



Private Phillip Seymour Hicks (Regimental Number 5426) presented himself for medical examination at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury on May 24, 1918. It was a procedure 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 on the day of that medical assessment, May 24, and at the same venue, that Philip Seymour Hicks 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, again at the *CLB Armoury* on Harvey Road, the final formality of his enlistment: attestation. On that same twenty-fourth day of May* he pledged his allegiance to the reigning monarch, George V, whereupon, at that moment, Philip Seymour Hicks 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 – Philip Seymour Hicks was to be taken into service.*

It seems not to be documented as to whether he was granted a period of leave at home – as many were - before being required to report...*to duty*...back in St. John's when ordered to do so at a later date. However, given that he was to be hospitalized seventeen days after his attestation, it may well be that he spent that intervening period in St. John's.

Thus after enlistment it is likely that Private Hicks, Number 5426, reported...*to duty*...to be quartered in the temporary barracks apparently established by that time in 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 10, Private Hicks was admitted into the Military Hospital for Infectious Diseases in St. John's where he was thereupon diagnosed as suffering from measles, and where, two days following, was to be reported by the attending physician, Doctor Burden, as...*seriously ill*.

The son of William Hicks, fisherman, and of Elizabeth Hicks (née *King*) of Merritt's Harbour in the District of Twillingate, he was also brother to at least Ida.

He was reported by the above-mentioned Doctor Burden as having...*died of sickness*...– pneumonia following measles – in hospital on June 18, 1918.



His remains embalmed and placed in a coffin by Mr. Oke, undertaker, Private Hicks was escorted by a funeral cortege to the railway station on Sunday, June 23, from where he began his final journey.

It was on board the vessel *Clyde* (shown on the preceding page – from *Wikipedia*) sailing from Lewisporte, then perhaps via Herring Neck, that he arrived home.

Phillip Seymour Hicks had enlisted at the *declared* age of eighteen years and ten months: date of birth in Merritt's Harbour, January 9, 1897 (from the Newfoundland Birth Register).

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



Note: If it had not been for the gentleman – whose name I unfortunately no longer remember – who, when we asked of the whereabouts of this cemetery, took it upon himself to walk over hill and dale for a half-hour with us to find it, we might well still be looking for it. Thank you, sir. – A.R.

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.