



## Benjamin George Jinks

Benjamin George Jinks was born in Gretton in 1892. His father was John Jinks, his mother Mary Jinks (nee Boon). The couple had married in 1877.

### Family History

In the 1901 Census, the family were resident in Gretton. John Jinks was employed as a platelayer with Midland Railway.

By the 1911 Census, Benjamin Jinks had left home. One of his younger siblings, Cornelius Jinks was employed in Corby as an ironstone labourer. Cornelius was also to serve during the War.

In the 1911 Census, Benjamin Jinks was resident in Burton-on-Trent, living with his older brother Robert William Jinks and his family. Benjamin was employed as a tram car cleaner. He was 19 years of age.

According to the UK Railway Employment Records (Burton & Ashby Light Railway), Benjamin joined them in November 1909. He was transferred to traffic staff in March 1913. According to his record he "left of his own accord to join the Derbyshire Constabulary", but returned to the railway as he was promoted to "Conductor-Driver" in March 1914. His record also states that prior to joining the railway in 1909 his previous occupation was as a farm labourer working for Mr William Dudley of Harborough Hill, Gretton.

### Military History

Benjamin Jinks joined the Grenadier Guards (23209). His service record is lost but there is reference to him arriving in France on 6<sup>th</sup> November 1915.

Private Benjamin Jinks of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, Grenadier Guards was killed in action around the 14<sup>th</sup> September 1916.

The Northampton Mercury of 20<sup>th</sup> October 1916 reported:-

*Jinks Pte. B, Grenadier Guards, the son of Mrs Jinks of Gretton is reported missing. His brother, Lance Corporal C Jinks has been awarded the Military Medal.*



The following month on 18<sup>th</sup> November 1916, the Grantham Journal reported:-

*A Northamptonshire Guardsman Killed*

*Notice has been received from the War Office by Mrs Jinks of Gretton, that her son, Pte. B Jinks, has been killed in action. He was in the Grenadier Guards. Nothing had been heard from him for some time, but a comrade sent word home that he was wounded, and that was the last known concerning him.*

*Mrs Jinks's son in law, belonging the Lincolns, who has been missing since the battle of Loos, is now officially notified killed.*

In the Army Register of Soldier's Effects, there is reference to Benjamin Jinks being a bus conductor. The Register records that his effects totalled £6 10s.

Private Jinks is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial and the Gretton War Memorial.

On 1 July 1916, supported by a French attack to the south, thirteen divisions of Commonwealth forces launched an offensive on a line from north of Gommecourt to Maricourt. Despite a preliminary bombardment lasting seven days, the German defences were barely touched and the attack met unexpectedly fierce resistance. Losses were catastrophic and with only minimal advances on the southern flank, the initial attack was a failure. In the following weeks, huge resources of manpower and equipment were deployed in an attempt to exploit the modest successes of the first day. However, the German Army resisted tenaciously and repeated attacks and counter attacks meant a major battle for every village, copse and farmhouse gained. At the end of September, Thiepval was finally captured. The village had been an original objective of 1 July. Attacks north and east continued throughout October and into November in increasingly difficult weather conditions. The Battle of the Somme finally ended on 18 November with the onset of winter.

In the spring of 1917, the German forces fell back to their newly prepared defences, the Hindenburg Line, and there were no further significant engagements in the Somme sector until the Germans mounted their major offensive in March 1918.

The Thiepval Memorial, the Memorial to the Missing of the Somme, bears the names of more than 72,000 officers and men of the United Kingdom and South African forces who died in the Somme sector before 20 March 1918 and have no known grave. Over 90% of those commemorated died between July and November 1916.



The memorial also serves as an Anglo-French Battle Memorial in recognition of the joint nature of the 1916 offensive and a small cemetery containing equal numbers of Commonwealth and French graves lies at the foot of the memorial.

The memorial, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, was built between 1928 and 1932 and unveiled by the Prince of Wales, in the presence of the President of France, on 1 August 1932 (originally scheduled for 16 May but due to the death of French President Doumer the ceremony was postponed until August).

The dead of other Commonwealth countries, who died on the Somme and have no known graves, are commemorated on national memorials elsewhere.

### References

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Gretton Local History Group

Grantham Journal

Northampton Mercury

***Lest We Forget***

**Benjamin George Jinks**  
of the Grenadier Guards

d. 14<sup>th</sup> September 1916