



**Private William Vincent O'Brien (Regimental Number 1068) is interred in Y Ravine Cemetery – Grave reference: D. 16.**

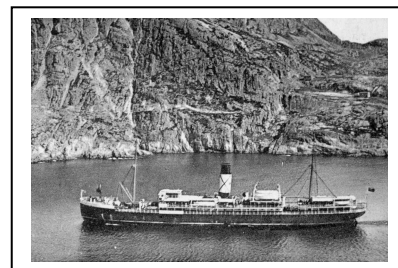
**His occupation prior to his military service recorded as that of a *fisherman* earning an annual three-hundred dollars, William Vincent O'Brien presented himself for enlistment at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland on January 20 of the year 1915. He was engaged at the private soldier's daily rate of a single dollar plus a ten-cent per diem Field Allowance.**

**(continued)**

Contrary to most of his fellow recruits, he was to undergo a medical examination *after* having enlisted; in his case, it came about two days later, on January 22, at the same *CLB Armoury* on Harvey Road. It was a procedure which would pronounce him to be...*Fit for Foreign Service*.

William Vincent O'Brien was now to be obliged to wait for a further four weeks less a day before attestation, the final formality before becoming a soldier of the King. He took his oath of allegiance on February 18.

For Private O'Brien, Number 1068, there was now to be yet another, but final, waiting period of some four weeks before he would be summoned to...*overseas service*. How he occupied himself during these two long periods is not recorded among his papers; he may, of course, have temporarily returned to work and, if so, likely at his home in Avondale, but this is only speculation.



(Right above: *The image of the Bowring Brothers' vessel 'Stephano', sister-ship of 'Florizel', as she passes through 'the Narrows' of St. John's Harbour is from the Provincial Archives.*)

Unlike the two previous contingents to have departed Newfoundland (see below) for...*overseas service*, Private O'Brien's 'D' Company was not to sail directly to the United Kingdom. On March 20 it, he a soldier of the Number 8 Platoon, embarked onto the Bowring-Brothers' vessel *Stephano* for the short voyage to Halifax, capital city of the Canadian province of Nova Scotia, where it was thereupon to board a second vessel, the newly-launched *Orduña* for the trans-Atlantic crossing\*.



(Right above: *The image of Orduña is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site. The vessel was not to be requisitioned during the Great War but would be used by the Cunard Company to operate on its commercial service between Liverpool and New York.*)

Having then sailed from Nova Scotia on March 22 for Liverpool, Private O'Brien and his draft landed there eight days later, on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Once disembarked in Liverpool, the two-hundred fifty men and officers of 'D' Company were thereupon transported on the same date by train directly to Edinburgh, the Scottish capital, to join the Newfoundland Regiment's 'A', 'B' and 'C' Companies.

These units were by this time stationed at the historic Castle, 'A' and 'B' having recently been posted from Fort George and 'C' having arrived directly from home (see further below). After 'D' Company's arrival at the end of that month of March, the Newfoundlanders were now to remain at Edinburgh for the following six weeks.



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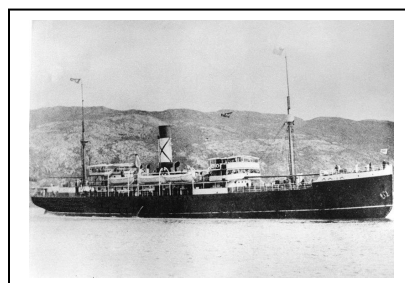


**(Preceding page: *From its vantage point on Castle Hill, the venerable fortress overlooks the city of Edinburgh where in 1915 the Newfoundlanders were to provide the first garrison to be drawn from outside the British Isles. – photograph from 2011)***

\* \* \* \* \*

Five to six months before that time, in the late summer and early autumn of 1914 there had been a period of training of some five weeks on the shores of *Quidi Vidi Lake* in the east end of St. John's for the newly-formed Newfoundland Regiment's first recruits – these to become 'A' and 'B' Companies - during which time the authorities had also been preparing for the Regiment's transfer overseas.

This first Newfoundland contingent was to embark on October 3, in some cases only days after a recruit's enlistment and/ or attestation. To become known to history as the *First Five Hundred* and also as the *Blue Puttees*, on that day they had boarded the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* awaiting in St. John's Harbour.



The ship had sailed for the United Kingdom on the morrow, October 4, 1914, to its rendezvous with the convoy carrying the 1<sup>st</sup> Canadian Division overseas, off the south coast of the Island.

**(Right above: *The image of Florizel at anchor in the harbour at St. John's is by courtesy of Admiralty House Museum.*)**

**(Right: *Fort George, constructed in the latter half of the eighteenth century, still serves the British Army to this day. – photograph from 2011)***



In the United Kingdom this first Newfoundland contingent was to train in three venues during the late autumn of 1914 and then the winter of 1914-1915: firstly in southern England on the Salisbury Plain; then in Scotland at *Fort George* – on the Moray Firth close to Inverness; and lastly at Edinburgh Castle – where, as recorded beforehand, it was to provide the first garrison from outside the British Isles.

Only days after 'A' and 'B' Companies had taken up their posting there, on February 16 'C' Company – the first re-enforcements for the original contingent\* - would arrive directly from Newfoundland.

***\*This contingent, while a part of the Newfoundland Regiment, was not yet a battalion and would not be so for a further five months – as will be seen below.***

\* \* \* \* \*

As seen in a previous paragraph, for the month of April and the first days of May of 1915, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies, now united, were to furnish the garrison – the first troops from outside the British Isles to do so - of the guardian of Scotland's capital city. Then,

during the first week of May, 'E' Company was to report there...*to duty*...from home. Four days later again, on May 11, the Newfoundland contingent was ordered elsewhere.

On that day, three weeks into spring – although in Scotland there was apparently still snow - the entire Newfoundland unit was dispatched to *Stobs Camp*, all under canvas and south-eastwards of Edinburgh, in the vicinity of the town of Hawick.

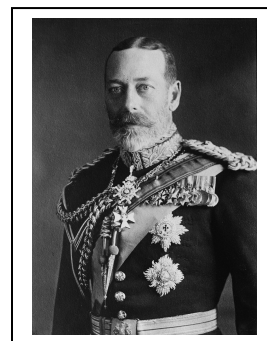
It was to be at *Stobs Camp* that the Newfoundland contingent would eventually receive the re-enforcements from home – 'F' Company which arrived on July 10, 1915 - that would bring its numbers up to that of British Army establishment battalion strength\*. The now-formed 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was thus rendered available to be sent on '*active service*'.

(Right: *The Newfoundland Regiment marches past on the training ground at Stobs Camp and is presented with its Colours on June 10, 1915. – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo*)



*\*This was approximately fifteen hundred, sufficient to furnish two re-enforcement companies and a headquarters staff.*

At the beginning of that August of 1915, the four senior Companies, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', were then sent south from *Stobs Camp* to undergo a final two weeks of training, as well as an inspection by the King, at Aldershot. This force, now the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment, was thereupon attached to the 88<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division of the (British) Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.



Meanwhile the two junior Companies, 'E' – last arrived at Edinburgh - and the aforementioned 'F', were ordered transferred to Scotland's west coast, to Ayr, there to provide the nucleus of the newly-forming 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion.

(Right above: *George V, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India – the photograph is from Bain News Services via the Wikipedia web-site.*)

It was while the Newfoundland Battalion was in training during those weeks at Aldershot, on August 15 that Private O'Brien would be prevailed upon to enlist for the duration of the conflict.

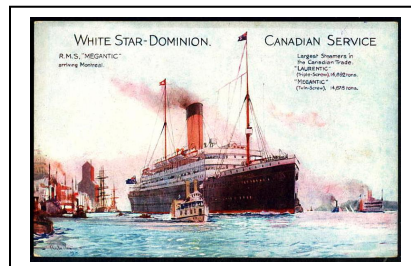
*\*At the outset of the War, perhaps because it was felt by the authorities that it would be a conflict of short duration, the recruits enlisted for only a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was obviously going to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist.*



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(Preceding page: *Some of the personnel of 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment at Aldershot in August of 1915, prior to its departure to active service on the Gallipoli Peninsula – from The Fighting Newfoundlander by Col. G.W.L. Nicholson, C.D.)*



(Right: *The image of Megantic, here in her peace-time colours of a 'White Star Line' vessel, is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site.)*

On August 20, 1915, Private O'Brien and his Newfoundland unit embarked in the Royal Navy Harbour of Devonport onto the requisitioned passenger-liner *Megantic* for passage to the Middle East and to the fighting against the Turks. There, a month later – having spent some two weeks billeted in British barracks in the vicinity of the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was to land at *Suvla Bay* on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



(Right above: *Kangaroo Beach, where the officers and men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Newfoundland Regiment, landed on the night of September 19-20, 1915, is to be seen in the distance at the far end of Suvla Bay. The remains of a landing-craft are still clearly visible in the foreground on 'A' Beach. – photograph taken in 2011)*



(Right: *Newfoundland troops on board a troop-ship anchored at Mudros: either Megantic on August 29, Ausonia on September 18, or Prince Abbas on September 19 – Whichever the case, they were yet to land on Gallipoli. – from Provincial Archives)*

(Right: *A century later, the area, little changed from those far-off days, of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla Bay, and where the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment was to serve during the autumn of 1915 – photograph from 2011)*



When the Newfoundlanders landed from their transport ship at *Suvla Bay* on that September night of 1915 they were to disembark into a campaign that was already on the threshold of collapse.

Not only in the area where the Newfoundland Battalion was to serve but, even ever since the very first days of the operation in April of 1915, the entire *Gallipoli Campaign*, including the operation at *Suvla Bay*, was proving to be little more than a debacle:

(continued)

Flies, dust, disease, the frost-bite and the floods – and of course the casualties inflicted by an enemy who was to fight a great deal better than the British High Command\* had ever anticipated – were eventually to overwhelm the British-led forces and those of the French, and it would finally be decided to abandon not only *Suvla Bay* but the entire *Gallipoli* venture.



(Right above: *No-Man's-Land at Suvla Bay as seen from the Newfoundland positions – from Provincial Archives*)

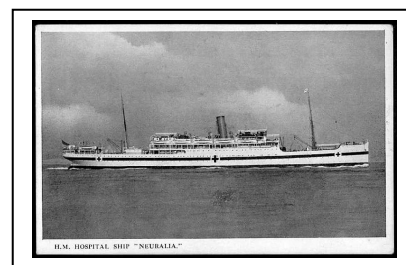
(Right: *An un-identified Newfoundland soldier in the trenches at Suvla Bay – from Provincial Archives*)



*\*Many of the commanders chosen were second-rate, had been brought out of retirement, and had little idea of how to fight – let alone of how to win. One of the generals at Suvla, apparently, had handed in his resignation during the Campaign and had just gone home.*

\* \* \* \* \*

On October 24, Private O'Brien was evacuated from *Suvla Bay* – possibly via the Greek island of Lemnos - on board His Majesty's Hospital Ship *Neuralia*. He had been diagnosed as suffering from enteritis – later to be re-diagnosed as typhoid - and was transferred to, then admitted into St. Andrew's Hospital on the British-held Mediterranean island of Malta on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of the same month.



(Right above: *The image of HMHS 'Neuralia' seen here in her war-time hospital-ship garb, is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site. The vessel, the largest of the British India fleet at the time of her launching in 1912, was requisitioned in June of 1915 and converted for medical service, capable of accommodation well over six-hundred sick and wounded. 'Neuralia' was to serve as a hospital ship and then as an ambulance transport until July of 1919 when she was returned to her owners.*)

(Right: *One of the many British military hospitals which for years have been standing abandoned on the island of Malta since its independence in 1964 – photograph from 2011*)



It was then another hospital ship, HMHS *Egypt*, which would transport him from Malta back to the United Kingdom for further treatment, a voyage lasting from November 22 to 29. Arriving in England on that second date, Private O'Brien was then admitted into the 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital in the Borough of Wandsworth.

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



**(Right below: A party of Newfoundland patients, dressed in hospital uniform but otherwise unfortunately unidentified, is seen here convalescing in the grounds of the 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital at Wandsworth – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo)**



**After convalescence – the date of admission appears not to be among his documents - at the Weybridge Convalescent Home, Private O'Brien was granted the customary ten-day furlough granted to military personnel upon release from hospital.**

**In the case of Private O'Brien that furlough was be from January 24 of the New Year, 1916, until February 2, a period of time which he was to sojourn in the familiar surrounds of Edinburgh at the Waverley Hotel which during the Great War offered special rates to service personnel.**



**Three days afterwards, on February 5, he arrived at the Regimental Depot at Ayr to begin a two-month posting there.**

**(Right above: Pictured here, the Edinburgh link in the chain of Waverley Hotels, likely because of the aforementioned favourable prices, was a popular destination for those in uniform during the war-time years. – from Wikipedia)**

**At the end of this summer of 1915, the once-Royal Borough of Ayr on Scotland's west coast was to begin to serve as the overseas base for the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment from where – as of November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 - re-enforcement drafts from home were to be despatched to bolster the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion's numbers, at first to the Middle East and then later to the Western Front.**

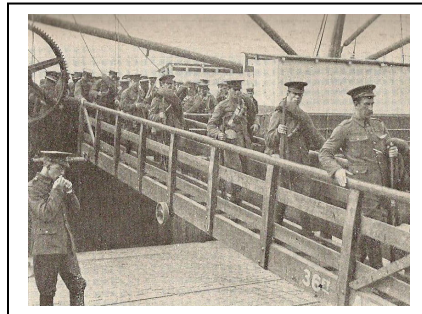


**(Right above: An aerial view of Ayr, likely from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr, where were quartered the 'other ranks', is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough, where were housed the officers, is to the right. – by courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr)**

**(Right: The High Street in Ayr as shown on a postcard of the time, the imposing Wallace Tower – it stands to this day (2017) - dominating the scene – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs Lillian Tibbo.**



On April 8\*of that 1916, the 4<sup>th</sup> Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr embarked in the English south-coast port-city of Southampton en route to Rouen, capital city of Normandy, where the contingent landed later on that same day. It then moved to the nearby British Expeditionary Force Base Depot for final training and organization\*\* before then leaving to seek out the parent unit, by then having arrived on the *Western Front*.



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

*\*Private O’Brien was supposed to leave Ayr on March 27 with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Re-enforcement Draft but was absent from the parade of that day and the contingent left without him. He was awarded twenty-eight days detention for this misdemeanour but whether or not it was ever fully served after his eventual departure in early April seems not to be documented.*

*\*\*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, Étapes, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.*

It was to be on April 26 that Private O’Brien’s draft of a single officer and forty...*other ranks*...arrived for duty in the village of Enlebelmer, some three kilometres behind the forward positions of the *Western Front*.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the mean-time, during those first days - then weeks - of Private O’Brien’s departure to Malta for medical attention, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had continued to serve in the cauldron – the area was ringed by hills and Turkish artillery – that *Suvla Bay* had by then become.

And the situation was to worsen.

(Right: *Anzac Bay is in the fore-ground with the Salt Lake in the centre further away. The bottom of Suvla Bay is just to be seen on the left and adjacent to the Salt Lake, and further away again. The hills in the distance and the ones from which this photograph was taken were held by the Turks and formed a horse-shoe around the plain surrounding the Salt Lake - which was where the British and Newfoundlanders were stationed. – photograph from 2011*)



November 26 would see the nadir of the Newfoundland Battalion’s fortunes at Gallipoli; there had been a freak rain-, snow- and ice-storm strike the *Suvla Bay* area and the subsequent floods had wreaked havoc amongst the forces of both sides. For several days, survival rather than the enemy was to be the priority.

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There were to be many casualties on both sides, some of them, surprised by the sudden inundation of their positions, fatalities who had drowned in their trenches – although no Newfoundlanders had been among that number. Numerous, however, had been those afflicted by trench-foot and by frost-bite.

On the night of December 19-20, the British had abandoned the area of *Suvla Bay* – the Newfoundlanders, the only non-British unit to serve there, to form a part of the rear-guard. Some of the Battalion personnel had been evacuated to the nearby island of *Imbros*, some to *Lemnos*, further away, but in neither case was the respite to be of a long duration; the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was to be transferred only two days later to the area of *Cape Helles*, on the western tip of the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.

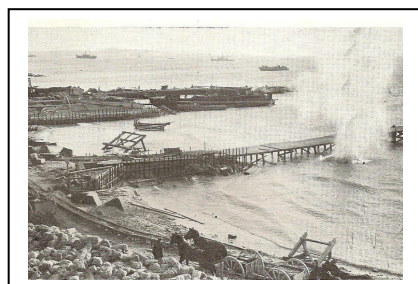
(Right: *Cape Helles as seen from the Turkish positions on the misnamed Achi Baba, positions which were never breached: The Newfoundland positions were to the right-hand side of the picture. – photograph from 2011*)



The British, Indian and *Anzac* forces – the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was also to serve at *Gallipoli* – had now only been marking time until a complete withdrawal of the *Peninsula* could be undertaken.

This final operation had taken place on the night of January 8-9, the Newfoundland Battalion to furnish part of the British rear-guard on this second occasion also.

(Right: *'W' Beach at Cape Helles as it was only days before the final British evacuation – from Illustration*)



*\*Lieutenant Owen Steele of St. John's, Newfoundland, is cited as having been the last soldier of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force to step into the final small boat to sail from the Gallipoli Peninsula.*

(Right: *'W' Beach almost a century after its abandonment by British forces in that January of 1916 and by the Newfoundlanders who were to be the last soldiers off the beach: Vestiges of the wharves in the black-and-white picture are still to be seen. – photograph from 2011*)



Immediately after the British had evacuated the entire *Gallipoli Peninsula* in January of 1916, the Newfoundland Battalion was to be ordered to the Egyptian port-city of *Alexandria*, to arrive there on the 15<sup>th</sup> of that month. The Newfoundlanders were then to be immediately transferred southward to the vicinity of *Suez*, a port at the southern end of the Canal which bears the same name, there to await further orders since, at the time, the subsequent destination of the British 29<sup>th</sup> Division had yet to be decided\*.



***\*Bulgaria had entered the conflict on the side of the Central Powers, and Salonika was soon to become a theatre of war.***

***(Preceding page: The British destroy their supplies during the final evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment were among the last to leave on two occasions, at both Suvla Bay and Cape Helles. – photograph taken from the battleship Cornwallis from Illustration)***



***(Right above: Port Tewfiq at the south end of the Suez Canal as it was just prior to the Great War – from a vintage post-card)***

**After a two-month interim spent in the vicinity of Port Suez, the almost six-hundred officers and other ranks of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion were to board His Majesty's Transport *Alaunia* at Port Tewfiq, on March 14 to begin the voyage through the *Suez Canal* en route to France. The Newfoundlanders would disembark eight days afterwards in the Mediterranean port-city of Marseilles, on March 22.**



***(Right above: British troops march through the port area of the French city of Marseilles. – from a vintage post-card)***

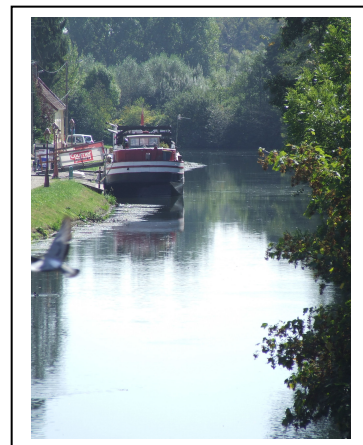
**Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, the Newfoundland Battalion's train was to find its way to the small provincial town of Pont-Rémy, a thousand kilometres to the north of Marseilles. It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for the troops having inexcusably travelled unused in a separate wagon.**

**Having de-trained at the local station at two o'clock in the morning, the Newfoundlanders were now still to endure the long, dark march ahead of them before they would reach their billets at Buigny l'Abbé.**

**It is doubtful if many of those tired soldiers were to pay much attention to the slow-moving stream flowing under the bridge over which they had then marched on their way from the station. But some three months later *the Somme* was to have become a part of their history.**

***(Right: A languid River Somme as seen from the bridge at Pont-Rémy – photograph from 2010)***

**On April 13, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment had subsequently marched into the village of Englebelmer – perhaps some fifty kilometres in all from Pont-Rémy - where it would be billeted, would receive re-enforcements from Scotland via Rouen and, in two days' time, would be introduced into the communication trenches of the *Western Front*.**





Just days following the Newfoundland Battalion's arrival on the *Western Front*, two of the four Companies – 'A', and 'B' – were to take over several support positions from a British unit\* before the entire Newfoundland unit was to then be ordered to move further up for the first time into forward positions on April 22 – which is where they were on April 26, the day on which Private O'Brien and his draft reported...*to duty*...from Rouen.

*\*It should be said that the Newfoundland Battalion and two-hundred men of the Bermuda Rifles who were serving at the time in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lincolnshire Regiment Battalion, were then the only units at the Somme from outside the British Isles - true also on the day of the attack on July 1.*

\* \* \* \* \*

(Right below: *A part of the re-constructed trench system to be found in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2009(?)*)

Having then been withdrawn at the end of that April to the areas of Mailly-Maillet and Louvencourt where they would be based for the next two months, the Newfoundlanders were soon to be preparing for the upcoming British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for the languid, meandering river, *the Somme*, that flowed – and still does so today – through the region.



If there is one name and date in Newfoundland history which is etched in the collective once-national memory, it is that of Beaumont-Hamel on July 1 of 1916; and if any numbers are remembered, they are those of the eight-hundred who went *over the top* in the third wave of the attack on that morning, and of the sixty-eight unwounded present at muster some twenty-four hours later\*.



(Right above: *Beaumont-Hamel: Looking from the British lines down the hill to Y Ravine Cemetery which today stands atop part of the German front-line defences: The Danger Tree is to the right in the photograph. – photograph taken in 2009*)

(Right: *A view of Hawthorn Ridge Cemetery Number 2 in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2009(?)*)

*\*Perhaps ironically, the majority of the Battalion's casualties was to be incurred during the advance from the third line of British trenches to the first line from where the attack proper was to be made, and while struggling through British wire laid to protect the British positions from any German attack.*



There are other numbers of course: the fifty-seven thousand British casualties incurred in four hours on that same morning of which nineteen-thousand were recorded as having been *killed in action or died of wounds*.

It was to be the largest disaster ever in the annals of the British Army...and, perhaps just as depressing, the carnage of *the Somme* was to continue for the next four and a half months.

(Right: *Beaumont-Hamel* is a commune, not a village. – photographs from 2010 and 2015)

*In fact, Beaumont-Hamel was a commune – it still exists today – at the time comprising two communities: Beaumont, a village on the German side of the lines, and Hamel which was behind those of the British. No-Man’s-Land, on which the Newfoundland Memorial Park lies partially today, was on land that separated Beaumont from Hamel.*



(Right: *A grim, grainy image purporting to be Newfoundland - dead awaiting burial after Beaumont-Hamel – from...?)*

The son of John O’Brien, fisherman, and of Mary (also signed herself as *Minnie*) O’Brien (née *Power*)\* – to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of eighty cents from his pay - of Avondale, he was brother to four sisters, Catherine, Anne, Mary-Ellen and Bridget.



*\*The couple was married in Harbour Main on June 11, 1892.*

Private O’Brien was at first reported as *missing in action* at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, 1916, while serving with ‘D’ Company during the fighting on the first day of *First Somme*. Some six months later, on December 31, he was officially *presumed dead*.

However, a subsequent report submitted by the General Officer Commanding 5<sup>th</sup> Corps documented his burial on July 21, 1917. Private O’Brien’s record was thus amended so as to read...*killed in action*.

William Vincent O’Brien had enlisted at the *declared* age of twenty years: date of birth in Salmon Cove, District of Harbour Main, Newfoundland, December 26, Boxing Day of 1894 (from Harbour Main Roman Catholic Parish Records).

Private O’Brien shares his grave marker with a Private G. Burt of the King’s Own Scottish Borderers.

Private William Vincent O’Brien was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, as well as to the British War Medal (centre) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).



(continued)



Avondale  
Conception Bay  
Newfoundland  
Feb 9<sup>th</sup>, 1916

Dear Sir

Can you throw any light on the reason my son Private W. V. O'Brien Reg. 1068 D Company who was sick and removed to 3<sup>rd</sup> General Hospital, Wandsworth, now at Weybridge Convalescent Home does not get any letter or parcel sent him by me.

I get letters from him every week and yet he does not get any of the letters or parcels I send him. Will you try to have this mail forwarded to him.

And you will make easy the mind of an anxious mother.

Yours truly

Mrs Mary O'Brien

P.S. There must be at least 25 or 30 letters and 3 or 4 parcels somewhere belong to him sent by me.

Newfoundland Contingent P & R Office  
58 Victoria Street London SE  
22<sup>nd</sup> February 1916

Madam.

Very probably the letters and parcels addressed to your son, No. 1068, Pte. W. V. O'Brien, were sent to the Mediterranean before it became known that he was at the 3<sup>rd</sup> London General Hospital, Wandsworth. The missing mail will no doubt be returned and will be forwarded to him in due course, as in a great many cases such mail matter has been returned to this country for men invalided back.

For Paymaster & Officer i/c Records

Mrs. M. O'Brien  
Avondale  
Conception Bay  
Newfoundland\*

*\*This being from a copy in the original records, no signature has been appended.*

**The above dossier has been researched, compiled and produced by Alistair Rice. Please email any suggested amendments or content revisions if desired to [criceadam@yahoo.ca](mailto:criceadam@yahoo.ca). Last updated – February 7, 2023.**