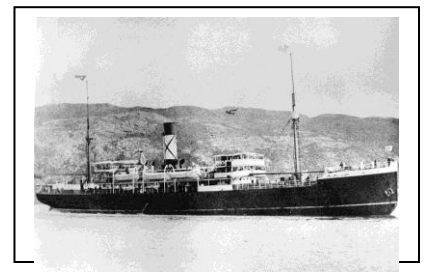




Private Jeremiah Francis Donnelly (Regimental Number 3572) lies in Marcoing British Cemetery – Grave reference II. G. 4.

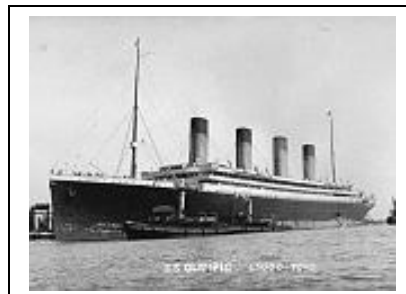
His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a labourer earning a weekly \$7.00, Jeremiah Donnelly was a recruit of the Fourteenth Draft. He presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on April 7, 1917, also enlisting - engaged *for the duration of the war* and at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and attesting on that same day.

Private Donnelly was not to depart from Newfoundland for overseas service until May 19, when the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* (right) left en route to Halifax. His contingent of three officers and one-hundred eighty-two *other ranks*, and also ninety-nine recruits of the newly-formed Newfoundland Forestry Unit, then left Nova Scotia for the United Kingdom on board an unspecified* vessel, on May 29.



(continued)

**The ship in question may well have been the White Star liner Olympic (right) – sister ship to Titanic – requisitioned as a troop transport during the war, which sailed on June 2 from Halifax with Canadian military personnel as well – there are no other departures on or about this date. May 29 may have been the date of embarkation by the Newfoundland contingent.*



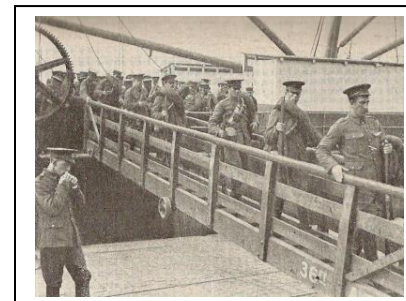
Arriving in the English west-coast port of Liverpool on June 9 the contingent entrained for the west coast of Scotland. By this time, the Regimental Depot at Ayr* had already been in existence as the base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment for some two years. It was from here – since November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers from home were being despatched in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later to the Western Front, 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*)

**During the summer months of 1917, 2nd (Reserve) Battalion was transferred from Ayr to not-so-distant Barry in the region of Dundee. Initially intended to be a permanent move, the protest from several quarters was so great that the Newfoundlanders were back in Ayr by the third week of September.*

It was not to be until November 6, 1917, that Private Donnelly took ship again; on this occasion he was on his way to the Continent, passing through the English south-coast port of Southampton as one of the one-hundred eleven *other ranks* of the 32nd Draft from Ayr. The Newfoundlanders disembarked in Rouen on the following day and made their way to the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot there for a few days of final training and organizing* before making their way to a rendezvous with 1st Battalion.



(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.*

By that time, 1st Battalion had been withdrawn from the *Passchendaele* campaign, on October 17, in order to prepare for yet another upcoming offensive: *Cambrai*. It had been ordered back south from Belgium into northern France to re-enforce, to organize and to train in the vicinity of Berles-au-Bois, a rural community a dozen or so kilometres to the south-west of Arras.

It was there that, on November 14, four officers and one-hundred forty-one *other ranks* – one of them Private Donnelly – reported from Rouen *to duty* with 1st Battalion.

That new offensive, 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)

The son of William Donnelly, tallyman with *Monroe & Co. Importers and Exporters*, and Mary Donnelly (née *Picco*) – to whom he had allotted a daily sixty cents from his pay - of 45, Wickford Street, St. John's, he was also brother to Charles, to Mary and to William Patrick* (his baptismal records have *William Joseph*, born July 7, 1898)**.



Private Donnelly was documented as having been *killed in action* while serving with 'A' Company on November 20, 1917, the first day of the fighting near the French villages of Marcoing and Masnières.

His subsequent burial was reported by the Reverend T. Nangle, Chaplain of the Forces to 1st Battalion.

Jeremiah Francis Donnelly had enlisted at the age of twenty years and four months: date of birth December 26, 1896.

(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)

**William Patrick Donnelly, Private, Regimental Number 2162, reported as missing in action later presumed dead at Monchy-le-Preux, on April 14, 1917.*

***The Donnellys also appear to be recorded as having a first William Joseph (see above), born on August 7, 1895, according to Basilica baptismal records.*

(continued)

(Right: *the monument in Belvedere Cemetery in St. John's, erected by Mary and William Donnelly to their sons Jeremiah and William Patrick Donnelly, both killed in France – photograph from 2011*)



Private Jeremiah Francis Donnelly was entitled to the British War Medal (on left) and also to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

