

Captain Jesse Jones, late of the First Foot Guards and the East Essex Militia.



Family Grave of Jesse Jones

Jesse Jones was born in Ripe, Sussex, to John, a labourer and Sarah Jones and was baptised on the 21st November 1787.

On the 25th June 1804 he enlisted in the army, joining the 2nd Battalion, First Regiment of Foot Guards (known since Waterloo as the Grenadier Guards) for unlimited service.

His younger brother, David, later enlisted in the 1st Battalion of the Regiment and was present at the Siege of San Sebastian as well as the Battle of Waterloo.



The Waterloo Shako Badge 1815



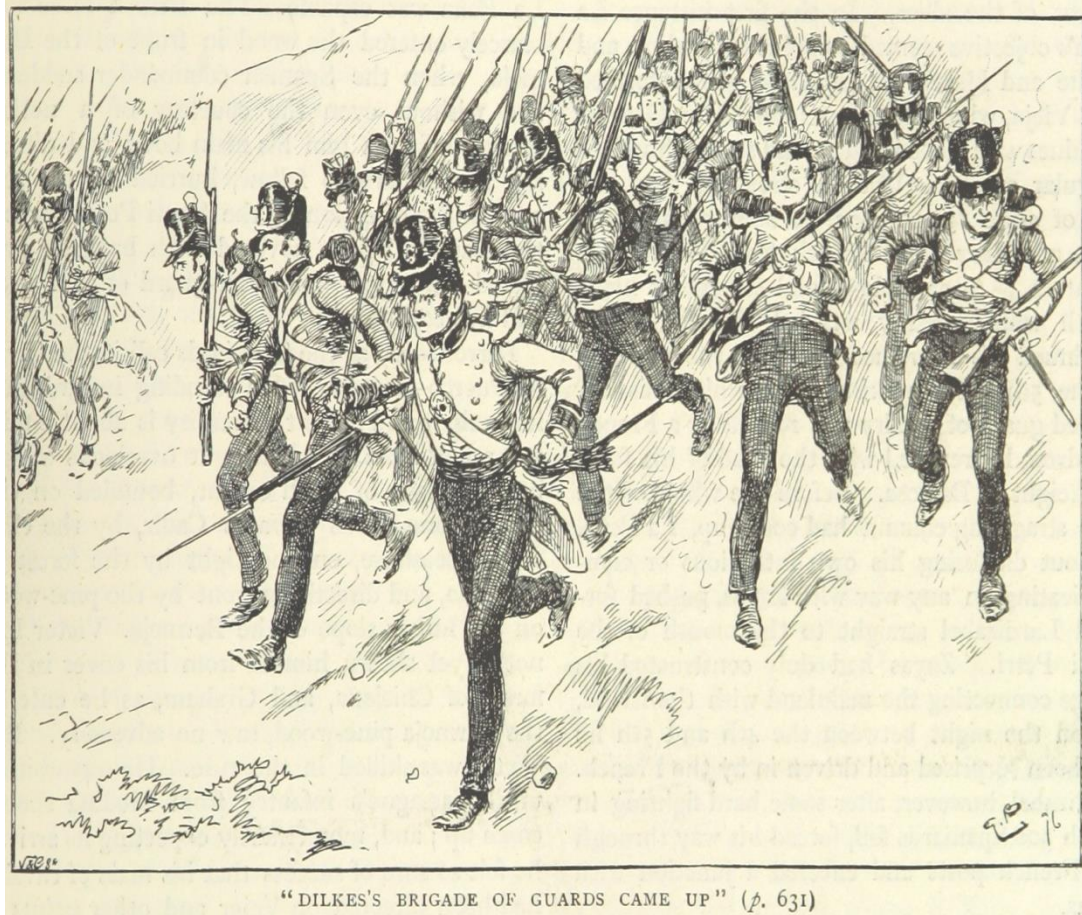
Privates of the First Foot Guards

(1812 Regulation Pattern Uniform)

Charles Hamilton Smith, published by Colnaghi & Co 1812-15

Jesse served for just short of 21 years from the 25th June 1804 until his retirement on the 14th April 1823 with the Battalion seeing service in particular, during the Peninsular War campaign. He was promoted to Corporal in April 1807.

In March of 1810 the 2nd Battalion formed a part of the brigade transported to Spain for the defence of the vital port and fortress of Cadiz. By the early months of 1811 the allied generals had determined on an aggressive attempt to bring the besieging French Army to battle by landing a strong Anglo Portuguese force behind the French lines while a Spanish force pushed out from the Cadiz lines. The focus of both forces was the position of Chiclana (also known as Barossa). However the Spanish General Pena withdrew his forces in the face of the attacking French Army



"DILKES'S BRIGADE OF GUARDS CAME UP" (p. 631)

and the smaller Anglo Portuguese force under General Graham suddenly found itself fighting for its life against a French force twice its size. The Brigade of Guards fought with particular distinction at the Battle of Barossa led by the 2nd Battalion of the First Regiment of Foot Guards. 4700 allied troops fought off the 9000 strong French Army that day, the 5th March 1811.

Jesse Jones later explained that he had helped secure the Colours of his battalion, the centre of which was almost entirely destroyed and the company to which he belonged had no less than 54 killed and wounded in the hour and 20 minutes of bitter fighting. For this, he explained, he was promoted on the field to Sergeant.

Later, he told his family, he then fought in further actions during the continuing defence of Cadiz as well as taking part in other actions in the Peninsular War.



The Battle of Barossa, also known as Chiclana 1811 by Louis-Francois Lejeune.



General Graham



The First Foot Guards at Barossa .

After returning home the battalion formed a part of the force under Lord Lyndock (General Graham) that was sent to Belgium and the Netherlands in the closing period of the War in 1814. In March he took part in the failed storming of Bergen op Zoom (where he was slightly wounded) as well as various other skirmishes. This allied force in the Low Countries then formed the nucleus of Wellington's troops in the Waterloo campaign.



“Sergeant – Light Company ,First Foot Guards ,1815 “ by Bryan Fosten

The Waterloo Medal roll shows Sergeant Jesse Jones in the Light Company 2nd Battalion under Lt Col Pack's command. The Light Companies were detached from

the Regiment to help defend the Chateau of Hougoumont specifically in the orchard under the command of Captain, Lord Saltoun.

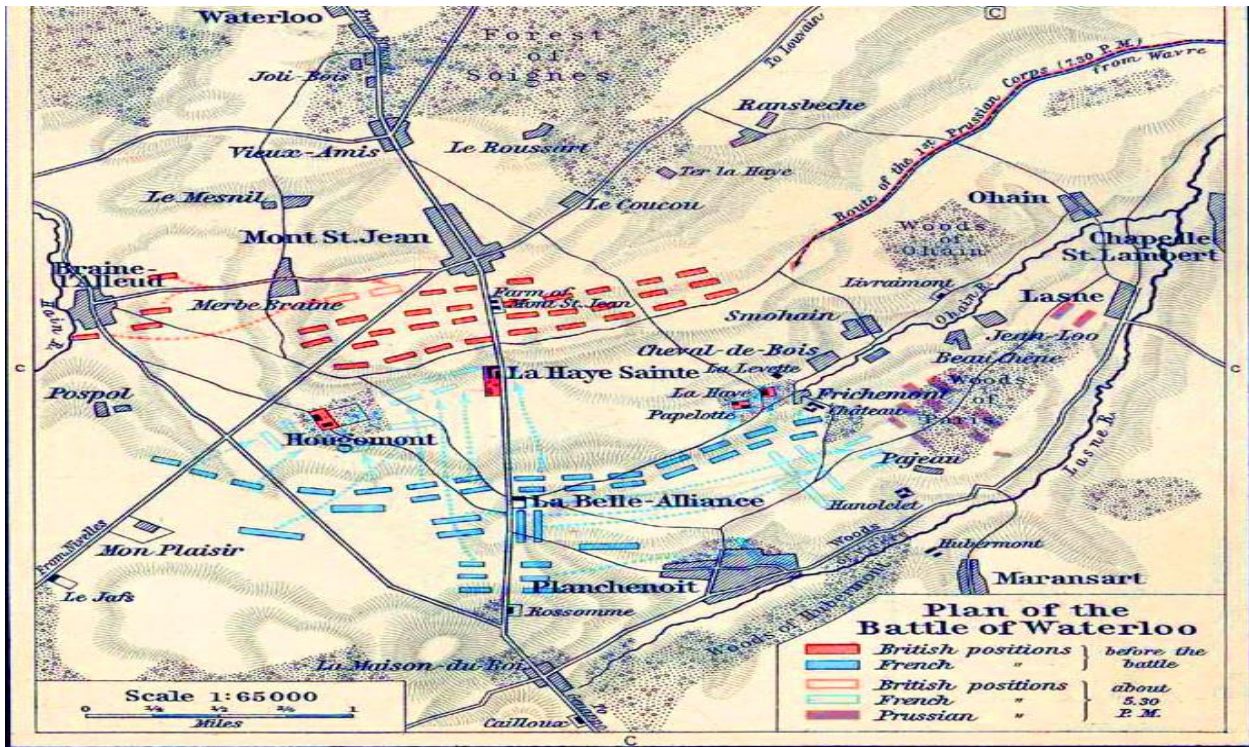
Sergeant Jones was wounded during the final hour of the battle by a musket ball through the chest and had to be removed from the field. During examination in Bruxelles later, the spent musket ball was found flattened in the back of his coat.



Musket balls recovered from the field of Waterloo



Lord Saltoun by William Salter



He remained immensely proud of this memento to his survival and kept it for the rest of his life to illustrate the story.



“Hougoumont” by Robert Alexander Hillingford

After recovery from his wound, Sergeant Jones returned to service with the Regiment on garrison and ceremonial duties in England.

He had married his first wife, Mary (nee Beals) on the 4th January 1810 at St Marylebone, London. This, in itself, was unusual for a Private soldier to be granted permission to marry and they had already started a family of two children before the Battle of Waterloo campaign.



East Essex Militia uniform button.

Worn on scarlet jacket with green facings. Officers would have silver buttons.

On the 2nd May 1823, as a consequence of rheumatism acquired through years of living outdoors in all weathers and the effect of his Waterloo wound, he was discharged from the Regiment with “a long distinguished and meritorious service pension” administered as a Chelsea Pensioner. He was then appointed to be the Adjutant of the East Essex Militia (later the Essex Rifles) with the rank of Captain as further recognition of this service. He moved to Colchester with his family to

start a new life of semi retirement with his Chelsea pension and the pay for his rank.

In due course he was awarded the Peninsular Medal with clasp for Barossa and the Waterloo Medal



Waterloo Medal



Peninsular Medal with Barossa Bar (copy)

By the 1820's the army had returned to peacetime status and the Colchester garrison had been closed and dismantled. The Militia now formed the Army Reserve and its only significant role in the early 19th century was in the policing of the pursuit of political representation and economic reform through the Chartist movement, food riots, machine wrecking and strikes. Thankfully Essex was largely free from such disturbance and the Militia service was seen as a social distinction for the Officers and for the other ranks largely made up of casual workers from the town or agricultural trades. The summer camps were seen as a useful adjunct

to their pay. The parades in town would be seen as social occasions and Lexden Heath would be regularly used for training.

The Colonel and the Adjutant would be the only officers generally entered on the Army List and for Captain Jones the role would be to maintain the links with the Regular Army necessary for uniforms, weapons and ammunition and as a retired Grenadier Guard would ensure the correct standards of drill and training were observed.

By 1852 the increase in international tension preceding the Crimean War led to a reappraisal of the Militia's role and the Militia Act of that year redefined the new reorganisation. The East Essex and the Essex (Rifles) Militia were later amalgamated into the newly formed Essex Regiment as the Territorial Reserve in 1881.

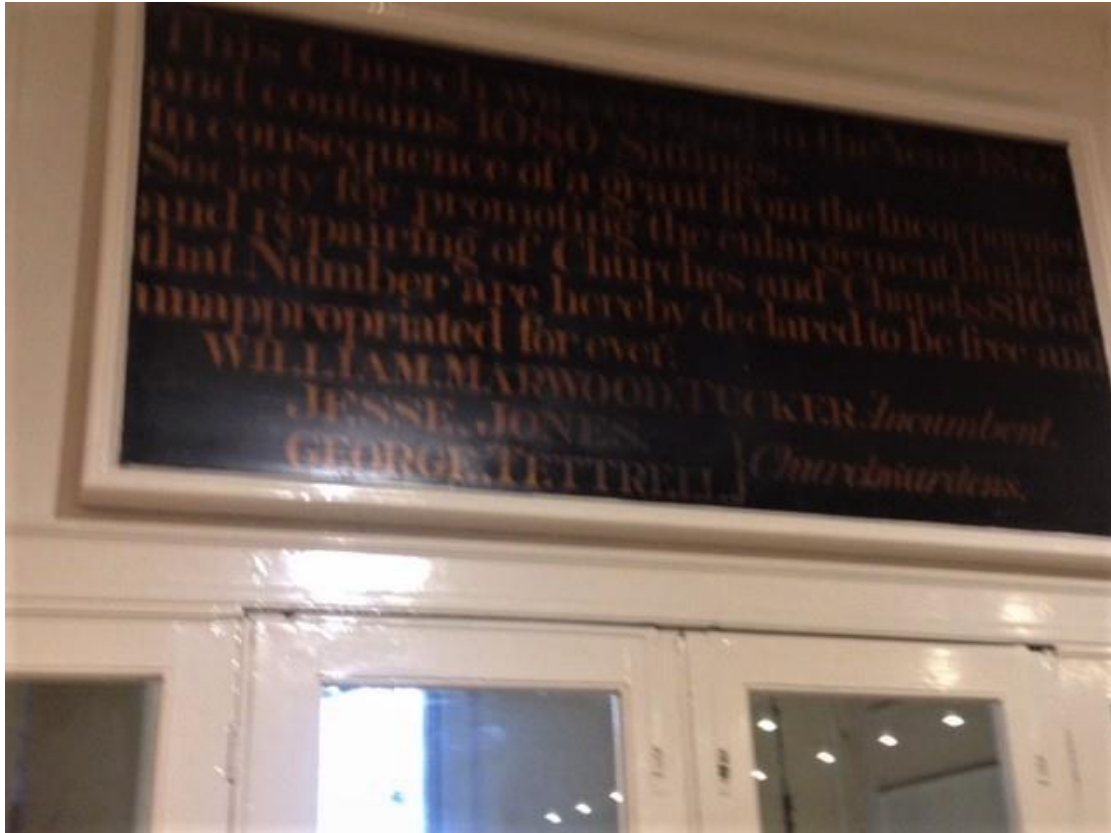
It was now that Captain Jesse Jones resigned his commission from the East Essex after 29 years service at the age of 66yrs in 1852.

He and his first wife Mary had raised a family of 12 children by the time she died on the 14th August 1852. They had lived variously on North Hill and Military Road before Jesse became a gentleman farmer at Fingringhoe Road, Abberton employing 6 men and 4 boys on his 100 acres according to the 1851 census.

Sometime in 1854 he married a second time, to the very much younger Rebecca (nee Lee) from Langenhoe with whom he had a further 4 children. His last child was born in Jesse's 74th year.

He was much respected in the town for his army service. He had been elected a committee member of the Colchester Association for the Protection of Property and the Prosecution of Thieves. This was a group of tradesmen with an annual subscription required to finance prosecutions before the creation of a police force.

He worshipped at St Botolph's Church and was one of the Church Wardens at the time of opening of the new church. In consequence the Jones family had a vault in the Parish graveyard in which were buried Mary, his first wife and William, his son who had died in 1847.



Signboard in the lobby of St Botolph's Church.

When, on 20th November 1868, he died at the age of 81, he too was buried in the family vault.

At his death, his wife Rebecca inherited his Barossa medal and his daughter Caroline, who had married the prominent solicitor Alfred John Prior, inherited his Waterloo medal and the musket ball. These were later passed on to their son Asher Prior who went on to become Colchester Mayor in 1889.

Of his many children, the most well known was Henry Jones, the solicitor, who served as Town Clerk at one point, as well as being an active Tory councillor and

property developer. His most lasting legacy is Salisbury Avenue and Beaconsfield Avenue off Maldon Road where he had acquired the land and laid it out for house building.



Henry Jones



The Cloisters, Maldon Road/Salisbury Avenue.

Built from the rubble of St Runwald's Church.