

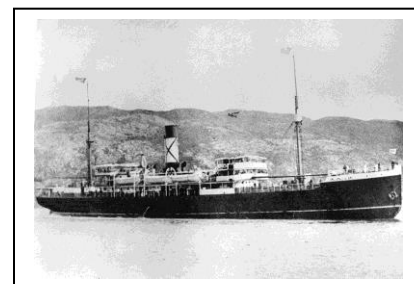


**Private Charles Llewelyn Gillam (Regimental Number 3148) lies in Brookwood Military Cemetery – Grave reference X. B. 2.**

**His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a fisherman earning a monthly \$30.00 (perhaps \$38.00), Charles Llewelyn Gillam was a recruit of the Twelfth Draft. He apparently enlisted at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's – *for the duration of the war* and engaged at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – on October 12, 1916, before then both presenting himself for medical examination and attesting a day later, on October 13.**

**While in St. John's awaiting orders to travel overseas, Private Gillam was to fall victim to the measles virus and became a patient of the Military Hospital for Infectious Diseases in St. John's from November 21 until December 12.**

**Private Gillam 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.**



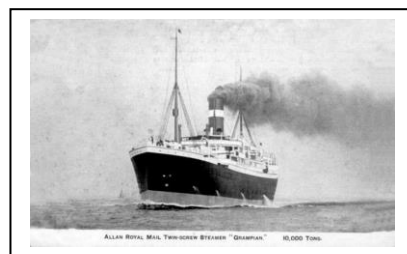
**(continued)**

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.

One of the few charges ever brought against him occurred while at Windsor: Private Gillam decided to stay in his bed until seven o'clock in the morning. For that he was *confined to barracks* for two days.

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 16, Private Gillam embarked onto His Majesty's Transport *Grampian* (right), one of three ships carrying the Newfoundlanders to sail two days later, in a convoy from Halifax. The vessels were also carrying Canadian reinforcements to the English west-coast port of Liverpool, where the ships docked on April 29.



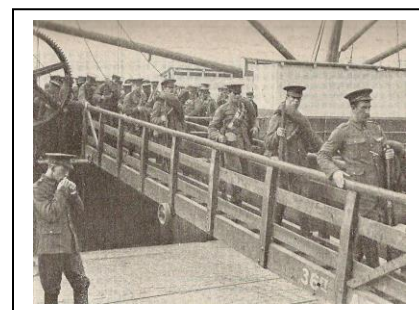
Arriving in England the contingent entrained for the west coast of Scotland. By this time, the Regimental Depot at Ayr had already been in existence to serve as the base for the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment for two years. It was from here – since November of 1915 and 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 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.



By the time that the Windsor Draft arrived at the Regimental Depot, 2<sup>nd</sup> (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 25<sup>th</sup> Re-enforcement Draft – Private Gillam 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 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.



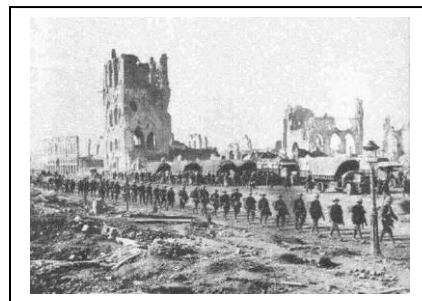
(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen on their way to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

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*\*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 Gillam's 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 – 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion supplied working parties for road-mending and for the construction of infantry tracks.

Only days before Private Gillam's arrival, at the end of June, the Newfoundlanders of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had once again moved 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.



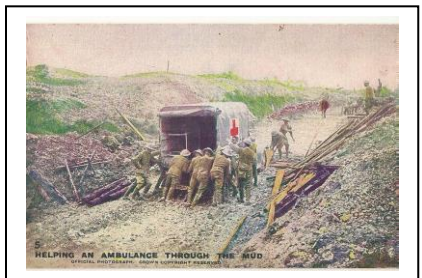
*(Right above: Troops file through the rubble of the medieval city of Ypres on their way to the front in the late summer of 1917. – from Illustration)*

1<sup>st</sup> 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 *Broembek* on October 9.



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

Only five days after the confrontation at the *Steenbeek*, on August 21, Private Gillam – a soldier of 'D' Company - was admitted into the 130<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance and on the same day transferred to the 14<sup>th</sup> Corps Rest Station; the diagnosis at the time was simply *debility*. On August 28 he was sent to the 63<sup>rd</sup> (1/1 London) Casualty Clearing Station – perhaps at Boubers-sur-Canche - and from there on some unspecified date, was forwarded to the 26<sup>th</sup> General Hospital at Étaples.



*(Right above: transferring sick and wounded from a field ambulance to the rear through the mud by motorized ambulance and man-power – from a vintage post-card)*

*(continued)*

Private Gillam was embarked onto the Belgian hospital ship *Stad Antwerpen* (right) on September 9 for the cross-Channel journey back to the United Kingdom.



Once having arrived in England he was transported and admitted into the 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital in the Borough of Wandsworth. There seems to have been no diagnosis recorded at that time other than the fairly-imprecise PUO (*Pain of Unknown Origin*) and pyrexia (high fever).

(Right: *The main building of what became 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital during the Great War was opened, on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1859, as a home for the orphaned daughters of British soldiers, sailors and marines. – photograph from 2010*)

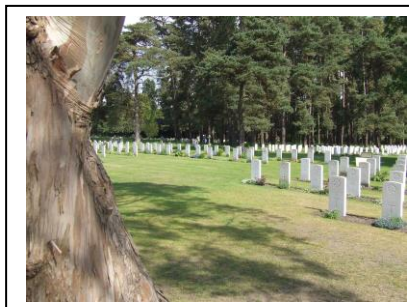


(Above far right: *Newfoundland patients, unfortunately unidentified, convalescing at 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital, Wandsworth – courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo*)

The son of Charles Gillam (also *Gilliam*), fisherman and sometime farmer, and Mary Jane (perhaps *Mary Ann?*) Gillam (née *Fortune*) – to whom he had allocated a daily sixty cents from his pay - of Jeffery's Crossing – he was also brother to George-Robert, Lily-Rhoda, John-Bernard, Caroline-Mary, Martha-Adelaide, Matilda-Frances, Richard T., Guyla and to Olive.

Private Gillam, a soldier of 'D' Company, was reported as having *died of sickness* – of pulmonary tuberculosis – at Wandsworth, on September 19, 1917.

He was buried at Brookwood on September 22 with full military honours: a Newfoundland flag shrouded his coffin; a firing-party and bearers were present from the 2<sup>nd</sup> South African Reserve Battalion; the service was conducted by the Reverend E. C. Walsh, Australian Chaplain. The Last Post was sounded at one forty-five in the afternoon.



Charles Gillam had enlisted at eighteen years and two months of age: date of birth: August 13 – a second source has August 8 – both of 1898\*.

(Right above: *The Newfoundland Plot in Brookwood Military Cemetery is in the centre of the frame, the further graves. – photograph from 2011*)

(continued)

*\*Unless August 13 is the date of his baptism.*

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

