

# GOWER REMEMBERS

## Private Henry Bertram Bastow

(1897-1938)



*“PTE. BASTOW IMPROVING Mrs. Augustus Bastow, 9 Cook St., has word from the Colonial Secretary that her son, Pte. Henry B. Bastow who was previously reported undergoing treatment, is suffering from frost bitten feet and an attack of jaundice. // Capt. Timewell states that his feet are practically cured, that the jaundice is disappearing, and he is receiving dental treatment.” (The St. John’s Daily Star, February 08, 1916)*

Henry Bertram Bastow was born in St. John's on June 01, 1897, the youngest of four children of Margaret Anne Bartlett (1870-1937) and Ernest Augustus Bastow (1860-1929). His younger siblings were Annie Mary (1890-1940), Isabel Bartlett (June 18 to September 21, 1892) and Frederick Donald (1894-1916).

Augustus Bastow first appears in the St. John's city directory for 1898 as an assistant auctioneer. His older brother, Marldon, owned an auction house in St. John's at that time, so it is not a surprising line of work for Augustus. The 1904 city directory lists Augustus as a truckman, while the 1913 directory indicates that he operated a grocery store. He and his family lived at 9 Cook Street and the grocery store was next door at 9½ Cook Street. The family attended Gower Street Methodist Church, sitting in Row 27 in the North Gallery.

Margaret Anne Bastow, in addition to her work as a mother and homemaker, was a long-time member of the Ladies Orange Benevolent Association, Lodge Jubilee 137, in St. John's. She served as its Worthy Mistress in 1916 and in all likelihood occupied other offices over the years.

Frederick had enlisted in the Newfoundland Regiment early in the war. He died at Wandsworth Hospital in London on October 12, 1916, the result of a severe head wound he had received on the night of June 27-28 while taking part in a raid on German positions in preparation for the battle of the Somme. He is one of the 18 Newfoundlanders buried at Wandsworth Cemetery: their graves are cared for by the children of Beatrix Potter Primary School.

Very little is known of Bert (as he was commonly known) Bastow's life before the war. One can assume that he had received some formal education as he signs his name on his Attestation Paper and there are several letters in what appear to be his hand in his Regimental personnel file. His name does not appear in the 1913 St. John's city directory; however when he enlisted in the Newfoundland Regiment on January 29, 1915, he gives his occupation as teamster, earning \$2.50 per day. This

would indicate that he was a truck driver, an occupation he attempted to resume after the war.

Bastow's Attestation Paper provides information about his physical state: he was 5 feet 8 inches tall, with a fair complexion, light brown hair and greyish brown eyes. He had a two-inch scar on his left forearm. He listed his mother as his next of kin and his residence as his parent's address at 9 Cook Street. He was assigned Regimental number 1016. Also enlisting that day along with Bastow were three other members of Gower: brothers Allan (1012), Robert (1013) and Cecil James Meadus (1015).

After several months training at Pleasantville, Bastow, as part of E Company, left St. John's for Halifax, Nova Scotia, aboard the SS *Stephano*, on April 22, 1915,; there they transferred to the SS *Missanabie*, which carried them across the Atlantic to Liverpool, England, arriving there on May 02.

The Newfoundland Regiment had been stationed at Edinburgh Castle in the Scottish capitol since February 19, so it was there that E Company joined their comrades two days after their arrival at Liverpool. E Company spent just a week at Edinburgh Castle, as the Regiment was transferred to a new location at Stobs Camp, near Hawick, in the west of Scotland on May 11. The Regiment underwent further training there until they were moved to Aldershot in the south of England on August 02. There they remained until the 20<sup>th</sup>, when they were taken to nearby Devonport, where they boarded HMTS *Megantic* for the trip to the Mediterranean and the war.

The Newfoundland Regiment arrived in Alexandria, Egypt, on August 31 and immediately entrained for Cairo, where they spent the next two weeks adjusting to the Mediterranean climate before returning to Alexandria on September 13. From there they boarded the SS *Ausonia* for the Greek island of Mudros. On the night of September 19-20, they left Mudros and were transported across the Augean Sea to Suvla Bay on Turkey's Gallipoli Peninsula. They were welcomed with a hail of bullets

and shells from the Turks. While 15 of the members of the Regiment were injured, luckily, no one was killed.

During the four months the Regiment spent in Gallipoli, 30 of its number were felled by enemy fire, while another ten died of disease. Many hundreds more were evacuated because of wounds or illness. Diseases of various kinds were much in evidence at Gallipoli that Fall, and included pulmonary and gastrointestinal infections as well as frostbite. The latter was a result of a particularly unexpected cold spell that brought snow, sleet and below freezing temperatures to the region for much of November.

Bastow was one of those who had to be evacuated because of illness. On December 08, 1915, he was admitted to number 15 Stationary Hospital at Mudros with frostbitten feet and jaundice. He was soon transferred to a hospital connected to the Depot in Cairo, arriving there on December 17. Less than three weeks later, he was invalided to England aboard the Hospital Ship *Britannic*, leaving Egypt on January 03, 1916. He was admitted to Lord Derby Military Hospital in Warrington on January 10, where he stayed until April 26, when he was released and granted a furlough. This was to last until May 05, after which he was attached to the Regimental Depot at Ayr, Scotland.

When not on active duty on the field of battle, Bastow had a tendency to get himself into trouble. This ranged from disobeying orders to missing parade to being drunk in town or while on duty. His first infraction occurred on May 07, three days after arriving at Edinburgh Castle, when he was drunk and disorderly in barracks, for which he received a penalty of five days confined to barracks. A month later, after the move to Stobs Camp, he was confined to camp for eight days for causing a disturbance in Hawick. In all, between May 07, 1915 and May 16, 1917, Bastow was found to be in violation of the military code of conduct on 21 separate occasions. These fall mainly into three groups: while at Edinburgh Castle and Stobs Camp (May 07 to July 23, 1915), while at the hospital at Warrington (March 17 to April 22, 1916) and while at Newton-on-Ayr and

Ayr, Scotland (May 15 1916 to May 16, 1917). Of these 21 infractions, eight were being drunk in barracks or in town; five were being absent from parade or tattoo; others were for disobeying orders or causing a disturbance, while one was for assault of a comrade. Cumulatively, he received punishments of 48 days confined to barracks, 22 days confined to camp, 504 hours of detention, 48 hours of Field Punishment Number 2, twice being detained in the hospital ward and once being fined ten shillings. Field Punishment Number 2 involved the soldier being placed in fetters and handcuffs. He was required to march with his unit while wearing these restraints and was also sentenced to hard labour and loss a portion of his pay.

On June 15, 1917, Bastow left England for Newfoundland for possible discharge from the Regiment on medical grounds. He arrived at Regimental Headquarters in St. John's on July 02, and was admitted on strength. A Medical Board Report, dated the following day, stated that he had first developed rheumatism in Gallipoli and has been suffering from it ever since, and constantly complains of pain in his legs and feet. Two days later the Medical Board recommended that he be admitted to the army hospital in St. John's for treatment. A second Medical Board Report on September 08, indicated that his general condition had improved but he was still suffering from rheumatism. The Board of Pension Commissioners, reporting on that same date, authorized that he receive a pension of \$15.00 per month for six months. On September 11 he was discharged from hospital and on October 06 discharged from the Regiment as medically unfit, having served for two years and 251 days.

During the decade that followed, Bastow's life included an endless round of Medical Boards and Pension Boards. Pain in his legs from his hips to his feet was his constant companion and he was subject to swelling in that area at times. He suffered regularly from diarrhea and often from haemorrhoids. A Medical Board Report from September 05, 1918 indicated that he could not "stoop without pain". Another, from September 23, 1921, reported: "*Left leg swells somewhat. Diarrhea troublesome. Has*

*suffered a great deal lately in hip joints & left thigh. Three days last week unable to work. Noticed some dark blood in passage last week. Is suffering from piles.*” Two years later, another Medical Board stated: *“Complains of pain in left thigh. Leg swells up. States every few days has attacks of diarrhea, then troubled with haemorrhoids. Walks with a slight limp due (he states) to stiffness & pain in hip.”* His condition was such that he was forced to give up work as a truckman and became totally reliant on his disability pension.

During the decade following his first receipt of a pension in 1917, his eligibility time period kept being renewed rather than made permanent and the amount of his pension fluctuated up and down. That was due in part to his continual pain and debility and in part to changes in his family situation. After renewals of his grant of pension for three and six month period through 1918 and 1919, he was extended for twelve months on March 30, 1920; then in April 1921, he was returned to six month renewals, with this schedule remaining in place until October 1923, when he once again was renewed for twelve months. In 1927 he was renewed for two years but reverted to twelve months at the end of that period in 1929.

While stationed at Ayr, Bastow met and fell in love with Jessie McClinton. They were engaged while he was still in Scotland. At his request, she came out to Newfoundland in the Fall of 1918 and they were married on November 18 of that year at his parents' house on Cook Street. Over the next five years they had three children: Margaret Jean (b. December 15, 1919); Eva McClinton (b. March 26, 1922); and Dorothy Ruth (b. July 14, 1923). Marriage and children resulted in first increases and then decreases in the amount of his pension.

Bastow's initial pension was for \$15.00 per month. The amount was increased to \$24.00 per month for twelve months on September 05, 1918; and then, on February 04, 1919, it was raised to \$30.00 per month for three months. On October 05, 1919, it reverted to \$15.00 per month for six months; on March 30, 1920 to \$15.00 per month for twelve months; and

on April 05, 1921 to \$10.00 per month for six months, which was renewed for another six months on September 23, 1921.

It was not until the Spring of 1922 that his wife and two older daughters (the youngest was not born until 1923) were factored into his pension. As of April 11, 1922, he received \$15.00 per month, his wife \$5.00 per month and \$3.00 per month was awarded each of his two daughters, for a total of \$26.00 per month. Then, six months later, on October 03, the monthly allotment was cut in half across the board, with monthly total of \$13.00 per month. This amount remained in force throughout the remainder of the decade, with \$1.00 per month being added when Dorothy was born in 1923. The awards for each of the children were to expire the day before their seventeenth birthday.

Although there are no records in his Regimental personnel file beyond 1929, one can assume that, since he was unable to work, his pension in some form continued until his death on January 07, 1938, six months shy of his 41<sup>st</sup> birthday. There is no cause of death stated in the newspapers of the day, but *The Evening Telegram* for January 10, 1938, gives an account of his funeral, although it does contain two errors; Bastow did not serve in France and was not wounded at the Somme:

### ***Gallipoli Veteran Laid to Rest***

*The funeral of the late Bert Bastow took place yesterday after noon at 4:15 p.m. from Freshwater Road, and the attendance of mourners was very large.*

*The deceased, who had served at Gallipoli and France [sic] with the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of the Royal Nfld. Regiment, went overseas with "E" Company, and was wounded on the Somme [sic]. He was married to a young lady from Ayr, Scotland, who survives with her family.*

*Over 100 War Veterans, wearing poppies, preceded the hearse, Major Marshall, Dominion President, with Secretary W. R. Martin, represented the Dominion Command: with Capt. W. D. Edwards, Vice-*

*President, Mr. M. J. Maddigan, Officers and Members of the St. John's Branch. Capt. W. V. Warren acted as Sergt-at-Arms. The casket was covered with the Union Jack, and there were many beautiful floral tributes.*

*At the General Protestant Cemetery the service was taken by Rev. J. McNeil, and Capt. L. C. Murphy recited the last ritual of the G. W. V. A. The officers of the Truckmen's Union acted as a Guard of Honour.*

Jessie McClinton Bastow left St. John's with her three daughters in late January 1939 on board the SS *Newfoundland*, arriving in Liverpool, England on February 03. The passenger manifest for that voyage indicates that she planned to take up residence at 14 Church Street, Ayr, Scotland. Her daughters eventually married: Margaret Jean to John Fox; Eva to Charlesworth Pearson; Dorothy to Albert Edward Gawthorpe. Eva died in 1995 in Bradford, Yorkshire; Dorothy in 2002 in Pontefract. No death dates have been located for Jessie or Margaret.



Jessie McClinton Bastow