



Private George Simms (Regimental Number 1066) lies in Lancashire Landing Cemetery at Cape Helles, Gallipoli – Grave reference J. 83.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a fisherman earning a monthly \$300.00, George Simms presented himself for medical examination at the Church Lads Brigade Armoury in St. John's on January 22 of 1915. When he in fact enlisted – engaged at the rate of \$1.10 per diem – is not altogether clear: either on January 20, or just perhaps on the 28th. Whatever the case, he attested on February 18.

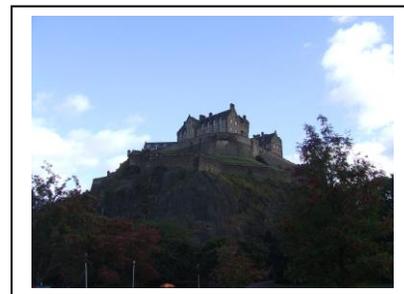


Private Simms then embarked with Number 8 Platoon of 'D' Company, just over four weeks later again, onto the Bowring Brothers' vessel *Stephano* (right above – from *Provincial Archives*) on March 20, 1915, for passage to Halifax and for overseas service. From Halifax he took ship on His Majesty's Transport *Orduna* (right) for the trans-Atlantic crossing to Liverpool.



(continued)

Sailing from Nova Scotia on March 22 for Liverpool, the draft landed there eight days later, on the 30th, and entrained to Edinburgh, arriving at the historic Castle on the same day. For the next six weeks, having been united with 'A', 'B' and 'C' Companies already stationed there, the Newfoundlanders formed the garrison – the first troops from outside the British Isles to do so - of the guardian of Scotland's capital city.



(Right above: *The venerable bastion of Edinburgh Castle dominates the skyline of the Scottish capital city from the summit of Castle Hill. – photograph from 2011*)

On May 11 the Newfoundlanders were transferred to Stobs Camp, near Hawick, to the south-east of Edinburgh. There they remained for some three months until the beginning of August when the senior Companies, 'A', 'B', 'C', and 'D' – now to become 1st Battalion, the Newfoundland Regiment - were sent south to Aldershot in the south of England. There they received final training – and a royal inspection - to prepare for *active service* in Gallipoli.

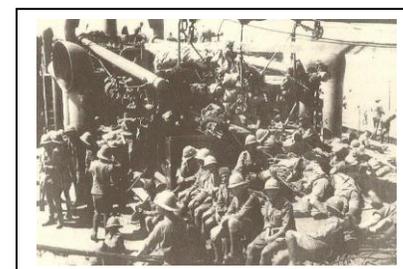


(Right above: *the Regiment on parade at Stobs Camp on June 10, the day it received its Colours – courtesy of Reverend Wilson Tibbo and Mrs. Lillian Tibbo*)

The later arrivals, 'E' and 'F' Companies, were sent to the new Regimental Depot recently being established at Ayr, on the west coast of Scotland. There they were to become the nucleus of the 2nd (Reserve) Battalion.



It was during this period at Aldershot, on August 16, that Private Simms was prevailed upon to re-enlist, on this occasion for the *duration of the war**.



**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.*

On August 20, 1915, Private Simms took ship on board the requisitioned passenger liner *Megantic* (right top) for passage to the Middle East and to the fighting in Gallipoli where, a month later – of which two weeks had been spent billeted at the British barracks at Abbassia, near the Egyptian capital, Cairo - on September 20, 1st Battalion landed on the beach at Suvla Bay on the Gallipoli Peninsula.



(Preceding page black & white: 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)



(Preceding page bottom: *'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 from 2011)



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

(Right above: *Cape Helles (see following paragraph) 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 son of William Simms, fisherman, and Nora Simms – to whom he had allotted a fifty cent allowance per day from his pay - of Pilley's Island, Green Bay, and also brother to John, Arthur and Melina, his own place of residence was cited in a second source as Badger Bay Head, Twillingate.

It was on that December 30 while he was working at *'W' Beach* in his capacity as mess cook and serving with *'D' Company* that he became the victim of a Turkish artillery shell, suffering wounds to the leg and abdomen, and dying at about three o'clock in the afternoon of the same day.



The record reads *killed in action*, which contradicted another source which reported him as having *died of wounds* in the 17th Stationary Hospital at Cape Helles – the former version supported by the entry of the day in Lieutenant Steele's diary.

At home it was the Reverend John N. Sceviour of Pilley's Island who was requested to bear the news to his family.

George Simms had enlisted at twenty-seven years of age.



(Right above black & white: *'W' Beach at Cape Helles as it was days before the final British evacuation – and where Private Simms was killed* – from *Illustration*)

(Right below: *'W' Beach almost a century after its abandonment by British forces and the Newfoundlanders, rear-guard also on this second occasion* – photograph from 2011)



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

(Right: *The War Memorial on Pilley' Island honours the sacrifice of Private Simms as also does a family monument which stands in the Old Methodist Cemetery. – photograph from 2014)*



Private George Simms was entitled to the 1914-1915 Star, as well as to the British War Medal (centre) and to the Victory Medal (Inter-Allied War Medal) (right).

