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Azariah Mercer
Royal Naval Reserve
Service No. 1759X
WW I

Born: 19 February 1897

Died: 14 February 1936

Place of Birth: Beachy Cove, Bay Roberts

Parents: Joseph and Eliza Jane Mercer

Azariah was the second person who enlisted in World War I bearing the identical name of Azariah Mercer. Both were from Bay Roberts, different families of course and both enlisted in the Royal Naval Reserve.

Azariah's enlistment documents dated May 4, 1915, show that he was light haired, blue eyed, 19-year-old who signed on for a one (1) period. He was rather short at only 5 ft. 2 ½ inches and single at the time.

His service record, which lasted from enlistment on May 4th, 1915, to July 7th, 1916, is recorded as:

1. Calypso 4 May 1915 – 29 May 1915
Basic training
2. Victory 30 May – 13 August 1915
3. Excellent 14 August – 1 September 1915
4. Arlanza 2 September – 24 November 1915
5. Victory 1: 25 Nov 1915 – 2 May 1916
6. Pembroke: 3 May – 22 June 1916
7. Britton (formerly the Calypso): 23 June – 7 July 1916

Azariah was discharged as of 7th July 1916. He had fulfilled his one-year commitment and now as noted on his file "time expired." He did not re-enlist but returned to civilian life.

The 1921 census shows that Azariah now 24 is living at home with his parents Joseph and Eliza Jane.

By 1935, the date of the next Newfoundland census, Azariah is now married to a lady Annie Violet, and living in Bay Roberts Central. They have a family of five, 3 girls and 2 boys. His mother Eliza (age 71) is a widow and lives alone.

Azariah died on the 14th February 1936 just shy of his 39th birthday and is buried in the Old Saint Matthew's Anglican Cemetery in Bay Roberts. His obituary from The Bay Roberts Guardian dated 29 February 1936 is included below.

OBITUARY.

AZARIAH MERCER.

"Dead in the flesh, but lives in the Spirit."

On Friday morning, Feb. 14th, the summoning angel once again visited this community and took from our midst the soul of Azariah Mercer. Born at Beachy Cove, Bay Roberts, on 19th February, 1897, he was the son of Eliza and the late Joseph Mercer, who predeceased him eleven months ago. In early youth he was an active partner in the fishing industry.

In April, 1915, whilst only quite young, he enlisted in the British Navy, to fight for King and country, and later in that year was one of the crew of the H.M.S. Alanz, which was mined off the coast of Russia.

After the Great War the major part of his life was spent in the U.S.A., where in 1931 he sustained severe injuries from an accident at New York, the effects of which lingered with him until his death. He has been confined to his bed the past seven months.

He leaves to mourn besides a sorrowing wife (nee Annie Hiscock), five children, mother, three brothers, Thomas and William at home, Walter, with the Western Union Telegraph Company, Brooklyn, New York, one sister, Mrs. George Mercer (King), and a large circle of relatives and friends.

The funeral, which was attended by a large concourse of citizens, including members of the Bay Roberts branch of the Great War Veterans' Association, of which the deceased was President up to the time of his death, took place to the C. of E. Church and cemetery, Sunday, Feb. 16th, Rev. W. E. Brown officiating. As the "Last Post" resounded through the air all that was mortal of another brave comrade was laid to rest.
—G.A.M.

From The Bay Roberts
Guardian
29 February 1936