

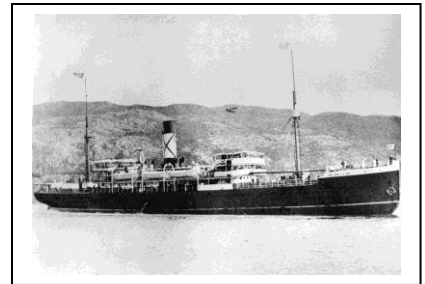


Private Frederick Sealey (Regimental Number 3257), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a machinist earning a daily \$3.50, Frederick Sealey was a recruit of the Twelfth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on November 17, 1916, he also enlisted – *for the duration of the war* and at the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem – and attested on that same November 17.



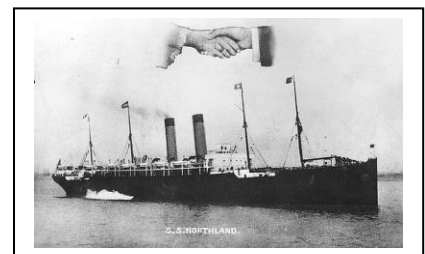
Private Sealey was one of the approximately three hundred twenty *all ranks* to leave St. John's for *overseas service* on the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* (right), bound for Halifax, on January 31, 1917, from there to take ship to the United Kingdom.



Immediately upon its arrival in Nova Scotia, however, this detachment was forwarded to accommodation in the town of Windsor where it was soon to be quarantined because of an epidemic of measles and mumps.

It was not before a lapse of some two-and-a-half months after its arrival that transport could be arranged for the trans-Atlantic crossing to the United Kingdom for the so-called *Windsor Draft* – minus the twenty-five or so personnel still unable to travel.

On April 17, Private Sealey embarked onto His Majesty's Transport *Northland* – originally the *Zeeland* - (right), one of three ships carrying the Newfoundlanders to sail on the next day in a convoy from Halifax, carrying Canadian reinforcements to the English west-coast port of Liverpool, where the ships docked on April 29.



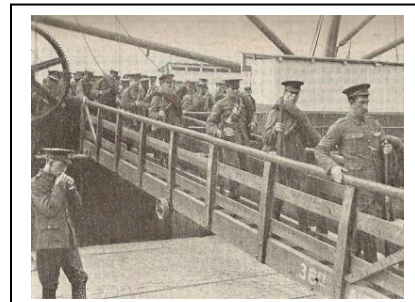
Arriving in England the contingent entrained for the west coast of Scotland. By this time, the Regimental Depot at Ayr had already been in existence to serve as the base for the 2<sup>nd</sup> (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment for two years. It was from here – since November of 1915 and 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.

(Previous page: *the new race-course at Ayr – opened in 1907 – where men of the Regiment were billeted and where they replaced some of the turf with a vegetable garden; part of the present grandstand is original – photo from 2012*)

On June 11, 1917, the 25<sup>th</sup> Re-enforcement Draft – Private Sealey among its ranks - passed through the English south-coast port of Southampton on its way to France. On the following day, June 12, the contingent disembarked in the Norman capital, Rouen, where time was spent at the large British Expeditionary Force Base Depot, to be organized and to undergo final training\* before moving onward to its eventual rendezvous with 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion.

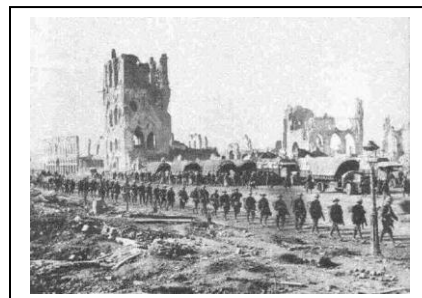


(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen on their way to the Western Front. – from Illustration*)

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

The records show that it was on July 2 – the *Regimental War Diary* says, in fact, on the day before - that Private Sealey's contingent of two-hundred fifty *other ranks* reported to duty at Caribou Camp, behind the lines near Woesten 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, at the end of June, the Newfoundlanders of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion had once again moved north into Belgium and once again to the area of Ypres. 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.



(Right above: *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 *Broembeek* on October 9.



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

The son of John Anthony and Jemima Anthony of Dock, Port de Grave, his parents had apparently both died by the time he was about ten years of age, but he had been brought up from the age of seven by John Sealey, farmer/ fisherman (his uncle), and Jessie Sealey (also *Seeley*, his aunt, née *Morgan*) of Bareneed, to whom he willed half of any and all his belongings. The Sealeys had at least two daughters, Sarah and Emma, but no sons of their own. To his sister Ella M. Anthony of Torbay – to whom he had allocated a daily fifty cents from his pay, after paying his eight dollar debt to his tailor - he bequeathed the other half of his possessions.



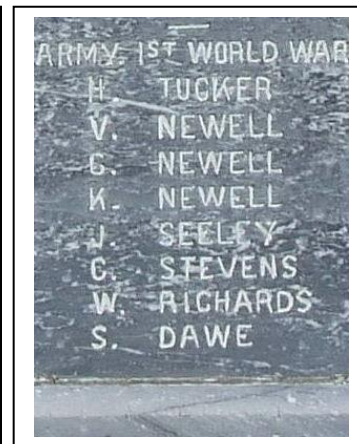
Private Sealey was reported as having been *killed in action* on October 9, 1917, while serving with 'C' Company during the fighting at the *Broembeek*.

At home, it was the Reverend K. H. Caldwell of Brigus who was requested to bear the news to his family.

Frederick Sealey had enlisted at the age of nineteen years and three months.

(Right above: *Normally a nondescript, placid, stream, the Broembeek in October of 1917 had burst its banks and inundated the surrounding fields, transforming them into a quagmire. – photograph from 2010*)

(Right: *The Port de Grave War Memorial honours a J. Seeley, soldier of the Great War who paid the ultimate sacrifice. Yet there seems to be no such J. Seeley from Newfoundland\*. There is, of course, a Frederick Sealey (also Seeley) who was killed in action October 9, 1917, whose foster-parents resided at Dock/ Bareneed. – photographs from 2010*)



\**There is an Edgar Stanley Seeley who fought and died with the Canadians.*

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

