

**Private Ernest Pinches**  
**Regimental Number: 17819**  
**1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, King's Shropshire Light Infantry**

**born: 1890/1 - died: 30 November 1918**

Private Ernest Pinches was born in late 1890 or early 1891 in Yarpole, Herefordshire.<sup>1</sup> He was the youngest child of George and Mary Ann Pinches. His father was born in about 1847, also in Yarpole. His mother, the former Mary Ann Carter, was born in Presteign, Radnorshire, Wales in about 1849. George and Mary Ann were married in 1872 in Herefordshire.<sup>2</sup> Ernest had nine siblings: Henry A. (born in about 1873), Annie M. (born in about 1875, but probably died in 1905),<sup>3</sup> Thomas G. (born in about 1877), James E. (born in about 1879), William J. (born in about 1880), Clara (born in about 1882, but died 1902),<sup>4</sup> Mary (born in about 1885), Albert (born in about 1887) and Joseph (born in about 1890).<sup>5</sup>

Ernest's father was originally a carpenter and wheelwright, but he became a farmer in the 1890s. In 1901, the family was living in Enmore House.<sup>6</sup> By 1911, the family was living at Cock Gate Farm and Ernest and three of his siblings were working on the farm with their father.<sup>7</sup> The family moved to Highwood Farm sometime during the period of World War I.<sup>8</sup>

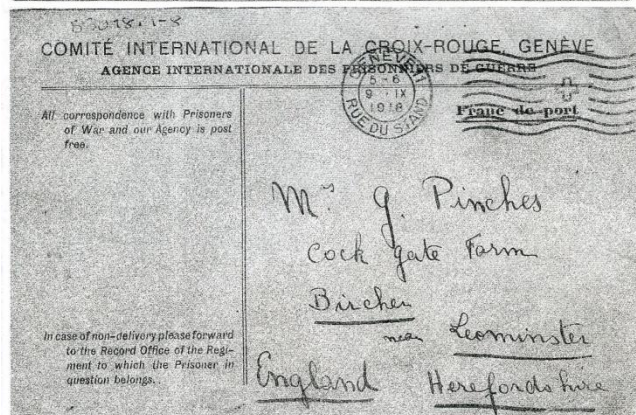
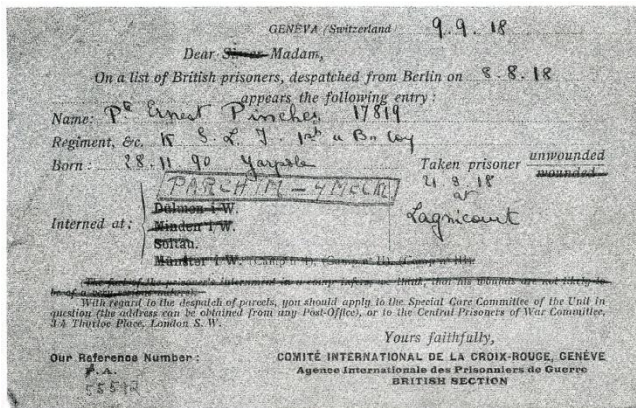
Ernest enlisted as a Private in the King's Shropshire Light Infantry, probably in 1915.<sup>9</sup> When he died, he was serving in the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion. He likely saw most



Parchim prisoner of war camp (Source: "Ernest A Pinches," Yarpole Living History Group, June 2014)

of the action in which the unit was engaged because he went to France on 30 December 1915.<sup>10</sup>

The King's Shropshire Light Infantry mobilized and went to France on 10 September 1914.<sup>11</sup> It was involved in many early major engagements. It saw action in the First Battle of Ypres in 1914, in the Ypres salient in 1915 and again at Ypres in April 1916. Action on the Somme followed in 1916 and at Arras and Cambrai in 1917. It was part of the 5<sup>th</sup> army when it faced the great German spring offensive in March 1918, when the Battalion was almost annihilated – no combatant officers and only 53 other ranks survived. The Battalion was reformed and rejoined the battle at Ypres and fought continuously in the salient until late August. The Battalion served through the final operations until the Armistice on 11 November.



Red Cross postcard sent to Pte Pinches' mother 9 September 1919 (Source: Leominster Folk Museum, May 2015)

It then became part of the army of occupation in the Rhineland. Fifty-three officers and 986 other ranks were killed during the war.



E Pinches in Gosselies Communal cemetery (Source: Author)

Ernest survived many major battles of the war, only to be taken prisoner on the 21 August 1918 at Lagnicourt in northern France and interned at Parchim in northern Germany.<sup>12</sup> He was likely a returning prisoner of war when he was admitted to the 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 25 November with dysentery.<sup>13</sup> He died there five days later and was buried in the evening of the following day in the Gosselies Communal Cemetery (Grave 251), with the chaplain W. O'Neill Fisher presiding. His mother was notified of his death and the monies owing to him from the army were also sent to her.<sup>14</sup>

Ernest was awarded the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918), the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the 1914-15 Star (for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).<sup>15</sup> The Pinches family has placed the family medals and other items in the Leominster Folk Museum.<sup>16</sup>

The Pinches lost at least two children to the war. Ernest's brother, Joseph, enlisted in Abergavenny, Wales in the South Wales Borders.<sup>17</sup> He was a Corporal in the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion when he died on 30 January 1917.<sup>18</sup> He is buried the Couin British Cemetery in the Nord-Pas-de Calais, France. A third brother,

William joined the King's Shropshire Light Infantry<sup>19</sup> in December 1915, but subsequently served in different units, transferring eventually to the Army Service Corps. He was demobilised in May 1919, perhaps with some disability.<sup>20</sup>



Graves of nine WW1 soldiers in Gosselies Communal cemetery (Source: Author)

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<sup>1</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 April 2015), entry for Ernest Pinches, Registration district: Leominster, Registration District Number: 340, Sub-registration district: Kingsland, ED, institution, or vessel: 10, Household schedule number: 2, Piece: 15829

<sup>2</sup> Marriage "England & Wales, FreeBMD Marriage Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 14 April 2015), entry for George Pincher, Registration district: Leominster, Inferred County: Herefordshire, Volume: 6a, Page: 915

<sup>3</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 21 January 2015), entry for Mary Ann Pinches, Registration district: Leominster, Inferred County: Herefordshire, Volume: 6a, Page: 328

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- <sup>4</sup> "England & Wales, FreeBMD Death Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 21 January 2015), entry for Clara Pinches, Registration district: Leominster, Inferred County: Herefordshire, Volume: 6a, Page: 401
- <sup>5</sup> "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 1 April 2015), entry for George Pinches, Registration district: Leominster, ED, institution, or vessel: 13, Piece: 2074, Folio: 117, Page Number: 7; "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 1 April 2015), entry for Ernest Pinches, Registration district: Leominster, Sub-registration district: Kingsland, ED, institution, or vessel: 13, Piece: 2496, Folio: 126, Page Number: 7, Household schedule number: 45
- <sup>6</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 11 January 2015), entry for Bruno Whittle, Registration district: Leominster, Sub-registration district: Kingsland, ED, institution, or vessel: 13, Piece: 2496, Folio: 126, Page Number: 7, Household schedule number: 45
- <sup>7</sup> "1911 England Census," entry for Ernest Pinches
- <sup>8</sup> "Ernest A Pinches," Yarpole Living History Group, June 2014
- <sup>9</sup> "Ernest A Pinches," Yarpole Living History Group, June 2014
- <sup>10</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 April 2015), entry for Ernest Pinches
- <sup>11</sup> "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 8 April 2015)
- <sup>12</sup> "Red Cross postcard, Leominster Folk, Museum, May 2015
- <sup>13</sup> "Record of Deaths, 17 February 1916 - 10 February 1919, a record maintained at No. 1 CCCS," Library and Archives Canada, (records accessed 2013 & 2015), Record Group 9, series IIC10, volume 4556, Record number 732
- <sup>14</sup> "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901-1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 1 April 2015), entry for Ernest Pinches
- <sup>15</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914-1920," entry for Ernest Pinches
- <sup>16</sup> "Ernest A Pinches," Yarpole Living History Group, June 2014
- <sup>17</sup> "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 April 2015), entry for Joseph Pinches
- <sup>18</sup> "UK, Commonwealth War Graves, 1914-1921 and 1939-1947," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 April 2015), entry for Joseph Pinches
- <sup>19</sup> "UK, WWI Service Medal and Award Rolls, 1914-1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 April 2015), entry for William J. Pinches. He is not included in a list of the fallen of Herefordshire. ("First World War - names of the fallen in Herefordshire, M - P," *Hereford Times* ([http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/ww1/11397037.First World War names of the fallen in Herefordshire M P/](http://www.herefordtimes.com/news/ww1/11397037.First%20World%20War%20names%20of%20the%20fallen%20in%20Herefordshire%20M%20P/); accessed 8 April 2015)
- <sup>20</sup> "Ernest A Pinches," Yarpole Living History Group, June 2014