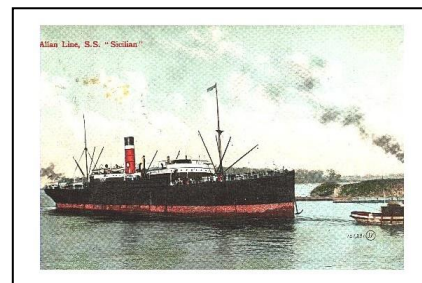
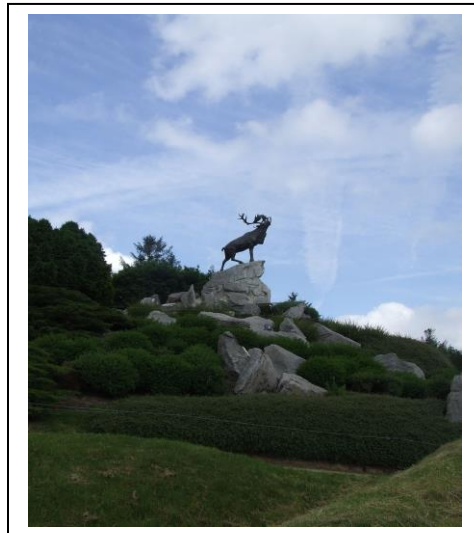




Private Harry Frampton (Regimental Number 2198), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a wood-barker earning \$1.35 a day at the *Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company* in Grand Falls, Harry Frampton was a recruit of the Eighth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on February 28, 1916, he then enlisted - at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 - and also attested on the following day, the 29th - 1916 was, of course, a leap year.

It was to be some four weeks before Private Frampton was to embark for overseas service to the United Kingdom. It was as a soldier of the second contingent of 'H' Company that he took ship for overseas service on board His Majesty's Transport *Sicilian** (right) in St. John's Harbour on March 23-24. The ship did not sail from Newfoundland until the 25th and likely crossed the Atlantic in convoy.



This would explain what was apparently a slow voyage**: Private Frampton did not disembark in the United Kingdom until April 9, at which time the contingent was transported to the Regimental Depot in Scotland.

**Some sixteen years previously - as of 1899 when she was launched - the vessel, originally built for the Allan Line, had been requisitioned as a troop-ship and transport carrying men, animals and equipment to South Africa for use during the Second Boer War.*

***Convoys often altered course and obviously had to travel at the speed of the slowest ship. Sicilian would also have had to sail to a rendezvous point to meet the accompanying vessels - a convoy left Halifax on March 31-April 1 to arrive in Liverpool on April 9.*

It could also be that she embarked some Canadian troops before crossing the Atlantic as she could carry well over one-thousand passengers with ease.

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 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 despatched in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1st Battalion.



(Page preceding: *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 winter of 1915-1916 the men of the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion had been lodged in several venues, at a nearby military camp at Gales, but also as far afield as Paisley Barracks, some sixty-five kilometres distant. However, by the spring of 1916 the difficulty had been overcome by housing the men in a requisitioned school, in a tented community and in the Ayr Racecourse Grandstand, all in the district of Newton-upon-Ayr.

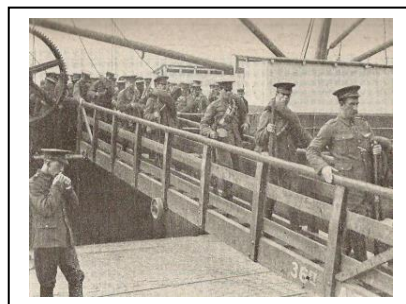


(Right above: *the new race-course at Ayr - opened in 1907 – where the men of the Regiment were sometimes billeted and where they replaced some of the turf with a vegetable garden; part of the present grandstand is original – photo from 2012*)

While one of his records documents that Private Frampton had originally enlisted for the duration of the war, there is also a signed form which shows that he also *re-enlisted** while stationed at Ayr, on June 30, just nine days before his departure to the Continent.

**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.*

July 9 saw the 8th Re-enforcement Draft – Private Frampton among its ranks - pass through the English south-coast port of Southampton on its way to France. On the day following, the 10th, it disembarked in Rouen, capital city of Normandy, and made its way to the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot, there to undergo final training and organization* before moving to a rendezvous with the parent unit.



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

There must have been a sense of urgency at the time: 1st Battalion had suffered terribly at a place called Beaumont-Hamel on the morning of July 1, and on July 6 its depleted strength, as reported by the Regimental War Diarist, still numbered no more than one-hundred sixty-eight *other ranks*, less than twenty per cent of the regulation strength of a British battalion.

Private Frampton was one of the contingent of one-hundred twenty-six *other ranks* from Rouen to report *to duty* with 1st Battalion on July 21 in the small community of Acheux. 1st Battalion had marched to there from the trenches in front of Maily-Maillet four days prior, and would continue this march as far as Beauval on the 23rd where they were to be billeted for only forty-eight hours before covering – still on foot – a further twenty kilometres to Candas on the 26th to board a train.

On July 27-28 of 1916, 1st Battalion - still under battalion strength at only five-hundred fifty-four strong, even after re-enforcement - moved north and entered into Belgium for the first time. It had been ordered to the *Ypres Salient*, one of the most dangerous pieces of real estate on the entire *Western Front*, there to continue to re-enforce and to re-organize after the ordeal of Beaumont-Hamel.



(Right above: *the entrance to 'A' Company's quarters in the ramparts of Ypres when it was posted there in 1916 – photograph from 2010*)

The Salient was relatively quiet during the time of the Newfoundlanders' posting there, yet they nonetheless incurred casualties, a number of them fatalities. On October 8, after ten weeks in Belgium, 1st Battalion was to move south, back to France and back to the area of – and the battle of – *the Somme*.



(Right above: *the city of Ypres towards the end of 1915 – and eight months before the Newfoundlanders were posted there for the first time – from a vintage post-card*)

Only four days after its return to France, 1st Battalion was ordered to pass to the offensive, on this occasion on the outskirts of the ruined village of Gueudecourt perhaps a dozen kilometres or so to the south-east of Beaumont-Hamel. Here, on October 12 – and during a heavy enemy bombardment of the previous evening – the Newfoundlanders lost heavily – two-hundred thirty-nine on the 12th alone - and again achieved little for their sacrifice.



(Right above: *This is the ground over which 1st Battalion advanced and then mostly conceded at Gueudecourt on October 12. Some few managed to reach the area where today stand the copse of trees and the Gueudecourt Caribou, on the far right horizon. – photograph from 2007*)

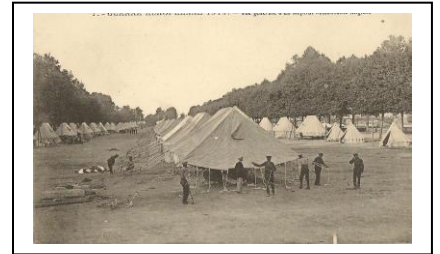
After the action at Gueudecourt in mid-October, 1st Battalion had continued its watch in and out of the trenches of *the Somme* – not without casualties – during the late fall and early winter, a period to be broken only by the several weeks – as of December 11-12 - spent in *Corps Reserve* during the Christmas period, the Newfoundlanders being withdrawn well behind the lines and encamped close to the city of Amiens.



(Previous page: *a typical British Army Camp during a winter period somewhere in France – from a vintage post-card*)

After that welcome six-week Christmas-time respite away from *the Front*, the Newfoundlanders officially returned to *active service* on January 23, although they had been back in the trenches already by that date and had incurred their first casualties – and fatality – of 1917.

Only a few days later, on February 3, Private Frampton was admitted into the 55th (2/2 London) Casualty Clearing Station at Grovetown for medical attention to ICT (*Inflammation of Connective Tissue*) of the foot. On February 8 he became a patient of the 5th General Hospital in Rouen. On February 23, some two weeks later on again, he was discharged to Base Depot where he spent the following five weeks.



(Right above: *a British Casualty Clearing Station – the one shown here under canvas for if or when the necessity for mobility might arise – somewhere in France at the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

Private Frampton returned to 1st Battalion on March 30 as one of a draft of five officers and thirty-two *other ranks* from Rouen reporting *to duty* from Base Depot. By this time the Newfoundlanders were in training and billeted for two nights at or near Vignacourt.



(Right: *a picture of Vignacourt at the time of the Great War – courtesy of the Australian War Memorial archives*)

On March 29, 1st Battalion had begun to make its way – on foot – from Camps-en-Amienois to the north-east, towards the venerable medieval city of Arras and eventually beyond, to Monchy-le-Preux. On March 31, the day that Private Frampton reported *to duty*, the unit had already reached the village of Vignacourt where it spent the day in training.



On the morrow, April 1, the Newfoundlanders were on the march again, its march to finish amid the rubble of a village called Monchy-le-Preux.

(Right above: *the remnants of the Grande Place in the city of Arras in early 1916 – from Illustration*)

(continued)

On April 9 the British Army launched an offensive in the area to the north of the Somme battlefields; this was the so-called *Battle of Arras* intended to support a French effort elsewhere. In terms of the daily count of casualties it was the most expensive operation of the War for the British, its only positive episode being the Canadian assault of Vimy Ridge on the opening day of the battle, Easter Monday. The French offensive was a disaster.



(Right above: *the Canadian National Memorial which stands on Vimy Ridge – photograph from 2010*)

1st Battalion was to play its part in the *Battle of Arras*, a role that would begin at a place called Monchy-le-Preux on April 14 and which would finish ten days later, on April 23, perhaps a kilometre distant, at *Les Fosses Farm*. After Beaumont-Hamel, Monchy-le-Preux was to prove the most costly day of the Newfoundlanders' war, four-hundred eighty-seven casualties on April 14 alone.



(Right above: *The village of Monchy-le-Preux as seen today from the western – in 1917, the British – side of the community. The Newfoundlanders advanced, out of the ruins of the place, to the east, away from the camera. – photograph from 2013*)

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(continued)

The son of George Frampton and Sarah Frampton – to whom he had allocated a daily allowance of sixty cents from his pay - of 30, Beaumont Avenue in Grand Falls (she by 1918 of 95, Hallam Street, Toronto, perhaps later returned), he was brother to Mary and to Jessie (she deceased in 1916, at the age of 13).



(Right above: *The Caribou at Monchy-le-Preux stands atop the remains of a German strongpoint in the centre of the re-constructed village. – photograph from 2009(?)*)

Private Frampton was reported as *missing in action* on April 14, 1917, while fighting at Monchy-le-Preux. Some thirty weeks later, on November 17, 1917, he was officially *presumed dead*.



Harry Frampton was aged nineteen years at the time of his enlistment.

(Right: *The sacrifice of Private Frampton is honoured on the War Memorial in the town of Grand Falls. – photograph from 2010*)

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

