

**Private Reginald Beardsley<sup>©</sup>**  
**Regimental number: 6535**  
**72nd Company, Machine Gun Corps (Infantry)**

**born: 1892–died: 21 May 1916**



**Reginald Beardsley**

Source: *Old Cestrefeldian Society*  
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of the Old Cestrefeldian Society

Private Reginald Beardsley was born in Chesterfield, Derbyshire, in 1892,<sup>1</sup> the son of John and Selina Beardsley.<sup>2</sup> Neither of his parents was born in Derbyshire—his father was born in Cosgrave, Nottinghamshire, in about 1859 and his mother, the former Selina Page, in Leeds, Yorkshire, in about 1854. They married in 1890, near Holbeck, Yorkshire West Riding, and just after their marriage, they were living at 9 Cobden Road in Chesterfield, where John was a grocer's manager. In the following years, they had six children: George William (born in 1892),<sup>3</sup> Reginald, Stella (born on 2 March 1896),<sup>4</sup> Winifred (born on 20 August 1897),<sup>5</sup> Jan (born in 1899)<sup>6</sup> and Eric Page (born in 1902).<sup>7</sup>

In 1901, the family was living at 10 Hartington Road in Chesterfield and John was now a grocer's traveller.

In September 1905, Reginald started at the Chesterfield Boys' Grammar School and was there until April 1908, when he left to go to the Hipper Street CCS. This grammar school dates from a charter issued by Queen Elizabeth I in April 1598 and a bequest from Godfrey Foljambe of Walton, who left just over £13 to cover the salary of a schoolmaster for "the education and instruction of boys in Chesterfield."<sup>8</sup> The early origins of the school are reflected in the opening lines of the school's song:

When Bess was Queen in days of old,  
Our founders lit a tiny flame;  
Three hundred years and more have rolled,  
Far brighter burns our School's fair fame;  
And let her but for service call,  
Each think not of himself, but all.<sup>9</sup>

The school paper, *The Cestrefeldian*, was created just three years after Reginald began at the school. During the Great War, it published accounts from former students who were serving in the war. It does not appear that Reginald contributed to the paper, but his sacrifice was noted in the paper<sup>10</sup> and on his school record.<sup>11</sup>

Reginald's sisters, Stella and Winifred, went to the Chesterfield High School for Girls (later known as St Helena) in 1907 and 1909, respectively.<sup>12</sup>

In 1911, the family was now at 9 Hartington Road and John was still a grocer's commercial traveller. Frank's mother was now working for the county council as an elementary teacher. Her eldest son George was a draughtsman's apprentice, working for an engineer, and Reginald was a

colliery clerk.<sup>13</sup> Stella left school later that year and went to work as a clerk.<sup>14</sup> Winnifred left two years later to take up secretarial work.<sup>15</sup>

Some time after May 1915,<sup>16</sup> Reginald enlisted in the Nottinghamshire and Derby Regiment (service number: 31743) in Chesterfield.<sup>17</sup> A year later, he was serving with the 72nd Company of the Machine Gun Corps. It was only about a year into the Great War that the British Army appreciated the importance of machine guns. There had been one single battery of machine guns in each army corps but, in October 1915, the batteries were brought together to maximize the effectiveness of the machine guns and the Machine Gun Corps was formed with Infantry, Cavalry, and Motor branches. The Infantry Branch, the largest branch, was formed by the transfer of battalion machine gun sections to the MGC.<sup>18</sup> It is possible that Reginald transferred from his original regiment when the MGC was created.

He was serving with the Infantry Branch of the MGC when he was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station with wounds to his left abdomen. He died there on 21 May 1916<sup>19</sup> and was buried in Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord (Plot II, Row B, Grave 103).<sup>20</sup> No. 1 CCCS was stationed in Bailleul at the time, and Reginald may have been one of the two soldiers who died there that day.<sup>21</sup>

Bailleul is in France, but near the Belgian border, about 15 kilometres southwest of Ypres.<sup>22</sup> It was occupied in October 1914 and became an important hospital centre, not just for No. 1 CCCS but also for No. 1 Australian and five British Army casualty clearing stations.<sup>23</sup>

A letter was sent to his mother at 9 Hartington Road to notify her of her son's death,<sup>24</sup> and she received the monies owing to him from the army upon his death.<sup>25</sup> She requested the following inscription for her son's gravestone:

TILL THE DAY BREAKS  
AND THE SHADOWS FLEE AWAY<sup>26</sup>

At some point after the war, Reginald's parents may have moved to 12 Valley Road, just 300 metres from their home on Hartington Road.<sup>27</sup>

Reginald was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).<sup>28</sup>

Reginald is remembered on the Roll of Honour at his old school and on the website of the Old Cestrefeldian Society.<sup>29</sup>



### Roll of Honour

Source: *Old Cestrefeldian Society*

Photo used with kind permission of the Old Cestrefeldian Society

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- <sup>1</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 10 September 2018), entry for Beardsley, Reginald, Registration district: Chesterfield, Volume 07B, Page 714
- <sup>2</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 August 2018), entry for Reginald Beardsley, Registration district: Chesterfield, Sub-registration district: Chesterfield, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 03, Piece: 3247, Folio: 12, Page: 13, Household schedule number: 83
- <sup>3</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 10 September 2018) entry for Beardsley, William George, Registration district: Chesterfield, Volume 07B, Page 646
- <sup>4</sup> "National School Admission Registers & Log-books 1870–1914," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 10 September 2018), entry for Stella Beardsley, Book type: Admissions, Archive reference: D3542\_1\_1, Folio/page no.: 76
- <sup>5</sup> "National School Admission Registers & Log-books 1870–1914," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 10 September 2018), entry for Winnifred Beardsley, Book type: Admissions, Archive reference: D3542\_1\_1, Folio/page no.: 186
- <sup>6</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 10 September 2018), entry for Beardsley, Jan, Registration district: Chesterfield, Volume 07B, Page 677
- <sup>7</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 10 September 2018), entry for Beardsley, Eric Page, Registration district: Chesterfield, Volume 07B, Page 753
- <sup>8</sup> "Chesterfield Grammar School, Based on a brief history by Roy Smith published in Reflections Magazine in March/April 2007," *Old Cestrefeldian Society* (<http://www.oldcestrefeldians.org.uk/>: accessed 10 September 2018)
- <sup>9</sup> "Chesterfield School Song," *op cit*.
- <sup>10</sup> "Roll of Honour," *Old Cestrefeldian Society* (<http://www.oldcestrefeldians.org.uk/>: accessed 10 September 2018)
- <sup>11</sup> "National School Admission Registers & Log-books 1870–1914," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 10 September 2018), entry for Winnifred Beardsley
- <sup>12</sup> "National School Admission Registers & Log-books 1870–1914," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 10 September 2018), entry for Stella Beardsley; "National School Admission Registers & Log-books 1870–1914," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 10 September 2018), entry for Winnifred Beardsley
- <sup>13</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 5 January 2018), entry for Reginald Beardsley, Registration district: Chesterfield, Registration district number: 438, Sub-registration district: Chesterfield, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 8, Piece: 21087
- <sup>14</sup> "National School Admission Registers & Log-books 1870–1914," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 10 September 2018), entry for Stella Beardsley
- <sup>15</sup> "National School Admission Registers & Log-books 1870–1914," *Findmypast* ([www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk): accessed 10 September 2018), entry for Winnifred Beardsley
- <sup>16</sup> Based on "War Gratuity Calculator" (<https://wargratuity.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/gratuity-calculator/>: accessed 18 May 2017); "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 August 2018), entry for Reginald Beardsley
- <sup>17</sup> "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 August 2018), entry for Reginald Beardsley
- <sup>18</sup> "Machine Gun Corps," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machine\\_Gun\\_Corps](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machine_Gun_Corps): accessed 18 August 2018)
- <sup>19</sup> "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 17 August 2018), entry for Beardsley, R.
- <sup>20</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 3 December 2018), entry for Beardsley, Reginald, Service No: 6535

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- <sup>21</sup> "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=FINN&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202\\_e.html&r=1&f=G](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=FINN&p=1&u=http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/archivianet/02015202_e.html&r=1&f=G))
- <sup>22</sup> "Bailleul Community Cemetery, Nord," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 17 January 2017)
- <sup>23</sup> "Bailleul Community Cemetery, Nord," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 17 January 2017)
- <sup>24</sup> "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 17 August 2018), entry for Beardsley, R.
- <sup>25</sup> "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 17 August 2018), entry for Reginald Beardsley
- <sup>26</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 3 December 2018), entry for Beardsley, Reginald, Service No: 6535
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>28</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 18 September 2018), entry for Reginald Beardsley
- <sup>29</sup> "Roll of Honour," *Old Cestrefeldian Society* (<http://www.oldcestrefeldians.org.uk/>: accessed 10 September 2018)