



Private Cecil Rose (Regimental Number 3532), 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 earning an annual \$400.00, Cecil Rose was a recruit of the Fourteenth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on March 12, 1917, he also enlisted - engaged *for the duration of the war* at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and attested on that same day.

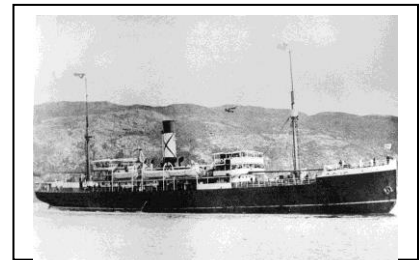
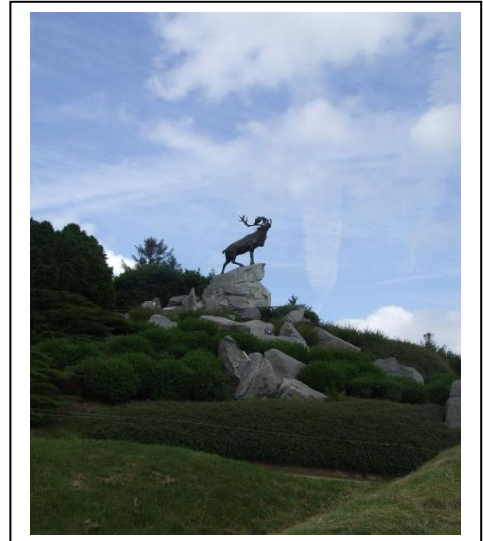
Private Rose was not to depart from Newfoundland for overseas service until May 19, when the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* (right) left en route to Halifax. His contingent of three officers and one-hundred eighty-two *other ranks*, and also ninety-nine recruits of the newly-formed Newfoundland Forestry Unit, then left Nova Scotia for the United Kingdom on board an unspecified\* vessel, on May 29.

*\*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.*

Arriving in the English west-coast port of Liverpool on June 9 the 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 the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment for some two years. It was from here – since November of 1915 and 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 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

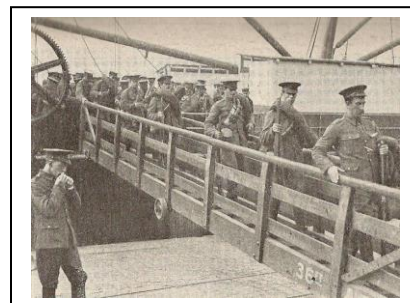
(Right above: *an aerial view of Ayr – probably from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough is to the right. – courtesy of the Carnegie Library at Ayr*)

(continued)



*\*During the summer months of 1917, 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion was transferred from Ayr to not-so-distant Barry in the region of Dundee. Initially intended to be a permanent move, the protest from several quarters was so great that the Newfoundlanders were back in Ayr by the third week of September.*

It was not to be until November 6, 1917, that Private Rose took ship again; on this occasion he was on his way to the Continent, passing through the English south-coast port of Southampton as one of the one-hundred eleven *other ranks* of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Draft from Ayr. The Newfoundlanders disembarked in Rouen on the following day and made their way to the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot there for a few days of final training and organizing\* before making their way to a rendezvous with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.



(Right above: *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.*

By that time, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had been withdrawn from the *Passchendaele* campaign, on October 17, in order to prepare for yet another upcoming offensive: *Cambrai*. It had been ordered back south from Belgium into northern France to re-enforce, to organize and to train in the vicinity of Berles-au-Bois, a rural community a dozen or so kilometres to the south-west of Arras.

It was there that, on November 14, four officers and one-hundred forty-one *other ranks* – one of them Private Rose – reported from Rouen *to duty* with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

That new offensive, the so-called *Battle of Cambrai*, was to officially last for just two weeks and a day, from November 20 until December 4, the Newfoundlanders directly involved at all times during that period.

The battle began well for the British who used tanks on a large scale for the first time; but opportunities were squandered and by its close the British had relinquished as much territory as they had gained. 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was again dealt with severely, at Marcoing and at Masnières - where a Caribou stands today: of the total of five-hundred fifty-eight officers and men who went into battle, two-hundred forty-eight had become casualties by the end of the second day.



(Above right: *the Canal St-Quentin at Masnières, the crossing of which and the establishment of a bridgehead being the first objectives for the Newfoundlanders on November 20, the first day of the Battle of Cambrai – photograph from 2009*)

A brother(?) of John Roy Rose, fisherman, of Great Harbour in the District of Burgeo and La Poile, of George (see below and also following document) and of Deborah, he was also nephew to William Rose whom he named as his next of kin. To his sister's daughter, cousin Elizabeth Maud Harris, he had allocated a daily sixty cents from his pay\*.

Private Rose was at first reported as *missing in action* on December 3, 1917, while serving with 'C' Company during the fighting retreat from the French villages of Marcoing and Masnières.

However, two subsequent reports documented Private Rose's burial: a regulation British burial report by the Reverend W. Keary attached to 17<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance and made on 22/11/17; then a second, an official German list received 14/3/18 in London through the offices of the *Geneva Red Cross*, recording the identification and interment of his remains by the enemy in their military cemetery at Seranvillers\*.

His personal record was therefore amended on December 3 of 1917 so as to read *killed in action 20/11/18*.

Back at home, it was the Reverend R. F. Mercer of Harbour Breton who was requested to bear the news to his family.

Cecil Rose had enlisted at the age of twenty-two years and ten months.

His younger brother, George (Private, Regimental Number 3533) with whom he had enlisted, and who was wounded on November 30, was to *die of wounds* one week after Cecil, on December 10.

*\*The two versions are not incompatible if the original grave was disturbed in subsequent fighting. It was then apparently destroyed or forgotten again, one final time,*

(Right: *The Caribou at Masnières stands on the high ground to the north of the community. The seizure of this terrain was the final objective of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion on November 20; however, whether this was ever achieved is at best controversial. – photograph from 2012*)



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

