



Albert Thomas Mercer
Royal Newfoundland Regiment
One of the First 500 "Blue Puttees"
WW1

Born: 09 April 1896

Died: 17 August 1956

Place of Birth: Little Bay, Green Bay,
Notre Dame Bay, Central Newfoundland

Parents: Reuben and Edith Mercer

Albert Mercer was born on the 9th of April 1896 to parent Reuben and Edith Mercer of Little Bay, located in Green Bay, part of Notre Dame Bay in Central Newfoundland. In 1912, he moved to Bell Island and went to work in the No. 2 mine.

Albert was No. 264, Coy "A" Blue Puttee, and part of the first 500.

Albert joined the military at an early age, on the second of September 1914. That is when he and the other "Bell Island Boys" left for St. John's. "Bell Island Boys" was the nickname that he and the other men from Bell Island were given.

"19 men from Bell Island were among the 1st contingent of Newfoundlanders who sailed for Europe on October 3, 1914, on board the Florizel.

On September 1, 1914, 25 men left Bell Island for St. John's under the command of Capt. L.C. Murphy of the Catholic Cadet Corps (C.C.C.) and Lieut. Robert Kershaw of the Church Lads Brigade (C.L.B.). They were given a royal send-off by the people of the Island. The dusty roads of Bell Island echoed that day to the tramp of marching feet as the C.C.C. and C.L.B. marched in full strength to the Beach accompanied by the Salvation Army Band. The recruits boarded the Mary for Kelligrews to the strains of "God Save the King" and "Auld Lang Syne." Off Kelligrews, they were transferred to the Othar as the tide was too low for the Mary to dock. Before taking the train for the City, they were addressed by Rev. Canon Colley, Magistrate Power and C.F. Taylor. From the St. John's Railway Station, they

marched down Water Street to the King George V Institute for luncheon, attracting much favourable attention by their fine bearing as they swung through the City. After spending the night at the Institute, they proceeded next day to Pleasantville to go under canvas.

Below is a photo of the first Newfoundland Regiment camp at Quidi Vidi Lake (Pleasantville), 1914.



While the Bell Island boys were in camp at Pleasantville, they were presented with photographs of the joint parade of the Brigades as they marched to the Beach for the send-off on September 1. The volunteers were home on leave at the end of the month prior to sailing for England and were entertained at a dance by the officers of the C.L.B. Rev. John Stead, chaplain of the C.L.B., wished the boys God-speed. "Auld Lang Syne," the "Marseillaise" and the "National Anthem" were sung. The Bell

Island Steamship Company and the Euphrates Steamship Company provided free transportation for the volunteers. On October 3, 1914, 525 men, comprising the Blue Puttees, embarked on the Florizel and the ship sailed next day for a rendezvous off Cape Race with the First Canadian Army Division which accompanied them in convoy to England. Capt. Carty was in charge of the Newfoundland contingent. 19 men from Bell Island were in that first draft: Wilfred T. Allan, Joseph Byrne, Martin J. Cahill, Thomas Carroll, Henry Coombs, Augustus P. Greene, John Hickey, Michael F. Kennedy, Robert Kershaw, Edward Lahey, Robert Lahey, Cyril Larner, Samuel T. Lodge, **Albert Mercer**, Albert E. Metcalfe, Michael W. Morrissey, Michael J. Ross, Wm. J. Somerton [#265], and George J. Sparkes.

The Regiment arrived at Devonport on October 12, 1914 and proceeded to Salisbury Plains for training."

OLD SOLDIERS AT WABANA



A picture of Albert and the other Bell Island boys before they left for their training.

<https://www.historic-wabana.com/world-war-i.html>

Albert's service record reads as follows:

ALBERT MERCER Reg. No. 264 (No Photo)
Enlisted, Sept. 2, 1914; British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force Aug. 20, 1915; Evacuated from Suvla, Oct. 11, 1915; Rejoined Battalion, Suez, Jan. 31, 1916; British Expeditionary Force, March 14, 1916; Wounded, Beaumont Hamel, July 1, 1916; Invalided to England, July 4, 1916; Attached to Depot, Ayr, Aug. 11, 1916; British Expeditionary Force, Feb. 10, 1917; Rejoined Battalion in field, June 19, 1917; Wounded, Steenbeke, Aug. 16, 1917; Invalided to England, Aug. 25, 1917; Repatriated to Newfoundland, Feb. 23,

1918; Discharged, St John's, medically unfit, April 10, 1918.

Albert was injured on the first of July 1916 at Beaumont-Hamel where the Royal Newfoundland Regiment suffered massive casualties and was almost wiped out.

In 1922 Albert married Mary Badcock of Bay Roberts. Together they had a family of four, one boy & three girls.

After his service he went back to Bell Island and opened a Wabana Lumber Company. A company he managed until 1941 when he moved to Bay Roberts, where he opened another lumber mill business.

After getting out of the lumber business, he started a dry goods and furniture store called the Avalon Stores situated on Main Beach, Spaniards Bay which proved quite successful.

Albert passed away at the Grace Hospital on August 17, 1956 in his 59th year as the result of a heart condition. He is buried in St. Mark's Anglican Cemetery, Shearstown, NL