in France during the early years of the War – from a vintage post-card*)



Private Chaytor was reported as back being *in the field* with 1st Battalion on October 10, the day after the fray at the *Broembeek*.

(continued)

***Several names such as Mendinghem, Bandagehem and Dozinghem were invented by the British troops as they resembled the Belgian and northern-French fashion of naming villages. These sites were occupied by medical facilities only – and the inevitable cemeteries which today remain. The town of Lozinghem seems to be an exception in that it is a real place – however much the name lends itself to the morbid spirit of the British soldier.**

A week after the encounter of October 9 at the *Broembeek*, the Newfoundlanders were withdrawn from the *Passchendaele* campaign in order to prepare for yet another upcoming offensive: *Cambrai*. They were ordered back south from Belgium into northern France on October 17 to re-enforce, to organize and to train in the vicinity of Berles-au-Bois, a small rural community a dozen or so kilometres to the south-west of Arras – some even being granted a ten-day furlough back to the United Kingdom.

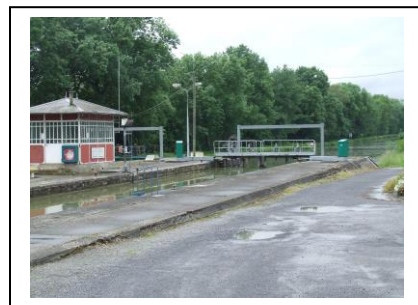
The so-called *Battle of Cambrai* was to officially last for just two weeks and a day, from November 20 until December 4, the Newfoundlanders directly involved at all times during that period.

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*)

(Right: *the lock on the Canal St-Quentin and the scene of desperate rear-guard actions involving 1st Battalion during the fighting retreat which marked the final days of the Battle of Cambrai – The bridge and building, of course, date from a later time. – photograph from 2010*)



The son of Mrs. Elizabeth Hoddinott* of Greenspond, Bonavista Bay, he was at first reported as *missing in action* on December 3, 1917, during the desperate fighting retreat near the French villages of Marcoing and Masnières.

However, a subsequent official German document forwarded to London by the *Geneva Red Cross* on March 14, 1918, reported that the remains of Private Chaytor had been buried by the enemy in the cemetery at Seranvilles. His record was thus amended so as to read *killed in action 3/12/17*.

Charley Chaytor had enlisted at the age of twenty-one years and eight months.

The following memo sent to his family via the offices of the British Red Cross was also included in his personal file: -

Informant 2057 Serg. A. Davis, D.C.M. states at 3rd London General Hosp He was standing close by when your son was shot through the head on 3rd Dec 1917 at Marcoing in front of Cambrai – from Pay & Record Office, 23/5/1918



(Right above: *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)*

(Right: *The sacrifice of Private J. Charles (Charley) Chaytor is honoured on the War Memorial in Greenspond. – photograph from 2011)*



**Possibly Elizabeth Allen who was married to John Cheater of Greenspond. If this is so there was another son, Eli Allen – born 1889 – who would have been older brother to Charles.*

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

