

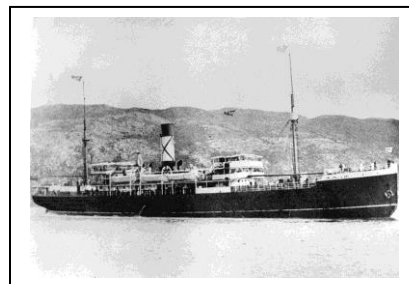
Private Arthur F. Gill (Regimental Number 3166) lies in Artillery Wood Cemetery – Grave reference X. B. 14.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a fisherman earning an annual \$400.00, Arthur Gill was a recruit of the Twelfth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on October 20, 1916, he then both enlisted – *for the duration of the war* and engaged at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and attested on the same October 20.

While awaiting orders to leave for overseas, Private Gill was admitted into the *Military Hospital for Infectious Diseases* in St. John's. There he was treated for measles, from November 29 until December 22.

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Private Gill 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 and overseas service.

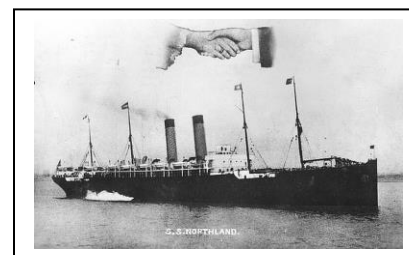


Immediately upon its arrival in Nova Scotia, however, this detachment was forwarded to accommodation in the town of Windsor where it was soon to be quarantined because of an epidemic of measles and mumps.

In fact, it was during this period at Windsor that Private Gill was admitted into hospital once more, and once more was diagnosed as suffering from a case of measles. On this occasion he was to remain in the Military Hospital from February 13 until March 15.

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 Gill embarked onto His Majesty's Transport *Northland* – originally the *Zeeland* - (right). She was one of three ships carrying the Newfoundlanders which were to sail on the next day in a trans-Atlantic convoy from Halifax. The vessels were carrying Canadian re-enforcements to the English west-coast port of Liverpool, where the ships docked on April 29.



Upon his arrival in Liverpool on April 29, Private Gill was again in need of medical attention. Thus he was transported to and admitted into *Sherlock Street Auxiliary Hospital* in that city where he was diagnosed as with tonsillitis. Some two weeks later he was sent directly to the Regimental Depot at Ayr where he reported *to duty* on May 14.

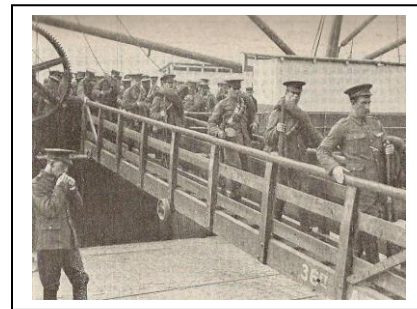
Once in England the contingent – minus those few sick who were hospitalized in Liverpool - entrained for the west coast of Scotland. By this time, the Regimental Depot at Ayr had already been in existence to serve as the base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment for two years. 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 Gill in 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.

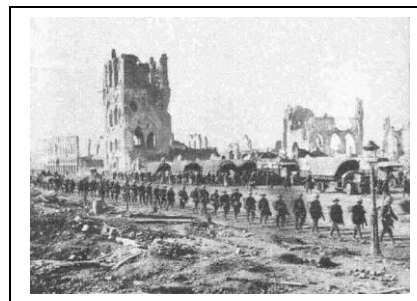


(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen on their way to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

**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 was on July 2 – the Regimental War Diary says, in fact, on the day before - that Private Gill's contingent of two-hundred fifty *other ranks* reported to duty at *Caribou Camp*, behind the lines near Woesten – to the north-west of Ypres - in Belgium. For the next few days – and nights – 1st Battalion supplied working parties for road-mending and for the construction of infantry tracks.

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.



(Right above: *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. Private Gill was to serve at only the former.



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

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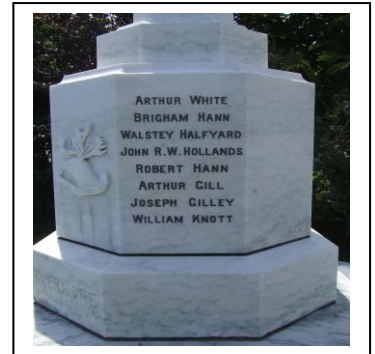
The son of Mrs. Susannah Roberts – to whom he had allocated a daily fifty cents from his pay - of Sally's Cove, Bonne Bay, in the District of St. Barbe, he was at first reported as having been *wounded* on August 16, 1917, and then as having been *killed in action** on the same day, while serving with 'A' Company during the fighting at the *Steenbeek*. At home it was the Reverend T. Greavett of Bonne Bay who was requested to bear the news to his family.



Arthur Gill had enlisted at the age of twenty-one years.

**Private Gill most likely died on the battle-field soon after being wounded.*

(Right top: *This is the area of the Steenbeek – the stream runs close to the trees - and close to where 1st Battalion fought the engagement of August 16, 1917. It is some eight kilometres distant from a village called Passchendaele. – photograph from 2010*)



(Right above: *Woody Point, Bonne Bay, War Memorial, on which is honoured the sacrifice of Private Gill – photograph from 2010*)

Private Arthur F. Gill was entitled to the British War Medal (on left) and also to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

