



Lance Corporal John Joseph Dunphy (Regimental Number 2459), 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 cooper earning a monthly \$35.00, John Joseph Dunphy was a recruit of the Ninth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on April 3, 1916, he then enlisted a week later *for the duration of the war* – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 – on April 10, before attesting on the same day.



Some six weeks before his departure for overseas service, on June 9, Private Dunphy was promoted to the rank of lance corporal.

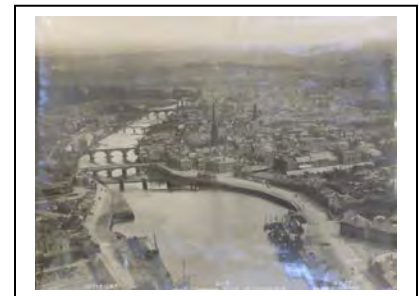
Lance Corporal Dunphy sailed from St. John's on July 19 on board His Majesty's Transport *Sicilian** (right). The ship - refitted some ten years previously to carry well over one thousand passengers - had left the Canadian port of Montreal on July 16, carrying Canadian military personnel.



It is likely that the troops disembarked in the English west-coast port-city of Liverpool; however, it is *certain* that upon disembarkation the contingent journeyed north by train to Scotland and to the Regimental Depot.

**Some sixteen years previously - as of 1899 when she was launched – the vessel had served as a troop-ship and transport during another conflict, carrying men, animals and equipment to South Africa for use during the Second Boer War.*

The Regimental Depot had been established during the summer of 1915 in the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland, there to serve as the base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion. It was from there – as of November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers arriving from home were despatched in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1st Battalion.



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(Preceding page: *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*)

At the outset there had been problems at Ayr to accommodate the new arrivals – plus men from other regiments who were still being billeted in the area – but by the spring of 1916, things had been satisfactorily settled: the officers were in Wellington Square in Ayr itself, and the other ranks had been billeted at Newton Park School and either in the grandstand or in a tented camp at the racecourse in the suburb of Newton-upon-Ayr.



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

The 12th Re-enforcement Draft – Lance Corporal Dunphy one of its non-commissioned officers - passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton on October 11 of 1916 on its way to the Continent and to the Western Front.

The contingent disembarked in the Norman capital of Rouen on the next day, October 12, and spent time at the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot located there, in final training and organization*, before making its way to a rendezvous with 1st Battalion.



(Right: *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.*

Lance Corporal Dunphy's contingent comprised a single officer and two-hundred twenty-six *other ranks* by the time it reported for duty at the Bernafay Wood Camp on October 22. Still in the area of Gueudecourt, 1st Battalion had been relieved in the front line three days before, on the 19th.



(Right: *Bernafay Wood a century later – not being close to the front lines, the wood may have resembled what is seen here – photograph from 2014*)

After the action of October 12 at Gueudecourt, 1st Battalion had remained in the same area of *the Somme* and was regularly into and out of the trenches. There were no infantry engagements, but the incessant artillery fire was to ensure a steady stream of casualties.

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1st Battalion relieved the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers in seven different front-line and support trenches near the village of LesBoeuifs on November 27. When the Newfoundlanders were in their turn relieved three days later, on the 30th, the Regimental War Diarist saw fit to make just the following brief entry: *Casualties while in trenches 1 killed 17 wounded.*

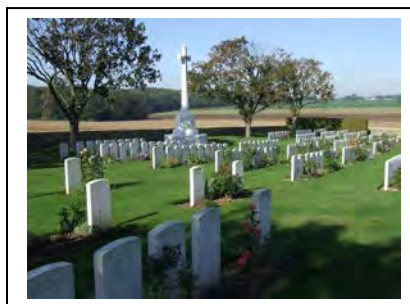
The son of Patrick Dunphy, master cooper with *George M. Barr* wholesale exporters of fish and lobsters, and Ellen Dunphy – to whom he had allocated a daily allowance of fifty cents from his pay - of 31, Central Street in St. John's, he was also brother to at least Thomas and to Edmond (see below).

Lance Corporal Dunphy was reported as having been *killed in action* on November 29, 1916, while serving with 'B' Company in trenches near the villages of LesBoeuifs and Guillemont, in the French *Département de la Somme* - during enemy shelling of the newfoundlanders' positions.

John Joseph Dunphy had enlisted at the age of twenty-one years and three months.

His brother Edmond (*Edmund* on the family memorial) Lawrence, Private, Regimental Number 2967, was to die on April 14 of 1917, during the fighting at Monchy-le-Preux.

2459 L/ Cp Dunphy was killed in Zenith Trench by the explosion of a 5.9 shell and died instantaneously – **Statement made by 2/Lt. A. Summers at Pay & Record Office, 18/12/16**



(Right above: *Guillemont Road Cemetery and the surrounding countryside in the area of the Newfoundland positions of November 29, 1916 – photograph from 2010*)

(Right: *A family memorial which stands in Belvedere Cemetery in St. John's commemorates the sacrifice of two brothers: Lance Corporal John Joseph Dunphy and Private Edmund Lawrence Dunphy. – photograph from 2010*)



Lance Corporal John Joseph Dunphy was entitled to the British War Medal (on left) and also to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

