

## William John Jinks MM



*Private Williams Jinks' WW1 medal set*

Private (Pte) 2441 William John Jinks enlisted in the 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion in the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade of the 4<sup>th</sup> Australian Division in Geelong on 8 May 1916. He embarked overseas on 7 September and disembarked in Plymouth on 30 October, where he joined the 12<sup>th</sup> (Brigade) Training Battalion.

He left England and arrived in France in early February 1917, where he was taken on strength of the 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion at Becourt on 26 February, one of 31 reinforcements received that day.

As the Australians cautiously advanced in the wake of the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line in late March, the 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion entered the new front line near Noreuil on 7 April, and it was here the next day that Pte Jinks sustained a shrapnel wound to his left forearm.

After being treated at a Casualty Clearing Station, he was later transferred to England and admitted to the 1<sup>st</sup> Southern General Hospital at Birmingham on 17 April. It is unclear from his service record when he was discharged, but Pte Jinks returned to France on 12 July and rejoined his battalion at Doulieu on 29 July.

The 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion was the 4<sup>th</sup> Division reserve for the successful attack at Polygon Wood on 26 September 1917. They then held the newly acquired front line near Zonnebeke until 28 September, although no German counter attacks ensued due to the effective artillery cover.

On 10 October the battalion moved back into the line near Zonnebeke, where it was also in reserve for the attack on Passchendaele Ridge on 12 October 1917. Despite that the battalion nevertheless sustained 137 casualties (13 killed).

In late March 1918, as news of the German Spring Offensive on the Somme filtered through, the 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion was placed on alert for a possible move at short notice.

The situation remained unclear even as the battalion moved 130 km south on 28 March, then into the new front line near Dernancourt, south-west of Albert (by that stage in German hands) on 30 March 1918. The battalion took up defensive positions along 2 km of the railway line embankment that extended from Albert and waited.

Two days later, on 1 April 1918, and without any preliminary bombardment, about 140 Germans tested the Australian line. The resultant defensive fire was so withering that the attack was broken in minutes. Not many of the Germans were observed to make it back, while six were captured, for the cost of four wounded Australians.

On 3 April, the Germans tried again, this time preceded by a heavy artillery bombardment. A “spirited” infantry attack followed however was defeated within 10 minutes. Overall, the 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion sustained around 50 casualties, mostly from the earlier artillery fire, and was relieved later that night.

For his performance at Dernancourt, Pte Jinks was awarded the Military Medal on 6 May 1918, and the citation read:

*“For gallantry and devotion to duty during an enemy attack on our lines near ALBERT on 3 April 1918. During the heavy preliminary bombardment, the telephone line was cut between Company and Battalion Headquarters. Private JINKS and another went out on three separate occasions and mended the breaks. On two of these occasions the barrage was at its highest. The brunt of the work fell on this man and his comrade, other signallers being casualties, and it was largely due to his energy and endurance that communication was maintained.”*

By 1 August the 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion was well rested. At midnight on 7 August, the men offloaded their surplus gear and collected extra ammunition and rations for 48 hours. At 4.20 am on 8 August, the Battle of Amiens commenced with a massive creeping artillery barrage and the Australians moved forward with tanks in support. The 4<sup>th</sup> Division, including the 46<sup>th</sup> Battalion, which was waiting in front of Hamel, moved through the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, and pushed on. By 10.30 am, they achieved all their objectives and had also captured over 100 Germans, at the relatively low cost of only 37 battalion casualties, including five killed.

On 24 August, the battalion was waiting to be relieved in the line near Lihons, when they were subjected to a three-hour German gas bombardment, during which Pte Jinks became one of 150 gas casualties. He was initially treated locally then transferred to England on 31 August and admitted to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Southern General Hospital at Bristol on 1 September.

He never fully recovered from his wound and embarked for return to Australia on 25 January 1919.

Private 2441 William John Jinks MM disembarked in Melbourne on 23 March, where he was medically discharged from the AIF on 7 May 1919.

Name: Jinks, William John	
Service Number	2441
Date enlisted	8 May 1916
Place enlisted	Geelong, Victoria
Rank on enlistment	Private
Initial Unit	46 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion
Date and ship embarked for overseas	7 September 1916 HMAT A15 <i>Port Sydney</i>
Stated age/DOB (if known)	28 years 5 months
Place of birth	Ireland, UK
Marital status	Single
Occupation	Farmer
Religion	Church of England
Next of kin and address	Jinks, Mr William, father, Cloonacurra, County Sligo, Ireland, UK
Permanent address	Curlewis, Victoria
Appearance	Fair complexion, brown hair, blue eyes, height – 5 feet 9 ¾ inches, weight – 11 stone, 13 lbs, chest measurement – 37/40 inches
Final Rank	Private
Final Unit	46 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion
Theatres of war served in	France, Belgium
Fate	Returned to Australia
Date and place wounded	8 April 1917 Noreuil, France
Nature of wounds	Shrapnel wound to left forearm
Date and place wounded (2)	25 August 1918 Lihons, France
Nature of wounds (2)	Gassed
Date and ship embarked for Australia	25 January 1919 HT <i>Ceramic</i>
Date discharged	7 May 1919
Nature of discharge	Medially Unfit (wounds)
Honours/medals	Military Medal, British War Medal, Victory Medal
Notes	Died 8 September 1968. Also remembered on the Leopold & District Honor Roll and Leopold War Memorial.