

Jones, Richard Vaughan. Sergeant.

4-F-6



Richard Vaughan Jones was born on November 30, 1919, in Ffestiniog, Merionethshire, Wales.

He is the son of Edward John Jones and Hannah Mary Jones. A bit of family history:

Richard's father, Edward John, emigrated to Canada in 1906. In Wales, he was a mining engineer. In 1915, during WW1, he returned and enlisted in the Royal Engineers. (British) After the war, he married in Wales Hannah Mary Davies and Richard Vaughan was born in 1919.

In 1928, Edward John Jones, returned to Canada in February 1928, and Hannah May with Richard arrived later in June 1928.

Richard has one brother, Donald Vaughan.

English is spoken at home, and the family attends the United Church.

Richard left school at the age of 15.

The family lived in Bienfait, Saskatchewan, when Richard enlisted for active service on September 16, 1939, in Regina, Saskatchewan.

Before enlisting, Richard had already served as a reservist with the South Saskatchewan Regiment since 1937.

This regiment was mobilized on September 1, 1939.

According to his own information, he worked for a while as an apprentice electrician.

Afterward, he went to work in the mines in Bienfait.

At the time of his enlistment, Richard had already been a miner for three years.

He was a member of the Saskatchewan Coal Miners Union.



His medical report reads the usual information: blue eyes, brown hair, 1.68 m tall, and 61 kg. However, an additional note was made: the doctor found Richard to be "underweight," but thought he would be fine in the army.

In 1939, his military service began in Regina, Saskatchewan. He was assigned to the 10th Field Ambulance (10 FA).

For Richard and his unit, the year 1940 had series of transfers.

In May 1940, they were transferred to Dundurn, Saskatchewan.

In October 1940, the entire unit moved to Toronto, Ontario.

These transfers were all part of a planned transfer of the entire South Saskatchewan Regiment to the United Kingdom.

Richard's last station in Canada was Halifax, Nova Scotia, on December 16, 1940.

On board Richard was in the sickbay, but his medical records don't explain his illness. Because it was only two days, the possible cause was 'seasickness'.

On December 25, 1940, Richard and the rest of his unit arrived in Gourock, Scotland.



The year 1941 he was relatively quiet for Richard. He was granted a few days' leave and remained assigned to the 10 FA until October of that year. He was then assigned to the fuel transport company of the 2nd Division until mid-December 1941. By then, he was transferred back to the 10 FA.

Also, over the year 1942, Richard's file shows only a few entries. He regularly received a week's leave and qualified as a driver for wheeled vehicles in July 1942.

Noteworthy to mention is that Richard attended a boxing course in the first week of January 1943 and in the summer of the same year, he passed his motorcycle test.

During World War II, military boxing courses were a standard part of basic training to build self-confidence, fitness, and self-defence. They were intended to develop physical courage and usually lasted a week.

Richard enjoyed another few weeks' leave in the first half of September 1943. He then made a remarkable transfer: In November 1943, he enlisted in the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion (1CPB).

After several weeks of preliminary training, he arrived at the Airborne Forces Depot/School at Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire, on November 27, 1943. The training center for parachute troops.

He became familiar with the British equipment and discipline. Tactical training for paratroopers was also provided there.

Richard received his final jump training at the Airfield Detachment at RAF Ringway.



Mass drop training at Ringway

He successfully completed the training in December 1943, and by January 1, 1944, he was qualified as a paratrooper and was eligible to wear the Para Badge.

In January 1944, he was awarded the Voluntary Service Medal with Clasp.

Then came the harsh reality of war for the men of 1CPB.

The battalion, with Richard in its ranks, was dropped in Normandy during the night of June 5–6, 1944, prior to the coastal landings.

There, 1CPB fought fierce battles. Of the 534 paratroopers dropped, on June 6 alone, 21 men lost their lives, 94 were wounded and 82 were taken prisoner of war.

Richard apparently survived his stay in France unscathed. There are no records of any irregularities or injuries in his file.

In early August, 1944, he was promoted to sergeant.

The 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion returned to England on September 7, 1944.

Just before Christmas 1944, 1CPB was alerted regarding the Ardennes Offensive launched by the Germans.

Due to poor weather conditions, they were not parachuted but instead they travelled by ship to Belgium.

Explanation:

On December 16, 1944, the Germans launched a final large-scale offensive on the Western Front. No fewer than 24 German divisions were involved in the offensive.

The objective of the German attack was a breakthrough through the Ardennes that would split the Allied forces. The aim was then to push on to Antwerp and recapture this port city. The 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion was the only Canadian unit to see action in the Ardennes Offensive, which was primarily an American-German battle.

On December 26, 1944, the troops arrived in Belgium and were transported by truck to the Ardennes. By then, the German advance had almost come to a standstill.

The task of the 1CPB then became: patrolling and clearing the assigned area of enemy groups. In doing so, the paratroopers also faced the ferocity of some enemy units.

Explanation:

During their patrol through the town of Bande, the men discovered one of the many atrocities that had taken place during the war. Thirty-seven elderly men, children, and women were herded into the cellar of a house and then slaughtered with rifle fire and grenades.

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Barracks Bulford

Then, only two more entries were made in Richard's file:

1. On March 24, 1945: boarded a plane and parachuted into Germany.
2. The last entry is from April 17, 1945: Killed in Action.

By then, the paratroopers had penetrated deep into Germany.

For a little more insight, here's some information about the movements of 1CPB:

On March 26 and 27, 1945, the 1st Canadian Parachute Battalion started moving from Bergerfürth, near Wesel, Germany.

Final destination: the Baltic coast near Wismar, if feasible.

Their primary objective was to keep the Red Army out of Denmark, and preferably even further away. Over the next six weeks, the men of 1CPB covered 480 kilometers.

On May 2, 1945, they arrived in Wismar, just hours before a Russian reconnaissance group arrived.

Where was the unit on April 17, 1945, the fateful day for Richard Vaughan Jones?

The following information is from the 1CPB war diary:

On the afternoon of April 16, 1945, the unit reached the village of Nettelkamp, south of Uelzen, Germany. The village was already cleared of enemy troops and the plan was to stay there overnight.

In the evening they received a warning that they had to be ready to leave from 2:30 a.m. on. The report reads:

17 APRIL 1945

Reveille 0200 hrs. Breakfast 0300 hrs. Move off at 0330 hrs. Bn moved by night with no opposition to HANSTEDT II 970886, arriving at 0630 hrs. For the first time, a mobile radar section travelled with the unit. Its function was to locate tanks, guns mortars, etc. At 0700 hrs tanks arrived and the unit embussed and moved on RATZLINGEN 975906. 9 Bn was already in the town and having some trouble. The enemy withdrew, having suffered some casualties, and our Bn mounted an attack on RIESTEDT, to which the enemy had withdrawn. The Bn attacked, dismounted over open ground with tanks and artillery giving fire support. As the Bn moved forward the tanks moved with them, and the enemy left behind in RIESTEDT three SP guns and a number of dead soldiers. RIESTEDT was taken by 1330 hrs. The Bn dug in and placed anti-tank guns, expecting a counter attack with armour. This failed to materialize. A number of Germans were observed in wood 955923 and were engaged by mortars. This discouraged them and a two man patrol went out and captured them, about twenty-five in all. At 2100 hrs enemy shelled the town, but no casualties were suffered. At 2200 hrs two men of a German patrol were captured. They were advance guard for twenty more who escaped across country when the shooting started. Our casualties for the day were 1 sgt killed, 1 sgt wounded, 1 cpl wounded.

The sergeant 'Killed in Action' was Sergeant Richard Vaughan Jones.

He was given a temporary grave near the church in Rätzlingen.

In June 1947, Richard was transferred to the British military cemetery near Hannover, also known as Limmer War Cemetery.

In October 1947, his final resting place was the CWGC Canadian War Cemetery in Holten. The grave reference is: 4-F-6.

He was awarded:

The 1939-1945 Star; the France-Germany Star; the Defence Medal; the War Medal 1939-1945; and the Canadian Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp.

His headstone has an additional inscription:

**Till we meet again
In regions blest,
We leave Thee in his Keeping
And at rest.**



Sources:

www.cwgc.org; www.ancestry.com; www.canada.ca/library-archives; project '44.