



Private Alfred Perry (Regimental Number 1273) lies buried in Guards' Cemetery, Lesboeufs – Grave reference XI. I. 4.

His occupation prior to his military service recorded as that of a fisherman earning \$450.00 annually, Alfred Perry presented himself at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's for medical examination on March 13, 1915. He then enlisted two days following – engaged at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 - on March 15, before attesting two weeks later again, on the 29th.



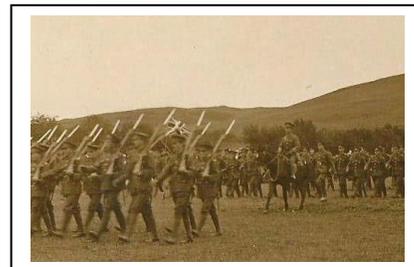
Private Perry of 'E' Company embarked in St. John's on board the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Stephano* (right above – from the *Provincial Archives*) just over three weeks later again, on April 22, 1915.

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The ship sailed to Halifax where his contingent took ship on His Majesty's Transport *Missanabie* (right) – likely with Canadian troops - for the crossing to Liverpool – the ship departed Halifax on April 25. From Liverpool they travelled by train to Edinburgh where the Newfoundlanders arrived on May 2. 'E' Company was to have but a few days to savor the charms of the Scottish capital.



Only nine days later, on May 11, the entire Battalion was posted for training from Edinburgh to a tented Stobs Camp near the Scottish town of Hawick.



(Right: *the Regiment on parade at Stobs Camp on June 10, the day it received its Colours* – courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo)

From Stobs, some thirteen weeks later again, in early August, 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D', the senior Companies now become 1st Battalion, the Newfoundland Regiment, were transferred to Aldershot in southern England. There they were to undergo final preparations – and a royal inspection – before departing on active service to the Middle East and to the fighting on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

'E' and 'F' Companies – the latter having arrived at Stobs Camp on July 10 - were to be posted to the new Regimental Depot and were to form the nucleus of the newly-formed 2nd (Reserve) Battalion.

The Regimental Depot was being established during that summer of 1915 in the Royal Borough of Ayr on the west coast of Scotland to serve as a 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 from home were sent in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and later to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1st Battalion.



The Depot was about to become home to Private Perry for the next seven months. He was not to leave there until the following March, by which time – on the 21st of that same month – he had re-enlisted, on this occasion *for the duration of the war**.

(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)

**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.*

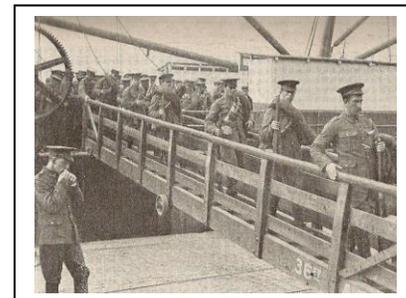
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On March 28, Private Perry, among the ranks of the 3rd Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr, passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton and boarded His Majesty's Transport *Archangel* (right) on his way to join 1st Battalion on the Continent. Disembarking two days later, on the 30th, in Rouen, capital city of Normandy and site of the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot, the contingent made its way to the Base Depot for several days of final training and organization* before leaving to seek out the parent unit.



(Right: *British troops disembark at Rouen en route 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, Étapes, LeHavre and Harfleur that became known notoriously to the troops as the Bull Rings.



On April 15, a detachment from Rouen of two-hundred eleven *other ranks* – accompanied by two officers – reported to duty with 1st Battalion already billeted in the village of Englebelmer some three kilometres behind the lines of the *Western Front*. Private Perry was among that number.

Only two days prior, on April 13, 1st Battalion had *itself* marched into the village of Englebelmer – thus completing a month-long transfer from Egypt to the Western Front – where it had been billeted, welcomed those re-enforcements of the 15th and, on the evening that same day, was ordered – along with the new-comers - forward into the British lines to work in the communication trenches not so very far away.



The Newfoundlanders were also soon to be preparing for the British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for the meandering river flowing through the region, *the Somme*.

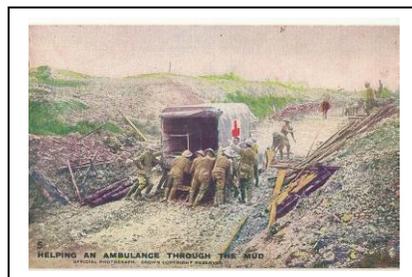
(Right above: *part of the re-constructed trench system to be found in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2007(?)*)

On July 1, 1916, during the fighting of the first day of *the Somme*, Private Perry was wounded at Beaumont-Hamel (right). He was evacuated on the following day to the 47th Casualty Clearing Station at Hesdin, with injuries to his right leg inflicted by enemy artillery fire. On the following day he was forwarded to the 24th General Hospital at Étapes and onward again to an unspecified convalescent depot, on July 6. Private Perry was then discharged to duty at Base Depot (Rouen?) on July 17.



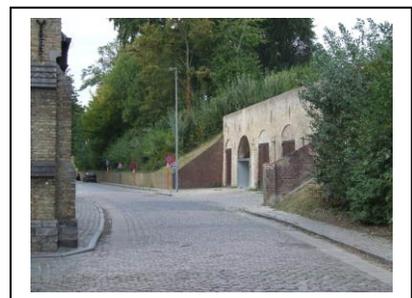
(Previous page: *Beaumont-Hamel - looking from the British lines down the hill to Y Ravine Cemetery which today stands atop part of the German front-line defences - The Danger Tree is to the right in the photograph. – photograph taken in 2009*)

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



Eighteen days later again, on August 4, Private Perry is recorded in his own files as re-joining 1st Battalion which was by then stationed in Belgium, although the Regimental War Diary makes no mention of any arrivals on that date.

On July 27-28 of August 1st Battalion had moved north and entered into Belgium for the first time. It had been ordered to the *Ypres Salient*, one of the most dangerous pieces of real estate on the entire *Western Front*, there to continue to re-enforce and to re-organize. *The Salient* was relatively quiet during the time of the Newfoundlanders' posting there, yet they nonetheless incurred casualties, a number of them fatal. On October 8, after ten weeks in Belgium, 1st Battalion moved south back to France and back to the area of – and the battle of – the Somme.



(Right above: *the entrance to 'A' Company's quarters in the ramparts of Ypres when it was posted there in 1916 – photograph from 2010*)

(Right: *the city of Ypres towards the end of 1915 – and eight months before the Newfoundlanders were posted there for the first time – from a vintage post-card*)



Four days after its return to France, 1st Battalion once again passed to the attack, on this occasion on the outskirts of the remnants of the village of Gueudecourt, a dozen or so kilometres south-east of Beaumont-Hamel. It was once more to be a case of much sacrifice for very little gain. There being no records to the contrary, it is most probable that Private Perry played his role in the fighting there.

(Right: *These are the fields across which 1st Battalion advanced on October 12, towards the trees on the far right horizon. They are where the Caribou stands. – photograph from 2012(?)*)



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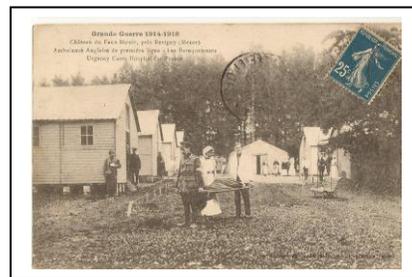
After Gueudecourt, 1st Battalion continued its watch in and out of the trenches of *the Somme* – not without casualties – during the late fall and early winter, a period broken only by the several weeks spent in *Corps Reserve* during the Christmas period, encamped well behind the lines and close to the city of Amiens.



(Right above: a *British camp, in not particularly clement conditions, somewhere on the Continent during a winter of the Great War* – from a vintage post-card)

Apparently the Newfoundlanders were still officially in *Corps Reserve* until the fourth week of January of 1917, not returning – again officially – to *active service* until the 23, but in fact the Regimental War Diary reports them as having *relieved 1st Border Regiment in the line* on January 19.

On the following day the same source reports 1st Battalion as having suffered *Two killed, 3 wounded*, one of the latter probably being Private Perry - his own files say January 21, but 1st Battalion was relieved on that particular day and recorded no casualties. Artillery fire had shattered his legs and he was evacuated into the 60th Field Ambulance where the remains of both were subsequently amputated.



(Right above: a *field ambulance, of a more permanent nature than some, behind the lines in France* – from a vintage post-card)

The son of Charles Perry, fisherman, and Julia Perry* (née *Noble*, her later name *Ward* – and perhaps, later again, *Simms*), and citing his address at the time of his enlistment as *Ward's Harbour, Notre Dame Bay*, he was brother to at least David and Effie and also nephew to Rachel Sceviour of the community of Herring Neck. It was to her that he had allotted a daily allowance of sixty cents from his pay, and to whom he had willed his all.



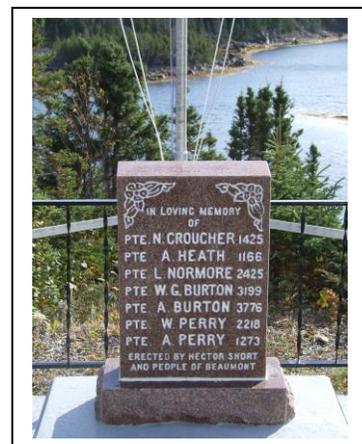
Private Perry, a soldier of 'A' Company, was reported as having *died of wounds* on that same January 21, 1917, in the 60th FA near the village of Guillemont in the French *Département de la Somme*.

He was twenty-four years of age at the time of his death.

(Right above: *Guillemont Road Cemetery and the country-side near to which Private Perry was serving on January 20-21, 1917* – photograph from 2010)

**The Perry family seems to have been living in Cutwell Arm in 1897 when Effie was born.*

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(Previous page: *The War Memorial in the community of Beaumont North (Ward's Harbour) honours the sacrifice of Private Perry.* – photograph from 2014)

Private Alfred Perry was entitled to the British War Medal (left) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

