

## **David Luther Jones, 43<sup>rd</sup> Virginia Cavalry**

David Luther Jones was born June 14, 1845 in Washington County, Virginia, the son of David Jones and Margaret Cole. David was the sixth son born to a family that would eventually include 7 boys and 4 girls.<sup>1</sup> By 1850, the Jones family had moved into neighboring Smyth County and by 1860 was enumerated in the Federal census taken that year as residing in the Seven Mile Ford Post Office area of Smyth County.<sup>2</sup>

As the Civil War was beginning, an older brother, Nathaniel 'Jasper' Jones enlisted in the Washington Mounted Rifles on June 2, 1861. The Mounted Rifles were attached to the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Cavalry Regiment as Company D on July 9, 1861. Three other Jones brothers also enlisted in Company D of the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Cavalry although their exact enlistment dates are unknown. They were William Alexander 'Willie' Jones, Robert Glenn Jones and the youngest of the four brothers, David Luther Jones. A first cousin of the Jones brothers, William Edmundson 'Grumble' Jones, was appointed Captain of the Washington Mounted Rifles and then Colonel of the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Cavalry before later being appointed a Brigadier General.<sup>3</sup>

Other recruits from the Washington and Smyth County area who enlisted in Company D of the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Cavalry and who would later serve together in the 43<sup>rd</sup> Virginia Cavalry included: Fountain Beattie, William L. Dunn, George W. Hughlett, John S. Mosby, and John W. S. Sanders.<sup>4</sup>

It is not surprising that three of the Jones brothers, Willie, Jasper and David, were included in early details from the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Cavalry Regiment to John S. Mosby's fledgling partisan ranger organization. The three brothers were involved in the rangers ill-fated attack on the cavalry camp of the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia (Union) Cavalry at Warrenton Junction on May 3, 1863. All three brothers were wounded in this engagement and Jasper and David were captured.<sup>5</sup>

David Jones was taken initially to Mansion House General Hospital in Alexandria where he was listed as suffering from a gunshot wound to the left eye. He convalesced at Mansion House until forwarded on July 20, 1863 to Old Capital Prison Hospital. He remained there until August 18, 1863 when he was "returned to duty" at Old Capital Prison where his brother, Jasper Jones, had been held since being captured. Both brothers were forwarded August 18, 1863 to Point Lookout Federal Prison on the southern tip of Maryland.<sup>6</sup>

David Jones was paroled from Point Lookout Prison on March 3, 1864. Older brother Jasper was not paroled at this time but escaped the Federal prison on September 13, 1864.<sup>7</sup> David rejoined the 43<sup>rd</sup> Virginia Cavalry after his release from Point Lookout enlisting in Company A. There is no record of his activities with the rangers until September 22, 1864. It was on this date that David L. Jones joined with 120 other rangers in Capt. Samuel F. Chapman's planned raid on an outpost of the 6<sup>th</sup> New York Cavalry in Chester Gap, southeast of Front Royal. The next day, September 23, 1864, Chapman decided to attack an ambulance train returning to Front Royal from Milford only to learn that it was being followed by the Reserve Brigade of General Wesley Merritt's cavalry division. Chapman's men were greatly overmatched and decided to employ the patented "skedaddle" strategy. Several of the men were cut off in their retreat; the result being six members of Chapman's party including David L. Jones, were captured in various locations around the south side of Front Royal. All six of the captured rangers were executed that day at different locations around Front Royal. Jones and another captured ranger, 17 year old Lucian Love, were taken to a small cemetery adjacent to the Methodist Church just south of Main Street and shot.<sup>8</sup>

The bodies of David L. Jones and three other executed rangers, Lucian Love, Henry C. Rhodes and a man known only by the name of Carter, were taken to Prospect Hill Cemetery for burial. Small stone markers were erected in the "Soldier's Circle" to the four rangers. Jones' marker reads "David Jones / Mosby's Ar. Batn. / Died Sept. 23, 1864." A large monument was erected in Prospect Hill Cemetery on September 23, 1899 by the survivors of Mosby's Command in memory of seven of their comrades who were executed during the war. On the backside of the monument is inscribed:<sup>9</sup>

“In Everlasting Honor of Thomas E. Anderson, \_\_\_\_\_ Carter, David L. Jones, Lucian Love, William Thomas Overby, Henry C. Rhodes, Albert C. Willis, 43<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry, Mosby’s Command, C.S.A.”

**Editor’s Note:** The inscription on David L. Jones’ marker in Prospect Hill Cemetery appears to be in error as there is no evidence that Jones ever served in the Artillery Company of Mosby’s Command. All post-war sources are consistent in identifying Jones as having served in Company A of the 43<sup>rd</sup> Virginia Cavalry after his release from Point Lookout Prison in March 1864.

Let us never forget of the sacrifice of David Luther Jones and the six other rangers who were executed in September and October, 1864.

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<sup>1</sup> James Cole folder. Redmond S. & Mary Cole Collection. Tulsa City County Library – Genealogy Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

<sup>2</sup> National Archives, Washington, D.C., 1850 Federal Census, Smyth County, Virginia, Series M432, Roll 976, page 190; 1860 Federal Census Smyth County, Virginia, Series M653, Roll 1377, Page 898.

<sup>3</sup> National Archives, Washington D.C., Record Group 109, War Dept. Collection of Confederate Records, Compiled Military Service Records of the Officers and Men who served in the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Cavalry Regiment, Microfilm #324, Roll #7.

<sup>4</sup> Keen, Hugh C. and Mewborn, Horace, *43<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Virginia Cavalry Mosby’s Command*. Lynchburg, VA: H. E. Howard, Inc., 1993, pages 295, 315, 333, 351 and 364.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. page 56; Scott, John. *Partisan Life with Col. John S. Mosby*. New York, N.Y.: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1867, Page 88.

<sup>6</sup> National Archives, Washington D.C., Compiled Military Service Records for soldiers serving in the 43<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Virginia Partisan Rangers, Microfilm #324, Roll #208, records #766 & & 770.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Scott, John. *Partisan Life*. Page 317-320; Hale, Laura Virginia. *Four Valiant Years in the Lower Shenandoah Valley 1861 – 1865*. Front Royal, Va.: Hathaway Publishing, 1986, page 431.

<sup>9</sup> Hale, Laura Virginia. “Memories in Marble, The Story of The Four Confederate Monuments at Front Royal, Virginia.” Front Royal, Va., Warren Rifles Chapter United daughters of the Confederacy, 1956.