

Rifleman Arthur William Kitching

Regimental Number: 27636
7th Battalion, King's Shropshire Light Infantry

born: 1889 - died: 20 May 1918

Arthur William, born in early 1889,¹ was the son of Alfred and Ellen Kitching of Yorkshire. Arthur's father, Alfred William Kitching died when Arthur was young - sometime between 1895 and 1901. In 1901, Arthur was living at 46 Winchester Street, Armley, Bramley, Yorkshire, with his mother, Ellen, a widow and a shopkeeper, and his three brothers:² Richard Nugent (born 1891),³ William Crampton (born 1893)⁴ and Samuel (born 1895).⁵ In 1911, they were all living at Blue Hill Cottage Wortley. By then all four boys were working: Arthur as a bookkeeper for a stationer/printer, Richard as a butcher, William as a clerk for a woollen merchant and Samuel as an electrician.⁶

Before the war, Arthur married Lilian M. Sneath in Bramley, Yorkshire.⁷ He enlisted in Leeds sometime before December 1915.⁸ He served in a number of units of the Shropshire Light Infantry: the Rifle Brigade (Rifleman Regimental number: 26289), Infantry Base Depot, 8th Rifle Brigade, Rifle Brigade, Labour Corps, Platoon 14, D Company and, finally, the 7th Battalion (Regimental number: 27636).⁹ He had also served in the King's Royal Rifle Corp (Regimental number: 26320).¹⁰ There is no evidence that any of his brothers served in the Great War.

The 7th Battalion, a Service Battalion formed at the beginning of the war, "...suffered more casualties than any other KSLI battalion, with 1048 killed in action or died during the war, and earned more battle honours than any other KSLI battalion."¹¹



A. W. Kitching in Pernes British Military Cemetery
(Source: Author, July 2015)

He was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 20 May 1918 with shrapnel wounds to his left leg and shoulder.¹² He died the same day and was buried the following day in Pernes British Military Cemetery (Plot 1, Row F, Grave 27). He was a member of the Church of England and the burial was under the care of the chaplain, J. K. Tibbits.

On 20 May, 370 soldiers were admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station – by far the highest number of admissions in any one day that month.¹³ This brought the total number of patients to 522. In the whole month of May, there were 115 deaths at this CCCS – more than in any of the other three and a half months that the 1st CCCS was in Pernes. The Pernes British Military Cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when the 1st and 4th Canadian Casualty Clearing Stations came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.¹⁴

The chaplain notified his wife, who was living at 7 Hawthorne Place, New Wortley, Leeds, of his death.¹⁵ She received the outstanding monies owed to him after his death.¹⁶ Family records suggest that Lilian did not remarry and died on the Isle of Wight in 1955.¹⁷

Arthur was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the 1914-15 Star.¹⁸

© BIFHSGO 2015

¹ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 December 2014), entry for Arthur William Kitching, Registration district: Hunslet, Inferred County: Yorkshire, West Riding, Volume: 9b, Page: 271

² "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 December 2014), entry for Arthur William Kitching, Registration district: Bramley, Sub-registration district: Wortley, ED, institution, or vessel: 34, Piece: 4212, Folio: 88, Page Number: 20, Household schedule number: 125

³ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 December 2014), entry for Richard Nugent Kitching, Registration district: Hunslet, Inferred County: Yorkshire, West Riding, Volume: 9b, Page: 264

⁴ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 December 2014), entry for William Crampton Kitching, Registration district: Hunslet, Inferred County: Yorkshire, West Riding, Volume: 9b, Page: 272

⁵ "England & Wales, FreeBMD Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 December 2014), entry for Samuel Kitching, Registration district: Hunslet, Inferred County: Yorkshire, West Riding, Volume: 9b, Page: 292

⁶ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 December 2014), entry for Arthur William Kitching, County/Island: Yorkshire-West Riding, Registration district: Bramley, Registration District Number: 499, Sub-registration district: Wortley, ED, institution, or vessel: 2, Piece: 26782

⁷ "England & Wales marriages 1837-2008," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 10 December 2014), entry for Lilian M. Sneath, District: Bramley, County: Yorkshire, Volume: 9B, Page: 561

⁸ He must have enlisted before that date because he was eligible for the 1914-15 Star for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915.

⁹ "UK, WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 10 December 2014), entry for Arthur William Kitching

¹⁰ "Soldiers died in the Great War 1914-1919," *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk: accessed 10 December 2014), entry for Arthur William Kitching

¹¹ "The King's Shropshire Light Infantry, 1914 - 1918," Shropshire Regimental Museum (<http://www.shropshireregimentalmuseum.co.uk/regimental-history/shropshire-light-infantry/the-kings-shropshire-light-infantry-1914-1918/>: accessed 10 December 2014)

¹² "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Library and Archives Canada, (records accessed 2013 & 2014), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 510

¹³ "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=FIN&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G: accessed 15 December 2014)

¹⁴ "Pernes British Military Cemetery" *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/find-a-cemetery/cemetery/11600/PERNES%20BRITISH%20CEMETERY>: accessed 13 January 2015)

¹⁵ "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Record number 510

¹⁶ "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 19 January 2015), entry for Arthur William Kitching

¹⁷ Family source, December 2014

¹⁸ "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 26 November 2014), entry for Arthur William Kitching
