

Aloysius Joseph Frantz

Born

March 9, 1837, France

Entered Service

August 20, 1862

Versailles, Indiana

Company E

83rd Indiana Infantry



Civil War

Died

October 4, 1913 (aged 76), Minnesota

Early Years

Aloysius Joseph Frantz was born March 9, 1837 in France. According to the 1900 US Federal census, he immigrated in 1845 at age 8. A record was found as a possible match, with Alois Freutz, age 22, immigrating from Le Havre, France with Joseph (age 55) and Christine Freutz (age 50) on August 18, 1856 aboard the ship RL Gillchrest. More research would need to be done to confirm that this is a correct record of arrival and family.ⁱ

The War Years

Aloysius was mustered into service in Company E, 83rd Indiana Infantry from Versailles, Ripley County, Indiana on August 20, 1862. The "Company Descriptive Book" lists him as age 26, 5-foot-10, blue eyes, light hair and complexion and a blacksmith by trade. He is listed as Pvt. Joseph Frantz, apparently foregoing his first name of Aloysius.ⁱⁱ

According to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website:

“His unit was at Vicksburg, Mississippi, on May 22, 1863, when Union General Ulysses S. Grant ordered an assault on a Confederate position. Private Frantz was among 150 volunteers for a storming party of “forlorn hope” – in other words, an extremely dangerous mission. When the attack failed, Grant ordered a withdrawal. “Of the storming party eighty-five percent were either killed or dangerously wounded, and few of them escaped without a wound of some kind,” Grant later wrote in his memoirs. Frantz survived and received the Medal of Honor more than 30 years later, on August 13, 1894.”ⁱⁱⁱ

The Northfield News in Minnesota published an article on Private Frantz in its September 22, 1894, edition:

Medal of Honor

Joseph Frantz, for several years a resident of Northfield, now living in Bridgewater, has just received a medal of honor from the U.S. government. He is a loyal member of the J. L. Heywood Post and during the late war was a member of Company E, 83rd Ind. Vols. One morning, just as he returned from duty on the picket line, his captain called for two men from the company to volunteer to join a forlorn hope storming party in front of Vicksburg. Only one man stepped forward. Comrade Frantz volunteered to fill the quota. The gallant storming party carried two lines of entrenchments but after suffering terrible loss failed to carry the third. The survivors, after exposure to the deadly fire of the enemy for many hours, found their way to our lines as soon as darkness came on. He was in all the battles around Vicksburg, in Gen. Sherman's Atlanta campaign and severely wounded at the battle of Atlanta. Mr. James Otis, of Portland, Maine, is writing, for publication in book form, a biography of all soldiers who have earned medals of Honor during the war, and sent a request for Frantz to send his photograph. All honor to the heroes who risked their lives during these supreme moments of destiny to our Republic.^{iv}

The Medal of Honor Citation:

For gallantry in the charge of the volunteer storming party on 22 May 1863.

Private Frantz served August 20, 1862-July 1865.

The Post War Years

Aloysius married Theresa F. Roth on October 10, 1865, in Franklin, Indiana.^v Most, if not all, of their children were born in Indiana. Among the children whose records have been found: John Frantz, born 07 Apr 1873, Grace Matilda France, born in St. Leon, Dearborn, Indiana, and Josephine Evalyn Frantz, on 26 Apr 1874 in St. Leon, Dearborn, Indiana.^{vi} The family moved from Indiana to Northfield, Minnesota in 1878.ⁱⁱ

In the 1880 US Census, Aloysius Frantz and family can be found in Northfield, Rice, Minnesota. The household members include Aloysius Frantz (41), wife, T. Frantz (34), and children Mary (14), Flora (10), Christina (7), Josaphine (6), Annie (3) and John (3). Aloysius' occupation is listed as laborer.^{vii}

In 1895, Alois Frantz is listed in the Rice County Farmers Directory on Section 33 in Bridgewater, Minnesota.^{ix}

In 1900, the family is living in Northfield Ward 1, Rice, Minnesota, and consists of Aloysius Frantz (62), Theresha (58), Daughter Grace (27), and niece Agnes Lynch (11). His year of immigration to the US is listed as 1845 and he owns his house, free and clear. Theresia is shown as immigrating in 1846 from Germany. She is shown as having eight children, and all eight are living in 1900. She was born Jan 1842 and the couple has been married 30 years. He is shown with a birthdate of March 1838 in France.^{viii}

In the 1903 Faribault, Rice County City Directory, the family is shown living at 111 N. Division, Northfield, Minnesota. Aloysius' occupation is listed as Farmer, Grace M. Frantz is "Stenographer", Joseph Frantz "Labor, C M & St. Paul Railway", Joseph A. Frantz, and Josephine E. Frantz, "Clerk".^{ix} On April 12, 1903, daughter Grace passed away in Rochester, Minnesota, having traveled there to get an operation for tuberculosis. Her obituary indicated that she had had the disease for six years, and that her sister "Miss Josie" was with her at her passing. Among those from out of the city to attend the funeral were Mr. and Mrs. Matt. Frank, Mr. and Mrs. John Frantz, Mrs. Boorse and Miss Ella Corrigan of St. Paul, and Mrs. Frank Knauer of Milwaukee. Her obituary also indicated that the family moved to Northfield from St. Leon, Indiana when she was a young girl; she had spent early years on a farm, and then in Northfield, where she had attended school.^x She is buried with her parents in Northfield.

In the 1914 Minneapolis City Directory, Theresa is listed as widow of Aloysius, residing at 3900 Minnehaha Avenue, Minneapolis, Hennepin, Minnesota. Also residing there is daughter Josephine, listed as a clerk at Donaldson Co.

According to an article in the Northfield News, *War Hero Recognized 140 Years Later*, “they may have also lived for a while in South Dakota. In 1884, Frantz was a charter member of the J.L. Heywood Post No. 83, Grand Army of the Republic, which was to Civil War veterans what the American Legion is to modern veterans. In 1894, probably through efforts of the GAR, Frantz was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism on May 22, 1863, at Vicksburg, Mississippi.”ⁱⁱ

He and his wife lived in Minneapolis the last years of their lives. Aloysius Joseph Frantz died on October 4, 1913 in Minneapolis at the age of 76, and his wife Theresa died in 1915 at age 72. His obituary appeared in the Northfield News:

Aloysius Frantz Buried Here

Friday, Oct. 17, occurred the burial of Aloysius J. Frantz, for many years a resident of Northfield. For the past seven years he has lived in Minneapolis. He was 76 years old. He is survived by his wife, five daughters and two sons: Mrs. Mary Frank of St. Paul; Mrs. Kate Knauer of Niagara Falls, N.Y.; Mrs. Anna Yates and Miss Josephine Frantz of Minneapolis; and Mrs. Flora Lynch of Dakota; Aloysius of Lily, S.D., and John of Humbolt, Canada.^{xi}

Frantz has also had a Facility dedicated to his memory. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is the government agency that oversees lawful immigration to the United States. They dedicated space in 18 of their facilities to recognize gallantry and tremendous courage of select immigrant Medal of Honor recipients. 700 recipients of the Medal of Honor have been immigrants. “Their bravery serves as an enduring reminder that immigrant recipients of the Medal of Honor embody the best of American values and continues to inspire” today. The USCIS Indianapolis Field Office is named after Pvt. Joseph Frantz, Civil War.ⁱⁱⁱ

On May 22, 2003, 140 years after Frantz was awarded the Medal of Honor, a Medal of Honor grave marker was placed at the Northfield cemetery through efforts by Northfield and Rice County Genealogy society’s member Norma Gilbertson, Ray Ozmun of the American Legion Post No. 84, Calvary Cemetery caretaker Ray Johnson, and others.^{xii}

**Compiled by Tracy Moore MacAllister
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Photos of grave markers courtesy of Don Morfe, “Find A Grave” contributor who researches and photographs Medal Of Honor Recipient gravesites.



SOURCES

- ⁱ Year: 1856; Arrival: *New York, New York*; Microfilm Serial: *M237, 1820-1897*; Microfilm Roll: *Roll 165*; Line: 38; List Number: 815
- ⁱⁱ *War Hero Recognized 140 Years Later*, Jun 14, 2003 northfieldnews.com
http://www.southernminn.com/northfield_news/archives/article_f290c0d3-feeaa-54d9-a7a5-67477308b628.html
- ⁱⁱⁱ USCIS Facilities website
<https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/find-uscis-office/immigrant-medal-honor-recipients/uscis-indianapolis-field-office>
- ^{iv} The Northfield News, Sept 22, 1894, p. 1
<http://newspapers.mnhs.org/web/mhsnews/web/imu.php?request=multimedia&irn=10029356&format=pdf&kind=supplementary>
- ^v "Indiana Marriages, 1780-1992," database, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:XFD4-BYF> : 3 December 2014), Joseph Franc and Therressa Roth, 10 Oct 1865; citing reference ; FHL microfilm 476,730.
- ^{vi} Social Security Record for Josephine Evalyn Frantz.
- ^{vii} Year: 1880; Census Place: Northfield, Rice, Minnesota; Roll: 632; Family History Film: 1254632; Page: 283C; Enumeration District: 136; Image: 0208
- ^{viii} Year: 1900; Census Place: Northfield Ward 1, Rice, Minnesota; Roll: 788; Page: 3B; Enumeration District: 0156; FHL microfilm: 1240788
- ^{ix} Rice County City Directory and Rice County Farmers Directory as transcribed at <http://www.dalbydata.com>
- ^x Northfield News, 1903 as transcribed at dalbydata.com
<http://www.dalbydata.com/user.php?action=resultobits>
- ^{xi} Northfield News; Friday, Oct. 24, 1913, p. 3
- ^{xii} Northfield News blog, "Cheers...06/18/03" http://www.southernminn.com/northfield_news/archives/article_27e149b1-f858-5ec7-955a-495bfa0cf96d.html