

THEODORE COLEMAN



Theodore Bernard Coleman was working as a farmer near Litchfield Minnesota when war came to the United States. He was 31 years old when the US declared war, and was thought to be older than what would be needed for military service.

Eventually, his time came to serve. He entered the US Army on 26 August 1918 in Litchfield Minnesota. He was sent to Camp Grant Illinois for his Basic Training.

Coleman arrived at Camp Grant just as the Spanish Influenza outbreak of 1918 started. In late September 1918, the outbreak affected the lives of over 4,000 men at the camp and took the lives of 1,000 of them.

He was assigned to the 3rd Company, 1st, Training Battalion, 161st Depot Brigade for his basic training. Theodore was instructed in military life while at Camp Grant. He was vaccinated, received clothing issue, and began drilling in military practices. In an effort to expedite getting soldiers to the battle field, the training time was very short. In late September, he was assigned to an Infantry Support Troop.



SOLDIER'S DISCHARGE RECORD	
	<p>FILED FOR RECORD BY CITY OF COUNTRY RECORDER TO CERTIFY THAT THE INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS TRUE AND CORRECT AND THAT IT IS A COPY OF THE ORIGINAL DISCHARGE DOCUMENT.</p> <p>UNITED STATES ARMY</p> <p>THE UNITED STATES ARMY, BY ORDER OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF,</p> <p>CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY</p>
	<p>Filed for record this _____ day of _____ A.D. 19____ at _____ o'clock M. By _____ Register of Deeds Deputy.</p>
<p>HONORABLE DISCHARGE FROM THE UNITED STATES ARMY.</p>	
<p>TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:</p> <p>THIS IS TO CERTIFY, That, <u>Theodore Bernard Coleman</u>, #376006 Private Corp. Discharged (Co. B, 1st Inf. Regt.) The United States Army, as a Testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service, is hereby Honorably Discharged from the military service of the United States by reason of <u>the Draft Act of Feb. 4, 1918 and 74-20 letters 4/30/18</u>.</p>	
<p>Sold <u>Theodore Bernard Coleman</u> in <u>Minneapolis</u>, in the State of <u>Minnesota</u> When enlisted he was <u>32 1/2</u> years of age and by occupation a <u>farmer</u>. He had <u>blue</u> eyes, <u>brown</u> hair, <u>fair</u> complexion, and was <u>5 feet 10 inches</u> in height. Given under my hand at <u>Camp Dodge Iowa</u> this <u>12th</u> day of <u>March</u> one thousand nine hundred and <u>Nineteen</u>.</p>	
<p><u>Louis Gansler</u> <u>Major Signal Corps</u> Commanding.</p>	
<p>(Name, Christian name first; e. g. "John Doe"; United States serial number, grade, company or regiment or arm or corps or department; e. g., "1,650,305"; "Corporal, Company A, 1st Infantry"; "Sergeant, Quar- tier Master Corps"); "Sergeant, First Class, Medical Department". If discharged prior to expiration of term of enlistment, give name, date, and source of order or full description of authority therefor.</p>	
<p>ENLISTMENT RECORD.</p>	
Name: <u>Theodore Bernard Coleman</u> Grade: <u>Private</u>	
Enlisted, or Inducted, <u>August 26</u> 1918, at <u>Duluthfield Minn.</u>	
Serving in <u>Fifist</u>	
Prior service: <u>None</u>	
enlistment period at date of discharge.	
Non-commissioned officer: <u>Never</u>	
Marksmanship, gunner qualification or rating: <u>None</u>	
Horsemanship: <u>Not mounted</u>	
Battles, engagements, skirmishes, expeditions: <u>None</u>	
<p><i>A fine copy of this discharge certificate has been taken and is retained by the State authorities to obtain toward purpose of securing soldiers for our great cause Under the signature of the commanding officer of the Minnesota National Guard Carney, Keane 1st Lt. Adj'ty Comt.</i></p>	
Knowledge of any vocation: <u>Farmer</u>	
Wounds received in service: <u>None</u>	
Physical condition when discharged: <u>Good</u>	
Typhoid prophylaxis completed: <u>September 10-1918</u>	
Paratyphoid prophylaxis completed: <u>September 10-1918</u>	
Married or single: <u>Single</u>	
Character: <u>Excellent</u>	
Remarks: <u>No W.M.C. or absence under G.O. 3 1/2 or 4 1/2, assigned to Co. 1, 1st Inf. Regt. Discharge to Camp T. C. 1918. To U.S.A. from Camp #2, 1/18-19. Received honest faithfully entitled to travel pay.</u>	
Signature of soldier: <u>Theodore Bernard Coleman</u>	
Signature of commanding officer: <u>John MacLennan</u>	
Rank in field: <u>Cpl. P. D. R. S. C. 1st Inf. Regt.</u>	
Rank in command: <u>1st Lt. Adj'ty 1st Inf. Regt.</u>	
<p>*Give company and rank or corps or regiment, with inclusive dates of service, in each enlistment. †Give date of qualification or rating and number, date and source of order announcing same.</p>	

On 11 November 1918, the Great War ended, and the need for more troops overseas was no longer present. Many troops were processed out.

Coleman was required to stay in a little longer. He was transferred to General Hospital #21 to work in a casualty detachment.

Soon though, the Army didn't need all of the extra personnel, and Theodore was going to be allowed to be discharged. He was sent to Camp Dodge Iowa to be processed out.

While in Camp Dodge, he was assigned to Casualty Detachment 101, 163rd Depot Brigade. He was discharged as a Private on 12 March 1919, returning home to Litchfield.

THEODORE B. COLEMAN

The funeral of the late Theodore B. Coleman was held Monday afternoon from his farm home in Litchfield township and Beckville Lutheran church, with the pastor, Rev. J. G. Larson officiating. Interment was in Ripley cemetery. Military services were conducted at the grave by the Neisan-Horton Post of the American Legion.

Mr. Coleman's sudden death was a severe blow to his family and friends. He passed away in his sleep early Friday morning at his home, after having worked as usual about his farm on the preceding day.

Theodore Bernard Coleman, a son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Gust Coleman, was born on July 16, 1886, at the farm where he spent all of his life and where death claimed him. He was always a resident there with the exception of eight months spent in army training in 1918. His marriage to Miss Alma Langren of this city took place on May 11, 1932.

Surviving are his wife and daughter, Mary Gall, 6 years old; one brother, Alfred Coleman, also resident on the home farm, and Mrs. A. G. Nordquist of this city, twin sister of the deceased. Preceding him in death were his parents, a brother and sister.

Relatives and friends from a distance who attended the funeral were Mr. and Mrs. August Nelson and Mr. and Mrs. Carl Nelson and daughter Mary Gail of Cannon Falls, Mrs. Elnor Eklund and Mrs. Joel May and son Junior of St. Paul and Mr. and Mrs. A. T. Nelson and daughter Miss Louise Nelson, Willmar.

Following his service in the US Army, Coleman returned to his life of farming in central Minnesota. In May 1932, he was married to Alma Langren. A couple of years later, the couple was blessed with a daughter, Mary Gayle.

Then one day in 1941, Coleman worked a day at the farm as usual, but died suddenly but peacefully in his sleep that night. He was 55 years old.

He is laid to rest in
a family plot in
Litchfield MN.





Because of Coleman's untimely death, he didn't talk to very many about him time in the Army.

Very little is known about the details of Coleman's service. the outline provided is based of off his discharge papers, and a couple of short letters home.

His only daughter, Gayle, knew almost nothing about her father's service because she was only 6 years old when he passed away.

The military items that Theodore had kept were donated by his daughter in 2007. The overcoat shown at left, along with a footlocker, and an old helmet were all donated.

Coleman, like many others during World War I, only served a brief time in the US Army. He fulfilled the obligation they asked of him, but that did not entail him having to go overseas.

Top- Coleman's Army overcoat, worn while he served in the Army. Donated by his daughter, Gayle Angier, in 2007.

Bottom- Panoramic photos, helmet, and Footlocker of Theodore Coleman's while on display at the 2012 Veteran's Day Observance.