

Armfield, Joseph Franklin ^[1]

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by Homer M. Keever, 1979

24 Jan. 1862–10 Oct. 1910



Photograph of Joseph F. Armfield, Adjutant General of North Carolina, from the Appleton Oaksmith Papers, 1825-1887. UNC Chapel Hill Libraries.

^[2]Joseph Franklin Armfield, colonel of a regiment of North Carolina troops in the Spanish-American War ^[3] and later brigadier general and adjutant general ^[4] of the North Carolina State Guard, was born at Yadkinville, son of Robert F. Armfield ^[5], wellknown legislator and criminal attorney, and Mary Ann Denny Armfield. His father was at one time president of the North Carolina Senate, later a representative in the U.S. House of Representatives from the North Carolina Seventh District, and finally a superior court judge.

Armfield spent most of his life in Statesville, where his father moved in 1870, and was educated there in the common schools and at the Statesville Male Academy. Primarily, he was a farmer, but he was best known in his military career. When a young man, he enlisted in the Iredell Blues, the local military company that had been reorganized after the Civil War ^[6]. He rose quickly to the captaincy of the Blues and after about six years in that position was elected colonel of his regiment, then the Fourth Regiment of the North Carolina State Guard.

At the outbreak of the war with Spain in 1898, his regiment volunteered; after being mustered in, in May, it was reorganized as the First North Carolina Regiment, with Armfield as its colonel. As the war progressed, it was stationed at Jacksonville, Fla.; after the surrender of the Spanish forces, it was the only North Carolina regiment to be sent to Cuba. In April 1899 it was brought home and disbanded after about eleven months of service. Much of that time, Armfield was acting brigadier general in the absence of the regular general. At the beginning of the administration of Governor Charles B. Aycock ^[7] in 1901, he was appointed brigadier general of the North Carolina State Guard. He held that position until he was appointed adjutant general of the guard by Governor W. W. Kitchen ^[8] in 1909.

Armfield spent the latter part of his life at the old Armfield homestead in Statesville, with a married sister and her husband, Dr. and Mrs. W. J. Hill. He came home in early October of 1910, suffering from Bright's disease ^[9], and died soon after. He was buried with full military honors, with most of the state's dignitaries attending, in Oakwood Cemetery in Statesville.

References:

Statesville *Landmark*, 1898–99, 14 Oct. 1910.

Additional Resources:

Finding Aid of the Joseph Franklin Armfield Photograph Collection, ca. 1890s, North Carolina State Archives: http://ead.archives.ncdcr.gov/PhC76_Joseph_Franklin_Armfield_.html [10]

Office of the Adjutant General, Adjutant Generals of NC: <http://www.ncmhs.net/ADJGenNC.htm> [11]

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Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press. [18]

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