

The Hugh Jones Story



Hugh Jones was born in Rogersville, Tennessee. He was the son of Henry M. Jones and Edith Cordelia Robinson Jones. He grew up in Ben Hur, (Lee County), Virginia. After being injured at a very young age on a mining car in an iron ore mine, his parents moved south to get employment in the cotton mills. Initially they moved into the Clifton area and didn't like it so they moved back. In just a few weeks later they tried again. This time they moved to Trough Shoals. Before he went into the Army he worked at Pacolet Manufacturing Company. In April, 1917, the United States became involved in World War I. Hugh Jones was one of many thousands of American men who were affected by the war. He joined the Army in Spartanburg on April 4, 1918 at the age of twenty three. He left behind a young wife, Ollie Manis Jones, who was expecting their first child

Hugh went to Camp Jackson in Columbia for his basic training. Camp Jackson still exists today as Fort Jackson. Hugh was eventually assigned to the 317th Field Artillery Regiment of the 156th Artillery Brigade in the famous 81st Wildcat Division. At that time, field artillery units

were very much like they had been in the Civil War. Their guns were much more powerful but were still pulled and maneuvered by horses. The 81st Division was originally made up mostly of soldiers from North and South Carolina, Florida and Tennessee.

A wildcat silhouette was adopted as a shoulder patch for the division. This was the first insignia worn by troops in the American Expeditionary Force (AEF). Each of the sections of the Division had different colors. The patch for the 156th Artillery Brigade was red as shown below.



The Division was organized at Camp Jackson, near Columbia, South Carolina, in September 1917. But in October, 50 percent of the men were taken from the 81st Division and transferred to other divisions being sent overseas. New draftees were sent to fill the empty ranks. As a result, the 81st Division was delayed from service in France even though it was one of the first national army divisions to be organized.

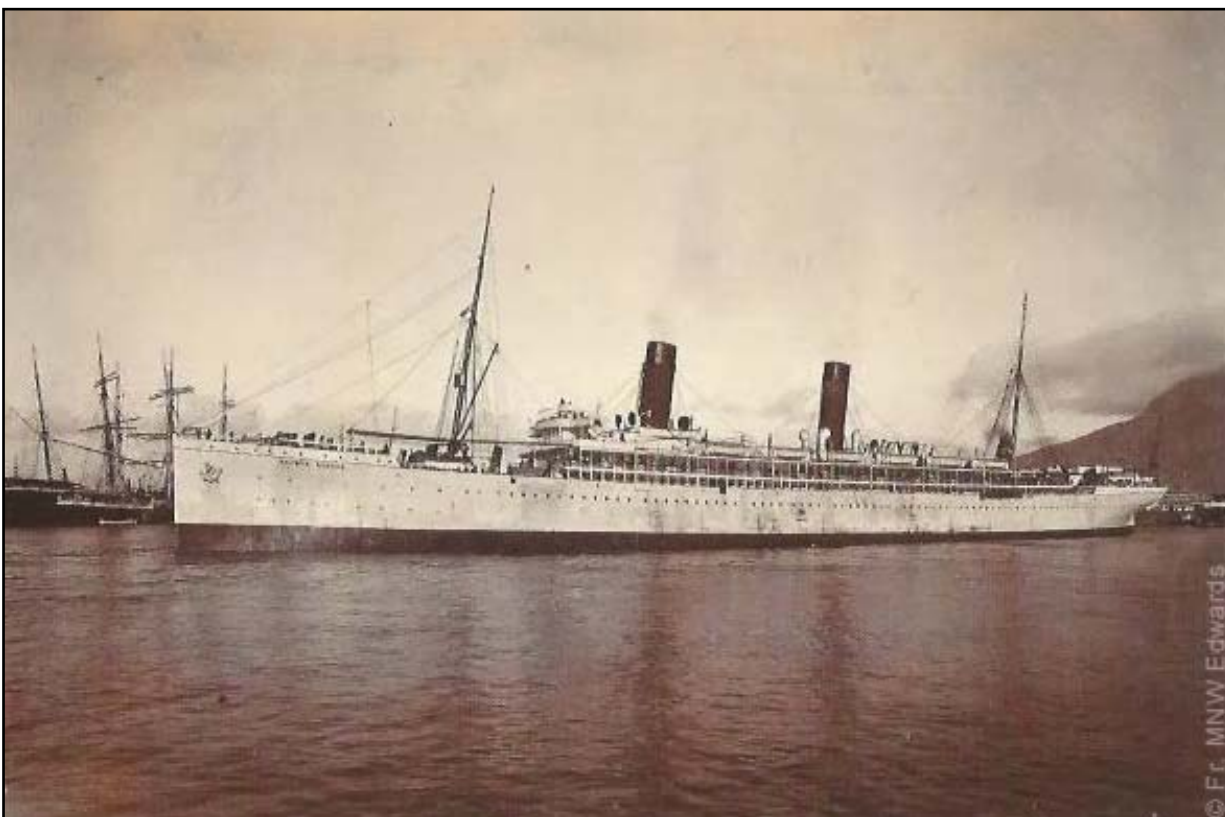


Panoramic Photo of Part of Battery A, 317th Field Artillery at Camp Jackson, SC

(It is not known if Hugh Jones is in this photograph.)

In May 1918, all of the Division except the 156th Artillery Brigade, including the 317th Artillery Regiment that Hugh Jones was in, was next sent to Camp Sevier, near Greenville, South Carolina. In July, it was ordered to New York to be shipped overseas.

In August the Division traveled to England. It is not known what ship Hugh Jones traveled in to England. However, another soldier in the 81st Division, T. P. Shinn, wrote that he went in the ship, *RMS(SS) Walmer Castle* that is shown below.



They landed in Liverpool in England. After a brief time they boarded ships in Southampton and sailed to France. They landed at LaHavre and Cherbourg. It is not known which port Hugh Jones landed in. Upon arrival in France, the 156th Artillery Brigade, including the 317th Artillery Regiment that Hugh Jones was in, was sent to LeValdahon for training. The Artillery Brigade did not rejoin the rest of the Division until after the Armistice. Unfortunately, the combat record of Hugh Jones and the rest of the Artillery Brigade has not been found.

The following pictures of the soldiers in the 317th Field Artillery were taken by Lt. Samuel Sanders.





(This gun crew is operating a 75 mm gun like those used by the 317th Field Artillery.)

The rest of the Division was ordered to the Tonnerre (Yonne) training area where it remained in training until the middle of August. The Division then proceeded to the St. Die sector (Vosges) where it held the line as a part of the 33d French Corps. While serving on this front, the division suffered 116 casualties to German trench raids and artillery fire.

On Oct. 19th, the Division was relieved and ordered to join the 1st Army for the Meuse-Argonne offensive. The Division arrived in the Sommedieue sector early in November and was attached to the 2d Colonial Corps (French, as reserve). On Nov. 6th, the Division entered the front lines east of Verdun, on the east side of the Meuse River. On November 8 the Division attacked German positions on either side of a heavily defended forest. When the assault was ordered, American commanders wrongly believed that the Germans were withdrawing.

From the outset, the 81st Division's troops were met with heavy German machine gun and artillery fire. But by midday, the division had slowly pushed the Germans back. Attempts to advance farther were stopped by intense enemy fire. By late afternoon, the soldiers were ordered to withdraw to safer positions.

The Division continued its attack on November 10, but by evening was forced to withdraw again because of intense enemy artillery fire. During the night, rumors reached the 81st Division commanders that an armistice might be signed the following day, November 11. But because no official word was received about a cessation of hostilities, plans were made for an early morning attack.



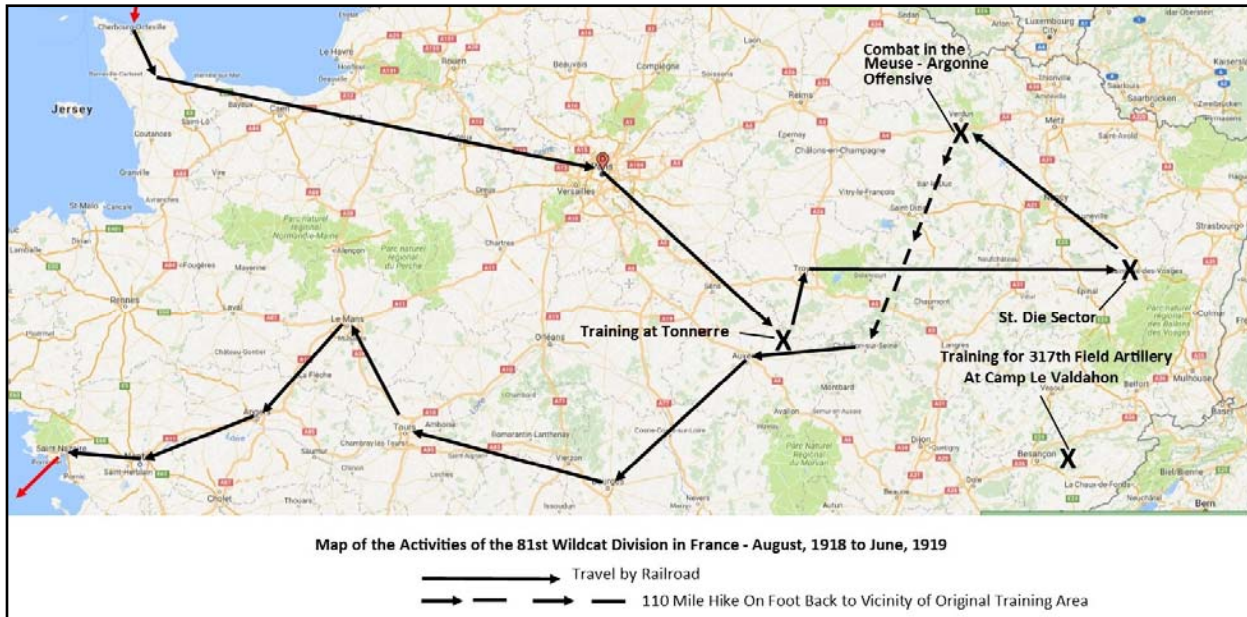
(Battlefield terrain - photo taken by Lt. Samuel Sanders of the 317th Artillery Regiment .)

At daybreak, the 81st Division soldiers were ordered "over the top" to attack the German trenches. The troops slowly advanced through the heavy fog and German shell and machine gun fire. The soldiers fought their way across no-man's-land and through barbed wire to the German trenches. Then, at 11:00 A.M., the firing abruptly stopped. The war was over.



(Photo of 81st Divisions Soldiers Just After the Armistice.)

After the war the, 81st Division remained in France for more than five months. The 156th Artillery Brigade which included Hugh Jones and the 317th Artillery Regiment soon rejoined the rest of the Division. The Division was not part of the Army of Occupation in Germany. While in France there was an outbreak of Swine Flu. Hugh and the other men who were sick were taken to barns out in the country where medicine and food were delivered each day by sliding it under the door. Many men died during this time, but Hugh was one of the fortunate ones who survived. In early June, the men were shipped back to the United States from the French port of St. Naizaire.



Hugh Jones returned home to Pacolet, SC and was honorably discharged on June 16, 1919. He raised nine daughters and one son to adulthood and lost three children, including his first born. His descendants in Pacolet include members of the Gordon, Whitt, Hogan, Longshore, Thompson, and Jones family. Other family members live in Greenville, SC (Hines), Greensboro, NC and on the South Carolina coast (Holmes), Gaffney (Poole and Spurlin), and Anderson, SC (Spurlin). Hugh lived in Pacolet until he died on January 31, 1988 and is buried at Floyd's Pacolet Memorial Gardens.

We want to thank Amanda Hogan Slusarczyk for providing the family details for this story. Amanda is the granddaughter of Hugh Jones. Her mother is Doris Jones Hogan. Doris has told her story elsewhere on this website at <http://pacoletmemories.com/hogan.pdf>.

Additional Photos are shown on the following pages.

Hugh Jones

Born: April 23, 1894 Rutgersville, Tennessee

Resident: Trough, S.C.

Inducted in National Army (from Spartanburg, S.C.) April 1, 1918

In 156 Depot Brigade (training) until May 25, 1918

In Battery B 317 Field Artillery until Discharge

Promoted to Private 1st Class August 1, 1918

In A.E.F. (France) August 7, 1918 until June 8, 1919

Honorable Discharge June 16, 1919

The 317th Field Artillery was a part of the 81st Division.

The 81st Division was made up of men from:

South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida and Puerto Rico.

Trained at Camp Jackson, Columbia, S.C..

*Sailed for France in August of 1918,
and served in the:*

St. Die and Sommediev Sectors.

*It spent 31 days in the line; the
Division advanced 5 1/2 kilometers
and captured 101 prisoners.*

The 81st Division:

251 Killed

973 Wounded



Summary of Hugh Jones' Service in World War 1



Photo of Hugh and some of his fellow soldiers taken in France. He is the sixth from the left, standing by the doorway.



Front and back of Hugh's World War 1 Victory Medal. As it was new, with ribbon, is shown below.





Hugh and his wife, Ollie Manis.



Hugh at the age of 90.



Hugh with his children - Rozelle Whitt, Hazel Hines, Dean Jones, Ruby Gordon, Christine Poole, Sylvia Motts, Doris Hogan, Nellie Holmes, Hugh, Elizabeth Spurlin Adams, Annette Thompson.

Information about the 81st Wildcat Division is from the following sources:

<http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/p15012coll10/id/2492>

<http://exhibits.archives.ncdcr.gov/wwi/OldNorthState/81stdivision.htm>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/81st_Infantry_Division_\(United_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/81st_Infantry_Division_(United_States))

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/multimedia/13228>

<http://www.genealogy.com/forum/general/topics/wwi/6292/>

<http://www.usmilitariaforum.com/forums/index.php?/topic/177-81st-infantry-division/>

<http://www.cgsc.edu/CARL/nafziger/918UDAA.pdf>

<https://archive.org/details/historyof321stin00john>