



Private Joseph Alexander (elsewhere *Alexandra*) (Regimental Number 6299) is interred in Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Cemetery in St. John's, in the Naval and Military Plot.

His occupation prior to enlistment recorded as that of a *farmer*, Joseph Alexander presented himself for medical examination at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on October 14, 1918. It was a procedure which would find him...*Fit for Foreign Service***.**

****The building was to serve as the Regimental Headquarters in Newfoundland for the duration of the conflict.***

*****Note in file: - When enlisted complained of shortness of breath and pain in head/ pain in legs and swelling/ pain in stomach/ pain in left side...***

I consider this man to be fit as his teeth seem to be the main defect. – D.J. Bethune M.D. (He had twenty-one decayed teeth.)

It was to be on the day of that medical assessment, October 14, and at the same venue, that Joseph Alexander was now to be enlisted. He was engaged...*for the duration of the war**...at the daily private soldier's rate of a single dollar to which was to be appended a ten-cent per diem Field Allowance.

****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. Later recruits – as of or about May of 1916 - signed on for the 'Duration' at the time of their original enlistment.***

Only a further few hours were then to go by before there came to pass, while still at the CLB Armoury on Harvey Road, the final formality of his enlistment: attestation. On that same fourteenth day of that October* he pledged his allegiance to the reigning monarch, George V, whereupon, at that moment, Joseph Alexander became...*a soldier of the King.*

****It had been two months prior to this that the Newfoundland Military Service Act (conscription had come into effect. From May 11 through to the end of the Great War, the Department of Militia was to call a total of 1,470 men into active service. No evidence – apart from his declared medical condition - found among his documents suggests that Joseph Alexander was or was not one of those to be conscripted.***

Many of the recruits during this period are recorded as having been granted several days of a final furlough before departure for overseas service. While he may eventually have been a period of leave, further medical problems were now to intervene.



Private Alexander was thus to have reported to quarters in St. John's**, these likely in the *Prince's Skating Rink* in the eastern end of the city, but there to remain for only two days.

(Right above: This photograph of the Prince's Rink in St. John's with military personnel, apparently attired in uniforms of Great War vintage, on parade is from the Ice Hockey Wiki web-site. There appears to be no further information a propos.)

On October 16, only two days his enlistment, Private Alexander was to report to the *Barracks Hospital* and from there, on the day afterwards, was admitted into the *St. John's General Hospital*, there to be diagnosed as...seriously ill...from influenza and pneumonia.

The son of Adolph Alexander, guide, - of Mattis (*Matt's*) Point in the District of St. George, and of Mary Alexander (née *MacDougall**), he was also the oldest brother of John-J., James, Ralph, William and Maggie.

**The couple was married in the community of Sandy Point on October 15 of 1894.*

Having been considered as...dangerously ill...on October 19, Private Alexander was reported as having *died of sickness...of pneumonia following influenza...-* in the General Hospital in St. John's during the morning of October 20, 1918.

Joseph Alexander had enlisted at the *declared age* of twenty-three years: the date of birth in Little River, Codroy, July 16, 1895, this recorded by the 1911 Census, and July 27 of the same year by Newfoundland Vital Statistics.

He was interred in St. John's on the day after his death following instructions from the Health Authorities.

To the department
Colonial Secretary
St.J.

Spruce Brook
Oct 26 1918

Dear Sir

I received your letter of condolment of my son Private Joseph Alexandra who died in General Hospital I am very sorry to have to write you in this way but would like to know if there should be any money left to him if so I would be very thankful to you if you would send it on to me as I am very bad in need of it at the present time do this and oblige

Yours Respectfully
Adolf Alexandra
Spruce Brook

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 – January 30, 2023.