

CRANFORD, L.C.

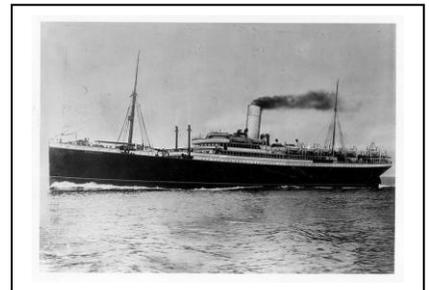
Private Llewelyn C. Cranford (Regimental Number 1663), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a labourer, Llewelyn Cranford was a recruit of the Sixth Draft. He enlisted at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 – on June 15, 1915, before presenting himself for medical examination four days later, on June 19. He then attested almost two weeks later again, on July 2.



It would seem as though Private Cranford was musically inclined for he was at some time to be a bugler in the Regiment, as witness the inscription on the New Harbour War Memorial.

Private Cranford and the other personnel of 'G' Company – apparently in the company of several naval reservists and also some German prisoners (these latter presumably to remain in Canada) - left St. John's by train on October 27, to cross the island to Port aux Basques. The contingent then traversed the Gulf of St. Lawrence by ferry, and proceeded by train from North Sydney to Quebec City.



There the Newfoundlanders boarded *His Majesty's Transport Corsican* (above) for the trans-Atlantic voyage to the English south-coast naval establishment of Devonport where they arrived on November 9.

By the morning of the 10th they had again travelled by train, to Scotland, and had been billeted in huts in a military camp at Gales, not far removed from the Regimental Depot where accommodation for the new arrivals was as yet not available.

The Regimental Depot had been established during the summer of 1915 in the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland to serve as a base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion. It was from there – as of November of 1915 – that the newcomers were sent in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and then subsequently to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1st Battalion.



(Right: 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)

(continued)

It was during this posting to the Regimental Depot that, on March 27, and only a single day before his departure to France on *active service*, Private Cranford was prevailed upon to re-enlist *for the duration of the War**.

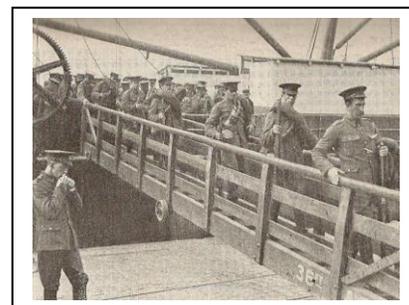
**At the outset of the War, perhaps because it was felt by the authorities that it would be a conflict of short duration, the recruits enlisted for only a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was obviously going to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist.*

On March 28, Private Cranford, as a soldier of the 3rd Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr, passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton and boarded His Majesty's Transport *Archangel* (right) on his way to join 1st Battalion on the Continent.



Disembarking one day later, on the 29th, in Rouen, capital city of Normandy and site of the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot, the contingent had made its way to the Depot by the 30th for several days of final training and organization* before leaving to seek out the parent unit.

(Right: *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.*

On April 15, a detachment from Rouen of two-hundred eleven *other ranks* – accompanied by two officers – reported to *duty* with 1st Battalion already billeted in the village of Englebelmer some three kilometres behind the lines of the *Western Front*. Private Cranford is documented as being among that number, a contingent which included not only personnel from Ayr, but also others from Gallipoli and Egypt whose departure from there had been delayed.

Only two days prior, on April 13, 1st Battalion had *itself* marched into the village of Englebelmer – thus completing a month-long transfer from Egypt – where the Newfoundlanders were billeted, welcomed those re-enforcements from Rouen on the 15th and, on the evening of that same day, were ordered forward – along with the new-comers - to work in the communication trenches not so very far away.

The Newfoundlanders were also soon to be preparing for the British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for the meandering river that flowed – and today still flows - innocuously through the southern part of the region to which it lends its name, *the Somme*.



(Previous page: *a part of the re-constructed trench system to be found in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2007(?)*)



The son of John (of Thomas) Cranford, fisherman, and Flora Cranford – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of seventy cents from his pay - of New Harbour, Trinity Bay, he had seemingly at least one sibling, a brother .

Private Cranford was reported as *missing in action* at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, 1916, during the fighting on the first day of *the Somme*. Six months later, on December 31, 1916, he was officially *presumed dead*.



Llewelyn Cranford had enlisted at twenty- years and seven months of age.

(Right top: *Beaumont-Hamel - looking from the British lines down the hill to Y Ravine Cemetery which today stands atop part of the German front-line defences - The Danger Tree is to the right in the photograph. – photograph taken in 2009*)



(Right above black & white: *a grim, grainy image purporting to be that of Newfoundland dead awaiting burial on July 1 after Beaumont-Hamel – from ...*)

(Right: *The War Memorial in New Harbour honours the sacrifice of Private Cranford. – photograph from 2013*)

(*The photograph of Private Cranford is from the Provincial Archives.*)



Private Llewelyn C. Cranford was entitled to the British War Medal (left) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

