

## **Rifleman Arthur Edward Verrall<sup>©</sup>**

**Regimental number: 46329<sup>1</sup>**

**1st Battalion, Rifle Brigade**

**born: 1899–died: 22 April 1918**

Rifleman Arthur Verrall was just 19 when he died fighting in World War I. Fortunately, his older brother survived his own war service.

Arthur was one of nine children born to George Clifford Verrall and Jane Piper. George had been born in Brighton, Sussex, England, to George David Verrall and Rosina Dodge; he was christened on 8 June 1874.<sup>2</sup> Jane had also been born in Brighton, to William Piper and Sarah Ann Rider, and she was christened on 21 August 1876.<sup>3</sup> Their marriage was registered in the third quarter of 1895 in Brighton.<sup>4</sup>

The nine children born to George and Jane Verrall in Brighton were:

- George William, whose birth was registered in the first quarter of 1897.<sup>5</sup> George also enlisted, but with the Royal Field Artillery in Brighton. He had indicated that he was 18 on 5 August 1914 when he enlisted, although he was still only 17. He had been a grocery assistant and became a driver, serving in Salonica. This was a military theatre formed when the Allied Powers attempted to aid Serbia against the combined attack of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria.<sup>6</sup> Commencing in July 1916 George suffered from recurring malaria, and when discharged on 11 May 1919 he was considered 20% disabled as a result.<sup>7</sup> George married Annie Adams in Brighton in 1930.<sup>8</sup> In 1939 George and Annie were living in Brighton, where George was a car park attendant.<sup>9</sup> However, he died in 1943 in Brighton at the age of 46.<sup>10</sup>
- Unnamed twins, whose births and deaths were recorded in the second quarter of 1898.<sup>11</sup>
- Arthur Edward, who was born on 25 June 1899.<sup>12</sup>
- Rosina, who was born on 18 December 1900. In 1925, Rosina married Thomas Fairweather in Brighton.<sup>13</sup> In 1939, Rosina and Thomas (who was a traffic clerk) were living in Brighton.<sup>14</sup>
- May Alexandra, whose birth was registered in the third quarter of 1902.<sup>15</sup> In 1929, May married Percy Rowland in Marylebone, Middlesex;<sup>16</sup> however, Percy died just two years later, on 11 December 1931.<sup>17</sup> May subsequently married Arthur R. Farrell in 1939 in Edmonton, Essex.<sup>18</sup> May's death was registered in the third quarter of 1986 in Hatfield, Hertfordshire.<sup>19</sup>
- Jessie, whose birth was registered in the second quarter of 1904.<sup>20</sup> She died at the age of 20 in 1924 in Brighton.<sup>21</sup>
- Ada Norah, who was born on 9 January 1906. In 1936 she married David Davies in Brighton.<sup>22</sup> In 1939 Ada and David were living in Willesden, Middlesex, and David was a gas meter collector.<sup>23</sup> Ada died at the age of 82 in 1988 in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire.<sup>24</sup>
- Albert Clifford, who was born on 9 April 1909. In 1939 he was an engineer's draughtsman living in Erith, Kent, with his wife Karen.<sup>25</sup> Albert died at the age of 95 on 10 January 2004 in Poole, Dorset.<sup>26</sup>

In 1901 the Verrall family was living at 17 Washington Street, Brighton. George was a draper's van man and young George, Arthur and Rosina were at home with mom Jane.<sup>27</sup>

In 1911 the Verrall family was living at 15 Albion Street, Brighton. George and Jane had been married then for 15 years. George was a domestic groom while Jane was caring for her growing

family. George Jr., at the age of 14, was an errand boy for a tailor and the other children (except young Albert) were attending school.<sup>28</sup>

Sadly, in 1913 Jane died in Brighton,<sup>29</sup> leaving behind her husband and seven surviving children, the youngest of whom was only 3 years old.

Arthur was an enterprising young man and at the age of almost 15 was employed with the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway as a lad porter. He had been hired just before his 15th birthday on 2 June 1914 and was earning 8 shillings weekly. He got annual salary increases, so that by 23 May 1916 he was earning 12 shillings weekly. Unfortunately, Arthur was dismissed on 27 April 1917 for bad timekeeping and being absent without leave.<sup>30</sup> It seems that Arthur almost immediately signed up to fight in the war.

Regrettably, only about 30% of UK service records still exist, due to a fire resulting from a 1940 air raid on the Army Records Office in Walworth, London,<sup>31</sup> and it appears that Arthur's records were not saved. As a result, certain specifics of Arthur's military experience were not obtainable.

We know that Arthur enlisted at Brighton with the 1st Battalion, Rifle Brigade.<sup>32</sup> This regiment had a long history, back to 1800, drawing recruits from various British regiments to train as "sharpshooters, scouts and skirmishers." They were originally equipped with the Baker Rifle, which was more accurate and had a longer range than muskets. They also wore natural-coloured uniforms rather than the traditional red, worked in pairs and were trained to think for themselves in order to harass the enemy.

The regiment formed 28 battalions during the First World War and lost 11,575 men during the course of the war.<sup>33</sup>



**Gravestone of Rifleman A. E. Verrall**  
Source: *Find A Grave*

Because Arthur received a war gratuity of £3, 3 shillings,<sup>34</sup> it is estimated that he enlisted in April 1917. The war gratuity was introduced in December 1918 as a payment to be made to those WW I servicemen who had served in the home service for a period of at least six months, or for any length of time if the man had served overseas.<sup>35</sup>

Arthur was injured and admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station on 22 April 1918 with shrapnel wounds to his left lung.<sup>36</sup> A casualty clearing station (CCS) is a military medical facility behind the front lines that is used to treat wounded soldiers. A CCS would usually be located just beyond the range of enemy artillery and often near transportation facilities (e.g., a railway). The CCS received battlefield casualties from regimental aid posts located in the combat zone. Casualties that could not be adequately treated in the CCS were stabilized there before being transported to a field hospital or military hospital.<sup>37</sup>

Arthur died the following day: 23 April 1918. He was buried at Pernes British Cemetery in Plot 1, Row D, Grave

20.<sup>38, 39</sup> Pernes British Cemetery was not opened until April 1918, when the 1st and 4th Canadian CCSs pulled back to Pernes, driven back by the German advance in Flanders. There are 1,098 First World War burials in Pernes.<sup>40</sup>

At some point, Arthur's father George remarried. In 1939 he and his wife Elizabeth were living in Brighton and George was a painter.<sup>41</sup> George passed away in 1953 at the age of 78 in Brighton.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The regimental number was incorrectly transcribed in the chaplains' journal of No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station as 46229

<sup>2</sup> "England, Select Births and Christenings, 1538–1975," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for George Clifford Verrall, FHL film number: 1067136, Reference ID: 2:131XWHX

<sup>3</sup> "England & Wales, Christening Index, 1530–1980," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 Apr 2021), entry for Jane Piper

<sup>4</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for George Clifford Verrall, Registration district: Brighton, Inferred county: Sussex, Volume: 2b, Page: 379

<sup>5</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Verrall, George William, Registration district: Brighton, Volume: 02B, Page: 242

<sup>6</sup> "Macedonian Front," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macedonian\\_front](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macedonian_front): accessed 26 April 2021)

<sup>7</sup> "UK, British Army WWI Pension Records 1914–1920," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for George W Verrall, Regimental number: 900454, Form title: Cover for Discharge Documents

<sup>8</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for George W. Verrall, Registration district: Brighton, Inferred county: Sussex, Volume: 2b, Page: 646

<sup>9</sup> "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for George W Verrall, Borough: Brighton; Registration district: 79-1; Enumeration district: EGBY

<sup>10</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for George W Verrall, Registration district: Brighton, Inferred county: Sussex, Volume: 2b, Page: 316

<sup>11</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 26 April 2021) entry for Verrall, —, Registration district: Brighton, Volume: 02B, Page: 246

<sup>12</sup> "UK, Railway Employment Records, 1833–1956," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Arthur Edward Verrall, Station: Brighton

<sup>13</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Rosina Verrall, Registration district: Brighton, Inferred county: Sussex, Volume: 2b, Page: 570

<sup>14</sup> "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Rosina J. Fairweather, Borough: Brighton; Registration district: 79-1; Enumeration district: EGBL

<sup>15</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Verrall, May Alexandra, Registration district: Brighton, Volume: 02B, Page: 210

<sup>16</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for May A Verrall, Registration district: Marylebone, Inferred county: Middlesex, Volume: 1a, Page: 1391

<sup>17</sup> "England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Percy Alfred Rowland

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- <sup>18</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for May A Rowland, Registration district: Edmonton, Inferred county: Essex, Volume: 3a, Page: 2842
- <sup>19</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for May Alexandra Farrell, Registration district: Hatfield, Inferred county: Hertfordshire, Volume: 10, Page: 330
- <sup>20</sup> "GRO online index–birth," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Verrall, Jessie, Registration district: Brighton, Volume: 02B, Page: 215
- <sup>21</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Jessie Verrall, Registration district: Brighton, Inferred county: Sussex, Volume: 2b, Page: 223
- <sup>22</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916–2005," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Ada N Verrall, Registration district: Brighton, Inferred county: Sussex, Volume: 2b, Page: 712
- <sup>23</sup> "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Ada N Davies, Borough: Willesden; Registration district: 129-2; Enumeration district: BXHJ
- <sup>24</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916–2007," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Ada Norah Davies, Registration district: Milton Keynes, Inferred county: Buckinghamshire, Volume: 19, Page: 1103
- <sup>25</sup> "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Albert C Verrall, Borough: Erith; Registration district: 43-1; Enumeration district: CKBN
- <sup>26</sup> "England & Wales, Death Index, 1989–2019," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Mr. Albert Clifford Verrall, Last residence: Poole, Dorset, England, Postal code district: BH15
- <sup>27</sup> "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Arthur E Verrall, Registration district: Brighton, Sub-registration district: East Brighton, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 21, Piece: 924, Folio: 58, Page: 3, Household schedule number: 21
- <sup>28</sup> "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Arthur Edward Verrall, Registration district: Brighton, Registration district number: 79, Sub-registration district: East Brighton, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 09, Piece: 5097
- <sup>29</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Jane Verrall, Inferred county: Sussex, Volume: 2b, Page: 266
- <sup>30</sup> "UK, Railway Employment Records, 1833–1956," *Ancestry*, entry for Arthur Edward Verrall
- <sup>31</sup> "How to research a soldier," *The Long, Long Trail* (<http://www.longlongtrail.co.uk/soldiers/how-to-research-a-soldier/>: accessed 26 April 2021)
- <sup>32</sup> "UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914–1919," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Arthur Edward Verrall
- <sup>33</sup> "Unit History: Rifle Brigade," *Forces War Records* (<https://www.forces-war-records.co.uk/units/297/rifle-brigade>: accessed 26 April 2021)
- <sup>34</sup> "UK, Army Registers of Soldiers' Effects, 1901–1929," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Arthur Edward Verrall
- <sup>35</sup> "What was the war gratuity?" *The war gratuities of WWI* (<https://wargratiuity.wordpress.com/2015/08/16/what-was-the-war-gratuity/>: accessed 26 April 2021)
- <sup>36</sup> "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* ([www.bifhsgo.ca](http://www.bifhsgo.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Verrall, A
- <sup>37</sup> "Casualty Clearing Station," *Wikipedia* ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty\\_Clearing\\_Station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty_Clearing_Station): accessed 26 April 2021)
- <sup>38</sup> "No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station," *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa*, entry for Verrall, A.

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<sup>39</sup> *Find a Grave* (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/123048652/a-e-verrall/photo>: accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Rifleman A E Verrall

<sup>40</sup> *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* ([www.cwgc.org](http://www.cwgc.org): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for Pernes British Cemetery

<sup>41</sup> "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for George E. Verrall, Borough: Brighton; Registration district: 79/2; Enumeration district: EGNL

<sup>42</sup> "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 April 2021), entry for George C Verrall, Registration district: Brighton, Inferred county: Sussex, Volume: 5h, Page: 233