



**Private Ebenezer Tucker, Number 2329820, of the Canadian Forestry Corps, Canadian Expeditionary Force, is buried in Seaford Cemetery: Grave reference 2966.**

***(Right: The image of a Canadian Forestry Corps is from an unidentified web-site.)***

**(continued)**



His occupation before military service recorded as that of a *janitor*, Ebenezer Tucker has left behind him little information of the early years of his life spent with his family in Scilly Cove – since 1912 named *Winterton*, Trinity Bay South – or of his later departure from the Dominion of Newfoundland to the Canadian province of Nova Scotia. All that may be said with any certainty is that he was present there, in the community of Yarmouth, during part of April of 1917, for that is where and when Ebenezer Tucker enlisted, signing on for the...*Duration of War and six months*.

His first pay records confirm that it was on April 18 that he was first remunerated for his services to the Number 2 Nova Scotia Forestry Company by which unit he was *taken on strength* on that same date. On the same day he underwent a medical examination which was to find him...*fit for the Canadian Over-Seas Expeditionary Force*...and attested, his oath witnessed by Major Émile Jean Stehelin, formerly of the Canadian Field Artillery, but now of the afore-named Forestry unit.

It was to be on the same day, April 18, that the formalities of Private Tucker's enlistment were to be swiftly brought to a conclusion when (Acting) Captain – and Adjutant - Albert Guy Pierce declared – on paper – that...*Ebenezer Tucker...having been finally approved and inspected by me this day...I certify that I am satisfied with the correctness of this Attestation*.

The Number 2 Nova Scotia Forestry Company was in Military District Number 6 which appears to have comprised at least all of Nova Scotia and was based in Halifax. Where exactly Private Tucker's unit was based for the two months following his enlistment, however, does not appear among his files.

His name next appears on the nominal roll of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Forestry Reinforcing Draft from M.D. 6 which was to depart for *overseas service* in June of 1917. The unit embarked on or about June 25 onto His Majesty's Transport *Justicia*, a ship which was being constructed and fitted for a German – a second source cites Dutch - company by Harland and Wolff in Belfast at the outbreak of the War. Subsequently requisitioned by the British government, she was to be used as a troopship during the years 1917 and 1918 until July of that latter year when she was torpedoed – six times in the space of two days - off the coast of Scotland and sunk; fortunately she had been travelling empty and few lives were lost.

Private Tucker's unit was not to take passage alone to the United Kingdom. Also travelling on board the vessel were Part 6 of the 230<sup>th</sup> Canadian Infantry Battalion, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Draft of the Canadian Army Medical Corps Training Depot, the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Drafts of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Training Depot of the Canadian Army Service Corps, and perhaps three other Forestry units from other military districts\*.



(Right above: *The image of Justicia garbed in her war-time dazzle paint is from the Wikipedia web-site.*)

(continued)



***\*Up until this point in the Great War, much of the necessary timber had been exported from North America to the United Kingdom and the Continent. But not only was the consumption increasing, but the newly-declared unrestricted submarine warfare of 1917 meant that not only was there to be less and less shipping available, but also that the fewer ships were to carry other, more important, cargoes.***

***It had therefore been decided to import instead to Europe the manpower necessary to harvest the trees, primarily in England, Scotland and in France. The Canadian Forestry Corps was thus expanded, an additional seven-thousand men to be recruited.***

***Justicia sailed on June 25 of 1917 and docked in the English west-coast port of Liverpool on July 4 – a second source has July 5.***

**From there, Private Tucker's Reinforcement Draft was immediately transported southwards on the day of its arrival in England to the area of the Canadian Forestry Base Depot at Sunningdale – better known otherwise for its golf courses - where work, primarily undertaken by Canadian Forestry units, had already been ongoing for a year in the Royal forests and parks surrounding Windsor, for the most part to produce boards and railway sleepers.**



***(Right above: Personnel of the Canadian Forestry Corps logging in Windsor Great Park in 1917 – image from the Sault History Online web-site)***

**Just over five weeks later Private Tucker was *struck off strength* by the Base Depot in bureaucratic preparation for his transfer to France for work with the 72<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Forestry Company in the area of Bordeaux. He crossed on the night of August 11-122 from the south-coast port of Southampton to the French industrial port-city of Le Havre situated on the estuary of the River Seine.**



***(Right above: The French port-city of Le Havre at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card)***

**There is now a space of ten months un-documented on his *Active Service Form* between the time that Private Tucker stepped off his ship in Le Havre and then was next reported as having joined his new unit, the 72<sup>nd</sup> Company. This missing period was from August 12, 1917, until June 12, 1918.**

**However, his pay records show that he was being paid through the offices of the 72<sup>nd</sup> Company as of October 1917, a time when it was operating as a part of the 12<sup>th</sup> District (*Bordeaux*) Group. His Company in the summer of 1918 then apparently became, in fact, a component of the 11<sup>th</sup> Forestry (*Marne*) Group which was to be employed in airfield construction\* for the newly-formed – as of April 1 of that year – Royal Air Force\*\*.**



(Preceding page: *Canadian Forestry Personnel loading timber* – photograph from Library and Archives Canada)

*\*This also comprised working on farms to harvest any and all crops growing on land to be used as the airfields in question. Having terminated the harvesting and then the construction of the RAF facilities, these companies were subsequently turned over to be used as was seen fit by the Army.*

*\*\*Up until that date, air services had been provided by the Royal Flying Corps and by the Royal Naval Air Service, those forces associated with and controlled, respectively, by the Army and the Royal Navy.*

It is likely also a sign of having served an appreciable amount of time with the 72<sup>nd</sup> Company that on August 31, 1918, Private Tucker was granted a two-week period of leave back to the United Kingdom, one which in fact was extended, likely because of travel considerations, until September 19 when he returned to duty.

(Right below: *London – in fact the City of Westminster – in the area of Marble Arch, in or about the year 1913, just prior to the Great War* – from a vintage post-card)

It was on January 18 of 1919, the *War to End All Wars* now having been ended some ten weeks since the Armistice of November 11, 1918, that Private Tucker was *struck off strength* at the Canadian Camp at Le Havre through which were passing those on their way to the United Kingdom for demobilization. For him, it was to the Canadian Forestry Corps Demobilization Depot either back at Sunningdale or perhaps more likely at Seaford on the East Sussex coast.



Three days later, on January 21, he appears once more to have been...*struck off strength on Transfer to Kimmel Park\** for return to Canada. On January 31 he was...*nominated for embarkation to Canada\*\*.*

Then influenza struck.

*\*A large Canadian Camp in north Wales at the end of the War used to house those en route to Canada. However, the delays were such that there were eventually riots and deaths among the troops, a number of the dead being interred in the nearby St. Margaret's Churchyard.*



*\*\*There appears to be no evidence that he ever reached Kimmel Park. In fact, it seems likely that he went directly from the Seaford Depot to the hospital.*

(Right above: *Bodelwyddan (St. Margaret's) Churchyard, Flintshire, Wales, in which cemetery lie one-hundred nineteen identified soldiers of the Great War, the vast majority of them Canadian.*)

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Taken sick on February 2, Private Tucker reported himself as such on the following day, February 3. He was thereupon admitted as a patient to the 14<sup>th</sup> Canadian General Hospital at Eastbourne, there on the same day to be reported as spitting blood, to be diagnosed as having contracted influenza and lobar pneumonia, and, most distressingly, to be deemed by the medical staff as...*dangerously ill*.

The son of John Tucker, fisherman – to whom on May 4, 1917, he had willed his all and to whom he had also, as of July 1 of the same year, allocated a monthly twenty dollars from his pay - and of Anna Maria Tucker (née *Hiscock*\*) of Winterton (formerly *Scilly Cove*), Trinity Bay, he was also brother to Leah-Harriett, to Joshua\*, to Maud, to Wilfred, to Sarah-Susannah, to Fannie-Lillian and to Franklin.



*\*The couple had been married on December 17 of 1881.*

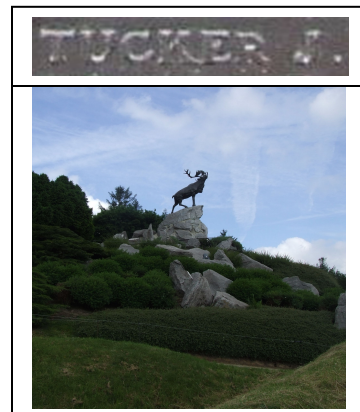
Private Tucker was reported as having *died of sickness* in the 14<sup>th</sup> Canadian General Hospital in Eastbourne on February 8 of 1919.

(Right above: *The Winterton War Memorial honours the sacrifice of brothers and Privates Joshua and Ebenezer Tucker.* – photograph from 2010)

Ebenezer Tucker had enlisted at the *apparent* age of twenty-four years and nine months: date of birth in Scilly Cove, Newfoundland, July 8, 1892.

*\*Joshua Tucker, Number, 2329820 served as a private soldier in the Newfoundland Regiment and was at first reported as 'missing in action' at Monchy-le-Preux on April 14, 1917. Some thirty weeks later, on November 17 of that 1917, his records were amended so as to read 'killed in action'. (See elsewhere in these files.)*

(Right: *Private Joshua Tucker, Regimental Number 2684, of the Newfoundland Regiment, having no known last resting-place, is commemorated on the bronze beneath the Caribou in Beaumont-Hamel Memorial Park.* – photographs from 2010)



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



**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](mailto:criceadam@yahoo.ca). Last updated – January 23, 2023.**