



Private Pierce – sometimes found as an incorrect Piercie - Garfield Perry (Regimental Number 4181) lies in the northern Bonavista Bay community of Newtown in the United Church Cemetery.

His occupation prior to military service recorded as that of a *fisherman*, Pierce Garfield Perry was a volunteer of the Eighteenth Recruitment Draft. He presented himself for medical examination on November 30 of 1917 at the *Church Lads Brigade Armoury\** in St. John's, capital city of the Dominion of Newfoundland. It was a procedure which was to pronounce him as...*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, November 30, and at the same venue, that Pierce Garfield Perry would enlist. He was thus 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 some few hours were now to follow before there subsequently came to pass, while still at the *CLB Armoury* on Harvey Road, the final formality of his enlistment: attestation. On the same thirtieth day of that month of November he pledged his allegiance to the reigning monarch, George V, whereupon, at that moment, Pierce Garfield Perry became...*a soldier of the King.*

Following his enlistment Private Perry, Regimental Number 4181, was likely to have been ordered quartered in the temporary barracks which had been established since 1915 in the St. John's curling rink and the adjacent *Prince's Skating Rink.*, although it appears that some of the recruits were to be lodged in some of the local boarding houses.

(Right: *This photograph of the Prince's Rink in St. John's with military personnel, apparently attired in uniforms of Great War vintage and on parade is from the Ice Hockey Wiki web-site.*)



The recruits of the Eighteenth Draft were not to leave Newfoundland for *overseas service* until the penultimate day of the following January, but how Private Pierce was now to spend that interval after his enlistment and attestation does not appear to have been documented. Many of his fellow-recruits were to be granted several days home leave and such may well have been the case with Private Perry. He thus perhaps returned to his home in Newtown in the District of Bonavista Bay. However, the records do not show this and thus it must remain a matter of speculation.

On January 22 of the New Year, 1918, a Medical Board – following the presence of Private Perry on sick parade simply *complaining of tickling in throat* - recommended that he be admitted into the General Hospital in St. John's. It was apparently suspected by that time that the complaint might be *tubercular* in nature.

His admission would take place two days later, on January 24, by which time he was additionally recorded as suffering from *ulceration of larynx with loss of voice.* Additionally, he was by then deemed by the medical staff to be *dangerously ill.*

The son of Samuel L. (*Sam*) Perry, fisherman, and of Frances (*Fanny*) Perry (née *Wix*) of Newtown, Bonavista Bay (by the time of their son's death their mail was being addressed – temporarily - to 977, Evelyn Street, Verdun, Province of Québec, Canada), he was also brother to Mary, to William-Robert, to Frederick-George and to Edward.

Private Perry was reported to have...*died of sickness*...- of tubercular laryngitis - at the General Hospital in St. John's, on March 20, 1918.

His remains were transported by train to Gambo, then to Shoal Bay by horse and sleigh, to Fair Island, to Shambler's Cove, and thence to nearby Newtown (*Fair Island*) to be laid to rest. The original stone, as seen above today lying flat in the graveyard, was originally erected by his father; the Commonwealth Graves Commission headstone arrived in Gambo for shipment to Newtown on or about November 23, 1925.

Pierce Perry had enlisted at the *declared* age of twenty-seven years and four months: date of birth in Newtown, Bonavista Bay, July 12, 1892 (from a Soldier's Discharge Form) – although *Ancestry.ca* has July 17, 1889.

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.

