

# MILTON KERSHAW

1886-1914 Age 28



7th November 1914

## 2nd Lieutenant, 1st Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment.

He was the eldest of three brothers and had two elder sisters. Their father George Kershaw was head-master of the National School in his home town of Cleckheaton, where his daughters assisted him. Milton was a pupil at Bradford Grammar from 1898 to 1905, then went up to Cambridge to read Natural Sciences at Peterhouse College, and he became a member of the University Officer Training Corps. He was then appointed to a lectureship in Physics at the Royal Agricultural College (now University), Cirencester. Kershaw was a talented cricketer—a “*capital fast bowler ... a very good field, and a very useful bat*” and he was “*the mainstay of the three-quarter line*” for the (Rugby) Football XV until he injured his knee. His military interests were strong. He commanded the College O.T.C. by 1914, and he was one of the few hundred cadets who fulfilled the obligation to join the Special Reserve of Officers, in his case in the Gloucestershire Regiment. Shortly before war broke out he was engaged to marry Eileen Hughes of Barnsley, Cirencester.

At the outbreak of war in August 1914, Kershaw joined his battalion, which landed in France with 3rd Brigade, 1st Division of the British Expeditionary Force, on the 13th. He saw action at Mons, the long retreat to the Marne, and at the Aisne. In October the BEF was sent to Ypres to block the final German thrust of 1914, to seize Calais. For three weeks the Gloucesters were hotly engaged and by early November they were reduced to



Kershaw, centre, pictured in June 1914 when he played cricket for the Royal Agricultural College Cirencester.

a quarter of their fighting strength. In dense fog on the morning of 7th November, they were commanded to take enemy trenches near Zwarteleen. The men were exhausted and the advance was hastily prepared, and they ran into intense fire and barbed wire. Kershaw's platoon was almost cut off and lay in the open waiting for dusk. He was wounded twice, and then “*nothing more [was] ever heard of him.*” A fellow officer wrote there was a “*faint hope that his wound in the head may not have been fatal*” but “*it was very slight*”. The German Red Cross confirmed his death in mid-1915. His grave was never found and he is listed among the missing British soldiers on the Menin Gate, Ypres. His final letter to his parents thanked them for all they had done for his education at BGS and Cambridge, and expressed his desire to do his duty to his country and King as an Englishman.



## Acknowledgements:

The Bradfordian.

I am extremely grateful to Mrs S Dyer, Kershaw's niece, for sharing with me his letter to his parents and other items in her possession relating to him, including his paper on "The Drought of 1911" and the *Agricultural Students' Gazette* for April 1915.

Lorna Parker of the Royal Agricultural University Archives ([www.rau.ac.uk](http://www.rau.ac.uk)) supplied the photo and excerpts from the *Agricultural Students' Gazette*. I am grateful for her kind assistance. The Gazette erroneously records Kershaw's death for 23rd October at the same time as the R.A.C. student H.E. Hippisley (p.105). The circumstances of his death are given later in same issue of April 1915, on pp.107-9.

"Cleckheaton's Finest. Officers who fell in the Great War", Charlie Turpin, <http://branches.britishlegion.org.uk/branches/spenborough/branch-information/spenborough-roll-of-honour/world-war-one-1914-18-officers>.

WO 95-1278-1, the War Diary of the 1st Gloucestershire Regiment for 1914, was supplied by the Public Record Office.

Ancestry was used to consult the census records for 1891, 1901, 1911.

Compiled by Nicholas Hooper ([NAH@bradfordgrammar.com](mailto:NAH@bradfordgrammar.com)/[Nhooper1956@googlemail.com](mailto:Nhooper1956@googlemail.com)) 2014.

it if the occasion arises.

I regret more than I can say that I was unable to see you before joining the Regiment, but my duty was to come straight here, & I had no choice.

You've been such a good father & mother to me & all of us, especially me & I know you will feel disappointed if I fail to reap the benefits of the education you gave me & the example you have set me in the way of life. Consequently

QUEBEC BARRACKS,  
BORDON,  
HANTS.

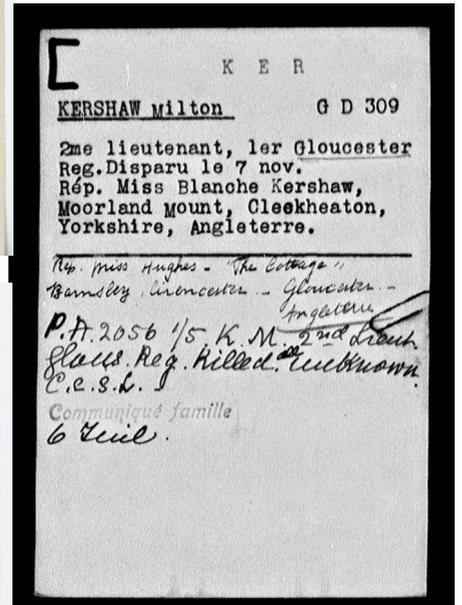
Aug. 7<sup>th</sup>

Dear Father, & Mother

You won't get this letter unless anything happens true but I feel I would like to write it. I made a will before I left Amsted in which I leave all I have, which I'm afraid is not much, to the girl I am engaged to so recently - Silven Hughes. I'm afraid she may need

Kershaw's final letter to be sent in event of his death—it is to be read top right - top left — bottom right — bottom left.

Below: the International Red Cross index card. Eileen Hughes was his fiancé.



especially Mother, will help her in any way you can.

With kindest remembrances from all Mother & Father, Susan, Blanche, Peter & Louis & I hope this letter will never have to be sent to you. We have just heard that we are to leave off at midnight so we wish all trust in God for the future.

Milton

It is with a feeling of regret to write that I now write this letter.

At the same time I know my duty to my country & King & I also know that you would wish me to do my duty as an Englishman. & this thought makes me quite happy.

I am sorry for Silven; being left alone so soon after an engagement & I hope, if ever you possibly can, that you

Campaign: - B. C. 1914. (A) War decoration was earned (B) Present situation

Name	Corps	Rank	Reg. No.	Roll on which included (if any)
Kershaw	Glouce. R.	2/Lt	10.5.19.	Gloucestershire R. Off. 2/3.
Milton	"	Lieut*	10.5.19.	Roll of Honour 7-11-14

Medals: VICTORY 01/45 72 1.V.X/772.4/6.10.21.14/3/751  
BRITISH 14 STAR  
class only: 1.V.X/772.4/6.10.21.14/3/751

Disembarkation Returns: 8.14.14. WS/3/751. WS/5/1089. 14-8-14. 0/6 States. 14-8-14. 14-8-14.

Correspondence:  
f Kershaw Rq. applies for 1914 Star in respect of his late son. 10.12.17.  
O/C No. 1 of Rec. Office, Warwick forwards roll of officers of Gloucestershire R. eligible for 1914 Star. 9-11-17.  
Address - Kershaw Esq. (1917)  
14 Moorland Brow.  
Pleckheaton, Yorks.

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(T.) Jendwine, J. H. W., Capt., 3rd West Riding Brigade, R.F.A.  
(T.) Johns, W. H. (formerly Capt. Westminster Dragoons), Lieut., 6th King Edward's Own Cavalry, Sialkot Brigade, Indian Expeditionary Force.  
(T.) Johnson, J. G. T., 2nd Lieut., Derbyshire Yeomanry.  
(S.) Johnson, R. H. K. (O.T.C.), 2nd Lieut., Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.  
(T.) Joynson, C., Capt., Warwickshire Yeomanry.

Keane, R. H., M.R.A.C., Naval Division.  
Keane, Sir J., Bart., Capt., Reserve of Officers, R.F.A.  
(T.) Kearney, J. J., Royal Gloucestershire Hussars Yeomanry.  
(T.) Kennedy, Lord Charles, M.R.A.C., Capt., Ayrshire Yeomanry. (Late Capt., Prince of Wales's Light Horse.)  
(R.) Ker, D. A. W., Capt., North Irish Horse. (Late Lieut., 6th Dragoon Guards.)  
(R.) Kershaw, M. (O.T.C.), 2nd Lieut., 1st Batt. Gloucestershire Regt. O.C. R. A. College O.T.C. Lecturer in Physics, R.A.C. Missing November 7th. Reported dead by German Red Cross.  
King, W., Royal Flying Corps.

Lace, W. H. (O.T.C.), Motor Ambulance Driver, Croix Rouge Francaise.  
Lane, G. W. B. (O.T.C.), Motor Cycle Dispatch Rider, R.E.  
(T.) Lawson, G., Capt., Westmoreland and Cumberland Yeomanry.  
(T.) Lees, E. B., Major, Westmoreland and Cumberland Yeomanry.  
(S.) Llewellyn, C. E. (O.T.C.), 2nd Lieut., 7th Batt. Wilts Regiment.  
Loring, W. L., formerly Adjutant O.T.C.—R.A.C., Lieut.-Col., R. Warwickshire Regt. Killed in action. Mentioned in despatches.  
(T.) Low, J. L., Capt., 5th Batt. Gordon Highlanders. Wounded.  
(T.) Lupton, A. C., Capt., Yorkshire Yeomanry. (Late Capt., 4th Batt. (Militia) Yorkshire Regt.)

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cricket for Somerset, and hockey for the Western Counties. His home was at Wells, Somerset. He met his death bravely doing his duty, his flank platoon being in a difficult position to which he stuck and probably saved the situation. Another 2nd Lieutenant in the same Battalion was killed and buried at the same time as Hippisley; Lieutenant Kershaw was in the same Company. We understand that the Brigadier spoke very feelingly to the regiment, on the next morning, of the work they had carried out. Aged 24.

Charles M. HOARE, Student R.A.C. 1911—12. Lieutenant in the 15th Hussars, was killed early in the war, his squadron coming under machine gun fire in a village. Cricket XI, 1911. Aged 21.

Captain Claud Giffard JEFFERY, R.A.C. 1898, of the Alexandra, Princess of Wales' Own Yorkshire Regiment, was educated at Bradford Grammar School, and was at the R.A.C. the whole of 1898. He attained his Captaincy in 1909. He was wounded in action on October 23rd, and subsequently died. He served in the South African War, 1900-1, and was awarded a Queen's medal with 6 clasps. Recently he served two years in the Egyptian Army.

Lieutenant-Colonel Walter Latham LORING, of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, was killed in action, October 24th. He came of a soldiering stock, being of the same family as Sir Nigel Loring, immortalized by Conan Doyle in "The White Company." His near kinsman, John Loring, was a student at the R.A.C. 1880—81. He became Captain in 1898, Major in 1904. Whilst Major he was Adjutant to the newly formed R.A.C. Officers Training Corps from 1910 till October, 1912, when he rejoined his Regiment and became Lieutenant-Colonel. He served in the South African War with the Mounted Infantry. At the R.A.C. he was of great use to the Cadets, and much respected for his carefulness and kindness. Colonel Loring was struck on the foot by shrapnel, but refused to go to hospital; after his wound was bound up he continued to lead on horseback, and therefore was more exposed; two chargers were killed under him. Aged 46.

Lieutenant Russell Kenneth SWANWICK (Special Reserve), of the 1st Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment. Student R.A.C. 1908—09.

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1897—1905, and Peterhouse College, Cambridge, 1905—1908. B.A. Camb.; Agricultural Dipl. Camb., 2nd Class Honours Nat. Sc. Tripos in Chemistry, Physics, Botany, and Geology. First Assistant to Professor of Chemistry, Lecturer on Physics and Meteorology at R.A.C. from January, 1909, to August, 1914.

Mr. Kershaw was a member of the R.A.C. O.T.C. from its inception in 1909, and was its Commanding Officer at the out-break of the war, when he left for service in France.

Kershaw was a great help to the Games and Sports as well as otherwise assisting in promoting the social life of the College. He belonged to the Football XV. for four years, but was obliged to stop playing in 1913 on account of an injury to his knee; he was the mainstay of the three-quarter line; he was in the Cricket XI during his whole time at the R.A.C., and in 1914 was Captain; he was a capital fast bowler, and was head of the bowling averages most of his years, a very good field, and a very useful bat, being generally second in the batting averages, all round he was a great help to the XI. and often pulled it out of straits. As a member of the Sports Committee and Timekeeper at the Sports his services were always sought and freely given. In every way, in the classroom, in the laboratory, and on the cricket field and on the football field Kershaw was a real help to the R.A.C.

He left with the Gloucesters early in August and was with the advance to and retirement from Mons, a very trying time and very hard work in the heat of August and September. His letters to his colleagues on the Staff of the R.A.C. showed that he was always in good health and spirits and well supplied with food, though there were concomitant hardships. He was reported missing as from November 7th, and known to be wounded.

A brother officer wrote on Nov. 26th, that "he went out with his company in a fog one morning and found when it cleared that he had advanced much closer to the German trenches than he had intended, in fact he was almost surrounded. From what I can gather he lay there with his men, hoping to crawl away at dusk. He was then wounded in the leg and tried to retire, and then they tell me he was shot through the head. . . . A search was made for him at dark

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before the Regiment had to withdraw, but without success. There is a faint hope that his wound in the head may not have been fatal, but I am afraid it is very slight, he would have been able to communicate with you by this time if that had been the case."

Another brother officer (M.R.A.C.), writing from the Front on February 6th, says "All the officers and men of the Regiment speak so highly of Kershaw, Swanwick, and Hippisley. I am afraid by what I am told there is practically no hope of poor Kershaw being alive."

THE SOLDIER.

If I should die, think only this of me:  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;  
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,  
Gave, once, her flowers to love, her way to room,  
A body of England's, breathing English air,  
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think, this heart, all evil shed away,  
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less  
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;  
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;  
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,  
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

RUPERT BROOKE, in *New Numbers*, No. 4,  
December 1914.

SOME NOTES ON THE COTTON BOLL WEEVIL  
(*Anthonomus grandis*. Boh.)  
By G. H. CORBETT, B.Sc. (Edin.).  
HISTORY.

There is very little certainty regarding the history of the Mexican cotton boll weevil (*Anthonomus grandis*. Boh.) before its presence in Texas came to the attention of the Division of Entomology in 1894. The first official record of the injury to cotton by this weevil was in

