

#### Artifact Backgrounder

# **Attestation Papers**

ATTESTA	TION PAPER.	No.
		Folio.
	AS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE	
QUESTIONS TO BE P	UT BEFORE ATTESTATION.	•
1. What is your surname?		
Ja. What are your Christian names?,		
<ol> <li>What is your present address ?</li></ol>		•••
what Country were you born ?		
<ol><li>What is the name of your next-of kin ?</li></ol>		
<ol> <li>What is the address of your next-of-kin ?</li> </ol>		
4a. What is the relationship of your next-of-kin		
5. What is the date of your birth ?		
6 What is your Trade or Calling ? 7. Are you married ?		
8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or r		
vaccinated and inoculated ?		
9. Do you now belong to the Active Militia ?		
10. Have you ever served in any Military Force		
If so, state particulars of foresis Service." 1. Do you understand the nature and terms		
	01	
<ol> <li>Are you willing to be attested to serve in the CANADIAN OVER-SEAS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE?</li> </ol>	}	
CANADIAN OVER-DARB HAPEDITIONALT PORCE:		
I,	ADE BY MAN ON ATTESTAT , do colemnly declare that the y are true, and that I am willing to full es to aerve in the Canadian Over-Sec rice therein, for the term of one year, or old that war last longer than one year, Maister schould as long require my aerice	above are answers fil the engagements as Expeditionary during the manyour
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### DEFINITION

The **attestation paper** was a personal information form that volunteers for the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) completed during the enlistment process throughout the First World War.

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Common trades listed on attestation papers include clerks, farmers, tailors, fishermen, steam engineers, insurance agents, photographers and many more.

# HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Upon the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, Canada immediately mobilized a contingent for overseas service, the CEF. During the four years of the war, there were more than 600,000 enlistments in the CEF. All of the men and women who joined completed an **attestation paper**.

## **EVOLUTION/DEVELOPMENT**

The purpose of the **attestation papers** was to collect personal information before accepting someone into the CEF. Among other things, this helped to ensure that the person was suitable to serve in the CEF and that they understood the implications of volunteering.

While there were slight modifications to the forms over the course of the war all forms included the following categories of information:

- Personal information;
- <u>Next-of-kin</u> information;
- Work experience;
- Consent to be vaccinated;
- Military background;
- Physical description;
- Religion;
- Oaths and certifications

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

#### VALUABLE HISTORICAL SOURCES:

The service records of the soldiers and nursing sisters of the CEF are preserved at Library and Archives Canada, in Ottawa, Ontario. Although the contents of the service records vary from person to person, depending on their wartime experiences, virtually all include **attestation papers**. The information provided reveals the eclectic make-up of the CEF during the First World War, in terms of nationality, occupation, and even physical description. These documents offer a truly revealing picture of the people who wore Canadian uniforms during the First World War and are arguably the most important source for researchers studying Canadians who served during the First World War. Digital images of most of the **attestation papers** are accessible through the Library and Archives Canada website.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

For much of the war, married men were legally required to have written permission from their wives before they could enlist.

## **VOCABULARY LIST**

#### Next-of-kin:

The next-of-kin refers to a soldier's closest living family member(s). The next-of-kin would be the first to learn of a soldier's injury or death, and would also benefit from any financial allowances or compensation that soldiers' families were eligible to receive under the terms of military service.

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