



Private Edward Pretty (Regimental Number 8116) of the Newfoundland Forestry Corps lies in *Our Lady of Perpetual Help* Roman Catholic Cemetery in Chapel Arm.

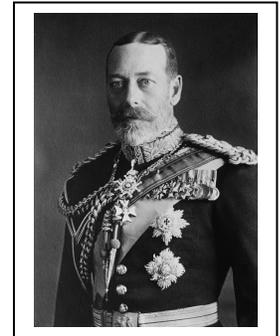
His occupation prior to his military service recorded as that of a *lumberman*, Edward Pretty travelled to St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, there to enlist at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury on Harvey Road on May 9, 1917. He was engaged *for the duration of the war*** at rate of pay, \$1.10 per diem, of the private soldier, to which would be appended a daily ten-cent Field Allowance.**

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****The building was to serve as the Regimental Headquarters in Newfoundland for the duration of the conflict.***

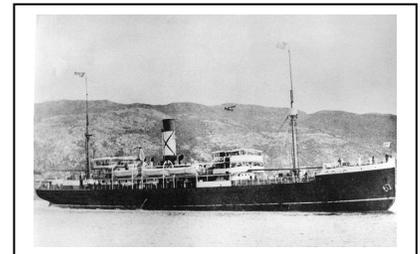
*****At the outset of the War, perhaps because it was felt by the authorities that it would be a conflict of short duration, the recruits enlisted for only a single year. As the War progressed, however, this was obviously going to cause problems and the men were encouraged to re-enlist. Later recruits – as of or about May of 1916 - signed on for the 'Duration' at the time of their original enlistment.***

Whether or not Edward Pretty was at this time to undergo the medical assessment mandatory for all recruits into the Armed Forces is not to be found among his papers, but on the day following his enlistment, on May 10 Edward Pretty attested, taking an oath of allegiance to the reigning monarch, George V, whereupon he officially entered into the service of the King.



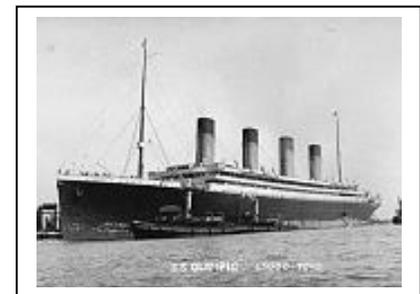
(Right: George V, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India – the photograph is taken from the Bain News Services as presented by the Wikipedia web-site.)

Private Pretty very possibly sailed for overseas service from Newfoundland only days later, on May 19, when the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* left St. John's en route to Halifax. The contingent of three officers and one-hundred eighty-two other ranks, and also ninety-nine recruits of the newly-formed Newfoundland Forestry Corps, then left Nova Scotia for the United Kingdom on board an unspecified* vessel, on May 29**.



(Right above: The image of 'Florizel' at anchor in the harbour at St. John's in October of 1914 is by courtesy of Admiralty House Museum.)

****The ship in question may well have been the White Star liner Olympic (right) – sister ship to Titanic – requisitioned as a troop transport during the war, which sailed on June 2 from Halifax with Canadian military personnel as well – there are no other departures on or about this date. May 29 may have been the date of embarkation by the Newfoundland contingent.***



*****It is possible that Private Pretty did not leave Newfoundland until July or August: the records for the Forestry Corps are far from complete.***

Arriving – if it were on *Olympic* - in the English west-coast port of Liverpool on June 9 the Newfoundland contingent entrained for the west coast of Scotland. By this time, the Regimental Depot at Ayr had already been in existence as the base for re-enforcements from home – these in the Spring of 1916 to form the nucleus of 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment - for some two years. It was from here – since November of

1915 and then up until January of 1918 – that the new-comers from home were being despatched in drafts, at first to *Gallipoli* and later to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of the 1st Battalion.

The Foresters of course were bound eventually for elsewhere in Scotland.

(Right: *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)



The Forestry men were to remain at Ayr until such time as prospective sites for felling had been seen and decided upon. The axe was to fall on the area of Dunkeld, to the north of Perth and in the area where the Highlands begin. The terrain to be cut was a part of the estate of the *Duchy of Atholl*, some of the forest being the *Birnam Wood* which...*shall come to Dunsinane...*, made famous in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.



Later, as the forests on the Duke of Atholl's estate began to become depleted, the operations of the Newfoundland Forestry Corps were moved further up the Tay Valley to the area of Kenmore and onto the estate of the Marquis of Breadalbane.

(Right above: *The River Tay seen here as it flows through the community of Dunkeld. The Newfoundland Forestry Corps at first worked here, on the hills that one sees in the distance.* – photograph from 2011)

It was not easy work and three men accidentally died in Scotland during this time. Not so Private Pretty although, at the time of his discharge and demobilization on April 29, 1919, he was considered to be ...*100% Disability rating – recommended for pension...*

In his own words ... *I am not in a position to resume a civilian occupation...*

Whatever may have been the cause of his condition, however, no pertinent information appears to be available among the documents in his personal file.



(Right above: *Dalguise Castle, within a distance of two or three kilometres or so of the logging operations – and apparently associated with the Beatrix Potter stories – was offered by its owner as an infirmary for the Newfoundland loggers.* – photograph from 2011)

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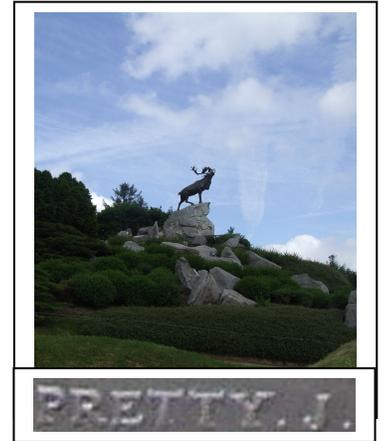
The son of Edmund (*of Eli*) Pretty, fisherman, and of Sarah (née *Newhook*) Pretty – to whom he had allotted a daily sixty cents from his pay – of Chapel Arm, Newfoundland, he was also brother to John-Charles*, to Elizabeth, Catherine, Gertrude, Joseph, William, Marcella, Alfreda and to Jessica.

Private Pretty passed away on May 29, 1920: any information other than the date from the *Find a Grave* web-site and also found on his head-stone has thus far proved to be elusive.

Edward Pretty had enlisted at the *declared* age of eighteen years and two months: date of birth in Chapel Arm, Newfoundland, November 28, 1899 (from the *Find a Grave* web-site).

Private Edward Pretty was entitled to the British War Medal for his overseas service.

**Private John Pretty, Regimental Number 2276, was reported as missing in action on April 14, 1917, during the fighting at Monchy-le-Preux. Some thirty weeks later, on November 17, he was officially presumed dead. His story is to be found elsewhere among these files.*



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. Last updated – January 30, 2023.