

**Private Ernest Joseph Worrall©**  
**Regimental number: 353100**  
**2nd Battalion, The Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment)**

**born: 1898–died: 5 May 1918**

Private Ernest Joseph Worrall was born near Wolstanton, Staffordshire, in 1898,<sup>1</sup> the son of William and Mary Worrall.<sup>2</sup> Both his parents were born in Newcastle, Staffordshire—William in about 1856<sup>3</sup> and Mary on 4 June 1863.<sup>4</sup> Mary's maiden name was Worthington, but no record could be found of her marriage to William. They appear to have been together since about 1882<sup>5</sup> or 1884.<sup>6</sup>

Ernest's father William was a pottery artist and, early in her marriage, Mary was also an artist and designer.<sup>7</sup> The family lived for several decades in Burslem and Hanley, both of which were near Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire and at the centre of ceramic production, which had begun as early as the 17th century. The industry was favoured by the local availability of clay, salt, lead and coal. Companies—including well-known companies such as Spode, Doulton, Minton and Wedgwood—produced all kinds of pottery, from tablewares and decorative pieces to industrial items. By the time the Worralls were working in the industry, production had begun to decline as other countries developed their industries.<sup>8</sup>

In 1891, William and his wife were living at with their four daughters:<sup>9</sup>

- Gertrude May (born in about 1882),<sup>10</sup>
- Elsie Sarah (born in about 1884),<sup>11</sup>
- Violet Mary (born in about 1886),<sup>12</sup>
- Janet (born on 3 September 1887),<sup>13</sup>

Another daughter, Jeanne, had been born in 1883, but died the same year.<sup>14</sup> In 1891, Mary was working as an artist designer. William had no occupation at the time, but in the 1896 city directory he was described as an artist. By 1901, William, still a pottery artist, and Mary had added two boys to their family: William Laurent (born on 15 February 1895)<sup>15</sup> and Ernest.<sup>16</sup>

William died in 1907 at the age of 50<sup>17</sup> and, in 1911, Mary was a widow, living in Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent, with five children.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps it was a sign of the declining pottery industry in Stoke-on-Trent, but none of her children were working in the industry—May was a laundry maid, Violet a milliner, Janet a hosiery knitter and William a chemist's apprentice. Ernest was still in school.

Just over three years later, Ernest enlisted to serve in the British Expeditionary Force. He signed up in about October 1914<sup>19</sup>—two months after the outbreak of the Great War. As would be expected, he first joined the North Staffordshire Regiment (regimental number 3532). At some point, however, he transferred to the 2nd Battalion of The Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment).<sup>20</sup>

At the end of April 1918, Ernest's battalion was on the front line.<sup>21</sup> It had relieved the 13th Battalion of the King's Liverpool Regiment on 30 April and was engaged in strengthening the posts and generally improving defences. The battalion received orders to attack the enemy post the following day and advance into the orchard nearby. The battalion attacked early in the morning of 2 May. By 4.35 a.m. the posts had been captured, but the men had been unable to take the orchard because of enemy machine gun fire. The battalion had captured two prisoners but also suffered casualties—three men killed and three wounded. The following day there was artillery shelling on both sides and then reports were received that the enemy was digging behind the hedge within 50 yards of

battalion's support line. Orders were given to push them back with bombs and grenades. Again, the battalion suffered casualties—two men killed and four wounded.

At 1 a.m. on 4 May, the stokes mortars—a British trench mortar designed by Sir Wilfred Stokes for high angles of fire<sup>22</sup>—began bombarding the orchard, but the enemy responded almost immediately with concentrated artillery bombardment and gas shells. This lasted about three-quarters of an hour and succeeded in destroying all telephone communications. Runners brought news of the status of the various companies. Although there was heavy barrage, no enemy attack developed. The battalion had anticipated an attack on the right company and so attacked first. Both sides experienced casualties but, by the end of the day, with the exception of two outposts, the line was intact. Fifteen battalion soldiers were killed that day and 37 wounded—one of whom was probably Ernest.

Ernest was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 4 May with shrapnel wounds to his hand, arm and buttock. He died the next day and was buried that day in Pernes British Cemetery (Plot 2, Row A, Grave 43) with the Canadian chaplain G. C. d'Easum presiding.<sup>23</sup>

Pernes British Cemetery was only set up in April 1918 when No. 1 and No. 4 CCCSs came to Pernes, driven back by the German advance.<sup>24</sup> Ernest was one of 185 soldiers admitted on 4 May 1918 and one of 115 soldiers to die at the station that month.<sup>25</sup>

The chaplain sent a letter to Ernest's mother at 6 Chamberlain Avenue, in Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent, to notify her of her son's death. She also received the monies owing to him from the army upon his death.<sup>26</sup> She later requested the following inscription for his gravestone:

MY TRUST IS IN  
THE TENDER MERCY OF GOD  
FOR EVER AND EVER<sup>27</sup>

Although it appears that Ernest enlisted early in the war, perhaps he did not go overseas until 1916, because he apparently only received posthumously two medals—the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).<sup>28</sup> He apparently did not qualify for the 1914–15 Star (for service in the war against Germany between 5 August 1914 and 31 December 1915).

Ernest's only brother William also served in the Great War in the Royal Marine Light Infantry (register numbers 455, 2479). He and Ernest enlisted at about the same time, early in the war. William enlisted on 6 October 1914.<sup>29</sup> Almost three years later, he married Frances M. Welch on 11 June 1917 at the Registry Office in Stoke-on-Trent.<sup>30</sup> They do not appear to have had any children.

It is not known what became of William or his sisters after the war. In 1939, Ernest's mother Mary and his sister Janet were living at 16 Chamberlain Street in Stoke-on-Trent. Janet was a hosiery knitter.<sup>31</sup> Mary probably died in 1947 in Stoke-on-Trent.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "GRO online index-birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>; accessed 30 August 2019), entry for Worrall, Ernest Joseph, Registration district: Wolstanton, Volume: 06B, Page: 131

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- <sup>2</sup> “1901 England Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 11 January 2019), entry for Ernest J. Worrall, Registration district: Stoke upon Trent, Sub-registration district: Hanley, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 07, Piece: 2599, Folio: 152, Page: 4, Household schedule number: 25
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>4</sup> “1939 England and Wales Register,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 4 September 2019), entry for Mary Worrall, Schedule number: 173, Sub-schedule Number: 1, Enumeration district: ONEK, Registration district: 360-2
- <sup>5</sup> When their first child, Gertrude May, was born (“GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 10 November 2019), entry for Worrall, Gertrude May, Registration district: Newcastle Under Lyme, Volume 06B, Page 63)
- <sup>6</sup> “1911 England Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 5 January 2019), entry for Ernest Worrall, Registration district: Stoke upon Trent, Registration district number: 361, Sub-registration district: Hanley, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 26, Household schedule number: 239, Piece: 16536
- <sup>7</sup> “1901 England Census,” *Ancestry*, entry for Ernest J. Worrall
- <sup>8</sup> “Staffordshire potteries,” *Wikipedia* ([https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Staffordshire Potteries](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Staffordshire_Potteries): accessed 9 August 2019)
- <sup>9</sup> “1891 England Census,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 27 January 2019), entry for Wm Worrell [sic], Sub-registration district: Burslem, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 3, Piece: 2161, Folio: 63
- <sup>10</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office*, entry for Worrall, Gertrude May
- <sup>11</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 10 November 2019), entry for Worrall, Elsie Sarah, Registration district: Newcastle Under Lyme, Volume 06B, Page 59
- <sup>12</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 10 November 2019), entry for Worrall, Gertrude May, Registration district: Stoke upon Trent, Volume 06B, Page 218
- <sup>13</sup> “1939 England and Wales Register,” *Ancestry*, entry for Mary Worrall
- <sup>14</sup> “GRO online index–birth,” *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 10 November 2019), entry for Worrall, Jeanne, Registration district: Newcastle Under Lyme, Volume: 06B, Page: 57; “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 24 August 2019), entry for Jeanne Worrall, Registration district: Newcastle under Lyme, Inferred county: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 38a
- <sup>15</sup> “Web: UK, Royal Marines Registers of Service Index, 1842–1925,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 6 September 2019), entry for William Worrall, Royal Marine Light Infantry: Plymouth Division Short Service, Register number: 455
- <sup>16</sup> “1901 England Census,” *Ancestry*, entry for Ernest J. Worrall
- <sup>17</sup> “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 9 August 2019), entry for William Worrall, Registration district: Stoke upon Trent, Inferred county: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 138
- <sup>18</sup> “1911 England Census,” entry for Ernest Worrall, Registration district: Stoke upon Trent, Registration district number: 361, Sub-*Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 9 August 2019), registration district: Hanley, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 26, Household schedule number: 239, Piece: 16536
- <sup>19</sup> Based on “War Gratuity Calculator” (<https://wargratitude.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 15 August 2019), entry for Ernest Worrall
- <sup>20</sup> “UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 9 August 2019), entry for Ernest Worrall
- <sup>21</sup> “UK, WWI War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 30 August 2019), Regiment or unit: Royal Scots (Lothian Regiment), Sub-unit: 2nd Battalion, Division: 3rd Division, Piece description: Piece 1423/1-7: 8 Infantry Brigade: 2 Battalion Royal Scots (1914 Aug–1919 May), Piece number: 1423

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- <sup>22</sup> "Stokes mortar," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stokes\\_mortar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stokes_mortar): accessed 4 September 2019)
- <sup>23</sup> "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 22 May 2019), entry for Warrel [*sic*], E.
- <sup>24</sup> "Pernes British Military Cemetery," *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (<http://www.cwgc.org/>: accessed 13 January 2015)
- <sup>25</sup> "War Diaries of the First World War: 1st Canadian Casualty Clearing Station 1914/08/13-1919/03/31," *Library and Archives Canada* (<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/>: accessed 28 March 2018)
- <sup>26</sup> "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 15 August 2019), entry for Ernest Worrall
- <sup>27</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 22 May 2019), entry for Worrall, Ernest Joseph, Service No: 353100
- <sup>28</sup> "British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 8 September 2019), entry for Ernest Worrall
- <sup>29</sup> "Web: UK, Royal Marines Registers of Service Index, 1842-1925," entry for William Worrall
- <sup>30</sup> "UK, British Army and Navy Birth, Marriage and Death Records, 1730–1960," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 4 September 2019), entry for W Worrall
- <sup>31</sup> "1939 England and Wales Register," entry for Mary Worrall
- <sup>32</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk): accessed 4 September 2019), entry for Mary Worrall, Registration district: Stoke on Trent, Inferred county: Staffordshire, Volume: 9b, Page: 719