

Gunner 290391

Alfred Jones

38th Heavy Battery
Royal Garrison Artillery
1874 - 1917



Life in the Community

Alfred was born in 1874

At the time of the Census in April 1881 Alfred was aged 7 living at home with his parents and three brothers in Kemys Inferior.

At the time of the Census in April 1891 Alfred had moved away from Kemys Inferior and his parents still lived at Old Kemys House with three sons and two daughters.

At the time of the Census in April 1901 Alfred was still living away and his parents remained at Old Kemys House with one son and one daughter plus his father's widowed brother, Sydney, and Sydney's two children.

At the time of the Census in April 1911 Alfred had moved back to his father's house. He was then 37 years of age and employed as a woodcutter. He lived with his father Henry aged 62 a Farm Labourer and his mother Matilda aged 59 and his father's two brothers - John, aged 61, a farm labourer, and Sidney, aged 58, a woodcutter.

Military Service

Alfred was conscripted in 1916 and joined the 38th (Welsh) Heavy Battery Royal Garrison Artillery. The Battery moved to France on 30th March 1916. Clearly this was part of the preparation for the Battle of the Somme. This was a battle fought by the armies of the British and French Empires against Germany, it took place between July and November 1916 in the basin of the River Somme in North Eastern France. The battle was the bloodiest in The First World War and indeed human history, with more than One Million men wounded or killed.

The battle is historically notable for the debut of tanks and the use of air power. On the first day of the battle, 1st July 1916, the British Fourth Army lost 57,470 men alone. Even more sobering is that 72,191 British empire troops who died in the battle have no known grave.

The Royal Garrison Artillery developed from fortress-based artillery located on British coasts. From prior to the First World War, when the army possessed very little heavy artillery, it grew into a very large component of the British forces. In the quagmire of trench warfare that existed in 1914 it was soon realised that the infantry lines was not the place for the artillery to be located. It was armed with heavy, large calibre guns and howitzers that were positioned some way behind the front line and had immense destructive power.

The artillery would be positioned behind the infantry battle line, firing at unseen targets, at co-ordinates on a map calculated with geometry and mathematics. As the war developed, the heavy artillery and the techniques of long-range artillery were massively developed. The Royal Garrison Artillery was often supported by the Royal Flying Corps who had devised a system where pilots could use wireless telegraphy to help the artillery hit specific targets. The Royal Flying Corps aircraft carried a wireless set and a map and after identifying the position of an enemy target the pilot was able to transmit messages in morse code to their own Royal Flying Corps land station attached to a heavy artillery units.

Heavy Batteries of the Royal Garrison Artillery were equipped with heavy guns, sending large calibre high explosive shells in fairly flat trajectory fire. The usual armaments were 60 pounder (5 inch) guns, although some had 8 inch howitzers. As British artillery tactics developed, the Heavy Batteries were most often employed in destroying or neutralising the enemy artillery, as well as putting destructive fire down on strongpoints, dumps, store, roads and railways behind enemy lines.



A 60 pounder gun on the road in Northern France

These weapons became the first to be hauled by motor tractors rather than horse power. Some of the guns were so large that they could only be deployed on railway tracks.

The 8-inch howitzer had a range of about 12,300 yards (11.24 km), and fired a 200-lb (90.8kg) shell.



A pair of 8-inch howitzers of the Royal Garrison Artillery, 1917

Heavy Batteries of the German forces were also employed in destroying or neutralising the British and Commonwealth artillery, so being located well behind the infantry battle line did not offer protection to the gunnery teams.

Alfred died of wounds received in France on 25th June 1917.

Jones.—In loving remembrance of Alf, beloved son of Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Kemys Inferior, who died of wounds received in France, June 25, 1917. Ever remembered by his sorrowing father, mother, sister, and brother Will. We miss him most who loved him best. W

The Army record of soldiers effects show that his father, who was his sole legatee, received £10 1s 4d on the 18th October 1917 and a War Gratuity of £9 10s 0d on 8th January 1920. This would have the equivalent purchasing power of £950 in 2017.

Medal Entitlement

Gunner 290391 Alfred Jones's medal entitlement was the British War Medal & the Victory Medal.

Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
JONES	R. G. A. - do -	gmc	384 290391
Alfred.			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	R. G. A/240B/4047		
BRITISH	- do -	- do -	
STAR			
Theatre of War first served in			
Date of entry therein			

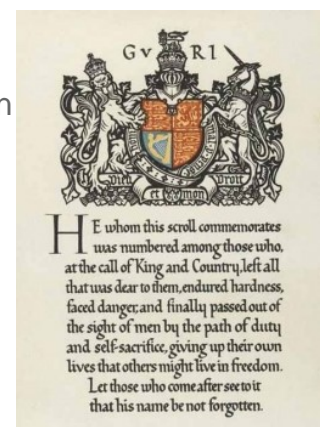
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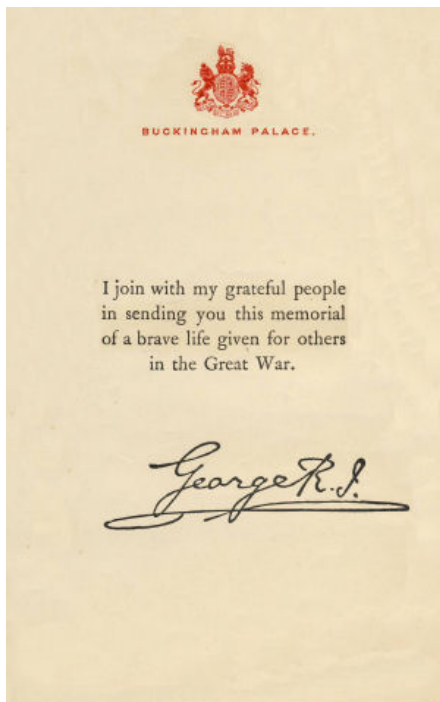
This pair of medals were generally awarded to servicemen who joined the war after 1915 and were colloquially known as "Mutt and Jeff". Mutt and Jeff were comic strip characters as were "Pip, Squeak and Wilfred", the nicknames for medals for servicemen who joined the war before 1916.

The medals were issued in the 1920's to the fallen serviceman or woman's legatees if a Will existed. If no Will existed, they were issued to the next-of-kin in the order of precedence laid down in Army Order 256 of 1917.

This Scroll accompanied the medals of servicemen and women who fell in the War and carried the full Name, Rank and Number beneath the last line of the script.



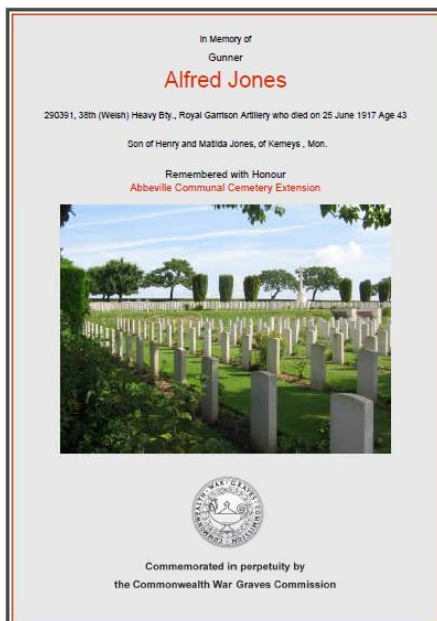
Commemoration of the Fallen



The Bronze Memorial Plaque was issued to the next of kin of servicemen or women who had fallen in the Great War. It just had the recipient's name cast in the box above the lion's head no rank was given as it was intended to show equality in their sacrifice.



1,355,000 plaques were issued, which used a total of 450 tonnes of bronze, 600 of these plaques were issued to women. Distribution started in November 1919 and they continued to be issued into the 1930s to commemorate people who died as a consequence of the war. The circular shape and coin-like appearance soon contributed to the nickname of this memorial plaque becoming widely known as the "Dead Man's Penny", the "Death Penny", "Death Plaque" or "Widow's Penny".



Alfred is buried at Abbeville Communal Cemetery Extension.111.B.2.

For much of the First World War, Abbeville was headquarters of the Commonwealth lines of communication and No.3 BRCS, No.5 and No.2 Stationary Hospitals were stationed there variously from October 1914 to January 1920. The communal cemetery was used for burials from November 1914 to September 1916, the earliest being made

among the French military graves. The extension was begun in September 1916. Abbeville Communal Cemetery contains 774 Commonwealth burials of First World War and the Extension contains 1,754 First World War burials.



The Newport cenotaph was unveiled by Lord Tredegar in June 1923, to commemorate the local people who died in active service in the First World War. It now also commemorates people who died in subsequent wars. There are no names on the memorial but Gunner 290391 Alfred Jones's name appears on the listing.