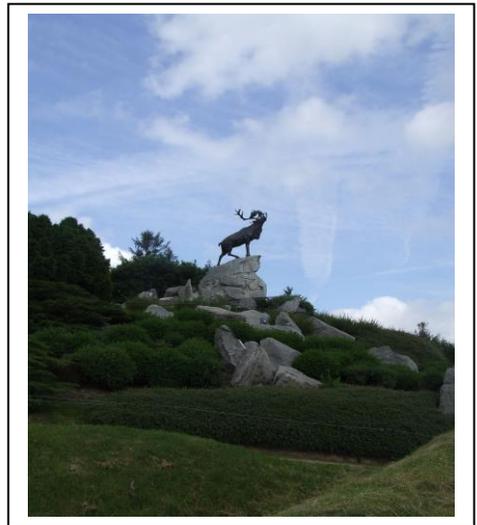




Private Armenius (*Allan* to at least some) Hewlett (Regimental Number 2333), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a fisherman, Armenius Hewlett was a recruit of the Ninth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury on Harvey Road in St. John's on March 27, 1916, he also enlisted *for the duration of the war* on the same day – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 – before then attesting on the morrow, March 28.



**A second source has him attesting on the day of enlistment.*

Private Hewlett sailed from St. John's on July 19 on board His Majesty's Transport *Sicilian** (right). The ship - refitted some ten years previously to carry well over one thousand passengers - had left the Canadian port of Montreal on July 16, carrying Canadian military personnel.



It is likely that the troops disembarked in the English west-coast port-city of Liverpool; however, it is *certain* that upon disembarkation the contingent journeyed north by train to Scotland and to the Regimental Depot.

**Some sixteen years previously - as of 1899 when she was launched – the vessel had served as a troop-ship and transport during another conflict, carrying men, animals and equipment to South Africa for use during the Second Boer War.*

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 the 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.



(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*)

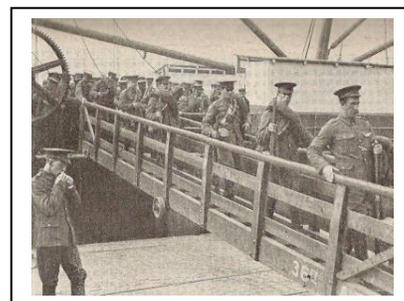
(continued)

At the outset there had been problems at Ayr to accommodate the new arrivals – plus men from other regiments who were still being billeted in the area – but by the spring of 1916, things had been satisfactorily settled: the officers were in Wellington Square in Ayr itself, and the other ranks had been billeted at Newton Park School and either in the grandstand or in a tented camp at the racecourse in the suburb of Newton-upon-Ayr.



(Right above: *the new race-course at Newton-upon-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 – photograph from 2012*)

Private Hewlett was to remain in Scotland for seven months before he was called upon to serve in France. On February 10, 1917, as a soldier of the 18th Re-enforcement Draft he passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton en route to the Continent. The detachment disembarked on the following day in Rouen, the Norman capital, and proceeded to the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot established there. There the Newfoundlanders were to undergo final training and organization* before leaving to rendezvous with 1st Battalion.



**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.*

(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen en route to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

But before quitting the Base Depot, Private Hewlett had a different rendezvous: he was admitted on February 19 into the 12th General Hospital in Rouen for medical attention to scabies. Apparently his case was quickly dealt with because he was discharged *to duty* back at the Base Depot on the 22nd, just three days later.

At the end of March, 1st Battalion was completing four weeks of activities out of the line. On March 31 it was training in or near the community of Vignacourt when a small draft of five officers and thirty-two *other ranks* – Private Hewlett one of its number - from Base reported for duty *in the field*.



(Right: *the community of Vignacourt at or about the time of the Great War – by courtesy of the Australian War Memorial archives*)

(continued)

It had been two days earlier, on March 29 that 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. On March 31, the day that Private Hewlett 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, their journey to end amid the rubble of the village of Monchy-le-Preux.

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

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*)

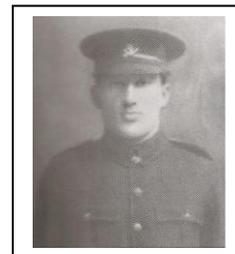
The son of William Hewlett (also *Hulett*), fisherman, and Alfreda Hewlett – to whom he had allocated a daily allowance of sixty cents from his pay - of La Scie of the *French Shore* in the District of St. Barbe, he was also brother to Janet, Norman, Robert W., Raymond, Carrie P., Bessie M., Mazie B., and to Ambrose G..



Private Hewlett was reported as *missing in action* on April 14, 1917, while serving with 'A' Company in the fighting at Monchy-le-Preux. Some thirty weeks later, on November, 1917, he was officially *presumed dead*.

Armenius Hewlett had enlisted at the age of twenty-one years and ten months.

(Previous page: *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(?)*)



The photograph of Private Hewlett is from the Royal Canadian Legion publication *Lest We Forget*.

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



173 Kilmarnock Rd.
Showlands
Glasgow
Scotland
Aug 16

Sir or Madam

In reference to Pte Allan Hewlett of 2nd 1st Newfoundland Reg 2333 A Coy
Posted as Missing on the 14-4-17

Would it be too much to ask you for his home address in Newfoundland &
oblige "his sorrowing friend"

Agnes Scott