

no photograph of the grave available as yet

Private Frederick Ernest Ebsary (Regimental Number 1138), lies buried in the Cairo War Memorial Cemetery – Grave reference: D. 112.

His occupation at the time of his enlistment being that of a *cooper* working for a weekly wage of six dollars, Frederick Ernest Ebsary presented himself for medical examination at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* on Harvey Road in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on February 16 of the year 1915. It was a procedure which was to pronounce him as...*Fit for Foreign Service*.

It was to be only a single day following his medical assessment, on February 17, that he returned to the *CLB Armoury* to enlist – engaged at the private soldier's rate of a single dollar per diem plus a daily ten-cent *Field Allowance*.

However, whereas attestation for others had come about several weeks after enlistment, he was now to await but ten days, until February 27, before *that* final formality would come to pass. Frederick Ernest Ebsary thereupon at that moment was to become...*a soldier of the King*.

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For Private Ebsary, Number 1138, there was now to be yet another, and last, waiting period of three weeks before he would be summoned to...overseas service. How he occupied himself during that time is not recorded among his papers; he may, of course, have temporarily returned to work, but this is only speculation.

(Preceding page: The image of the Bowring Brothers' vessel 'Stephano', sister-ship of 'Florizel', as she passes through 'the Narrows' of St. John's Harbour is from the Provincial Archives.)

Unlike the two previous contingents to have departed Newfoundland (see below) for...overseas service, Private Ebsary's 'D' Company was not to sail directly to the United Kingdom. On March 20 it, he a soldier of the Number 7 Platoon, embarked onto the Bowring-Brothers' vessel *Stephano* for the short voyage to Halifax, capital city of the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, where it was thereupon to board a second vessel, the newly-launched *Orduña* for the trans-Atlantic crossing*.



(Preceding page: The image of Orduña is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site. The vessel was not to be requisitioned during the Great War but would be used by the Cunard Company to operate on its commercial service between Liverpool and New York.)

Having then sailed from Nova Scotia on March 22 for Liverpool, Private Ebsary and his draft landed there eight days later, on the 30th. Once disembarked in Liverpool, the two-hundred fifty men and officers of 'D' Company were thereupon transported on the same date by train directly to Edinburgh, the Scottish capital, to join the Newfoundland Regiment's 'A', 'B' and 'C' Companies.

These units were by this time stationed at the historic Castle, 'A' and 'B' having recently been posted from Fort George and 'C' having arrived directly from home (see further below). After 'D' Company's arrival at the end of that month of March, the Newfoundlanders were now to remain at Edinburgh for the following six weeks.



(Right above: From its vantage point on Castle Hill, the venerable fortress overlooks the city of Edinburgh where in 1915 the Newfoundlanders were to provide the first garrison to be drawn from outside the British Isles. – photograph from 2011)

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Five to six months before that time, in the late summer and early autumn of 1914 there had been a period of training of some five weeks on the shores of *Quidi Vidi Lake* in the east end of St. John's for the newly-formed Newfoundland Regiment's first recruits – these to become 'A' and 'B' Companies - during which time the authorities had also been preparing for the Regiment's transfer overseas.

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This first Newfoundland contingent was to embark on October 3, in some cases only days after a recruit's enlistment and/ or attestation. To become known to history as the *First Five Hundred* and also as the *Blue Puttees*, on that day they had boarded the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* awaiting in St. John's Harbour.



The ship had sailed for the United Kingdom on the morrow, October 4, 1914, to its rendezvous with the convoy carrying the 1st Canadian Division overseas, off the south coast of the Island.

(Right above: *The image of Florizel at anchor in the harbour at St. John's is by courtesy of Admiralty House Museum.*)

(Right: *Fort George, constructed in the latter half of the eighteenth century, still serves the British Army to this day. – photograph from 2011*)



In the United Kingdom this first Newfoundland contingent was to train in three venues during the late autumn of 1914 and then the winter of 1914-1915: firstly in southern England on the Salisbury Plain; then in Scotland at *Fort George* – on the Moray Firth close to Inverness; and lastly at Edinburgh Castle – where, as recorded beforehand, it was to provide the first garrison from outside the British Isles.

Only days after 'A' and 'B' Companies had taken up their posting there, on February 16 'C' Company – the first re-enforcements for the original contingent* - would arrive directly from Newfoundland.

**This contingent, while a part of the Newfoundland Regiment, was not yet a battalion and would not be so for a further five months – as will be seen below.*

* * * * *

As seen in a previous paragraph, for the month of April and the first days of May of 1915, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies, now united, were to furnish the garrison – the first troops from outside the British Isles to do so - of the guardian of Scotland's capital city. Then, during the first week of May, 'E' Company was to report there...*to duty*...from home. Four days later again, on May 11, the Newfoundland contingent was ordered elsewhere.

On that day, some seven weeks into spring – although in Scotland there was apparently still snow - the entire Newfoundland unit was dispatched to *Stobs Camp*, all under canvas and south-eastwards of Edinburgh, in the vicinity of the town of Hawick.

It was to be at *Stobs Camp* that the Newfoundland contingent would eventually receive the re-enforcements from home – 'F' Company which arrived on July 10, 1915 - that would bring its numbers up to that of British Army establishment battalion strength*. The now-formed 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was thus rendered available to be sent on '*active service*'.

(Right: *The Newfoundland Regiment marches past on the training ground at Stobs Camp and is presented with its Colours on June 10, 1915. – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo*)



**This was approximately fifteen hundred, sufficient to furnish two re-enforcement companies and a headquarters staff.*

At the beginning of that August of 1915, the four senior Companies, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', were then sent south from *Stobs Camp* to undergo a final two weeks of training, as well as an inspection by the King, at Aldershot. This force, now the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment, was thereupon attached to the 88th Brigade of the 29th Division of the (British) Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.



Meanwhile the two junior Companies, 'E' – last arrived at Edinburgh - and the aforementioned 'F', were ordered transferred to Scotland's west coast, to Ayr, there to provide the nucleus of the newly-forming 2nd (Reserve) Battalion.

(Right above: *George V, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India – the photograph is from Bain News Services via the Wikipedia web-site.*)

It was while the Newfoundland Battalion was in training during those weeks at Aldershot, on August 15 that Private Ebsary would be prevailed upon to enlist for the duration of the conflict.

**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.*



(Right above: *Some of the personnel of 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies of the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment at Aldershot in August of 1915, prior to its departure to active service on the Gallipoli Peninsula – from *The Fighting Newfoundlander* by Col. G.W.L. Nicholson, C.D.)*

On August 20, 1915, Private Ebsary and his Newfoundland unit embarked in the Royal Navy Harbour of Devonport onto the requisitioned passenger-liner *Megantic* for passage to the Middle East and to the fighting against the Turks.



(Right above: *The image of Megantic, here in her peace-time colours of a 'White Star Line' vessel, is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site.*)

There, a month later – having spent some two weeks billeted in British barracks in the vicinity of the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, the 1st Battalion was to land at *Suvla Bay* on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*. However...



(Right: *Kangaroo Beach*, where the officers and men of the 1st Battalion, Newfoundland Regiment, landed on the night of September 19-20, 1915, is to be seen in the distance at the far end of *Suvla Bay*. The remains of a landing-craft are still clearly visible in the foreground on 'A' Beach. – photograph taken in 2011)



(Right: *Newfoundland troops on board a troop-ship anchored at Mudros: either Megantic on August 29, Ausonia on September 18, or Prince Abbas on September 19 – Whichever the case, they were yet to land on Gallipoli.* – from Provincial Archives)

...well before that time, Private Ebsary had been hospitalized. On August 31 he arrived with the Newfoundland Battalion in Alexandria where, having spent a further day aboard ship, the unit boarded a train at midnight of September 1-2. The train departed one hour later to arrive seven hours later again, in the Egyptian capital city, Cairo.

When it was that Private Ebsary was subsequently admitted into the 5th Canadian Stationary Hospital at Cairo appears to be un-recorded among his files. However, once there, he was diagnosed as suffering from tubercular meningitis.



(Right: *The Egyptian capital city, Cairo, at or about the time of the Great War* – from a vintage post-card)

The son of Newman McCawley Ebsary, a fireman*, and of Sarah Ebsary (née *Hinds* or *Hynes*)** – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of seventy cents from his pay - of 89, the Southside in St. John's, he was also brother to Florence-Isabelle, Herbert, Albert-Newman, Elizabeth, William-Alexander-Hynes and to Samuel-Joseph (see below).



**Whether employed to tender the fire in a railway locomotive or a coal-fired steam-ship, or whether to fight fires is not recorded.*

***The couple had married circa May, 1880.*

Private Ebsary was reported as...*died of sickness...having passed away in hospital on September 23, 1915.*

(Preceding page: *A family memorial which stands in the General Protestant Cemetery in St. John's commemorates the sacrifice of Private Frederick Ernest Ebsary and of his brother, Lieutenant Samuel Ebsary.* – photograph from 2015)

His brother, Lieutenant Samuel Ebsary, Regimental Number 501, was later to...*die of wounds*...incurred in the action at Gueudecourt, in hospital at Rouen on October 15, 1916. He was buried in the nearby St-Sever Cemetery in Rouen – his grave shown here at right.



(The above photograph of Private Frederick Ernest Ebsary is from Provincial Archives.)

Frederick Ernest Ebsary had enlisted at a *declared* nineteen years of age, although the *Angelfire* web-site records the year of his birth as 1898.

Private Frederick Ernest Ebsary was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, as well as to the British War Medal (centre) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

