

48: Walter Jones

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

Name as recorded on local memorial or by CWGC: W. Jones

Rank: Gunner

Battalion / Regiment: 335th Siege Bty. Royal Garrison Artillery

Service Number: 155625

Date of Death: 14 November 1917

Age at Death: ?

Buried / Commemorated at: Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Poperinge, West Flanders, Belgium

Additional information given by CWGC: None

Walter Jones was the second son of wine and spirit merchant William and Mary Jones. The large family - 10 children are known - lived firstly on Neston High Street and were recorded there in 1881:

Walter Jones	36	Wine Merchant	Neston
Mary Jones	36	Wine Merchant's wife	Pensby
Edith M. Jones	9		Neston
Arrabella Jones	6		Neston
Margaret Jones	5		Neston
Walter Jones	4		Neston
William H. Jones	2		Neston
Ethel Jones	1		Neston
Annie Jones	3 months		Neston
Louise Jones	16	Nurse	Neston
James Jones	21	General	Neston
Helen Jones	15		Neston

1881 census (extract) – Neston High Street

William Jones	36	wine merchant	born Neston
Mary	36	wine merchant's wife	born Pensby
Edith M.	9		born Neston
Arrabella	6		born Neston
Margaret	5		born Neston
Walter	4		born Neston
William H.	2		born Neston
Ethel	1		born Neston
Annie	3 months		born Neston

Also in the household were two general domestic servants and a nurse.

The baptismal dates, at Neston Parish Church, of the children are:

Edith Mary	6 June 1872	William Henry	12 July 1878
Arrabella	1 May 1874	Ethel	12 September 1879
Charles	15 July 1874	Annie	28 January 1881
Margaret	1 August 1875	Edward	17 March 1882
Walter	24 November 1876	Mabel	8 October 1883

William Jones	Head	M	46	Wine dealer and spirit merchant	Neston
Mary	Wife	M	46		Pensby
Charles	Son	M	20	clerk and book keeper	Neston
Edith	Daughter	F	19		Neston
Arrabella	Daughter	F	17		Neston
Margaret	Daughter	F	15		Neston
Walter	Son	M	14		Neston
William H.	Son	M	12		Neston
Ethel	Daughter	F	11		Neston
Annie	Daughter	F	10		Neston
Mabel	Daughter	F	7		Neston
Susan Bedson	General domestic servant	F	19		Thurstaston

1891 census (extract) – High Street, Neston

William Jones	46	wine dealer and spirit merchant	born Neston
Mary	46		born Pensby
Charles	20	clerk and book keeper	born Neston
Edith	19		born Neston
Arrabella	17		born Neston
Margaret	15		born Neston
Walter	14		born Neston
William H.	12		born Neston
Ethel	11		born Neston
Annie	10		born Neston
Mabel	7		born Neston

Also in the household was Susan Bedson, 19, general domestic servant, born Thurstaston

In the census of 1891 the family was still on Neston High Street:

43 Broadlake	William Jones	Head	M	56	Retired wine merchant employer	Sturley, Warwickshire
	Mary	Wife	M	56		Neston, Cheshire
	Margaret	Daughter	S	25		Pensby - do
	Walter	Son	S	24	Cattle grazer	Neston - do
	Ethel	Daughter	S	21		do do
	Annie	do	S	20		do do
	Mabel	do	S	17		do do
44 Queen's Cott.	Elizabeth Rugman	General Servt	S	18	General Servt domestic	do do

1901 census (extract) – 'Broadlake', Leighton Road, Neston

William Jones	56	retired wine merchant	born Neston
Mary	56		born Pensby
Margaret	25		born Neston
Walter	24	cattle grazer	born Neston
Ethel	21		born Neston
Annie	20		born Neston
Mabel	17		born Neston

Also in the household was general domestic servant Elizabeth Rugman, 18, born Neston

From 1901 the family was recorded at 'Broadlake', a substantial property of 10 rooms on Leighton Road, Neston.

It is very probable that Walter was working on the family land as 'Broadlake' was, in fact, a small farm. Walter's father, William, died aged 65 and was buried at Neston on 11 December 1909. It appears that, by the time of the 1911 census, 'Broadlake' now being worked as a family dairy farm as Mary (66), Walter's mother, is recorded as 'farmer' with 5 of the adult children, all single, now working on the farm:

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.													
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.)		Personal Occupation.		Industry or Service with which worker is connected.				
			Write "Single," "Married," "Widowed," or "Widow" opposite the names of all persons aged 15 years and upwards.	Completed years of present Marriage last lasted.	Children born alive to present Marriage.	Children who have Died.	The reply should show the precise branch of Profession, Trade, Manufacture, &c.	This question should generally be answered by stating the business carried on by the employer. If this is clearly shown in Col. 10 the question need not be answered here.	Write opposite the name of each person engaged in any Trade or Industry: (1) "Employer," (2) "Worker" (that is working for an employer), or (3) "Own Account" (that is either employing others or working for a trade employer).	Write the words "At Home" or "At Work" opposite the name of each person carrying on Trade or Industry at home.	(1) If born in the United Kingdom, write the name of the County, and Town or Parish.	State whether — (1) "British subject," giving year of naturalisation. (2) "Totally blind." (3) "Lunatic," or "Feeble-minded," state the infirmity opposite that person's name, and the age at which he or she became afflicted.	
1	Mary Jones	Head	66	Widow			Farmer.	100	employer		Cheshire Heswall		
2	Charles Jones	Son	40	Single			Farmer's son working on farm	100	worker		Cheshire Neston		
3	Margaret Jones	Daughter	35	Single			Farmer's daughter dairy work		worker		Cheshire Neston		
4	Walter Jones	Son	34	Single			Farmer's son working on farm		worker		Cheshire Neston		
5	Ethel Jones	Daughter	31	Single			Farmer's daughter dairy work		worker		Cheshire Neston		
6	Annie Jones	Daughter	30	Single			Farmer's daughter dairy work		worker		Cheshire Neston		
7	Ellen Smith	Servant	39	married	6	3	General servant (domestic)	100			Lancashire Liverpool	75	

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

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

Initials of Enumerator: *E.E.S.*

Total.		
Males	Females	Persons.
2	5	7

(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 (House, Tenement, or Apartment). Count the kitchen as a room but do not count scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor warehouse, office, shop.

10

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

Signature: *Mary Jones*

Postal Address: *Broadlake Neston Cheshire*

1911 census (condensed) – Broadlake, Neston

Mary Jones	66	widow, farmer, employer	born Heswall
Charles	40	farmer's son working on farm	born Neston
Margaret	35	farmer's daughter, dairy work	born Neston
Walter	34	farmer's son working on farm	born Neston
Ethel	31	farmer's daughter, dairy work	born Neston
Annie	30	farmer's daughter, dairy work	born Neston
Ellen Smith	39	general servant (domestic)	born Liverpool

'Broadlake' was described recently (about 2014) by an Estate Agent as being '..a most interesting character property being the substantial part of a large period house along with the converted former stables and coach house..'



Nothing is known about Walter's military career, as no Service Records have been found, although it is known that the 335th Siege Battery went to the Western Front, via Le Havre, on 3 May 1917 where it joined 91st Heavy Artillery Group (HAG) on 13 May 1917. It was transferred to the 98th HAG on 23 May 1917 but rejoined the 91st HAG on 30 May 1917 and was transferred to the 98th HAG on 3 August 1917. For some, perhaps all, of this time the unit was south and south west of Vaulx-Vracourt and it is believed that they were equipped with four 6" Howitzers.

Before the war, "heavy batteries" fulfilled the role of "general purpose heavy artillery" and were considered the most important artillery units in the British army. Twenty-six heavy battery units existed at war's outbreak. In contrast, the lighter-armed "siege batteries" were regarded as "specialised units" to be utilized only in specific situations. Only eight siege batteries existed prior to the war's outbreak, and none accompanied the British forces that departed for France in August 1914. As the BEF engaged German forces along the Western Front, the heavy battery's shortcomings soon became apparent. Their long-range, heavy guns - mainly the British-manufactured "60 pounder" - proved ineffective in destroying enemy trenches, as well as the barbed wire strewn across the battlefield. Nor were they effective in silencing rival German artillery batteries. A dramatic reversal of roles occurred during the first two years of the war. By mid-1916, the more lightly equipped and mobile "siege battery" replaced the "heavy battery" as the preferred artillery unit, playing an increasingly significant role in the battles fought during the war's last two years.

The siege battery thus became the most common field artillery unit created during the war. A total of six units were mobilized in August 1914. By 1916, there were 221 siege batteries in existence. In comparison, the number of heavy batteries increased at a much more modest pace - from the initial 26 to approximately 130 - over the same time period. As the war moved into its final two years, the BEF actually disbanded several heavy battery units in order to create additional siege batteries.

At the beginning of the war, the BL 6-inch 30cwt howitzer was the most common weapon deployed by siege batteries. First introduced in 1896, the "back loaded" (BL) medium howitzer was quickly adopted by the British Army. The designation "30cwt" refers to the weight of the barrel and breach - 3507 kg. The gun utilized a recoil system of springs mounted beneath the barrel. Placed on a simple gun carriage (an axle and two wheels), it had no "traverse" (side to side) capability without physically moving the entire unit. Maximum barrel elevation was 35 degrees, which limited its range.

The 6-inch howitzer fired a 53.75 kg shell a maximum distance of 4755 metres. It was initially designed to fulfil two different roles on the battlefield. As a field gun, it could be mounted on a short, conventional two-wheel carriage. As a siege gun, where a higher firing angle and "plunging fire" were required, the wheels were removed and the gun carriage was mounted on a heavy wooden platform measuring 3.6 meters square. Three layers of planks were placed into the ground and bolted together, and the gun was then attached to the platform. This deployment increased elevation to 70 degrees and range to 6400 metres.

An improved design - the 6-inch 26cwt howitzer - was developed in 1915 to replace the older 30cwt. While only slightly lighter, the new model featured an improved hydro-pneumatic recoil system, a traverse that allowed the gun to rotate 4 degrees to the left or right, and an elevation range from 0 to 45 degrees. The 26cwt was capable of firing a 45 kg shrapnel shell a distance of 8.7 kilometres. Lighter weight, 39 kg shells increased the range to 10.4 km. The weapon was also capable of firing a pure HE shell, previously used only in heavy battery weapons. The 26cwt howitzer made its debut during the Battle of the Somme, the major British offensive launched on July 1, 1916.

6-inch 26cwt howitzer in action in 1918.

It proved to be one of the few weapons capable of cutting through the enemy's barbed wire and was equally effective in destroying German front line dugouts. Its weight, however, meant that large teams of horses were required to move the weapon. Mechanized vehicles - particularly the Holt tractor - were therefore used for transportation whenever possible.



The 6-inch 26cwt howitzer became the "work horse" of British artillery, firing a total of 22.4 million rounds on the Western Front. It was used well into World War II before being replaced by more modern guns. While the 6-inch howitzer was a vital resource on the battlefield, as the war progressed it was gradually replaced by a newer, more effective gun - the BL 9.2-inch howitzer.

[Source (with minor amendment), including photograph:

<http://guysboroughgreatwarveterans.blogspot.co.uk/2012/08/bef-cef-artillery-units-weapons.html>]



A War Bonds postcard showing a 60-pounder heavy gun and horse team

Killed in Action.

The death in action of Gunner Walter Jones, second son of Mrs. W. Jones, Broadlake, is reported. Deceased was exceedingly well known in Newton district, and deep sympathy is extended to his mother, brothers and sisters in their sorrow.

Birkenhead News – Saturday 24 November 1917

It is not known precisely where Walter Jones was when he was wounded although the report of his death in the *Chester Chronicle* notes that he died before he could be taken to a hospital. Walter was listed as being wounded in the Daily List of 6 October 1917 although it is not known whether it was this, or a later injury, which led to his death.

ROLL OF HONOUR.—News has come through from a reliable source that Gunner Walter Jones has died from wounds received in action on Nov. 14th in France. The deceased, a comparatively young man, joined up in his group. He was the son of Mrs. Jones, of Broadlake, and the late Mr. Jones, who was a prominent member of the old local board, and subsequently district council, and who interested himself in everything that benefited the town. Walter was wounded, and died before reaching the hospital. He was a well-known and respected young fellow, and our sympathy is extended to his mother and family in their great bereavement.

Chester Chronicle - Saturday 24 November 1917

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regt. No.
JONES Walter	R.G.A.	Gnr	155625
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	R.A.F. 100 B	9064	
BATON	Do	Do	
Star			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920

JONES—November 14, killed in action, aged 41 years, Gunner Walter Jones, B.G.A., second son of Mary and the late William Jones, of Broadlake, Neston.

Liverpool Echo - Tuesday 27 November 1917



Walter Jones' War Grave at Dozinghem Military Cemetery, Poperinge, Belgium
[Photo: CWGC]

Walter Jones probably died just a few days after his 41st birthday and was buried at Dozinghem Military Cemetery to the north-west of Poperinge, Belgium.

This area was outside the front held by Commonwealth forces in Belgium during the First World War, but in July 1917, in readiness for the forthcoming offensive, groups of casualty clearing stations were placed at three positions called by the troops Mendinghem, Dozinghem and Bandaghem. The 4th, 47th and 61st Casualty Clearing Stations were posted at Dozinghem and the military cemetery was used by them until early in 1918. [CWGC]

Throughout the Great War of 1914-1918 Poperinge, or "Pops" as the British soldiers called it, was used by the British Army as a gateway to the battlefields of the northern Ypres Salient. It was an important rail centre behind the front line and was used for the distribution of supplies, for billeting troops, for casualty clearing stations and for troops at rest from duty in the forward trench areas. Thousands of troops passed through this small town at some time or other.

The main square formed the hub of five main roads leading into the town and,



British artillery passing through Poperinge in 1917
[World War : 1914 – 1918 Amalgamated Press Ltd magazine 1935]

therefore, was constantly bustling with military traffic, military personnel and those civilians who had stayed on in the town. Because of its importance to the military behind the front Allied lines, the town was frequently targeted by long range German artillery. During The Third Battle of Ypres (31 July - 10 November 1917) Poperinge and the surrounding area was bombed by German aircraft. Some bombs landed on the Casualty Clearing Stations nearby.

[<http://www.greatwar.co.uk/ypres-salient/town-poperinge.htm>]

"I cannot quite remember.... There were five
Dropt dead beside me in the trench - and three
Whispered their dying messages to me...."

Back from the trenches, more dead than alive,
Stone-deaf and dazed, and with a broken knee,
He hobbled slowly, muttering vacantly:

"I cannot quite remember.... There were five
Dropt dead beside me in the trench, and three
Whispered their dying messages to me....

"Their friends are waiting, wondering how they thrive-
Waiting a word in silence patiently....
But what they said, or who their friends may be

"I cannot quite remember.... There were five
Dropt dead beside me in the trench - and three
Whispered their dying messages to me...."



'The Messages'
Wilfred Wilson Gibson
(1878 - 1962)

