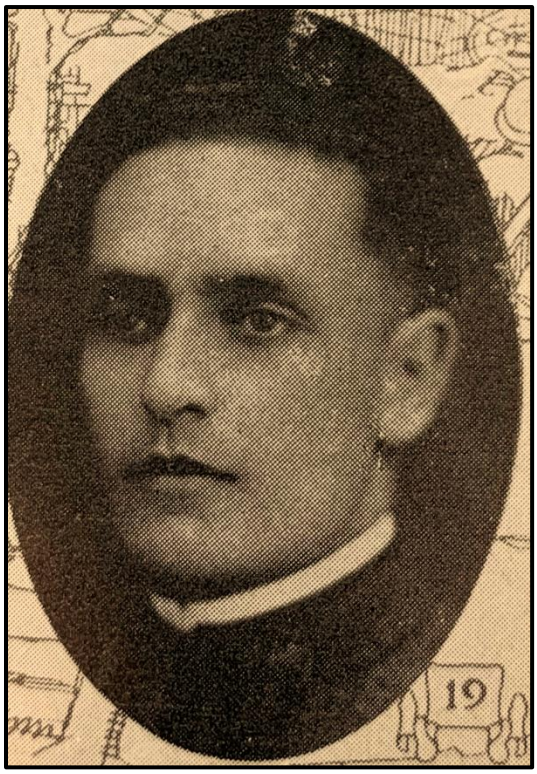
Jasper Axel Jesperson



Jasper Axel Jespersen was born 9 August 1893 in St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota to Anton "Tony" Jespersen (1860-1925), and Mary (last name unknown), Danish immigrants. At the time of the 1895 Minnesota state census, the Jesperson family lived at 404 Charles Street in St Paul. Anton "Tony" (age 33) and Mary (32) were Jasper's parents, and he had a 4-year-old sister named Sarah. Jasper was listed as "Axel." Tony was working as an engineer. In the 1905 Minnesota state census, 12-year-old Jasper was again listed as "Axel". He lived on Winifred Street in St. Paul with his father and presumed stepmother, Anna (39), his stepbrother, Edward (15), and sister, Sarah (14). All of the children were born in Minnesota. Anton was working as an engineer. When the 1910 U.S. census was taken, 17-year-old "Axel" lived at home with his father, stepmother, and his stepbrother, Ed Cristiansen/Christensen. Anton and Anna's marriage was listed as the second marriage for each. Anton still worked as an engineer, for a department store. Edward worked as a driver for a paint store. Jasper worked as a press feeder for a shoe company.

Jasper Jespersen registered for the draft in St. Paul, Ramsey County, on 5 June 1917. He was 23 years old, single, and unemployed, but his usual occupation was listed as caterer. Jasper married Rose Slama (born circa 1899 in Minnesota, the daughter of Joseph Slama of South Park, Dakota County) on 25 January 1918 in Pulaski County, Arkansas. Presumably Rose came to visit Jasper at Camp Pike, Arkansas during his military training, and they decided to marry.

Jasper had enlisted in the U.S. Army on 20 September 1917. He shipped off to war on the *USS Mauretania* out of New York City on Aug 27, 1918. The U.S. Army Transport documents list his wife, Mrs. Rose Jasperson of Stickney and Annapolis Streets in St. Paul, as his emergency contact. He served as a private first class with Company C, 312th Signal Battalion out of Camp Dodge, Iowa, 87th Division, AEF. He also served with Casual Detachment 236, 163rd Depot Brigade, and the headstone itself reads, "Minnesota PFC 163 Depot Brigade." He returned to the US from St Nazaire, France on the *USS Manchuria* in January or February 1919. He was mustered out of service on 9 April 1919.

By 1920, Jasper (age 26) was living on Bircher Avenue in South St. Paul with his wife, Rose (age 20), and 1-year-old daughter, Margaret. Jasper was working as a laborer in a hotel.

Tragically in February 1925, his father and his father's wife were found dead in their St. Paul home, after a neighbor smelled gas and called the police.

At the time of the 1930 census, Jasper was 36 years old and living with his wife, Rose (age 30) and children. Two sons, Robert (5) and Richard (3). had joined Margaret (11). The family owned a home at 1622 Willis in South St Paul. Jasper worked as a porter at the St. Paul Hotel.

By the time he registered for WWII draft in April 1942, however, things had changed in Jasper's life. He was 48 years old, unemployed, and living at the Economy Hotel on East 7th Street in St. Paul. His emergency contact was Edward Freese of 321 East 7th Street. He was described as 5'8", 139lbs, with blue eyes and grey hair. He had a scar on the right side of his nose.

Jasper died of heart disease and pulmonary tuberculosis at the Healthwin Hospital, Hope Rescue Mission in South Bend, Indiana on 8 September 1962, where he had been a patient since 1958. His last occupation was listed as hotel worker. He was 69 years old. The person who requested his military headstone was Charles MacCausland of 20531 Darden Road, South Bend, Indiana (no relation). Jasper Jespersen was buried at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery in South Bend. Survivors were his two sons, Robert and Richard of St. Paul, a daughter, Mrs. Howard Fahster of St. Paul, and a sister, Mrs. Kip O'Brien of Lake Elmo, Minnesota.

Note: Minnesota Historical Society holds a bonus file and a military service questionnaire for this veteran. Due to time limitations, those records were not researched.