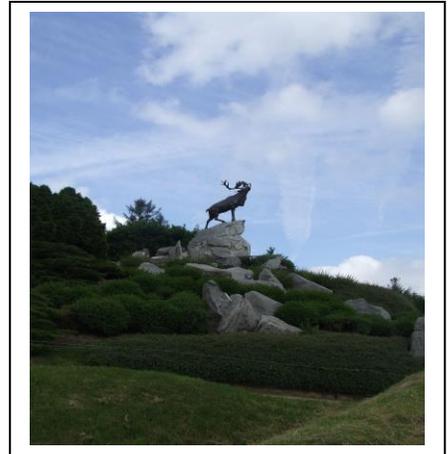




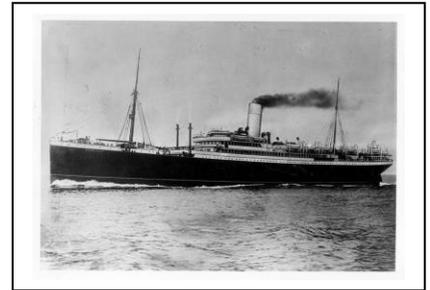
Private Edward Butt (Regimental Number 1623), having no known last resting-place, is commemorated beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a fisherman, Edward Butt was a recruit of the Sixth Draft. Having presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on June 25, 1915, he then enlisted - at the daily private soldier's rate of \$1.10 - on June 26, the following day. He attested* some sixteen days later again, on July 12.



**Another source has him attesting on the day of his enlistment.*

Private Butt and the other personnel of 'G' Company - apparently in the company of several naval reservists and also some German prisoners (these latter presumably to remain in Canada) - left St. John's by train on October 27, to cross the island to Port aux Basques. The contingent then traversed the Gulf of St. Lawrence by ferry, and proceeded by train from North Sydney to Quebec City.



There the Newfoundlanders boarded *His Majesty's Transport Corsican* (above) for the trans-Atlantic voyage to the English south-coast naval establishment of Devonport where they arrived on November 9.

By the morning of the 10th they had again travelled by train, to Scotland, and had been billeted in huts in a military camp at Gales, not far removed from the Regimental Depot where accommodation for the new arrivals was as yet not available.

The Regimental Depot had been established during the 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 - that the newcomers were sent in drafts, at first to Gallipoli and then subsequently to the Western Front, to bolster the four fighting companies of 1st Battalion.



(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*)

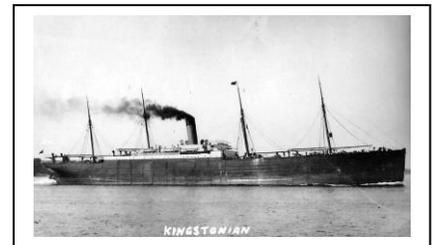
(continued)

It was not to be until March 13 that Private Butt, as a soldier of the 2nd Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr, passed through the naval establishment of Devonport on the English south coast, en route – although no-one knew it at the time – for France.

The Newfoundlanders - somewhat surprisingly - were to travel by way of Egypt*. By that time Private Butt had re-enlisted at Ayr, on February 2, some six weeks before his departure from there.**

**At the time there was some confusion as to whether 1st Battalion would stay in the Middle East or not, and this draft apparently had orders to set sail for Egypt. However, there was surely a bureaucratic foul-up as 1st Battalion embarked in Egypt on only the following day for passage to France. The two ships presumably passed each other in the Mediterranean Sea, going in opposite directions.*

One can only suppose that the ship from Devonport was carrying supplies, equipment and/ or other personnel that were needed in the Middle East and therefore could not be turned around – either that or the vessel had no radio. The 1st Draft then voyaged to Marseilles from Alexandria on HMT Kingstonian (right).



***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.*

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



The draft of one-hundred forty *other ranks*, under the command of Captain Ledingham, having disembarked in the French Mediterranean port of Marseilles on April 3, joined 1st Battalion on April 8 in the small town of Louvencourt where the parent unit – still on its march towards the front - had already been billeted for two days.



Five days later, on April 13, 1st Battalion marched into the village of Englebelmer – situated at some three kilometres behind the front - where the Newfoundlanders were billeted, welcomed re-enforcements from Rouen on the 15th and, on the evening of that day, were ordered forward into the British lines to work in some of the communication trenches.

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

(continued)

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 that flowed – and today still flows – innocuously through the southern part of the region to which it lends its name, *the Somme*.

Private Butt was wounded at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, during the fighting of the first day of *the Somme*. Suffering from a gun-shot wound to his left foot he was evacuated from the field to the 87th Field Ambulance by July 2. From there he was almost immediately forwarded to an anonymous casualty clearing station before being admitted - on the same July 2 - into the 1st Canadian General Hospital at Étaples.

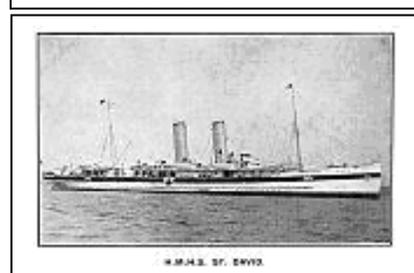


(Right above: a further part of the re-constituted battle-field to be found in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2007(?))

(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)



Two days later again, on July 4, Private Butt was evacuated back to the United Kingdom on board His Majesty's Hospital Ship *St. David* (right) for further treatment. Once having arrived in England, Private Butt was admitted on July 5 into the 3rd London General Hospital in the Borough of Wandsworth, where he received further treatment for the subsequent four weeks.



(Right: The main building of what became 3rd London General Hospital during the Great War was opened, on July 1st, 1859, as a home for the orphaned daughters of British soldiers, sailors and marines. – photograph from 2010)



(Above far right: Newfoundland patients, unfortunately unidentified, convalescing at 3rd London General Hospital, Wandsworth – courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo)

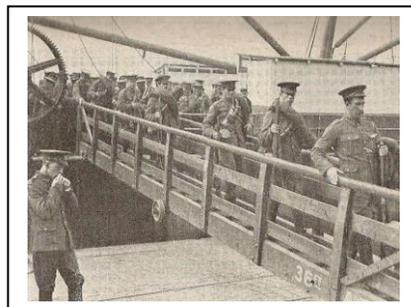
Discharged as being *fit for duty* on August 2, Private Butt was granted the customary ten-day furlough accorded military personnel upon release from hospital. He then received an immediate posting to the Regimental Depot in Scotland where he reported *to duty* on August 11.



(continued)

(Previous page: *the High Street in Ayr – the historic Wallace Tower dominant then as it still is today - as shown on a postcard of the time sent home by a Newfoundland soldier – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs Lillian Tibbo*)

On October 3, some seven weeks later, the 11th Reinforcement Draft passed through the south-coast port of Southampton en route to the Continent. Private Butt was one of its number and disembarked in Rouen on the 4th. There, at the nearby British Expeditionary Force Base, the contingent spent some time in final training and organization* before moving on to its rendezvous with 1st Battalion.



(Right above: *British troops disembark at Rouen en route to 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.*

October 12 was a difficult day for 1st Battalion: only four days after having arrived back in France from Belgium, it took the offensive near the remnants of a small village of Gueudecourt. The Newfoundlanders lost heavily, incurring a total of two-hundred thirty-nine casualties and finally achieved little.



(Right: *This is the ground over which 1st Battalion advanced and then mostly conceded at Gueudecourt on October 12. Some few managed to reach the area where today stand the copse of trees and the Gueudecourt Caribou, on the far right horizon. – photograph from 2007*)

It was little wonder therefore, that the draft of two-hundred sixty-six *other ranks*, reported in the Regimental War Diary as arriving in the transport lines on that same October 12 – Private Butt among that number - remained out of the picture – and out of the front-line area - for the following three days. It was not until the 15th that the new-comers were moved up to the front lines to be parcelled out to the four depleted fighting companies.

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 typical British Army Camp during a winter period somewhere in France – from a vintage post-card*)

(continued)

After that welcome six-week Christmas respite spent in *Corps Reserve*, the Newfoundlanders had *officially* returned to *active service* on January 23, 1917, although they had been back in the trenches already by that date and had incurred their first casualties of 1917.

The only infantry activity directly involving 1st Battalion during the entire period from the action at Gueudecourt in mid-October of 1916, until Monchy-le-Preux in April of 1917, was to be the sharp engagement at Sailly-Saillisel at the end of February and beginning of March, an action which brought this episode in the Newfoundlanders' War – in the area of *the Somme* - to a close.



(Right above: *The fighting during the time of the Battalion's posting to Sailly-Saillisel took place on the far side of the village which was no more than a heap of rubble at the time.* - photograph from 2009(?))

After Sailly-Saillisel the month of March was a quiet time for the Newfoundlanders; having departed from the trenches, they now spent their time near the communities of Meaulté and Camps-en-Amienois re-enforcing, re-organizing, and training for upcoming events. They even had the pleasure of a visit from the Regimental Band, and also one from the Prime Minister of Newfoundland, Sir Edward Morris (right), the latter on March 17, St. Patrick's Day.



On March 29, 1st Battalion began to make its way – on foot – from Camps-en-Amienois to the north-east, towards the venerable medieval city of Arras and eventually beyond, their march to finish amid the rubble of a village called Monchy-le-Preux.



(Right: *the remnants of the Grande Place in Arras at the time of the Great War – from Illustration*)

On April 9 the British Army launched an offensive in the area to the north of the Somme battlefields; this was the so-called *Battle of Arras* intended to support a French effort elsewhere. In terms of the daily count of casualties it was the most expensive operation of the War for the British, its only positive episode being the Canadian assault of Vimy Ridge on the opening day of the battle, Easter Monday. The French offensive was a disaster.



(Right above: *the Canadian National Memorial which stands on Vimy Ridge – photograph from 2010*)

(continued)

1st Battalion was to play its part in the *Battle of Arras*, a role that would begin at a place called Monchy-le-Preux on April 14 and which would finish ten days later, on April 23, perhaps a kilometre distant, at *Les Fosses Farm*. After Beaumont-Hamel, Monchy-le-Preux was to prove the most costly day of the Newfoundlanders' war, four-hundred eighty-seven casualties on April 14 alone.



(Right above: *The village of Monchy-le-Preux as seen today from the western – in 1917, the British – side of the community. The Newfoundlanders advanced, out of the ruins of the place, to the east, away from the camera. – photograph from 2013*)

The son of James Butt, a fisherman with whom Edward had previously worked, and Sophia Butt (née *Marshall (Mousseau)*) - to whom he had allotted a daily allowance of fifty cents from his pay - of *Petrie's Crossing* in the Bay of Islands - and his family later, by the time of the 1921 Census, of nearby *Child's Point* (formerly *Mount Moriah*), he was brother to John, Mondon, Alfred, Ernest, Patrick, Arthur, Duncan, Eric-Ronald and perhaps Ernest*. (*Some of these names need confirmation.*)



Private Butt was reported as having been *killed in action* while serving with 'C' Company on April 14, 1917, during the fighting at Monchy-le-Preux.

Edward Butt had enlisted at the age of nineteen years and eight months – a second source cites his birth in 1898 (to be confirmed).

**There had also apparently been triplets, post-1909, none of whom had survived infancy.*

(Right above: *The Caribou at Monchy-le-Preux stands in the centre of the re-constructed community on top of the remains of a German strongpoint. – photograph from 2007*)

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



(continued)

7 august 1919

Dear Sir

Just a few to see if I can get my son gravitely money all the rest get it around iam tole that I should get it to yong men around hear getting it and was not at the front at all they are not sick neather are they wounded nothing wroung with them my son laid down his life so I am entilled to his money iam a sickely woman I need it will you kindly get it for me if you please his no 1623 privet Edward Butt

will you please answer Back my letter again

your truly

Mrs Sophia Butt

Petries crossing

Bay of islands

(Extract of reply) ...I am directed to state that War Service Gratuity is not payable to the next of kin of the deceased soldier, as it is only intended to be a personal payment to the soldier to enable him to assume his duties in civil life...etc, etc.