



Private Ambrose George (Regimental Number 3412) is buried in Dozinghem Military Cemetery – Grave reference III. A. 7.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a fisherman, Ambrose George was a recruit of the Eleventh Draft. He presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on January 12, 1917, before enlisting – *for the duration of the war* and at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and also attesting on that same day.

Private George was one of the contingent of one-hundred four *other ranks* to leave St. John's on March 17, St. Patrick's Day of 1917, for the journey to Halifax. The means of their departure, however, is not clear: in one source, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, the claim is that it was on board the Bowring Brothers vessel *Florizel*; the files of the soldiers themselves record that it was... *Embarked S.S. Train to Halifax 17/3/17...* presumably via Port-aux-Basques and thence by ferry and train again to Halifax. Other sources have not proved helpful.

It was from Halifax that the detachment made its trans-Atlantic crossing in the company of Canadian troops on board His Majesty's Transport *Missanabie* (right), sailing from Nova Scotia on March 28. Thus this draft was to reach the United Kingdom two weeks or so before the ill-fated *Windsor Draft** which had left Newfoundland at the end of January, some ten weeks earlier.



**This was the name given to the draft of about three-hundred twenty all ranks which had left St. John's on January 31, 1917, en route to Halifax from where they were to sail to the United Kingdom. This contingent would eventually make that voyage, but about thirteen weeks later than envisaged. They were quarantined at Windsor as the result of a measles and mumps epidemic that claimed two of their number – and maybe a later third. In the meantime, 2nd (Reserve) Battalion at Ayr was running low on man-power.*

Missanabie having docked in Liverpool on April 6, the Newfoundland 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 Ayr – 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: *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*)

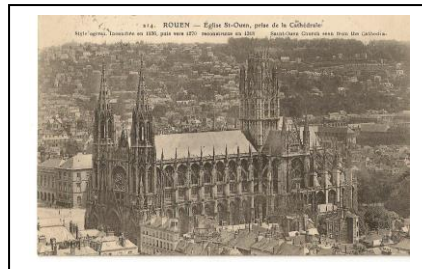
On June 3, the 24th Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr – Private George one of its number - passed through the English Channel port of Folkestone for the short sea-crossing to Boulogne on the French coast opposite. From there the Newfoundlanders entrained to travel south to Rouen and to the large British Expeditionary Force Base established there, for final organization and training* before leaving to seek out 1st Battalion.



(Right above: *a view of the French port of Boulogne at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

(continued)

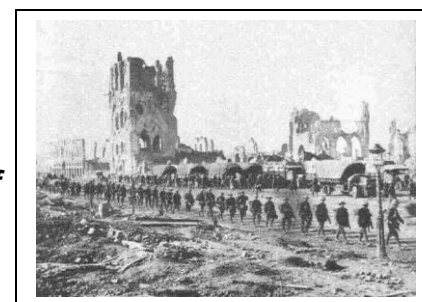
(Right: *the centre of the French city of Rouen with its venerable gothic cathedral at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)



**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.*

Private George, one of a contingent of one-hundred eighteen *other ranks* from Rouen, reported *to duty* to the parent unit on June 19, in the community of Bonneville. At the beginning of June, 1st Battalion had retired from the line to Bonneville and was to spend much of that month re-enforcing, re-organizing and training for the upcoming British offensive of the summer – and as it transpired, the autumn as well.

At the end of the month of June, the Newfoundlanders of 1st Battalion were once again ordered north into Belgium and once again to the area of *the Ypres Salient*. 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.



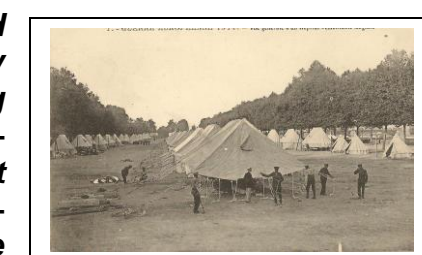
(Above right: *Troops file through the rubble of the medieval city of Ypres on their way to the front in the late summer of 1917. – from Illustration*)

August 5 was a quiet time for 1st Battalion – it had withdrawn from the front lines – so quiet, in fact, that the *Regimental War Diarist* has written no entry at all for that particular day. One can only surmise that it was a stray shell – or perhaps even an unfortunate accident at *Sutton Camp* where the Newfoundlanders were billeted: there seem to be no further details - that resulted in Private George being recorded as *wounded* on that day while serving with 'B' Company.



He was immediately transferred to the 61st Casualty Clearing Station at Lozingshem for treatment.

**Several names such as Mendinghem, Bandagehem and Dozingshem were invented by the British troops as they resembled the Belgian and northern-French fashion of naming villages. These sites were occupied by medical facilities only – and the inevitable cemeteries which today remain. But Lozingshem seems to be an exception in that it is a real place – however much the name lends itself to the morbid spirit of the British soldier.*



(Previous page: *A British casualty clearing station – the one seen here under canvas for mobility if and when necessary – being established somewhere on the Continent during the Great War. – from a vintage post-card*)

The son of Robert George and Martha George – to whom he had allocated a daily sixty cents from his pay - of Apsey Brook, Smith's Sound, Trinity Bay, his own place of residence is also cited as Britannia Cove.

Private George was reported as having *died of wounds* in the same 61st CCS on August 6, 1917.

At home it was the Reverend Mr. Facey who was requested to bear the news to his family.

Ambrose George had enlisted at the age of nineteen years.

Private Ambrose George was entitled to the British War Medal (left) and also the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

