

Private Robert Linden Jenings[©]
Regimental number: 3234658
3rd Battalion, Canadian Expeditionary Force

born: 2 October 1896 – died: 12 January 1919

Private Robert Linden Jenings was born on 2 October 1896¹ in Shallow Lake, Ontario.² His parents, Robert Augustus Bingham Jenings³ and Sarah Ann Crampton, had married in nearby Owen Sound on 23 January 1883.⁴ Robert was born in Ontario⁵ in about 1856, the son of Henry Bingham Jenings and Catherine Kershaw,⁶ both of whom were born in Ireland.⁷ Henry Jenings, came to Canada in 1846 and purchased land in Keppel, near Owen Sound in the 1860s.⁸ Sarah Ann was born in Presqu'île—a small town on Georgian Bay, Ontario—on 28 January 1859⁹ the daughter of John Crampton and Jane Cook, both of whom were born in Carleton Place, in Eastern Ontario,¹⁰ but of Irish origins.¹¹ The Cramptons moved to the Grey-Bruce area when it was opened up—John and a brother joined a party surveying it into lots for settlement in 1854.¹² Although John returned to Eastern Ontario at some point and married Jane Cook in Perth, Ontario, in 1856.



Vivian, Arthur, Ethel, George, Lyndon [*sic*] Jenings
Front: Sarah (Crampton) Jenings (Harold Jenings)
Source: "The Jenings Family"

Robert and Sarah Ann had seven children: Anne May (born in 1884),¹³ Louisa Jane (born in 1885, but died in 1898)¹⁴, Sarah Ethel (known as Ethel) (born in 1887),¹⁵ Vivian Bingham (born in 1893),¹⁶ Arthur Clarence (born in 1895),¹⁷ Linden, and George Thomas (born in 1898).¹⁸

Robert Sr. was a farmer and the family lived in Keppel, near Owen Sound, for at least four decades.¹⁹ He died of appendicitis on 25 September 1909 at the age of 52,²⁰ when Robert was just 13 years old.

Robert was working on the family farm when he was conscripted under the Military Service Act

of 1917²¹ and joined the 1st Central Ontario Regiment on 14 May 1918 in Toronto.²² He was 5' 7½" tall and had a fair complexion, blue eyes and light hair. When he enlisted, he made a will leaving everything to his mother.

At the beginning of June 1918, Robert left Canada for England, arriving in London on 21 June. On arrival, he joined the 12th Reserve Battalion and was sent to Witley Camp, a military training camp in Surrey. In July 1918, he reported to an eye clinic with double vision, where he was prescribed a strychnine tonic and put on light duty. He obviously recovered because, on 9 October 1918, he transferred to the 3rd Battalion and was sent to France the next day, where he joined his unit on 15 October. The Armistice was signed on 11 November and on 13 December, the 3rd Battalion crossed the Rhine and arrived in Westhoven, just outside Cologne.²³ Three days later they moved about 70 kilometres south to Lind. The soldiers were billeted in barracks. "Billets are roomy; there is running water in every hut and beds for everyone . . . On the whole, the camp could not have been better laid out."²⁴ The month of December was taken up with training activities and equipment repairs.

The war diaries record the celebration of Christmas. "Christmas morning and everything looking bright. A little snow fell during the night, making everything look like a real Christmas morning in

Canada. Everyone is hustling around and all that can be heard is “A Merry Xmas”. . . . No training [on 26 December], as everyone feels that a quiet day would be a great thing to settle the nerves after a strenuous Christmas festival.”

But influenza was taking its toll on the battalion. On 28 December, there were a few cases of influenza and the medical officer opened a battalion hospital to care for them. He gave special instructions that windows should be opened during the day and at night to ventilate the huts. On 30 December, he ordered all school classes to be disbanded until further notice, owing to the outbreak of influenza.

31 December was a usual training day for the rest of the battalion, but for Robert, it was the day he was taken by the 1st Canadian Field Ambulance to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station. He succumbed to influenza 12 days later and was buried the next day in Poppelsdorfer Cemetery (Grave 10, Plot 1, Row B) in Bonn, Germany, with the Canadian chaplain A. D. Reid presiding. He was just 22 years old. His mother, who was his next of kin, was notified of his death.

At No. 1 CCCS, January 1919 had been a month of steady medical work, mostly influenza cases, many accompanied by bronchopneumonia.²⁵ Despite the horrific number of soldiers killed in the Great War, the influenza pandemic, which affected the whole world and scourged Europe in 1918–1919, killed more people than the war itself.²⁶

Robert was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).²⁷

Sometime before April 1921, when his family was notified of the change, Robert’s body was exhumed and his remains moved to the Brussels Town Cemetery (Grave Reference: Plot X, Row 1, Grave 4).

Both Robert’s brothers served in, but survived, the Great War. His older brother Arthur, 22, enlisted as a private in the 1st Central Ontario Regiment (Regimental number: 3038150) on 16 May 1918, two days after Robert. Very little information was found about his military service. He was discharged on 2 January 1919.

Robert’s younger brother George enlisted as a private in the 246th Battalion (Regimental number: 1066147) on 30 January 1917, over a year before his two brothers. He was 19 years old. He left Halifax on 28 May 1917, arriving in Liverpool, England, on 9 June 1917. He was sent to Shorncliffe—a staging post for soldiers for the Western Front. He transferred to the 58th Battalion in November 1917. George had several health incidents while on the Front. In February 1918, he had bronchitis; next came a foot abscess in May; and then in November, while on leave in England, he was hospitalized in London with influenza. It is not clear if he went back to the Western Europe before returning to Canada on 25 June 1919. He was discharged on 5 July 1919 in Toronto.

George intended to settle in Edmonton after his discharge from the army. But in 1921, he and his brother Arthur were both still living with their mother Sarah and farming in Keppel. Later that year, George married Minnie Florenda Nelson.²⁸ His brother Arthur married three years later, marrying Bertha Ann Jones in March 1924.²⁹



Private Robert Linden Jenings
Source: “Canadian Virtual War Memorial”
(www.veterans.gc.ca)

His sisters Anne and Vivian both married during the Great War—Anne married Edmund Martin in February 1917.³⁰ They lived in Drummond Township, where Edmund was a reeve. They are both buried in the cemetery at St John’s church, near Innisville, Ontario.³¹ Vivian married Winfred Winfield Waite in March 1918³² and, by 1949, they were living near Lanark, Ontario.³³ Winfred died in hospital in Perth, but he and Vivian are buried in Owen Sound.³⁴ Ethel probably did not marry, but died in the United States in 1974.³⁵

Robert’s mother Sarah died of terminal bronchopneumonia on 14 November 1936.

© 2017 BIFHSGO

¹ “Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 8 December 2016), entry for Robert Linden Jennings [sic]

² “Service Files of the First World War, 1914–1918 - CEF,” *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/search.aspx>: accessed 22 November 2016) entry for Jenings, Robert Lynden [sic], Reference: RG 150 Accession 1992-93/166, Box 1628 - 10, RG 150, Accession 1992-93/166, Box 4811 - 19, Item number: 492548, Digitized service file - PDF format: B4811-S019

³ “1891 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 November 2016), entry for Robert Jennig [sic], Province: Ontario, District number: 68, District: Grey North, Sub-district: Keppel

⁴ “Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801–1928,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 November 2016), entry for Robert A B Jennings [sic]

⁵ “1891 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 November 2016), entry for Robert Jenning [sic]

⁶ “Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801–1928,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 November 2016), entry for Robert A B Jennings [sic]

⁷ “1891 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 November 2016), entry for Robert Jenning [sic]

⁸ “The Jenings Family,” by Betty Adair in *Beautiful Stoney Keppel: including the village of Shallow Lake, 1855-1986*, edited by Betty Warrilow, Betty Siegrist and W. Bev Shouldice

⁹ “1901 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 November 2016), entry for Linden Jennings [sic], Province: Ontario, District: Grey (north/nord), District number: 65, Sub-district: Keppel, Sub-district number: C-4

¹⁰ “Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869–1938, 1943–1944, and Deaths Overseas, 1939–1947,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 November 2016), entry for Sarah Ann Jennings [sic]

¹¹ “1871 Census of Canada,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 January 2017), entry for Sarah Ann Crampton, Province: Ontario, District: Grey North, District number: 37, Division : 01, Subdistrict: Keppel, Subdistrict number: i

¹² Family information

¹³ “Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 December 2016), entry for Anne May Jenings

¹⁴ “Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 December 2016), entry for Louisa Jane Jenings; “Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869–1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939–1947,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 November 2016), entry for Louisa Hennings [sic]

¹⁵ “Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 December 2016), entry for Sarah Ethel Jennings [sic]

¹⁶ “Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 December 2016), entry for Pevian Bingham Jennings [sic]

-
- ¹⁷ "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 December 2016), entry for Arthur Clarence Jennings [*sic*]
- ¹⁸ "Ontario, Canada, Births, 1869–1913," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 December 2016), entry for George Thomas Jennings [*sic*]
- ¹⁹ "1891 Census of Canada," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 November 2016), entry for Robert Jennig [*sic*]
- ²⁰ "Ontario, Canada, Deaths, 1869–1938 and Deaths Overseas, 1939–1947," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 November 2016), entry for Robert A B Jenings
- ²¹ Family informatrion
- ²² "Service Files of the First World War, 1914–1918 - CEF," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/search.aspx>: accessed 22 November 2016) entry for Jenings, Robert Lynden [*sic*]
- ²³ MIKAN 1883209: War Diaries – 3rd Canadian Infantry Battalion," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca>: accessed 26 November 2016) File: **RG9-III-D-3**, Volume/box number: **4915**, File number: 358, Copied container number: **T-10707**
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13–1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (http://data4.collectionscanada.gc.ca/netacgi/nph-brs?s1=casualty+clearing&s13=&s12=&l=20&s9=RG9&s7=9-52&Sect1=IMAGE&Sect2=THESOFF&Sect4=AND&Sect5=WARDPEN&Sect6=HITOFF&d=FINDD&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02016202_e.html&r=1&f=G; accessed 17 June 2016)
- ²⁶ "The Influenza Pandemic of 1918," (<https://virus.stanford.edu/uda/>: accessed 3 February 2015)
- ²⁷ "Service Files of the First World War, 1914–1918 - CEF," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/military-heritage/first-world-war/first-world-war-1914-1918-cef/Pages/search.aspx>: accessed 22 November 2016) entry for Jenings, Robert Lynden [*sic*]
- ²⁸ "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801–1928," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 November 2016), entry for Thomas George Jennings
- ²⁹ "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801–1928," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 November 2016), entry for Arthur Clarence Jenings
- ³⁰ "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801–1928," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 November 2016), entry for Anne May Jennings [*sic*]
- ³¹ Family source
- ³² "Ontario, Canada, Marriages, 1801–1928," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 22 November 2016), entry for Vivian B Jenings
- ³³ Family source
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*
- ³⁵ "U.S., Social Security Death Index, 1935–2014," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 12 September 2016), entry for Ethel Jenings