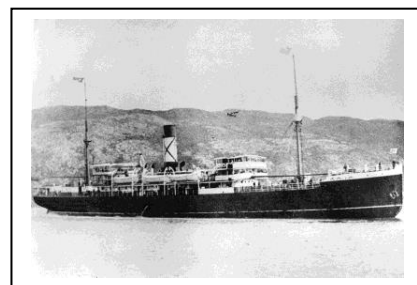




Second Lieutenant Charles LeGallais Edgar (Regimental Number 199) lies in Guards' Cemetery, Comblès – Grave reference I. D. 6.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a clerk with the *Reid Newfoundland Company* and earning an annual \$720.00, Charles Edgar was a recruit of the First Draft. The records show him enlisting as early as August 29, 1914 – and then attesting on September 4 – having been engaged for the private soldier's rate of \$1.10 per diem, at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury on Harvey Road.

Private Edgar embarked for England on October 3 of the same year on board the Bowring Brothers vessel *Florizel* (right), although the ship did not sail until the following day, the 4th, in order to join the convoy carrying the 1st Canadian Division overseas, which it joined off the Newfoundland south coast.



(continued)

The Newfoundlanders arrived in the south-coast English port of Devonport on October 14 and then sat on board ship until the 20th. Having finally disembarked in the United Kingdom, Private Edgar trained with the Battalion, firstly in southern England on the Salisbury Plain close to historic Stonehenge. There it was wet and cold for the most part, and the men were under canvas.

Less than a month later 1st Battalion was in Scotland, at Fort George, where the Newfoundlanders were to spend most of the winter. Even colder than on the Salisbury Plain, at least here the Newfoundlanders were indoors.

(Right: *Fort George, built on the Firth of Moray and near to Inverness, was built after the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. It still serves the British Army today. – photograph from 2011(?)*)



In mid-February of 1915, 1st Battalion was stationed at the Scottish capital, Edinburgh, as part of the garrison of the historic castle there – it was at Edinburgh that Private Edgar received a first promotion, on April 4, to the rank of lance corporal.

The Newfoundlanders finally were transferred in early May to *Stobs Camp* near the town of Hawick, to the south-west of Edinburgh, there for some final few months of re-enforcement and training before the four senior companies were sent south to Aldershot for the opening weeks of August, 1915, for final training before being sent on active service. It was during this period, on July 27, that he sewed a second stripe to his sleeve, elevated to the rank of corporal.



The two junior companies – the last to arrive from home – had been sent from *Stobs Camp* to the new Regimental Depot at the Royal Borough of Ayr.

(Right above: *the Regiment on parade at Stobs Camp on June 10, the day it received its Colours* – courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo)

On August 20, 1915, Corporal Edgar embarked on the liner-converted-to-troopship *Megantic* (right) for the voyage to the Middle East and for the fighting in Gallipoli where, a month later - having spent two weeks of it in the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, he landed with 1st Battalion at Suvla Bay.



(Right: *Newfoundland troops on board a troop-ship anchored at Mudros, either Megantic on August 29, Ausonia on September 18, or Prince Abbas on September 19 - In either case they were yet to land on Gallipoli. – from Provincial Archives*)



A further promotion had been forthcoming on September 13, the day on which 1st Battalion left Cairo to travel to the Gallipoli Peninsula, and so it had been as Sergeant Edgar that he set foot on the beach at Suvla.

(Right: 'Kangaroo Beach', where the men of 1st Battalion landed on the night of September 19-20, 1915, is in the distance at the far end of Suvla Bay. The remains of a landing-craft are still clearly visible in the foreground on 'A' Beach. – photograph taken in 2011)

(Right: almost a century later, the area, little changed from those far-off days, of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla, and where Sergeant Edgar served during the fall of 1915 – photograph from 2011)



It was on December 5 that Sergeant Edgar was reported as having been evacuated to the 54th Casualty Clearing Station at Suvla with a *slight* gun-shot wound to the neck. It had been only a week prior to this that the Peninsula had been struck by a freak rain/hail/snow storm and flash-flood that had caused disaster – and many casualties – on both sides, and things were only beginning to revert to as normal – as normal as things ever had been at Suvla.

Only two weeks later, on the night of December 19-20, the British were to abandon Suvla altogether.

From the 54th CCS at Suvla, Sergeant Edgar was shipped to the Egyptian port-city of Alexandria where he was admitted into the 19th General Hospital on December 11; on December 13 he was transferred to the 6th (*Lady Howard de Walden*) Convalescent Hospital – a different hospital is suggested elsewhere - and it was from there that he was discharged *to duty* on January 19 of the New Year and then travelled to join his unit, by then posted to Suez.



(Right above: one of the major thoroughfares of Alexandria, at or about the time of the Great War – from a vintage post-card)

(Right: The British destroy their supplies during the final evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The Newfoundlanders were among the last to leave on two occasions.)

Only days prior to that, when the British had evacuated the entire Gallipoli Peninsula in January of 1916, 1st Battalion had been sent to Alexandria, arriving there on the 15th of that month.



(continued)

The Newfoundlanders were immediately posted to Suez at the northern end of the Red Sea where they were to await orders as at the time it was not sure to which theatre they would next be posted.



It was during this posting to Suez that Sergeant Edgar found himself appointed as Company ('A' Company?) Quartermaster Sergeant on the last day of January. On March 14, he embarked with the Battalion through Port Tewfiq at the southern end of the Suez Canal for the French port of Marseilles, en route to the *Western Front*.



(Above right: *Port Tewfiq in the days just prior to the Great War* – from a vintage post-card)

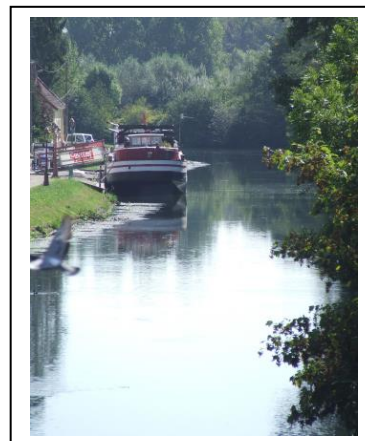
(Right: *British troops march through the port area of the French city of Marseilles.* – from a vintage post-card)

Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, the Battalion's train arrived at the small provincial town of Pont-Rémy.

It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for them travelling unused in a separate wagon. De-training at the station at two in the morning the Newfoundlanders still had a long march ahead of them before they would reach their billets at Buigny l'Abbé.

(Right below: *the Somme as seen from the bridge at Pont-Rémy* – photograph from 2010)

It is doubtful that any of those tired soldiers paid much attention to the slow-moving stream flowing under the bridge that they passed on their way from the station. Some three months later *the Somme* would be a part of their history.



On April 13, 1st Battalion marched into the village of Englebelmer – perhaps some fifty kilometres in all from Pont-Rémy – where the Newfoundlanders were billeted, received re-enforcements and, after two days, were ordered into the nearby British lines to be set to work improving the communication trenches.

The Newfoundlanders were also soon to be preparing for the British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for that same meandering river, *the Somme*.

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



Another promotion was not long forthcoming for Sergeant Edgar: on June 5 he received an Imperial Commission and was appointed Second Lieutenant Edgar – at a rate of two dollars per diem.

This is the date on which, in fact, twelve second lieutenants were commissioned, having just completed a finishing course for officers at the *Bull Ring* at Étapes, on the west coast of France. It is not confirmed, however, that he was one of that number, perhaps having been promoted *in the field*.

On July 11 Lieutenant Edgar was reported as *transferred to England en route to Newfoundland* and then, according to a subsequent letter of his, he boarded His Majesty's Transport *Corinthian* in London on July 20 for passage back to Newfoundland via Québec where the vessel docked on August 1. He had been granted leave to visit his incurably ill mother who was to have died of cancer on July 26. Alas! She was not see her son nor he his mother.

Lieutenant Edgar returned to Great Britain on August 28 on HMT *Sicilian* (right) with members of the Tenth Draft, thence back to the 1st Battalion in France. On November 12, 1916, Lieutenant Edgar was one of four officers to report *to duty* to 1st Battalion from the Depot at Étapes on that day. 1st Battalion was at the time in Corps Reserve at Ville-sous-Corbie.



On what date he had traversed the Channel to return to the Continent is not clear, although a solitary entry – a letter from London dated October 25 - suggests that it might have been on or about October 27, perhaps accompanying a small detachment of ten *other ranks* from Ayr - or he may have travelled alone or with a party of other officers.

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 by the unit in *Corps Reserve* at Camps-en-Amienois near to the city of Amiens during Christmas.

This time out of *active service* may have even have been lengthened for Lieutenant Edgar as he seems to have been on leave in London on January 17 of the New Year, 1917, this on the evidence of two telegrams sent from there to Newfoundland, one to his father and one to a Miss Bartlett of Cornwall Avenue wishing each a Happy New Year.



(Right: a *British camp* – here seen in wintry conditions – somewhere on the Continent during the early years of the Great War – from a vintage post-card)

After their six-week Christmas respite, the Newfoundlanders 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 – and fatality - of 1917. When Lieutenant Edgar returned *to duty* with 1st Battalion seems not to be recorded but the length of furlough to the United Kingdom was customarily of a ten-day duration.

(continued)

The only infantry activity involving 1st Battalion during the entire period from that January 23 until mid-April 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 area of *the Somme* - in the Newfoundlanders' War – and also Lieutenant Edgar's - to a close.



(Right: *the re-constructed village of Sailly-Saillisel, close to the scene of the incident of February 26* - photograph from 2010)

The son of Joseph Highmore Edgar, draper with *Jas. Baird Ltd.*, and Martha Edgar* (née *Crocker*) of 36, Freshwater Road in St. John's (formerly of Greenspond), he was also younger brother to Edith and Mildred.

Lieutenant Edgar was reported as having been *killed in action* while serving with 'A' Company in the area of the trenches near Sailly-Saillisel, in the French *Département de la Somme*, on February 26 of 1917.

10/4/17

“He was with a working party going towards the front line when a shell exploded, mortally wounding him. He died a few minutes afterwards having wished his men ‘good-bye’.

He was buried at a nearby cemetery and a Cross was placed over the grave by his fellow officers.

**I am
Madam
Your obedient servant
xxxxx Major
Paymaster & Officer i/c Records**

**to:- Miss Robina Macdonald
15, Sussex Drive
Worthing
Sussex**



Four of his men died with him.

Lieutenant Edgar was buried by the Reverend K. Smith attached to the 2nd Battalion, South Wales Borderers, and was interred at Combles.

Charles Edgar had enlisted at the age of twenty-four years.

(continued)

**He had allotted a daily sixty cents from his pay, but the name of the recipient seems not to be recorded.*

(The photograph of Private(?) Edgar is from the Provincial Archives.)

(Right: This family memorial which stands in the Old Anglican Cemetery on Forest Road in St. John's commemorates - in loving memory - the sacrifice of Charles LeGallais Edgar. - photograph from 2015)



Lieutenant Charles LeGallais Edgar was entitled to (left to right) the 1914-1915 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal).

