



William Jarman Lenton

William Jarman Lenton was born in Gretton in 1894. His mother was Angelica Lenton, born in 1871.

Family History

In 1901, Angelica Lenton and her son William are living with her parents in Gretton. Angelica is employed as a tailor's machinist. Her parents Michael Lenton & Mary Lenton (nee Jarman) are both from Gretton. Michael is an agricultural labourer. Also registered in the household is John Ligo (railway porter), a cousin of William Lenton.

In 1911, Angelica Lenton and her son William is still living in Gretton. William, now 17, is employed as an ironstone labourer.

Military History

William Jarman Lenton served as a Private (9469) in the 2nd Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment. His service record has not survived, but according to his Medal Card he was posted on 8th November 1914.

A newspaper article from 1915 provides some detail of his service.

Grantham Journal 24th April 1915

Another Northamptonshire Private Killed In Action

Notification has been made to the mother of Pte. W. Lenton of Gretton, that her son was killed in action between March 10th and 14th. He was in the 2nd Northamptons, the same Battalion to which Pte. A. Coleman, the Gretton soldier whose death we chronicled last week, belonged, and the dates given are identical, so the village is unlucky in losing two of its young men together. Pte. Lenton, on enlistment, was sent to Egypt, where he was attached to the Camel Corps. He was sent to France at the beginning of this year, and his letters written home were invariably bright and cheery. The casualty lists published on Monday contained among the killed the name of W.J. Lenton, 9469.

It is recorded, that Private Lenton was killed in action on 14th March 1915 at Neuve Chapelle. He is commemorated on the Le Touret Memorial and the Gretton War Memorial. He died on the same day as Percy Austin of Corby, also serving in the 2nd Battalion.



The Le Touret Memorial commemorates over 13,400 British soldiers who were killed in this sector of the Western Front from the beginning of October 1914 to the eve of the Battle of Loos in late September 1915 and who have no known grave. The Memorial takes the form of a loggia surrounding an open rectangular court. The names of those commemorated are listed on panels set into the walls of the court and the gallery, arranged by regiment, rank and alphabetically by surname within the rank. The memorial was designed by John Reginald Truelove, who had served as an officer with the London Regiment during the war, and unveiled by the British ambassador to France, Lord Tyrrell, on 22 March 1930.

Almost all of the men commemorated on the Memorial served with regular or territorial regiments from across the United Kingdom and were killed in actions that took place along a section of the front line that stretched from Estaires in the north to Grenay in the south. This part of the Western Front was the scene of some of the heaviest fighting of the first year of the war, including the battles of La Bassée (10 October – 2 November 1914), Neuve Chapelle (10 – 12 March 1915), Aubers Ridge (9 – 10 May 1915), and Festubert (15 – 25 May 1915).

Soldiers serving with Indian and Canadian units who were killed in this sector in 1914 and '15 whose remains were never identified are commemorated on the Neuve Chapelle and Vimy memorials, while those who fell during the northern pincer attack at the Battle of Aubers Ridge are commemorated on the Ploegsteert Memorial.

In October 1914, II Corps of the British Expeditionary Force moved north from Picardy and took up positions in French Flanders where they were immediately engaged in the series of attacks and counter attacks that would become known as the 'race to the sea'. Over the course of the next year most of the British activity in this sector focused on attempting to dislodge the German forces from their advantageous position on the Aubers Ridge and capture the city of Lille, a major industrial and transport centre which the Germans had occupied early in the war. The ridge is a slight incline in an otherwise extremely flat landscape from which the Germans were able to observe and bombard the British lines. Following the British capture of the village of Neuve Chapelle in March 1915, the Germans greatly strengthened their defences along the ridge, reinforcing their positions with thick barbed wire entanglements, concrete blockhouses and machine gun emplacements. These extra defences frustrated British attempts to break through enemy lines and led to very heavy casualties at the battles of Aubers Ridge and Festubert in May 1915.



Reference

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Gretton Local History Society

Lest We Forget

William Jarman Lenton
of the Northamptonshire Regiment

d. 14th March 1915