

Aubrey Hampden Barrington-Kennett

Aubrey Hampden Barrington-Kennett was born on September 8th 1890 in East Barnet, but the family home at that time was 23 Sloane Gardens, Chelsea. In common with his brothers Aubrey was sent to Ludgrove Preparatory School and then on to Radley where he became a prefect.

After Radley, Aubrey went up to University College, Oxford and whilst there he joined the University Officers Training Corps (OTC). He became a Lance Sergeant and trained with the 2nd Battalion, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry at Aldershot for six weeks during the summer of 1912.

In December 1912 on completion of his studies, he was nominated for an Army Commission but 'suddenly chucked it up' and began a financial career in the City. It appears that he soon came to regret this decision for on February 7th 1913 Aubrey applied for a Commission in the Special Reserve of Officers in the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and persuaded his old OTC adjutant to write a letter of support. His application form shows his permanent address as Tillington House, Petworth, but he also includes his London address, 9 Princes Street EC and his profession as 'Financial House of Business'. The form was completed in a fine hand as shown by Aubrey's signature.

A boy called Barrington-Kennett, brother of the flying man, was nominated here last term for an Army Commission and suddenly chucked it up, though he was fully qualified except for one group in his schools. He is now anxious to join the supplementary list of the Regiment he was going into, i.e., the 52nd, but he has difficulty in putting in his six months' training. He took no certificates while in the Corps, but he passed the War Office examinations, A.B. & C., for Army candidates from the University. He also has done his six weeks' attachment to a Regular Unit.

Extract from letter to Officer Commanding Ox and Bucks Light Infantry from OTC Adjutant H M Wilson

A.H. Barrington Kennett.
(Usual signature of Candidate.)
Date February 7th 1913.

On March 2nd 1913 Aubrey attended Queen Alexandra's Military Hospital in London for a medical examination. At this time he was 21 years old, 6 feet 1 1/4 inches in height and weighed 10 stones 9lbs. His hearing was good and his teeth 'sufficient' (whether quality or quantity is not stated). On the same day he was commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant in the Reserve of Officers. He completed his probationary training and on September 27th he joined C Company, 2nd Battalion, Ox and Bucks Light Infantry.

The Battalion sailed into Boulogne on August 14th 1914 and as part of the 5th Infantry Brigade, 2nd Division, it immediately moved to the Western Front in Belgium to take part in the first British battle of the war at Mons. Although they fought well, the British were eventually forced to retreat. This 'retreat from Mons' lasted for two weeks and took the army to the outskirts of Paris before a substantial counter-attack was possible at the Battle of the Marne.

After this battle the German army retreated under the weight of the British counter offensive, which began on the evening of September 13th (Battle of Aisne) and by the evening of the 14th the Battalion had reached the French village of Soupir, east of Soissons.

September 19th began quietly but early in the afternoon German artillery opened up on the front line trenches. B and C Companies were held in reserve in some nearby caves but were soon brought up to the trenches where they endured heavy artillery fire for some considerable time. Casualties for that day, all from shell fire, amounted to 35 including two officers.

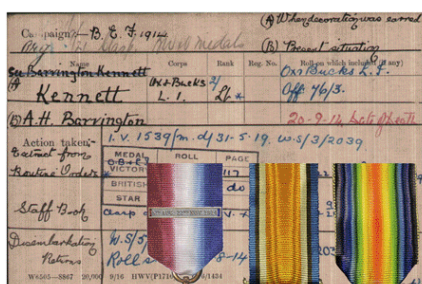
COPY TELEGRAM
O. H. M. S. Royal Pavilion Aldershot. 29 September 1914.
TO Lt. Col. Barrington Kennett
19 Cheyne Gardens S.W.
The King and Queen deeply regret the loss you and the army have sustained by the death of your Son in the Service of his country their majesties truly sympathise with you in your sorrow.
Private Secretary.

Lieutenant Colonel Davies's diary for the 19th September records: 'A few were hit between the farm and the caves, and unfortunately Eveleigh and Barrington-Kennett were among them. The former was killed outright. The latter, though badly hit, refused to allow men to carry him to the cave in which the dressing-station had been established. When eventually brought in, he was very cheerful, though rather badly wounded in the neck, jaw and back. He was got away to hospital that night but the next day he died at Vieil Arcy'.

Captain G Blewitt's diary for 19th September reads: 'I was hit by a shrapnel bullet just below the eye at about 3pm..... I went back to the second cave, which was our hospital to see Thurston, the doctor..... Here I found poor Barrington-Kennett, terribly wounded and I lay down beside him, as he preferred me to the orderly, and I did what I could for him. The Colonel came and saw us, and was very kind. At 11pm the horse ambulance came up, and we drove to Vieil Arcy.

September 20th - (Vieil Arcy). The doctor took off my field dressing about 11.30amPoor Barrington-Kennett died about 12.30pm after having his arm off'.

Second Lieutenant Aubrey Hampden Barrington-Kennett was laid to rest in Vailly British Cemetery, close to the small town of Vailly sur Aisne



Medal Card showing medal entitlement



My son was killed while laughing at some jest. I would I knew what it was, and it might serve me in a time when jests are few.

A Son - Rudyard Kipling