

43: Christopher Jones

Basic Information [as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC]

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: Christopher Jones

Rank: Private

Battalion / Regiment: 15th Bn. Cheshire Regiment

Service Number: 244483

Date of Death: 23 April 1918

Age at Death: 20

Buried / Commemorated at: Doullens Communal Cemetery Extension No. 1, Doullens, Departement de la Somme, Picardie, France

Additional information given by CWGC: The son of James and Ellen Jones of Badger Butt, Little Neston.

Christopher Jones, baptised in Neston Parish Church on 13 March 1898, was the first child of collier James & Ellen Jones of Little Neston.

Christopher's father, James (a widower, recorded as 27, but he was probably 30), had married Ellen Peers (21) at Neston Parish Church on 21 July 1897.

Previously married to Mary (it is believed he had married Mary Ouldred, the step daughter of John Williams, fisherman of Brook Street, Neston, in Liverpool in late 1887) James had children by this first marriage. Mary Jones appears to have died, aged 28, and was buried in Neston on 6 May 1897 just 2½ months before he married Ellen.

Christopher Jones was named after his father's father, fisherman Christopher Jones.

In 1901 the family was living in Little Neston, Christopher and Alfred being the only children of James' marriage to Ellen:

James Jones	Head	M	28	✓	Coalminer and hewer	Woker	Christopher Jones
Ellen do	Wife	M	24	✓			do
Robert do	Son		12	✓			do
James do	Son		10	✓			do
Mary do	Daughter		7	✓			do
Christopher do	Son		3	✓			do
Alfred do	Son		8 mos	✓			do

1901 census (extract) – Norman's Cottages, Badger Butt [now Badger Bait], Little Neston

James Jones	28	coal miner, coal hewer	born Little Neston
Ellen	24		born Little Neston
Robert	12		born Little Neston
James	10		born Little Neston
Mary	7		born Little Neston
Christopher	3		born Little Neston
Alfred	8 months		born Little Neston

Ten years later, at the time of the 1911 census, the family had expanded but was still living on Badger Butt in Little Neston:

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.

Number of Schedule 152
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after selection)

The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family	AGE (last birthday) and Sex	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE					PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards				BIRTHPLACE of every person	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country	INFIRMITY	
			State, for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the number of—	Children born alive to present Marriage. (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7.)	Children born alive to previous Marriage. (If no children born alive to previous Marriage write "None" in Column 8.)	Children born alive to previous Marriages. (If no children born alive to previous Marriages write "None" in Column 9.)	Children born alive to previous Marriages. (If no children born alive to previous Marriages write "None" in Column 10.)	Children born alive to previous Marriages. (If no children born alive to previous Marriages write "None" in Column 11.)	Children born alive to previous Marriages. (If no children born alive to previous Marriages write "None" in Column 12.)	Children born alive to previous Marriages. (If no children born alive to previous Marriages write "None" in Column 13.)	Children born alive to previous Marriages. (If no children born alive to previous Marriages write "None" in Column 14.)				Children born alive to previous Marriages. (If no children born alive to previous Marriages write "None" in Column 15.)
James Jones	Head	44	Married	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ellen Jones	Wife	31	Married	13	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Robert Jones	Son	22	Single												
James Jones	Son	20	Single												
Christopher Jones	Son	13													
Alfred Jones	Son	10													
Samuel Jones	Son	8													
Freddie Jones	Son	6													
Edith Jones	Daughter	3													
Joseph Jones	Son	1													

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

I hereby state—
(1) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex column.
(2) I have counted the males and females in Columns 3 and 4 separately, and have entered their sum with the usual number of persons.
(3) After making the necessary entries I have corrected all errors on the Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.

Total:
Males 8 Females 2 Persons 10

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (Kitchens, Parlor, or Apartments). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom, nor warehouse, office, shop.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature James Jones
Postal Address Badger Butt Little Neston Cheshire

1911 census (condensed) – Badger Butt, Little Neston

James Jones	44	coal miner (hewer)	born Parkgate
Ellen	31		born Little Neston
Robert	22	traction engine steerer	born Neston
James	20	labourer to bricksetter	born Little Neston
Christopher	13		born Little Neston
Alfred	10		born Little Neston
Samuel	8		born Little Neston
Freddie	6		born Little Neston
Edith	3		born Little Neston
Joseph	1		born Little Neston

James and Ellen had been married 13 years and all 6 of their children had survived. Robert & James jnr were children of James' previous marriage to Mary.

Christopher must have been employed at Neston Colliery as in November 1914 - when he would have been 16 - he is recorded (as is his father) as the witness to an accident at the colliery.

Christopher, who may have been underage, enlisted at Chester and, according to his outline military record (his Service Records have not been found), died of wounds. Unusually, local newspapers do not appear to have carried any mention of his death.

The 15th (Service) Battalion Cheshire Regiment - also known as the 1st Birkenhead - was one of the Bantam battalions which were formed at Birkenhead on 18 November 1914 by Alfred Bigland MP. The battalion moved to Hoyle and, in June 1915, came under the orders of 105th Brigade 35th Division at Masham, Yorkshire before moving to Salisbury Plain in August 1915. Mobilised, they landed at Le Havre in January 1916.

In the Spring of 1918 the Germans advanced and, on the night of 26 / 27 March, they entered Aveluy Wood north of the town of Albert and about 30km north-east of Amiens. By 5 April this wooded area was mostly in German hands in spite of the stubborn defence, but conflict continued here throughout the month. Following one assault by the Cheshires on a German machine gun post on 20 April:

'The artillery salvoes ceased; during this lull the Cheshires conveyed wire and ammunition to the forward positions in readiness for the impending attack on Aveluy Wood and the nearby valley. This attack was to be made by the 35th and 38th Divisions with the intention of seizing the remaining elevated ground inside the woodland. The assault on the fortified wood was to be carried out by the Cheshires on 22 April in conjunction with the 15th Sherwood Foresters under the protective cover of a creeping artillery barrage. Zero hour was scheduled for 7-30 p.m. when W company led by Lieutenant Harford would lead the attack. Two platoons of Z Company were to provide Germans operating a captured British Vickers machine gun support, while the other two platoons were to carry forward the picks, wire and materials required to consolidate any gains. Preceding the infantry advance the artillery pounded the edges of Aveluy Wood for precisely three minutes, before sweeping forward on a creeping barrage. At 7.20 p.m. the predetermined range of the guns would then provide a protective barrage in front of the battalion's objective. At zero hour as the officers' whistles blew the patrols set off across No Man's Land to their objective. The barrage had failed to eliminate the German resistance; their machine gun bullets were soon zipping across the intervening ground, ripping into the khaki clad figures with deadly results. The 19th D.L.I. while in the support trenches had been caught out by a hostile barrage, their bad luck continued for as they advanced they were silhouetted against the setting sun and paid the ultimate price. Despite fierce fighting on the Cheshires left flank the 15th Sherwoods' attack on a strong point failed to eliminate the garrison, the defenders' stubborn resistance also prevented the Cheshires from advancing. Lieutenant Harford rallied his diminishing band of men, then moved off across the bullet swept fields to assist the hard pressed Sherwoods capture the strong point, while doing so the gallant Lieutenant Harford was wounded, but while being carried to the rear by stretcher bearers he was killed. As the advance had stalled Captain Miln M.C. came forward and seeing the enemy strong point on the perimeter of the wood had halted the advance and ordered in additional patrols from Z Company. When Captain R. E. Warner commanding Z Company was wounded, Sergeant Read then displayed fine qualities of leadership and took control of his men, despite being wounded he refused any treatment until his wounded men had been attended to. Further to the right heavy machine gun and rifle fire was emanating from the direction of Lone Tree position. Despite repeated attacks against the German garrison equipped with three machine guns the position remained invincible. Reluctantly the Cheshires began to withdraw to their original positions, by 9-30 p.m. the centre of the Brigade attack had achieved a gain of 200 yards but little headway was made on the flanks of the attack. To prevent any further build-up of troops the enemy guns laid a sixty-minute barrage on the Cheshires frontage. 105 Brigade was relieved on the night of 24 April. The battalion casualty report for the action launched on the evening of 22nd concluding 23 April records the deaths of Captain G.G. Miln M.C. from Chester who was killed by two machine gun bullets to the head [his parents received notification of his M.C. three days prior to notification of his death] and also Lieutenant A.W. Hanford. Captain A.E. Wenner and Second Lieutenant T. Heap M.C. were wounded. The other ranks sustained six men killed, thirty-seven wounded three missing. In the small hours of the morning the weary battalion arrived at their dug outs near Hedauville, the remainder of the month passed without any noticeable incidents, carrying parties and a brief tour of the line at Bouzincourt occurred. The battalion's casualty rate for April consisted of three officers killed,

five wounded. The other ranks had thirteen killed, ninety-four wounded, a further five were wounded but remained on duty, finally seven men were simply listed as missing, their fate being unknown.' [From: *The Cheshire Bantams* Stephen McGreal Pen & Sword 2006]

This was the action in which Christopher Jones was wounded, dying from his wounds a few hours later at the 3rd Canadian Stationary Hospital, at Doullens, just to the north. The Hospital War Diary records that, on this date, 439 patients were admitted and 398 were discharged and it is known that, on 23 April 1918, 12 men from the 15th Battalion Cheshire Regiment died. The large hospital suffered considerable damage during an aerial bombing on the night of night of 29/30 May 1918.

15th (S) Bn Cheshire Regt.

WAR DIARY
or
INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY.

Army Form C. 2113.

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Instructions regarding War Diaries and Intelligence Summaries are contained in P. S. Regs., Part II, and the Staff Manual respectively. Title pages will be prepared in manuscript.

(Erase heading not required.)

Place	Date	Hour	Summary of Events and Information	Remarks and references to Appendices
East of MARTINSART	23/4/18	-	At dawn the enemy put down as heavy a barrage as that of the previous night for about an hour, probably fearing a resumption of the attack of the night before. After this had ceased the rest of the day passed quietly though during the late afternoon & until relief was completed about 12.15 AM 24 April without incident there was a good deal of enfilade machine gun fire up the valley between the wood & the village - indicating a change in the position of some of the enemy machine guns to more advantageous spots for him.	Rte Map. 57 D S. E. 1/20000. 226 D.O.M. 47.
HEADAUVILLE	24/4/18	-	The Battalion arrived at this dug out near HEADAUVILLE in the early hours of the morning & after a hot meal finally got settled down, very tired, about 2.30 AM. The remainder of the day was devoted to clearing up, reorganisation & resting.	

War Diary extracts – 15th Battalion Cheshire Regiment

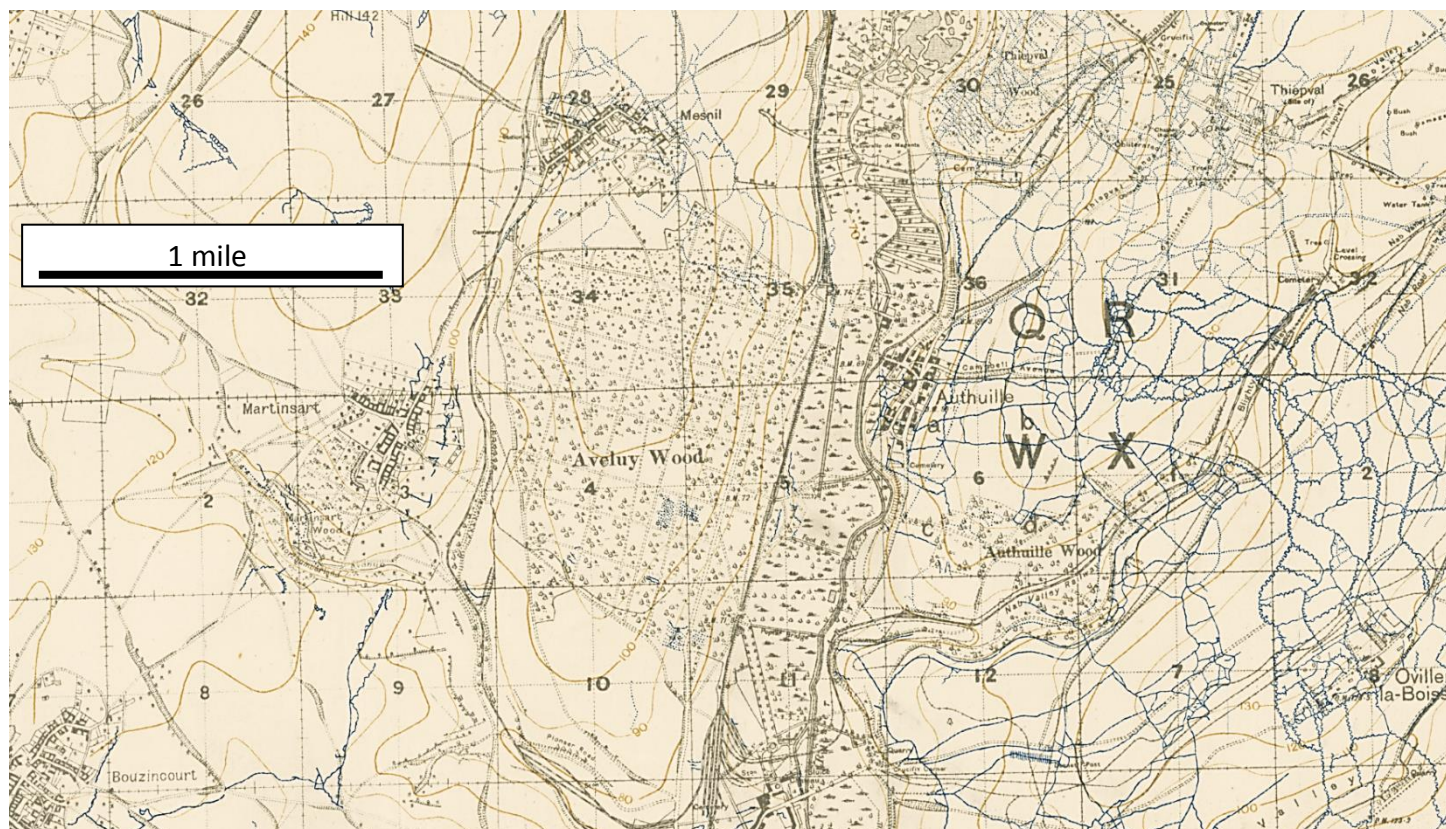
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HEADAUVILLE 24/4/18 The Battalion arrived at this dug out near HEADAUVILLE in the early hours of the morning & after a last meal finally got settled down, very tired. About 2.30 AM. The remainder of the day was devoted to clearing up, reorganisation & resting.

Note: *Enfilade fire* is a volley of gunfire directed along a line from end to end.

— CASUALTIES DURING APRIL 1918 —

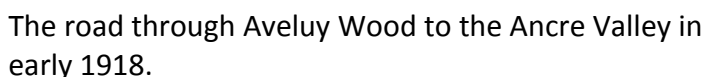
DATE	OFFICERS				OTHER RANKS			
	KILLED	WOUNDED	MISSING	WOUNDED AT DUTY	KILLED	WOUNDED	MISSING	WOUNDED AT DUTY
9	1					2		
10		2				5		
12						3		
16					1	11		
17						1		
19		2				1		
20		2			5	15		
21						0	3	5
23					6	31	3	
24						13		
26					1	2	1	
29						6		
TOTAL	3	5	-	-	13	94	1	5



Trench map of the Aveluy Wood and surroundings, 7 April 1918. This map indicates that the area was, at this time, occupied by British forces – the blue lines indicate the British-held trenches.



The current agricultural landscape around Aveluy Wood, north of the town of Albert. The distance from Aveluy village to Bouzincourt is approximately 3½km. [Source: Google Earth]



http://www.ossett.net/WW1/Bennett_Brook.html



http://www.ossett.net/WW1/Ezra_Squires.html

Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929

In Summer 1919 the army paid outstanding credits – mainly remaining wages – to soldiers or, in the case of those who had died, their family or nominated representatives. At the same time a War Gratuity was often paid.

Christopher Jones had accrued a credit of £9 10s 7d and this was received by his mother, Ellen, at the request of his father. Ellen received also the £3 War Gratuity.

The total payment, £12 10s 7d, is approximately equivalent to a *labour value* (ie wages) of about £1900 in 2016.

The War Gratuity was introduced in December 1918 as a payment to be made to those men who had served in WW1 for a period of 6 months or more home service or for any length of service if a man had served overseas. The rules governing the gratuity were implemented under Army Order 17 of 1919 but the amount paid was related to the length of war service.

In the 1939 Register (29 September) Robert Jones (born 18 February 1889), one of Christopher's half-brothers, was living at 'Sunny Bank', Church Lane, Neston (next to the gas works). It is believed that Robert married Margaret Edwards (born 26 December 1889) in the Wrexham area in July / September 1920 and that they had several children. In 1939 Robert was recorded as a

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920

traction engine driver and living with them was unmarried daughter Margaret Alice (born 8 December 1922, in domestic service, out of work). Margaret married Leslie George Goodwin at Neston Parish Church in mid-1945.

Christopher's half-brother James Jones (born 6 March 1891) married Sarah Ellen Elsie Chatterton (born 13 December 1890) at Neston Parish Church in mid-1913 and it is believed that they had at least two sons and five daughters. In the 1939 Register they are recorded at 10 Mostyn Gardens, Parkgate, and James was a pump attendant and gas lighter. With them were two of their unmarried children (a further four lines of the entry have been redacted, as of March 2018):

Ethel born 15 May 1917 domestic servant (no record of her birth has been found)

Annie born 12 March 1920 general servant.

It is believed that she married Stanley William Boswell at Neston Parish Church in late 1939.

The four younger full-brothers of Christopher Jones, and his parents, were living in Neston at the time of the 1939 Register:

Alfred born 27 July 1900 general labourer living at 10 Mayfield Gardens
Alfred married Maggie Phyllis Oxton (born 10 March 1901) at Neston

Parish Church in late 1922 and they had several children (probably four, or more - in the Register three lines have been redacted as of March 2018).

It is not known when Alfred died or where he is buried (it does not seem to be at Neston Parish Church) but Maggie Phyllis Jones died on Wirral

on 8 August 1956 aged 55 and is buried with her mother at Neston Parish Church.



Samuel born 17 November 1902, a brickwork labourer living at 36 Mayfield Gardens, Samuel was unmarried and living with him were parents James (born 18 March 1867, retired colliery hewer) and Ellen (born 27 July 1880) together with a Nellie Jones (unmarried, born 8 August 1879, daily domestic in general service).

Ellen Jones may have died, aged 61, in late 1941 but it is not known when James died. Neither seems to have been buried at Neston Parish Church. Samuel Henry Jones died on Wirral in early 1970.

- Freddie born 27 January 1905 he married Alice Gill (born 12 October 1896) at a Civil Marriage on Wirral in mid-1936. At the time of the 1939 Register Freddie was a builder's labourer and they were living at 3 Moorfield Drive, Parkgate. They seem to have had a daughter, Anne R Jones, who was born on Wirral in mid-1939 (one line, presumably the details of Anne, of the Register entry has been redacted. No details are known for the deaths of Freddie or Alice although it does not seem that they were buried at Neston Parish Church.
- Joseph born 20 February 1910 Joseph was married to Elizabeth E (born 10 November 1908) although no record of the marriage has been found. One line of the entry has been redacted (as of March 2018) although no details of the children of Joseph and Elizabeth are known.
No details are known of the death or burial place of either James or Elizabeth Jones.