

EVANS. N.

Private Nicholas Joseph Evans (Regimental Number 1767), 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 clerk earning \$4.00 weekly working for *A.M. Jackman*, Nicholas Joseph Evans was a recruit of the Sixth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on August 10, 1915, he then enlisted – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 – and attested on the following day, the 11th.

Private Evans 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.

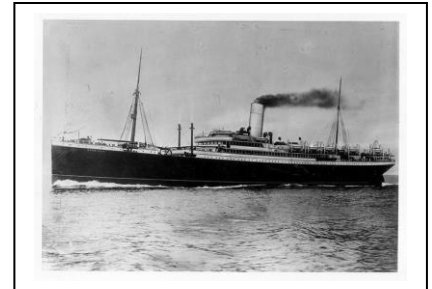
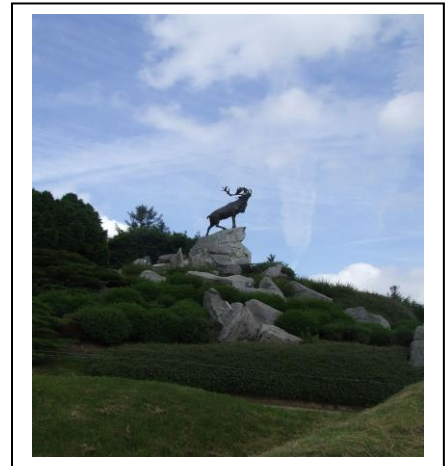
At Québec the Newfoundlanders boarded His Majesty's Transport *Corsican* (above) for the trans-Atlantic passage to the English south-coast naval establishment of Devonport where they arrived on November 9.

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

That new 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 and up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers arriving from home 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 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*)

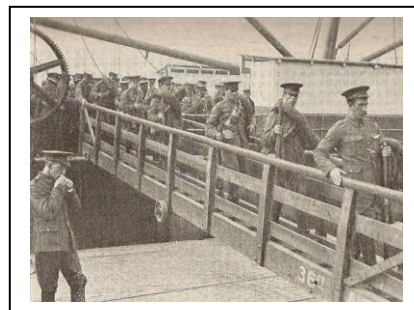
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It was during this posting to the Regimental Depot that on May 24, a month before his departure to France on *active service*, Private Evans was prevailed upon to re-enlist *for the duration of the War**

**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.*

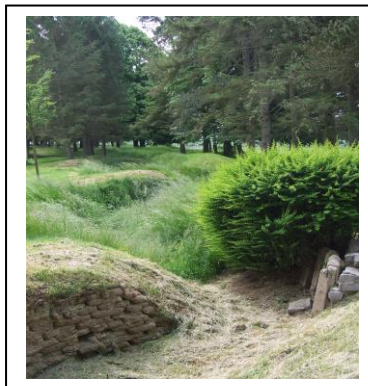
On June 14, 1916, the 6th Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr – Private Evans among its ranks - passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton en route to the Continent. On the following day, the 15th, it disembarked in Rouen, capital city of Normandy and the site of the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot where the contingent spent time in final training and organizing* before moving on to a 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, Étapes, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

A detachment of sixty-six *other ranks* from Rouen, a draft which included Private Evans, arrived to join the parent unit in the community of Louvencourt on June 30. At 9:15 that evening, the Newfoundlanders – including a goodly number of those newcomers – and with the exception of the fourteen officers and eighty-three *other ranks* assigned to remain behind with the Re-enforcement Company, marched from there to their assigned *forming-up place trenches i.e. rear line of trenches in our usual sector* (Regimental War Diary).



(Right: *Just inside the entrance to the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel, this trench is reputed to be the one where 1st Battalion spent the night before launching its attack from there on July 1. – photograph from 2009*)

The son of Luke Evans and Mary Evans (both parents deceased) of St. John's – he was also nephew to Edward Doheney (deceased August 8, 1918) and Helena Doheney of 137 Gower Street, St. John's, to whom he had allocated sixty cents from his pay; a second uncle, John J. Evans was proprietor of *The Newfoundland Quarterly*.



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Private Evans was reported as having been *killed in action* at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, 1916, while serving with 'B' Company during the fighting on the first day of *the Somme*.

Nicholas Joseph Evans was aged eighteen years and nine months at the time of his enlistment.

(Previous page: *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: *a grim, grainy image purporting to be Newfoundland dead awaiting burial after Beaumont-Hamel – from ...*)

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

Private Nicholas Joseph Evans was eligible for the British War Medal (on left) and also the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

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H.F. Reeve, Esq. C. M. G.

Dear Sir,

I wish to enquire from you as to the stoppage of pay from my late nephew Pte. Nicholas Evans who was killed in action on 1st July, 1916. I have not received it since May 1917 and as the mothers of all the boys that was kill with him are getting their allotments right along I can't see why I should not get it also. He signed for the duration of the war and I am entitled to it as well as those who are receiving it as he was my only one and I did all that a mother could do for him and my poor boy did not get time to do much for me. At present the cost of living is so high it is very hard to get along.

Yours Gratefully,
Helena Doheney

(Excerpt from reply) ...I beg to state that the allotment payable to you on account of your late nephew Private N. Evans has been cancelled by orders of the Patriotic Finance Committee...