

PRIVATE ARTHUR LESLIE JONES

105845, Irish Labour Regiment, Labour Corps

Died aged 23 on 11 February 1921

Buried without Military Honour at *Tewkesbury Cemetery*; C-480

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross



Family headstone in Tewkesbury Cemetery; C-480

Labour Corps

ARTHUR LESLIE JONES was born in Tewkesbury in 1897, the third son and the fourth of five surviving children of Thomas Jones and Esther Ann (formerly Williams), both born in Tewkesbury; Thomas was a Steam-Boat Driver for Bathurst's boatyard. In 1901 the family was living at Manns Court, 59 High Street, and they were still at the same address in 1911, by which time Arthur had left school and was an Errand Boy. Immediately prior to the war Arthur was working as a Pipe Fitter's mate.

On 7 December 1915 Arthur enlisted in Birmingham at the age of 18 years and 10 months, probably under the 'Derby Scheme'. However, he was not actually called up for military service until 15 March 1917 at Oxford, when he was appointed to the Labour Companies of the Devonshire Regiment. In early 1916, a number of battalions within infantry regiments were formed into Labour Battalions and were mainly composed of men who had been medically rated below the 'A1' condition needed for front-line service. In the case of the Devonshire Regiment there were two such battalions that served overseas, the 12th and 14th, and it is likely that Arthur joined one of them when he went to France on 25 March 1917.

Shortly afterwards, in April, labour battalions within infantry regiments were transferred to the Labour Corps, an organisation that had itself only been formed in January 1917 to merge labour resources in the British Army into a single body. The infantry battalions became Labour Companies within the Corps and, whilst they were then numbered, evidence suggests that they were still known by the name of their parent

regiment. Arthur's discharge records place him in an Irish Company in the Labour Corps, implying that he was transferred to a company that had previously been a Labour Battalion in an Irish Regiment.

Arthur served in France until 25 April 1918; according to the *Record* on 11 May, he was reported as wounded, possibly gassed. On 22 May he was examined at the 2nd London General Hospital and diagnosed as suffering from Myopia (short-sightedness). As a result he was recommended for discharge as no longer physically fit for war service; his discharge became effective from 24 June after 1 year and 104 days service. Arthur was granted a gratuity of 22s. (£1.10p) a week for 52 weeks from the date of his discharge. His medical condition of 'Myopia' was assessed as congenital and not attributable to his war service. His pension papers provide a description of him: '5'10" tall, fresh complexion, hazel eyes, dark hair ... honest and reliable'.

Arthur Leslie Jones died on 11 February 1921 and was buried in *Tewkesbury Cemetery*. His death certificate states the cause as '*Henoch-Schonlein Purpura*', a childhood condition that is triggered later in life. There was accordingly no need for a post-mortem. His obituary claimed that he '*died from illness from German poison gas*' although there is no reference to any such condition on his medical reports or discharge papers. At the time he died, Arthur was still living at Manns Court, 59 High Street.

Owing to the date of his death, his name was omitted from the Memorial in the Abbey but he is commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross.