



Major Barrington-Kennett  
in RFC uniform

**On Monday September 28th 1914** Baring wrote in his diary;  
'BK had got news two days previously that his brother (Aubrey) in the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry was missing and wounded, and wanted to go to an advance hospital to get news.... we came to a small field hospital. BK went inside and I waited outside. As I was waiting a shrapnel shell burst in the middle of the road we had just left.... BK came out. I said laughing "we are being shelled". Then I saw he had just received news that his brother had been killed. He had been buried in the little cemetery a few yards off..... His grave, with some others, was just freshly dug; flowers on it and a neat wooden cross. BK saluted'.

**On February 7th 1915** BK caught influenza and was confined to his bed, although he insisted on continuing his work. On the 11th he returned to England to convalesce and together with his wife he spent this time in a hotel in Sidmouth. On February 25th he received a letter from his friend Major Geoffrey Salmond of the RFC, he replied:

'I saw the General (Sir David Henderson) when I first came back and told him I wanted to leave. He was very nice and offered me a squadron. The call of my Regiment is too strong, however. You see it is quite different for you, as there are plenty of Gunner Officers to go round..... Hope to get out with the 1st or 2nd Battalion (Grenadier Guards) early next month.'

**Major Barrington-Kennett** returned to the Grenadier Guards on April 1st 1915, joining the 2nd Battalion fighting in France. On May 1st BK is recorded as commanding No 3 Company. On the morning of the 17th during the Battle of Festubert the Battalion was sent to the front line close to the village of Festubert. On the 18th the 2nd Battalion was ordered to attack. The ground was very flat and the men had no real chance of reaching the German trenches some 600 yards away which were bristling with machine guns. The first three platoons to attack were all 'mown down' before they had covered 100 yards. Leading his men in this first rush Major Barrington-Kennett was killed instantly, together with several other officers under his command. The Battalion War Diary records his arrival and his death without emotion.

**Geoffrey Salmond**, who survived the war, was knighted and became Chief of the Air Staff in 1933, wrote home to his wife: 'One of the saddest things has happened. Barrington-Kennett, the one I was with at the beginning of the war has been killed. It is so distressing, he was such a good fellow. I do wish he had never left us...It is due to him and him only that the spirit of the men in the RFC is what it is, everyone is grateful to him for it....Our Flying Corps is recognised by all nations as being the best and this is principally due to BK, he was such a good fellow.'

**Maurice Baring wrote:** 'If ever a man deserved a soldier's death, to die leading the men of his own regiment into battle, it was BK. But of all the losses one had to bear throughout the war, it was, with one exception, this particular loss I felt the most, minded the most, resented the most, and found it most difficult to accept. He was not an old friend of mine. I had never seen him before the war. But he was bound up with every moment of my life during the first months of the war, and I got to know him intimately and to admire him more than others and to delight in his company more than in that of others..... He was the most completely unselfish man I had ever met: a compound of loyalty and generosity and a gay and keen interest in everything that life has to offer.'

**Major Barrington-Kennett** was a Company Commander for less than three weeks but the bravery and leadership he showed in the hours before his death did not go unrecognised. He was mentioned in despatches, published in the London Gazette, 22nd June 1915. He was buried in Le Touret Military Cemetery, Richebourg-L'Avoine, close to Bethune and he lies peacefully with many other brave soldiers of the Great War.

Was Dead  
2nd Bn Grenadier Guards  
April 1915

1st April 1915  
Battalion relieved 1st Bn Grenadier  
in trenches at GIVENCHY about 6pm.  
Very quiet. Casualties nil.  
Major B.H. Barrington-Kennett joined.

1st Lieut Col Smith mortally  
wounded  
Major Barrington-Kennett killed  
6th Bn Grenadier Guards  
wounded 2nd Lieut Coe  
wounded. Other ranks  
wounded 69 Missing 4

C. 1914-15		B. E. F. 1914-15		C. 1914-15		B. E. F. 1914-15	
Name		Rank		Regt		Medal	
BARRINGTON-KENNETT, Gen. Sqn.		Lt		2nd Bn Grenadier Guards		VICTORY MEDAL	
Service No.		Service No.		Service No.		Service No.	
100000		100000		100000		100000	
Action taken		Action taken		Action taken		Action taken	
Excluded from		Excluded from		Excluded from		Excluded from	
Honorary Order		Honorary Order		Honorary Order		Honorary Order	
Staff Book		Staff Book		Staff Book		Staff Book	
Disembarkation		Disembarkation		Disembarkation		Disembarkation	
Return		Return		Return		Return	
W6000-3357 20/000		W6000-3357 20/000		W6000-3357 20/000		W6000-3357 20/000	

Medal Card showing medal  
entitlement



1914-15 Star British War Medal Victory Medal

Mentioned in Despatches  
Oak Leaf Clasp worn  
on Victory Medal



If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is forever England. There shall I be  
In that rich earth a richer dust is concealed;  
a dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,

The Soldier - Rupert Brooke