



Private Frederick Wicks (Regimental Number 5502) lies in the United Church (Old) Cemetery, Greenspond, Newfoundland.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *fisherman*, Frederick Wicks presented himself for medical examination at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland, on May 29, 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 29, at the same venue, that Frederick Wicks 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 twenty-seventh day of May* he pledged his allegiance to the reigning monarch, George V, whereupon, at that moment, Frederick Wicks 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 – Frederick Wicks was to be taken into service.***

Whereas many of the recruits during this period were to be granted several days of home leave, Private Wicks, Number 5502, has left no evidence among his papers that he had been one of them. But given the rapidity of the events that followed, it is perhaps highly unlikely that any such furlough ever came to pass. He may well have remained in St. John's.

Following his enlistment it is likely that Private Wicks 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 14, some two weeks after his enlistment, Private Wicks was admitted into the Barracks Hospital in St. John's where he was diagnosed as...*seriously ill*... suffering from measles.

Despite some improvement cited by Doctor Burden on June 15, Private Wicks was reported as...*dangerously ill*...on June 17 and subsequently as having...*died of sickness...of pneumonia following measles*...- in hospital in the early afternoon of June 18, 1918.

The son of William Wicks (at an earlier time the name was spelled *Weeks*), fisherman (deceased of myocarditis on March 4 of 1921), and of Laura Jane Wicks (née *Blackwood*), he was also brother to Pearce, Mary, Beatrice, and to Margaret-Irene.

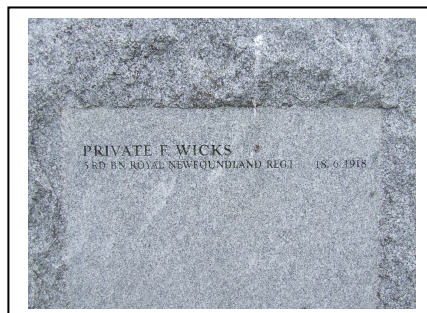
His remains, embalmed and placed in a coffin by Mr. J. C. Oke, undertaker, were escorted in a funeral cortege to the harbour where Private Wicks' body was embarked on board the *Earl of Devon** for passage to Greenspond. At the same time his mother and a brother, aware of his sickness but not of his death, were en route to St. John's on the schooner *Reginald B.*

Private Wicks had enlisted at the *declared* age of twenty-one years: Date of birth in Greenspond, Newfoundland, September 14, 1893 (from the Newfoundland Birth Register – a copy of Vital Statistics records September 18 on the same year.

The Commonwealth War Graves headstone was shipped to Wesleyville on the SS Prospero on or about November 20, 1925.

**There were apparently two ships of that name in service in Newfoundland at the time, a schooner and an iron steam-tug.*

(Right: *The sacrifice of Private Wicks is honoured on the Screen Wall in the Military Plot, Mount Pleasant Cemetery, St. John's.* – photograph from 2011)



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 31, 2023.