



**Private Adolphus Locke (Regimental Number 3403) is interred in the Methodist Cemetery at Heads Harbour on Pilley's Island.**

**His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a fisherman, Augustus Locke 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 8 of 1917, 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.**

**(continued)**

Private Locke 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.

*\*In the meantime, between the date of his enlistment and then departure, he likely spent time at home as evidenced by a claim for \$3.00 (for twelve meals) by a Mrs. Willis Locke in Grand Falls and dated February 29, 1917.*

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, 2<sup>nd</sup> (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 2<sup>nd</sup> (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 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.

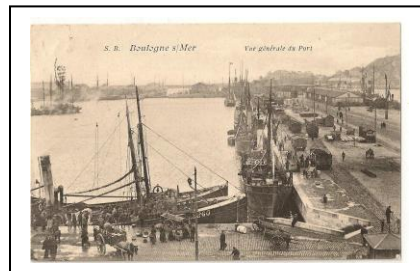
(Right above: *an aerial view of Ayr – probably from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough is to the right. – courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr*)

On June 3, the 24<sup>th</sup> Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr – Private Locke one of its number - passed through the English Channel port of Folkestone for the short sea-crossing to Boulogne on the French coast opposite.

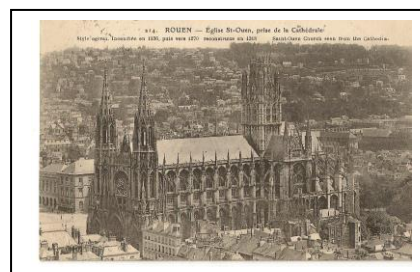


From there the Newfoundlanders entrained to travel south to Rouen and to the large British Expeditionary Force Base established there, for final organization and training\* before leaving to seek out 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

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



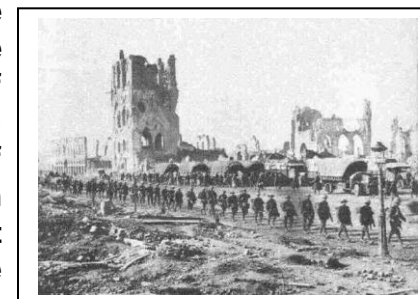
(Right adjacent: the centre of the French city of Rouen with its venerable gothic cathedral at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card)



\*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.

The records show that was on July 2 – the Regimental War Diary says, in fact, on the day before - that Private Locke'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 – 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion supplied working parties for road-mending and for the construction of infantry tracks. For that purpose, several of the Newfoundlanders were attached temporarily – until July 20 - to the 173<sup>rd</sup> Company of the Royal Engineers.

Only days before Private Locke's arrival, at the end of the month of June, the Newfoundlanders of 1<sup>st</sup> 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.



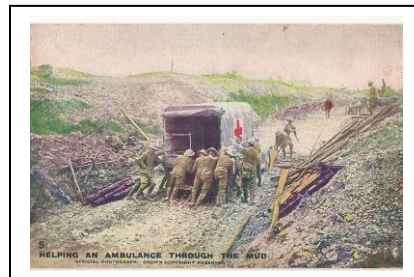
(Above right: *Troops file through the rubble of the medieval city of Ypres on their way to the front in the late summer of 1917. – from Illustration*)

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.



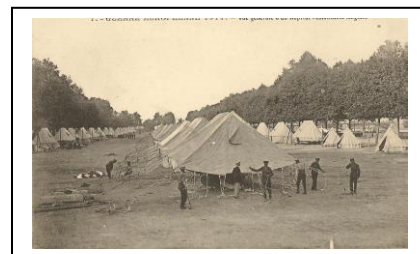
(Right: an unidentified – perhaps unidentifiable – part of the *Passchendaele* battlefield in the autumn of 1917 – from *Illustration*)

On October 9, at the *Broembeek*, Private Locke was wounded while serving with 'D' Company, suffering a severe gun-shot wound to the knee and a fractured femur. He had been evacuated to the 4<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station at Lozinghem\* by the following day and, by the end of the next day again, the 11<sup>th</sup>, he had been admitted into the 3<sup>rd</sup> General Hospital in Rouen.



(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*)

\*Several names such as *Mendinghem, Bandaghem and Dozinghem* 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 *Lozinghem* 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.



(Right above: *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*)

In the hospital at Rouen the decision was taken to invalid Private Locke back to the United Kingdom; thus on October 20, he was embarked onto His Majesty's Australian Hospital Ship *Western Australia* (right) for the cross-Channel journey. Once having arrived in England, he was transported to and admitted into Grove Military Hospital in the southern outskirts of London where he was operated on October 23.



(Right below: *one of the very few remaining of the original buildings that served as a part of Grove Military Hospital in Tooting during the Great War: The original hospital – for infectious diseases – opened in 1899. – photograph from 2010(?)*)

He apparently spent a total of three-hundred four days in that institution before being discharged as an invalid. He is recorded as next having been sent, on August 23, 1918, to the 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital in the nearby Borough of Wandsworth – or to one of its auxiliary hospitals – presumably for convalescence. The records conflict a little at this point, but he must have spent nineteen days or so in convalescence before being granted the customary ten-day furlough accorded those discharged from hospital.



(continued)

(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 convalescing at 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital, Wandsworth – courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo*)

After that period of leave – from about September 10 to 20 - he was at that point ordered to report to the *Pay and Record Office* in London for disposal where he learned that he was being sent home to be discharged from service.

Private Locke is documented as having left England – likely from London on board the *City of Poona* (right) - on September 23 to travel via Montreal where the ship docked on October 7, before travelling on to Newfoundland where he arrived on October 12, one year and three days after his wounding at the *Broembek*. On the 18<sup>th</sup> a medical board recommended... *discharge as permanently unfit; requires electrical treatment\**.



*\*The bones in his knee had fused together, prohibiting movement – the aforementioned electrical treatment had already been tried but with minimal effect.*

When exactly Private Locke caught the Spanish 'flu is not clear but his foster-father wrote that... *He arrived home on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of Oct was taken ill on the way home with 'Spanish Influenza' and died on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Nov.*

The son of Philip Locke, fisherman, and Georgina Locke (née *Dean*, deceased May 2, 1909) of Pilley's Island, he was also the adopted son of Emmanuel White and Martha White\* of Pilley's Island – he named them simply as *friends* - to whom he had allocated a daily sixty cents from his pay, and to whom he had willed his all.

Private Locke was reported as having *died of sickness* on November 3 of 1918.

Adolphus Locke had enlisted at the age of twenty-two years and four months.

*\*They also had an adopted daughter, Minnie.*

*In late 1925 a Commonwealth War Graves headstone was sent to Pilley's Island on the Bowring Brothers vessel Prospero to be placed on his grave. A stone had already been set in place by his foster-parents as early as 1919, and remains there today.*





(First page top left: *The War Memorial on Pilley's Island honours the sacrifice of Private Locke.* – photograph from 2014)

(Previous page: *Private Locke is also commemorated on the Screen Wall in the Military Plot, Mount Pleasant Cemetery, St. John's.* – photograph from 2011)

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



Pilley's Island  
Nov 16<sup>th</sup> 18

W W Warren Lieut  
Casualty Officer for Minister of Militia  
St John's

Dear Sir

Your letter asking for particulars of 3403 Pte Adolphus Locke death has been received He arrived home on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of Oct was taken ill on the way home with "Spanish Influenza" and died on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of Nov. Dr A.H. Bulham of Pilley's Island was called in and everything was done that could be done for his comfort but despite all our efforts he was taken from us

We feel his loss very keenly both myself and Mrs White but we are glad to know that he did his duty and was spared to see us again before death did its work

Hoping this will be satisfactory if not I would refer you to Dr. A.H. Bulham of Pilley's Island.

I remain yours very  
truly Emmanuel White