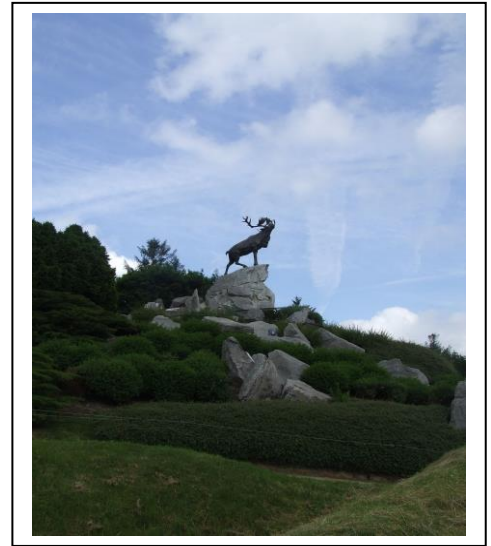


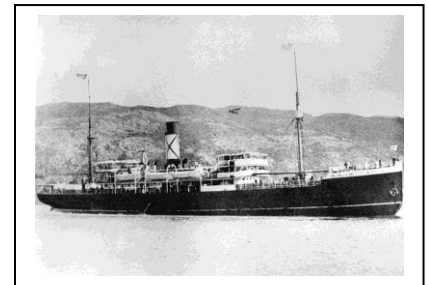


Private Charles Fields (Regimental Number 3267), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a fisherman earning an annual \$600.00, Charles Fields was a recruit of the Twelfth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination (likely in St. John's?) on November 16 of 1916, he then both enlisted, at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in the capital city – *for the duration of the war* and at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and attested, six days later, on November 22.



Private Fields was one of the approximately three hundred twenty *all ranks* to leave St. John's for *overseas service* on the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* (right), bound for Halifax, on January 31, 1917, from there to take ship to the United Kingdom.

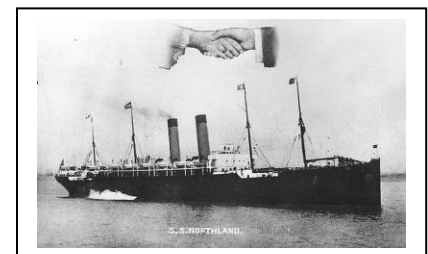


Immediately upon its arrival in Nova Scotia, however, this detachment was forwarded to accommodation in the town of Windsor where it was soon to be quarantined because of an epidemic of measles and mumps.

In fact, Private Fields was one of the several personnel to fall foul of the mumps virus during that period, and he was to spend from February 22 to March 10 receiving medical attention in the Military Hospital in Windsor.

It was not before a lapse of some two-and-a-half months after its arrival that transport could be arranged for the trans-Atlantic crossing to the United Kingdom for the so-called *Windsor Draft* – minus the twenty-five or so personnel still unable to travel.

On April 17, Private Fields embarked onto His Majesty's Transport *Northland* – originally the *Zeeland* - (right), one of three ships carrying the Newfoundlanders to sail on the next day in a convoy from Halifax, carrying Canadian reinforcements to the English west-coast port of Liverpool, where the ships docked on April 29.



(continued)

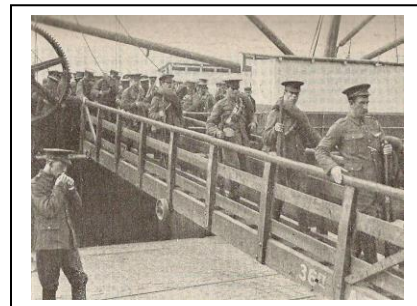
Arriving in England the contingent entrained for the west coast of Scotland. By this time, the Regimental Depot at Ayr had already been in existence to serve as the base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment for two years. It was from here – since November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers from Newfoundland were to be despatched in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1st Battalion.



By the time that the Windsor Draft arrived at the Regimental Depot, 2nd (Reserve) Battalion was becoming critically short of personnel.

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

On June 11, 1917, the 25th Re-enforcement Draft – Private Fields among its ranks - passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton on its way to France. On the following day, June 12, the contingent disembarked in the Norman capital, Rouen, where time was spent at the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot, to be organized and to undergo final training* before moving onward to its eventual rendezvous with 1st Battalion.

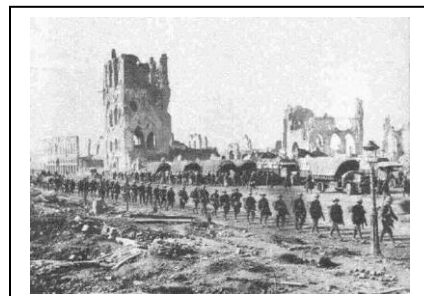


(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen on their way to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

**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, Étaples, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

The records show that it was on July 2 – the *Regimental War Diary* says, in fact, on the day before - that Private Fields' contingent of two-hundred fifty *other ranks* reported to duty at Caribou Camp, behind the lines near Woesten in Belgium. For the next few days – and nights – 1st Battalion supplied working parties for road-mending and for the construction of infantry tracks. For that purpose, several of the Newfoundlanders were attached temporarily until July 20 to the 173rd Company of the Royal Engineers.

Only days before, at the end of June, the Newfoundlanders of 1st Battalion had once again moved north into Belgium and once again to the area of Ypres. This had been selected by the High Command to be the theatre of the British summer offensive of 1917. Officially named the *Third Battle of Ypres*, the campaign came to be known to history as *Passchendaele*, taking that name from a small village on a ridge that was one of the British Army's objectives.



(Previous page: *Troops file through the rubble of the medieval city of Ypres on their way to the front in the late summer of 1917. – from Illustration*)

1st Battalion remained in Belgium until October 17, a small cog in the machinery of the British Army which floundered its way across the sodden countryside of Flanders. Notably it fought in two major engagements, at the *Steenbeek* on August 16, and at the *Broembeek* on October 9.



(Right: *an unidentified – perhaps unidentifiable – part of the Passchendaele battlefield in the autumn of 1917 – from Illustration*)

The foster-son* of Fanny Bradbury* of Cook's Harbour in the Straits of Belle Isle, he was undoubtedly brought up as brother to George Field and James Field, her sons. For reasons unclear - particularly to his foster-mother – before going overseas he had allocated his own savings of a daily sixty cents to a Mrs. Richard (Susannah) Eddy of the Strait of Belle Isle in the event of his death.



Private Fields was reported as having been *killed in action* on October 9, 1917, while serving with 'A' Company in the fighting at the *Broembeek*. At home, it was the Reverend E. S. Tarrant of St. Anthony who was requested to bear the news to his family.

Charles Fields had enlisted at the age of thirty-five years and three months.

**His foster-father likely James Fields of Cook's Harbour – deceased 28/12/1898 and buried in the local cemetery next to Fannie, his wife, who later married Bradbury.*

(Right above: *Normally a nondescript, placid, stream, the Broembeek in October of 1917 had burst its banks and inundated the surrounding fields, transforming them into a quagmire. – photograph from 2010*)

Memo from personal records: ... the officer commanding A Co.*, 1st Battalion to which this soldier was attached, states that Pte. C. Rowe saw Pte. Fields killed at Langemarck Station by a bullet in the head during the advance on 9th October. No further particulars are to hand.

*Captain Stick

(continued)

Private Charles Fields was entitled to the British War Medal (on left) and also to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).



Cook's Harbour
March 16th 1920

To Min. of Militia.

Dear Sir:

I received a letter from you about the money due the late Pt. Charles Fields. I herewith give you the full particulars of his birth and relationship with me.

Charles Fields was the illegitimate child of May (Mary?) Howell who is long since dead. I took the child when an infant and raised him as my own son, and only until very recently before he enlisted did he find out his genealogy. I am the only person alive that any debt of gratitude is due and he was always a dutiful child to me. Why he acted like he did I cannot understand, i.e. in leaving his bank book to another person, as there was no definite agreement between him and the young woman in question, of course, if he left his B. B. and will his money to her I am quite satisfied, but the money due him from the Pay & Record Office or any other source I would like to get it as I am a widow and under circumstances am entitled to it. If any doubt exists I am prepared to make an affidavit before a magistrate to the above effect.

Trusting this will be satisfactory,

I remain,

Dear Sir'

Yours very truly'

Sgd. Fanny Bradbury