



Second Lieutenant Clifford (or simply *Clift*) Rendell (Regimental Number 621*) is interred in Étapes Military Cemetery – Grave reference I. A. 38.

****Officers who were eventually promoted from the ranks may be identified from their Regimental Number. Other officers who were not from the ranks received the King's Commission, or in the case of those in the Newfoundland Regiment, an Imperial Commission, and were not considered as enlisted. These officers thus had no Regimental Number allotted to them.***

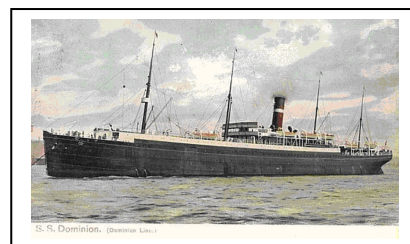
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And since officers did not enlist, they were not then required to re-enlist ‘for the duration’, even though, at the beginning, as a private, they had volunteered their services for only a limited time – twelve months.

His previous occupation recorded as that of a clerk with *Rothwell & Bowring Ltd., Wholesale Merchants* of Water Street and Holdsworth Street, Clifford Rendell presented himself for medical examination at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury* on Harvey Road in St. John’s, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on December 2, 1914.

He then enlisted – engaged at the private soldier’s daily rate of a single dollar plus a ten-cent per diem Field Allowance – and possibly also likely some twelve days later, on December 14.

Having been promoted directly to the rank of corporal on January 26, he had now to wait only a further nine days before he was to be embarking via the sealing tender *Neptune* onto the *SS Dominion* – the vessel having anchored to the south off Bay Bulls because of ice conditions.



The larger vessel then sailed a day later again, and Corporal Rendell departed Newfoundland for *overseas service* on February 5, as a non-commissioned officer of Number 1 Platoon of ‘C’ Company*, the first re-enforcements for the first Newfoundland contingent by this time serving in Scotland (see further below).

(Right above: The image of the steamer ‘Dominion’ - launched in 1894 as the ‘Prussia’ - is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site. An older vessel, she was to be requisitioned during the latter part of the Great War as a store and supply ship. She survived the conflict to be scrapped in 1922.)

**There appears to be some confusion in some sources as to whether these troops were ‘C’ or ‘D’ Company. However, ‘D’ Company was to go overseas some time later on ‘Stephano’ to Halifax and then on Orduña to Liverpool.*

(Right: The photograph of personnel of ‘C’ Company on board the ‘Neptune’ on the way to the harbour at Bay Bulls is from the Provincial Archives.)

Having disembarked in the English west-coast port-city of Liverpool on February 16, the Newfoundlanders entrained for Edinburgh, the first Newfoundland Regiment contingent having by this time been posted to the historic Castle in Scotland’s capital city. There the Newfoundland contingent was to provide the garrison, thus being the first unit from overseas ever to do so.



Corporal Rendell and his fellow new-comers reported to duty at Edinburgh Castle later in the day, on that same February 16.

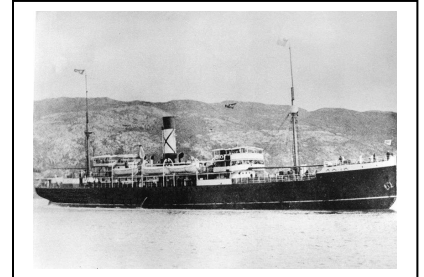
(Right: Edinburgh Castle dominates the city from its position on the summit of Castle Hill. – photograph from 2011)



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Five to six months before that time, in the late summer and early autumn of 1914 there had been a period of training of some five weeks on the shores of *Quidi Vidi Lake* in the east end of St. John's for the newly-formed Newfoundland Regiment's first recruits – for the most part to become 'A' and 'B' Companies - during which time the authorities had also been preparing for the Regiment's transfer overseas.

This first Newfoundland contingent was to embark on October 3, in some cases only days after enlistment and/ or attestation. To become known to history as the *First Five Hundred* and also as the *Blue Puttees*, on that day they had boarded the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Florizel* awaiting in St. John's Harbour.



The ship would sail for the United Kingdom on the morrow, October 4, 1914, to its rendezvous with the convoy carrying the 1st Canadian Division overseas, off the south coast of the Island.

(Right above: *The image of Florizel at anchor in the harbour at St. John's is by courtesy of Admiralty House Museum.*)

(Right: *Fort George, constructed in the latter half of the eighteenth century, still serves the British Army to this day. – photograph from 2011*)



In the United Kingdom this first Newfoundland contingent was to train in three venues during the late autumn of 1914 and then the winter of 1914-1915: firstly in southern England on the Salisbury Plain; then in Scotland at *Fort George* – on the Moray Firth close to Inverness; and lastly at Edinburgh Castle – where, as recorded beforehand, it was to provide the first garrison from outside the British Isles – and where 'C' Company and Corporal Rendell, as also cited beforehand, would arrive from Newfoundland on February 16 of 1915.

It was during this posting at Edinburgh that Corporal Rendell would put up his third stripe, attaining the rank of sergeant on April 24.

On May 11, now bolstered by the arrival of both 'D' and 'E' Companies, the Regiment moved south-west from Edinburgh to the tented site of *Stobs Camp* a dozen or so kilometres from the town of Hawick where they were to receive three months more training in the company of many other troops.

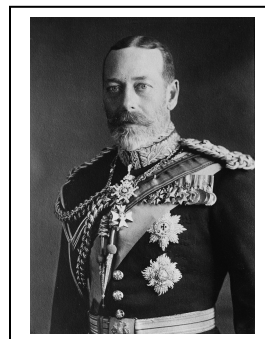


(Right above: *By the time of 'F' Company's arrival on July 10, the Regiment had received its Colours at Stobs Camp in a ceremonial parade on June 10. – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo*)

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The Newfoundland Regiment was also anticipating welcoming ‘F’ Company whose numbers would bring the contingent up to establishment battalion strength, thus enabling it to be despatched on *active service*. At that time also, Sergeant Rendell was granted an Imperial Commission and the accompanying appointment to the rank of second lieutenant at *Stobs Camp* on July 27 – recorded elsewhere as the 29th - just days before being ordered to his next posting.

At the beginning of that August of 1915, the four senior Companies, ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’, were then sent south from *Stobs Camp* to undergo a final two weeks of training, as well as an inspection by the King, at Aldershot. This force, now the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment, was thereupon attached to the 88th Brigade of the 29th Division of the (British) Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.



Meanwhile the two junior Companies, the later-arrived ‘E’ and aforementioned ‘F’ – that of Second Lieutenant Rendell - were ordered transferred to Scotland’s west coast, to Ayr, there to provide the nucleus of the newly-forming 2nd (Reserve) Battalion.

(Right above: *George V, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India* – the photograph is from *Bain News Services* via the *Wikipedia* web-site.)



(Right above: *Some of the personnel of ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’ Companies of the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment at Aldershot in August of 1915, prior to its departure to active service on the Gallipoli Peninsula* – from *The Fighting Newfoundlander* by Col. G.W.L. Nicholson, C.D.)

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At the end of this summer of 1915, the once-Royal Borough of Ayr on Scotland’s west coast was to begin to serve as the overseas base for the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment from where – as of November of 1915 and up until January of 1918 - re-enforcement drafts from home were to be despatched to bolster the 1st Battalion’s numbers, at first to the Middle East and then later to the *Western Front*.



(Right above: *An aerial view of Ayr, likely from the period between the Wars: Newton-on Ayr, where were quartered the ‘other ranks’, is to the left of the River Ayr and the Royal Borough, where were housed the officers, is to the right.* – by courtesy of the *Carnegie Library at Ayr*)

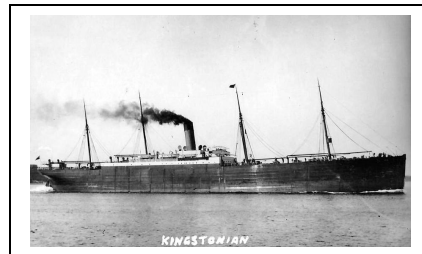


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(Preceding page: *The High Street in Ayr as shown on a postcard of the time, the imposing Wallace Tower – it stands to this day (2017) - dominating the scene – by courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs Lillian Tibbo.*

Second Lieutenant Rendell was to remain stationed at the Regimental Depot for some seven months as others – the 1st Re-enforcement Draft of November 14 – departed on *active service*. It was not to be until March 11 of 1916 that he departed from Ayr and two days later again, on March 13 of 1916, that he embarked at Devonport to join the parent 1st Battalion. With him was the 2nd Re-enforcement Draft from Ayr en route for the Middle East and Egypt.

However, some three weeks later, by this circuitous route, the detachment was to arrive in the French Mediterranean port of Marseilles on board His Majesty's Transport *Kingstonian*, on April 3-4, to join - not the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in Egypt... but - the British Expeditionary Force in France*.



(Right: *The image of HMT Kingstonian is from the old Ship Picture Galleries web-site.*)

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

Four days later, on April 8, Captain Ledingham and Lieutenant Pippy, accompanied by one-hundred forty *other ranks*, were both recorded as having arrived from Egypt to report to duty with the 1st Battalion, the parent unit, in the village of Louvencourt. The 1st Battalion had itself arrived from Suez, Egypt, in Marseilles only some two weeks previously, on March 22, and in Louvencourt itself on April 4.



Any arrival of Second Lieutenant Rendell to report to the 1st Battalion, however, is *not* documented in the Regimental War Diary. And Colonel Nicholson's book, *The Fighting Newfoundlander*, records only two officers arriving at Louvencourt at the time**.

**At the time there was some confusion as to whether the 1st Battalion would stay in the Middle East or not, and this draft had likely already set sail for Egypt before the 1st Battalion was ordered to France from Egypt. It may be their vessel had no wireless or it may be that some of the other units on board were needed in the Middle East, but no official reason appears to have been documented.*

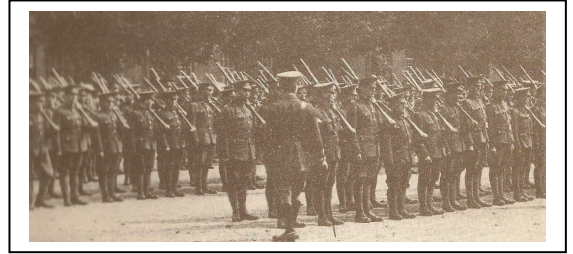
***Perhaps even left behind at Alexandria due to a lack of officers there as suggested in Lieutenant Owen Steele's Diary. Steele reports that four officers – Keegan, C. Rendell, Robertson and W. Ayre – ‘...went to Marseilles...but had been kept by the Base in Alexandria’...which unfortunately makes little sense. Was the Base in question either Marseilles itself or the one at Rouen?*

There is no further mention of Second Lieutenant Rendell until after the attack of July 1.

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At this time, during those few months of Second Lieutenant Rendell's posting to Ayr, the four senior companies of the Newfoundland Regiment, having become the 1st Battalion, had thereupon been attached to the 88th Brigade of the 29th Division of the (British) Mediterranean Expeditionary Force and had been despatched to *active service*.



(Right above: *Some of the personnel of 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' Companies of the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment at Aldershot in August of 1915, prior to leaving for active service – from *The Fighting Newfoundlander* by Col. G.W.L. Nicholson, C.D.)*

On August 20, 1915, the Newfoundland unit had embarked in the Royal Navy Harbour of Devonport onto the requisitioned passenger-liner *Megantic* for passage to the Middle East and to the fighting against the Turks. There, a month later – having spent some two weeks billeted in British barracks in the vicinity of the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, the 1st Battalion had landed at *Suvla Bay* on the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



(Right above: *The image of Megantic, here in her peace-time colours of a 'White Star Line' vessel, is from the Old Ship Picture Galleries web-site.)*



(Right above: *Kangaroo Beach, where the officers and men of the 1st Battalion, Newfoundland Regiment, landed on the night of September 19-20, 1915, is to be seen 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 above: *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 – Whichever the case, they were yet to land on Gallipoli. – from Provincial Archives)*



(Right: *A century later, the area, little changed from those far-off days, of the Newfoundland positions at Suvla, and where the 1st Battalion was to serve during the fall of 1915 – photograph from 2011)*

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Not only in the area where the Newfoundland Battalion would serve but, even since the very first days of the operation in April of 1915, the entire *Gallipoli Campaign*, including the operation at *Suvla Bay*, was to prove to be little more than a debacle:

Flies, dust, disease, the frost-bite and the floods – and of course the casualties inflicted by an enemy which was to fight a great deal better than the British High Command* had ever anticipated – were eventually to overwhelm the British-led forces and those of the French, and it would finally be decided to abandon not only *Suvla Bay* but the entire *Gallipoli* venture.

(Right below: *An un-identified Newfoundland soldier in the trenches at Suvla Bay – from Provincial Archives*)

**Many of the commanders chosen were second-rate, had been brought out of retirement, and had little idea of how to fight – let alone of how to win. One of the generals at Suvla, apparently, had handed in his resignation during the Campaign and had just gone home.*

November 26 would see the nadir of the Newfoundland Battalion's fortunes at Gallipoli; a freak rain-, snow- and ice-storm was to strike the *Suvla Bay* area and the subsequent floods had wreaked havoc amongst the forces of both sides. For several days, survival rather than the enemy was to be the priority.



There were to be many casualties on both sides, some of them, surprised by the sudden inundation of their positions, fatalities who had drowned in their trenches – although no Newfoundlanders were to be among that number. Numerous, however, had been those afflicted by trench-foot and by frost-bite.

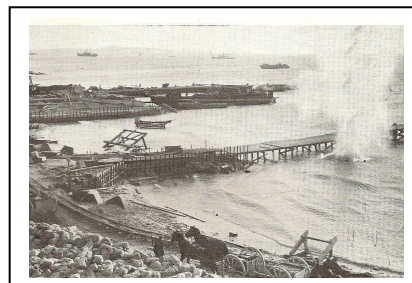
On the night of December 19-20, the British had abandoned the area of *Suvla Bay* – the Newfoundlanders, the only non-British unit to serve there, to form a part of the rear-guard. Some of the Battalion personnel had been evacuated to the nearby island of *Imbros*, some to *Lemnos*, further away, but in neither case was the respite to be of a long duration; the 1st Battalion would be transferred only two days later to the area of *Cape Helles*, on the western tip of the *Gallipoli Peninsula*.



(Right above: *Cape Helles as seen from the Turkish positions on the misnamed Achi Baba, positions which were never breached: The Newfoundland positions were to the right-hand side of the picture. – photograph from 2011*)

The British and the *Anzac* forces – the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps was also to serve at *Gallipoli* – were now to be only marking time until a complete withdrawal of the *Peninsula* could be undertaken.

(Right: *'W' Beach at Cape Helles as it was only days before the final British evacuation – from Illustration*)



This final operation would take place on the night of January 8-9, the Newfoundland Battalion to furnish part of the British rear-guard on this second occasion also.

**Lieutenant Owen Steele of St. John's, Newfoundland, is cited as having been the last soldier of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force to step into the final small boat – with General Maude - to sail from the Gallipoli Peninsula.*



(Right above: *'W' Beach almost a century after its abandonment by British forces in that January of 1916 and by the Newfoundlanders who were to be the last soldiers off the beach: Vestiges of the wharves in the black-and-white picture are still to be seen. – photograph from 2011*)

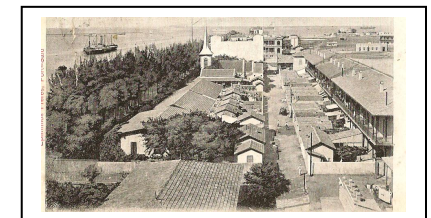
Immediately after the British had evacuated the entire *Gallipoli Peninsula* in January of 1916, the Newfoundland Battalion was to be ordered to the Egyptian port-city of Alexandria, arriving there on the 15th of that month. The Newfoundlanders were then to be immediately transferred southward to the vicinity of Suez, a port at the southern end of the Canal which bears the same name, there to await further orders since, at the time, the subsequent destination of the British 29th Division had yet to be decided*.



**Bulgaria had entered the conflict on the side of the Central Powers, and Salonika was soon to become a theatre of war.*

(Right above: *The British destroy their supplies during the final evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The men of the 1st Battalion of the Newfoundland Regiment were among the last to leave on two occasions, at both Suvla Bay and Cape Helles. – photograph taken from the battleship Cornwallis from Illustration*)

After a two-month interim spent in the vicinity of Port Suez, the almost six-hundred officers and *other ranks* of the 1st Battalion were to board His Majesty's Transport *Alaunia* at Port Tewfiq, on March 14 to begin the voyage through the *Suez Canal* en route to France. The Newfoundlanders would disembark eight days afterwards in the Mediterranean port-city of Marseilles, on March 22.



(Right above: *Port Tewfiq at the south end of the Suez Canal as it was just prior to the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

Some three days after the unit's disembarkation on March 22, the Newfoundland Battalion's train was to find its way to the small provincial town of Pont-Rémy, a thousand kilometres to the north of Marseilles. It had been a cold, miserable journey, the blankets provided for the troops having inexcusably travelled unused in a separate wagon.

Having de-trained at the local station at two o'clock in the morning, the Newfoundlanders were now still to endure the long, dark march ahead of them before they would reach their billets at Buigny l'Abbé.

It is doubtful if many of those tired soldiers were to pay much attention to the slow-moving stream flowing under the bridge over which they had then marched on their way from the station. But some three months later *the Somme* would become a part of their history.

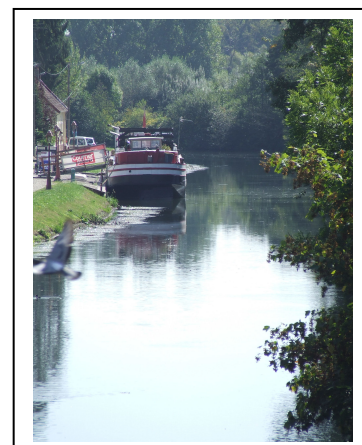
(Right below: *A languid River Somme as seen from the bridge at Pont-Rémy – photograph from 2010*)

Some days later the Newfoundland Battalion had halted its march towards the forward area for a few days in the community of Louvencourt. There it was to train and organize and, as seen in a preceding paragraph, await the arrival of the 2nd Re-enforcement Draft from Scotland via Egypt – without Second Lieutenant Rendell.

Also as reported above, it would now be July 1 before he was to be heard of again.

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On April 13, the 1st Battalion had subsequently marched into the village of Englebelmer – perhaps some fifty kilometres in all from Pont-Rémy - where it would be billeted, would receive re-enforcements from Scotland via Rouen and, in two days' time, would be introduced into the communication trenches of the *Western Front*.



Just days following the Newfoundland Battalion's arrival on the *Western Front*, two of the four Companies – 'A', and 'B' – were to take over several support positions from a British unit* before the entire Newfoundland unit was to then be ordered to move further up for the first time into forward positions on April 22.

**It should be said that the Newfoundland Battalion and two-hundred men of the Bermuda Rifles who were serving at the time in the 2nd Lincolnshire Regiment Battalion, were then the only units at the Somme from outside the British Isles - true also on the day of the attack on July 1.*

(Right below: *A part of the re-constructed trench system to be found in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2009(?)*)

Having then been withdrawn at the end of that April to the areas of Mailly-Maillet and Louvencourt where they would be based for the next two months, the Newfoundlanders were soon to be preparing for the upcoming British campaign of that summer, to be fought on the ground named for the languid, meandering river, *the Somme*, that flowed – and still does so today – through the region.



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If there is one name and date in Newfoundland history which is etched in the collective once-national memory, it is that of **Beaumont-Hamel** on July 1 of 1916; and if any numbers are remembered, they are those of the eight-hundred who went *over the top* in the third wave of the attack on that morning, and of the sixty-eight unwounded present at muster some twenty-four hours later*.



(Right above: *Beaumont-Hamel: Looking from the British lines down the hill to Y Ravine Cemetery which today stands atop part of the German front-line defences: The Danger Tree is to the right in the photograph. – photograph taken in 2009*)



(Right: *A view of Hawthorn Ridge Cemetery Number 2 in the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont-Hamel – photograph from 2009(?)*)

**Perhaps ironically, the majority of the Battalion’s casualties was to be incurred during the advance from the third line of British trenches to the first line from where the attack proper was to be made, and while struggling through British wire laid to protect the British positions from any German attack.*

There are other numbers of course: the fifty-seven thousand British casualties incurred in four hours on that same morning of which nineteen-thousand were recorded as having been *killed in action or died of wounds*.



It was to be the largest disaster ever in the annals of the British Army...and, perhaps just as depressing, the butchery of *the Somme* was to continue for the next four and a half months.

(Right above: *Beaumont-Hamel is a commune, not a village. – photographs from 2010 and 2015*)

In fact, Beaumont-Hamel was a commune – it still exists today – at the time comprising two communities: Beaumont, a village on the German side of the lines, and Hamel which was behind those of the British. No-Man’s-Land, on which the Newfoundland Memorial Park lies partially today, was on land that separated Beaumont from Hamel.



(Right above: *A grim, grainy image purporting to be Newfoundland - dead awaiting burial after Beaumont-Hamel – from...?*)

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The son of Doctor Herbert Rendell and Mrs. Elizabeth (also found as *Lizzie* and *Eliza*)* Ehlers Rendell (née *Clift*)* of the *Anchorage*, Duckworth Street in St. John's, he was also brother to Herbert** and to Edgar.

**The couple had married on June 22, 1889.*

(Right above: *Wounded at the Somme being transported from the forward area for further medical attention – from Le Miroir*)

He was at first reported as *missing in action* on July 1 while serving with 'C' Company. A further document dated July 9, describes his medical situation in a single word – he was by then already, as of July 6, in the 1st British Red Cross (*Duchess of Westminster*) Hospital in Le Touquet – and considered as being *critical*.

(Right above: *A view of the sea-side resort community of Le Touquet at a time just prior to the Great War – from a vintage post-card*)

Second Lieutenant Rendell was reported as having *died of wounds* on July 22, 1916, in the same Red Cross hospital. He had succumbed to gas infection (gangrene), to gun-shot wounds in the right thigh and the right leg - subsequently amputated - and to generalized septicemia, all sustained during or as a consequence of the fighting at Beaumont-Hamel on July 1, 1916, the first day of *the Somme*.

He was buried in the Camiers Road Cemetery at Étaples on July 22.

Clifford Rendell had enlisted at nineteen years of age.

***His brother, Captain Herbert Rendell MC, was later to be killed in action at the Keilberg Ridge on September 29, 1918, and was buried where he lies today, in Dadizeele New British Cemetery. (His record is to be found elsewhere in these files.)*

(Right above: *The photograph of Lieutenant Rendell is from the Provincial Archives.*)

Second Lieutenant Clifford Rendell was entitled to the British War Medal and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal) (right).

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. Last updated – February 10, 2023.

