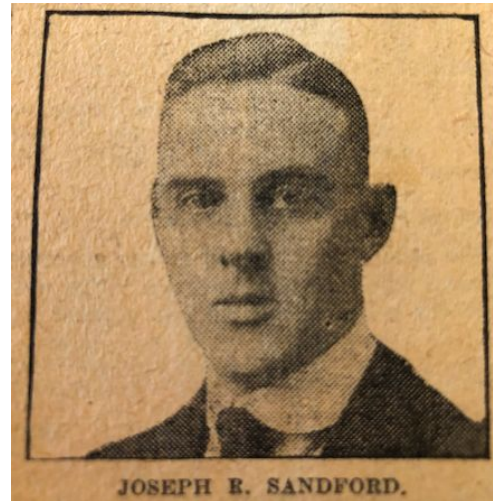


## Joseph Ralph Sandford

Joseph Ralph Sandford was born on October 16th, 1895 in Skowhegan, Maine.<sup>1</sup> He was the only child of Almon F. Sanford and Della Ames.<sup>2</sup> During his childhood, Sandford worked on his father's farm.<sup>3</sup> In 1913, Joseph graduated from Skowhegan High School.<sup>4</sup> In July of 1914, he enlisted in the National Guard and in September, he began his first year at Bowdoin College with the intention to graduate in 1918.<sup>5</sup> While at Bowdoin, Sandford was a member of the Associated Students of Bowdoin College, a student group which carried out the financial and administrative duties of all Bowdoin clubs. He was also a member of the Mandolin Orchestra and played Cornet.<sup>6</sup> However, in 1916 he was deployed to the Mexican border with Company of the 2nd Maine National Guard.<sup>7</sup> While in Texas, Sandford spent his spare time hunting specimens of rocks, trees, and bugs. He preserved all he found in alcohol and gave them to Bowdoin.<sup>8</sup> In March of 1917, Sandford went to the Plattsburg Training Camp in New



York to receive advanced military training.<sup>9</sup> While at the Plattsburg Camp, Sandford passed an aviation test and was sent to Boston to receive further aviation training.<sup>10</sup> In late 1917, Sandford graduated from the aviation ground school at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and then became one of six men chosen to go overseas to get even more

aviation training.<sup>11</sup> He traveled to London on the transport ship *Carmania* in August of 1917 and from there traveled to Ayr, Scotland.<sup>12</sup> At Ayr, he was commissioned as a 1st Lieutenant. Sandford was then deployed to France with the 54th Squadron RAF. The badge of the 54th Squadron is shown on the left. He flew combat missions in a Sopwith Camel F.1 with a B5424 engine, shown below.<sup>13</sup>



On March 20th, 1918, Sandford began combat operations and on April 12, 1918, he was shot down near Wambrechies, France.<sup>14</sup> He was originally listed as missing but then declared KIA when his body was recovered.<sup>15</sup> He was buried in La Touraine cemetery for four years before being brought back to Skowhegan on October 8, 1921 and buried in Southside Cemetery in Skowhegan.<sup>16</sup> In fact, he was the only person from Skowhegan to die in World War 1.

*Joseph R. Sandford* 18  
*October 16, 1895 - April 12, 1918*



**THE FIRST TO FALL**—Joseph Ralph Sandford, the only son of the late Mr. and Mrs. Alvan Sandford of Shepleton, was this town's first representative to give

Touchingly, his parents chose to later be buried next to him, a decision that marked the beginning and the end of the Sandford family plot, as Joseph Sandford never married and left behind no descendants.

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