



**Private Permanus Canning (Regimental Number 5455) lies in Morton's Harbour United Church Wild Cove Cemetery, Newfoundland.**

**His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *fisherman*, Permanus Canning presented himself for medical examination at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury\**, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on May 27, 1918. It was a procedure which found him...*Fit for Foreign Service*.**

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

It was to be on the day of that medical assessment, May 27, at the same venue, that Permanus Canning 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.*

A further several 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 twenty-seventh day of May\* he pledged his allegiance to the reigning monarch, George V, whereupon, at that moment, Permanus Canning became...*a soldier of the King.*

*\*This was the month during which the Newfoundland Military Service Act (conscription) came into effect. From May 11 through to the end of the War, the Department of Militia called a total of 1,470 men into active service. However, nothing amongst his papers appears to suggest under which circumstances – as a volunteer or a conscripted man – Permanus Canning was to be taken into service.*

Whereas many of the recruits during this period were to be granted several days of home leave, Private Canning, Number 5455, has left no evidence among his papers that he had been one of them. It may be that he thus remained in St. John's.

If he did so it is likely that Private Canning reported...*to duty*...to be quartered in the temporary barracks apparently established since 1915 in the St. John's curling rink and the Prince's Skating Rink in the eastern end of the city.

(Right: *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 June 13, only some seventeen days after his enlistment, he was admitted into the General Hospital in St. John's and there diagnosed as suffering from...*Toxic influenza with Bron. (bronchial) Pneumonia.*

According to his files, before his hospitalization he had been too ill even to have an identity photograph taken.

(continued)

Reported as...*dangerously ill*...as early as June 14, only a day later, Private Canning was reported as having...*died of sickness* – of pneumonia - in hospital on the morning of June 24, 1918.

The son of William Canning, fisherman (also found as *Cannings*, later re-married, to *Dorcas Flynn*), and of Emma Canning (née *Baker\**, deceased of endocarditis on February 17, 1910), the family of Morton's Harbour, he was also brother to Carrie, Edward, Harry and Doris, as well as half-brother to Pleamon.

*\*The couple had been married in the community of Moretons Harbour on November 11 of 1896.*

His remains, embalmed and placed in a coffin by Mr. Oke, undertaker, were escorted in a funeral cortege to the railway station in St. John's on June 26. His records then show Private Canning travelling homeward as late as Sunday June 30 by the daily express.

Permanus Canning had enlisted at the *declared* age of nineteen years. Thus far the exact date of his birth has proved to be elusive.

*The Commonwealth War Graves headstone was shipped by train en route to Moreton's Harbour on August 13-14 of 1923.*

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](mailto:criceadam@yahoo.ca). Last updated – January 31, 2023.