



## James Peerless

James Peerless was born in Corby in 1893. His father, Alfred Jeremiah Peerless was born in Kent in 1857. His mother, Frances Peerless (nee Spencer) was born in Deene in 1864. The couple married in 1880.

### Family

The Peerless family was by modern standards a large family. In total Alfred & Frances had 12 children.

According to the 1901 Census, the family was living in Tunwell Lane, Corby. Alfred was employed as a "railway platelayer". Also recorded in the house were children Sarah Lily, Samuel, Harry, James, Daisy & Olive.

It seems older children had already moved out of the family home - Alfred Jeremiah Saunders Summers (b. Deene 1878) & George Edward (b. Corby 1882).

A daughter Frances Alice born in 1880 in Corby died in 1891 (possibly from typhoid fever).

Two boarders lodged at the property; a cousin William Corral from Deene and Joseph Spring. Both were labourers.

By 1911, the family was living on Rockingham Road, Corby. Alfred was still employed as a "platelayer on the railway". Son Harry was now employed as a "bootmaker" and James as a "furnace labourer". Sarah was not recorded at the property.

Samuel is recorded as having died in 1907 aged 19 years of age (possibly of meningitis).

Another son had been born, John in 1905, but a daughter Eva born in 1907 died in 1909 (possibly of measles).

### Military Service

James Peerless enlisted in Kettering into the Northamptonshire Regiment (15154). He served in the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion, rising to the rank of Sergeant.

Sergeant James Peerless was killed in action on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1916. He is buried at the Carnoy Military Cemetery.



The Northamptonshire Mercury of 31<sup>st</sup> March 1916 notified its readers –

*Peerless, Sergt. James, 6<sup>th</sup> Northamptonshire Regiment, Sergeant Peerless, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Peerless, of Corby, was killed in action on March 20. He was standing at the entrance of a dug-out and a splinter of shell struck him in the neck, severing the spinal cord and killing him instantly.*

The Grantham Journal of 15<sup>th</sup> April 1916 also detailed his death –

### **Loss Of “A Splendid Soldier”**

*Captain Podmore writes concerning the loss of Sergt. James Peerless, Northamptonshire Regiment, son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Peerless, of Corby, whose instantaneous death by shrapnel on March 20<sup>th</sup> has already been recorded:- “He was quite the most splendid fellow I have met in the Army; very quiet and modest, and absolutely straight. He fully justified his name. I have had no loss so far which I have felt anything like so much. Besides being a very lovable man, he was a splendid soldier, perfectly cool under any circumstances, and making all around him cool.”*

The cemetery was begun in August, 1915, by the 2nd King's Own Scottish Borderers and the 2nd King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, when the village was immediately South of the British front line. It continued in use by troops holding this sector until July 1916, when Field Ambulances came up and a camp was established on the higher ground north of the village. It was closed in March 1917.

From March to August, 1918, it was in German hands, and German (and a few British) graves were made between the British graves and the entrance, and also in a German Cemetery alongside; but the German graves and the German Cemetery were removed in 1924.

There are now over 850, 1914-18 war casualties commemorated in this site. Of these, nearly 30 are unidentified and special memorials are erected to 17 soldiers and one airman from the United Kingdom, known or believed to be buried among them.

James brother, Alfred Jeremiah Saunders Summers Peerless served as a Sergeant in the Royal Engineers during the First World War.

### Reference

Commonwealth War Graves Commission



***Lest We Forget***

**James Peerless**  
of the Northamptonshire Regiment.

d.20<sup>th</sup> March 1916

2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015 copy

