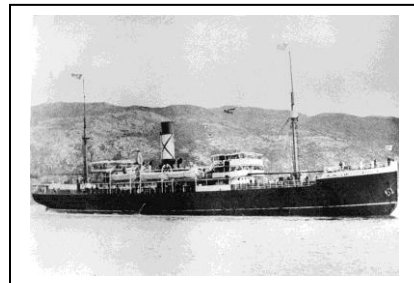


Private William Clyde Coish (Regimental Number 3200) lies in Artillery Wood Cemetery – Grave reference VII. F. 7.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a fisherman earning a weekly \$7.00, Clyde Coish was a recruit of the Twelfth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on November 2 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 the same November 2.

Private Coish 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.

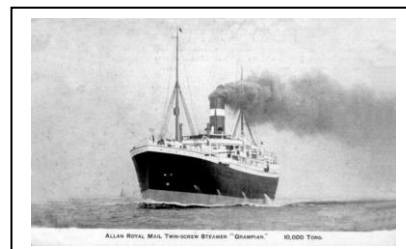


(continued)

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 Coish 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.



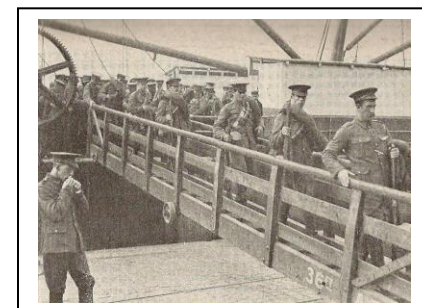
Arriving in England the contingent entrained for the west coast of Scotland. By this time, the Regimental Depot at Ayr had already been in existence to serve as the base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment for two years. It was from here – since November of 1915 and up until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

(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 Coish 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.

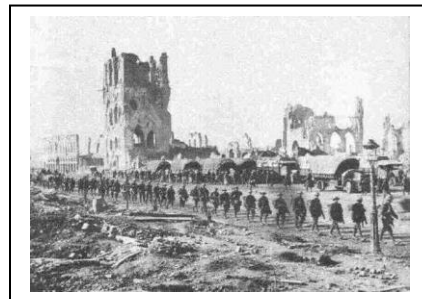


(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen on their way to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

**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 Coish'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 Coish'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*)

On July 14, Private Coish was admitted into the 87th Field Ambulance suffering from gastritis. His case was apparently not serious as he reported directly back to duty with 1st Battalion only three days later, on the 17th.



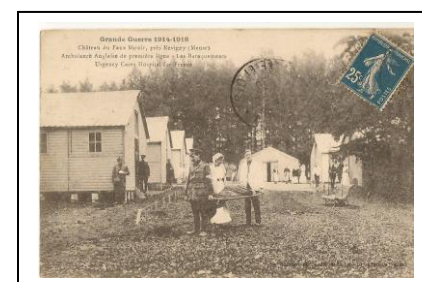
(Right: *transferring sick and wounded from a field ambulance to the rear through the mud by motorized ambulance and manpower – from a vintage post-card*)

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*)

On August 17, on the day after the confrontation at the Steenbeek, he was once again in need of medical treatment, on this occasion for ICT (*Inflammation of the Connective Tissue*) in his left foot. Sent to the 130th Field Ambulance, Private Coish was transferred to the 14th Corps Rest Station on the 27th, and re-joined 1st Battalion only two days later, on August 29.



(Right above: *A British field ambulance – the one pictured here of a more permanent nature – somewhere in the north-east of France towards the end of the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

During the period of September 25 to 29, the Newfoundlanders were near Elverdinghe, to the north of Ypres, and again in the line. The Regimental War Diary entry of August 25 is a composite for the tour spent in the trenches by 1st Battalion from that date until that 29th. There follow two excerpts: *During tour in line there were 34 Casualties viz: 7 killed & 27 wounded – all other Ranks. Enemy aircraft were very active all the time & flew very low. Gas shells were used by enemy frequently...* There was also the habitual artillery activity.



The weather was apparently fine – maybe not much of a compensation.

(Right above: *the Yser Canal to the north of the city of Ypres (today Ieper) – Towards the end of September of 1917 the Newfoundlanders were stationed near to this spot, the entire 1st Battalion posted on the east bank towards the front lines (to the right in the photograph).* – photograph from 2013)

The son of William Coish, fisherman, and Alice Maud Coish – to whom he had allocated a daily sixty cents from his pay - of Ladle Cove in the District of Fogo, he was reported as having been *killed in action* on September 28, 1917, while serving with 'B' Company in front-line trenches to the east of the Belgian village of Elverdinghe and across, to the east of, the Yser Canal.



At home, it was the Reverend Henry Scott who was requested to inform his family.

His brother, Harold Gordon Coish (Private, Regimental Number 1400) had died at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, 1916.

William Clyde Coish had enlisted at the age of eighteen years and nine months.

The remains of Private Coish were later removed from their original grave on February 2, 1925, and re-interred where they repose today.



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

(Right above: *The War Memorial in Ladle Cove honours the sacrifice of both Privates Coish.* – photograph from 2014)

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

(continued)



Department of Militia
St. John's

Ladle Cove
Aug 12th 1920

Gentlemen

In reply to yours of July 18th asking if I had received any of the things belonging to Poor Clyde, I may say that I have received nothing whatsoever with the exception of the little Army Book.

He had a wristlet watch and several little things. I shall be glad to receive any of the things you may secure.

Yours Sincerely,
Alice Maud Coish