

## LANCE CORPORAL HENRY PERCY JONES

50102, 9th Battalion, North Staffordshire Regiment

Died aged 34 on 17 May 1918

Buried with honour at *Mount Huon Military Cemetery, France*; VJ 10A

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross and in the Abbey



*Mount Huon Military Cemetery, France*



*North Staffordshire Regiment*

**HENRY PERCY JONES** was born in Bredon, Worcestershire, in 1884, one of six children of Albert Henry Jones and Eliza Ann (formerly Merritt). Albert and Eliza were both from Bredon and lived there with their family. Albert worked as a Bricklayer with Collins & Godfrey. In 1906 Henry married Rose Lillian Lea in Bredon and they had three children, William, Alma and Kathleen, all born in Bredon's Hardwick. At the time he joined up, at the age of 32, Henry was working as a Bricklayer for the same employer as his father and the family was living in Bredon's Hardwick, near Tewkesbury.

Henry enlisted at Tewkesbury on 6 June 1916 (as Percy Henry Jones) and was mobilised two months later on 13 August. He was initially assigned to the Royal Garrison Artillery but, by the end of the year, was based at the Royal Engineers Depot in Chatham, most likely undergoing training before being posted to the infantry. Sometime in 1917 Henry was transferred to the 9th (Service) Battalion (Pioneers), North Staffordshire Regiment. The battalion was formed at Lichfield on 20 September 1914 as part of Kitchener's New Army and attached to the 22nd Division. In April 1915 they became a Pioneer Battalion and were transferred to the 37th Division. On 29 July 1915 the battalion landed at Le Havre, France.

**Lance Corporal Henry Percy Jones** died on 17 May 1918 of wounds received in action. His wounds were attributed to gas poisoning and he must therefore have been in the front-line zone at the time. The most likely action in which his battalion was involved, as part of the 37th Division, and in which he probably sustained his

wounds, was the *Battle of the Ancre* (5 April 1918), a phase of the *First Battles of the Somme 1918* (referred to by the Germans as *Operation Michael*, the first of four phases of the campaign which became known as the German Spring Offensive or *Kaiserschlacht* (Kaiser's Battle)). Henry would have been evacuated from the front line along a well-established chain of medical units until he reached the French coast at Le Treport, near Dieppe. Le Treport was an important medical centre and contained a number of hospitals and a convalescent depot. Henry would have been treated in one of these hospitals but unfortunately he succumbed to his wounds and is buried in the nearby *Mount Huon Military Cemetery* in Le Treport.

At the same time that Henry's death was reported by the *Tewkesbury Record* so was that of his brother, **L/Cpl. Ernest James Jones**, serving with the 12th Field Company, Royal Engineers. Before the war Ernest was working for the same firm as Henry but he enlisted a little earlier in August 1915 in Cheltenham, originally joining the Gloucestershire Regiment. Ernest was one of a group of four sappers from the 12th Field Company serving in the Ypres Salient who were killed on 21 April 1918 by a bomb dropped from an enemy plane. He is buried in the *Ramparts Cemetery* near the Lille Gate in Ypres, Belgium. He left a widow and two young children. Although his place of residence on the casualty records is shown as Tewkesbury, Ernest was not commemorated in the town. This may be because his post-war CWGC record shows that his widow, by then re-married as Mrs. E. Johnston, was living in Winchcombe.