

Private Bernard Vincent Wellstead[©]
Regimental number: 236126
2nd Battalion, East Lancashire Regiment

born: 1898–died: 16 October 1918

Private Bernard Vincent Wellstead¹ was the only son of Sidney Wellstead and his wife Ellen Jane. His birth was registered in Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, in 1898² and he was baptized on 7 December 1898 at Holy Trinity Church in Heath Town, a town a mile northeast of Wolverhampton.³

Bernard's father was Sidney Lock Wellstead (born on 12 August 1865⁴ in Kingston, Dorset⁵). Sydney married Ellen Jane Lock (born on 22 November 1862⁶ in Dorchester, Dorset⁷) on 20 April 1890 at St Luke's Church in Wolverhampton, when they were living at 13 Bromley Street, just a few blocks away.⁸

This was Ellen's second marriage. Ellen Jane Riggs had married Francis Henry Lock on 24 December 1883 in Cheselborne, Dorset,⁹ and had two children—Francis William, born in 1884,¹⁰ and Elsie Gertrude, born in 1886.¹¹ Sadly, Francis died soon after birth.¹² No evidence was found for the death of Ellen's first husband before her marriage to Sidney Wellstead.

Although Sidney indicated on his 1911 census return that he and his wife had had five children, all living,¹³ they had, in fact, had eight children, although three of them died before 1911:

- Unnamed female (born in 1891, but died the same year)¹⁴
- Beatrice Louise (born in 1892, but died on 17 August 1892 at the age of 1 month)¹⁵
- Sidney Lock (born in 1893, but died at the age of 1 month and was buried on 9 August 1893 at Holy Trinity Church)¹⁶
- Violet (born in 1894)¹⁷
- Beatrice Louise (born in 1896)¹⁸
- Bernard Vincent
- Nellie Matilda (born in 1901)¹⁹
- Mona Lock (born on 16 February 1904)²⁰

No evidence was found to indicate where Sidney and Ellen were living in the months after their marriage, but Ellen's first daughter Elsie was living with her maternal grandparents, Thomas and Mary Ann Riggs in Dewlish, Dorset.²¹ In 1901, the family was living at 228 Staveley Road in Wolverhampton, where Sidney was a brewer's labourer.²² Ten years later, they were at 6 Chequers Street in Penn Fields, Wolverhampton.²³ Elsie had remained on Staveley Road, as a boarder at the neighbour's house at number 229. She was working as a painter on glass.²⁴

Bernard enlisted in the British Expeditionary Force in about January 1917.²⁵ He first served in the Manchester Regiment (regimental number 303056) and then, at some point, transferred to the 2nd Battalion of the East Lancashire Regiment.²⁶

In early October 1918, the 2nd Battalion was in the field in northern France. On 14 October, the battalion's war diary notes "Enemy very troublesome with his artillery."²⁷ That may have been the day Bernard was wounded, as he was admitted to No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station²⁸ on 14 October with gunshot wounds and a fractured skull. According to the No. 1 CCCS chaplains' journal, Bernard died the same day, although other military records indicate that he died on 16 October.

Bernard was buried in the Duisans British Military Cemetery (Plot 7, Row C, Grave 92) with the Canadian chaplain W. Fisher presiding.²⁹

Duisans British Military Cemetery is located in Étrun, near Arras, France. The first burials in the cemetery took place in March 1917.³⁰ No. 1 CCCS arrived at the beginning of September 1918 and was stationed near Duisans for two months. As a result of the serious and urgent nature of the cases admitted to No. 1 CCCS, the death rate was high in October—a total of 83 deaths occurred during the month.³¹

Bernard was awarded posthumously the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) and the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre).³² His mother requested the following inscription for his gravestone:

EVER IN THE THOUGHTS
OF MOTHER, DAD AND SISTERS³³

Both of Bernard's parents lived into their 80s and saw another world war: his father died in 1949, at the age of 83,³⁴ and his mother the following year, aged 87.³⁵ However, little can be confirmed about the lives of Bernard's sisters after the war—except his youngest sister.

Bernard's eldest surviving sister, **Violet**, may have married Harold J. Box in King's Norton in Warwickshire, in 1914,³⁶ but the evidence that she did, in fact, become Violet Box is not certain.

The sister born just two years before Bernard, **Beatrice**, probably married Leonard C. Sheasby in Wolverhampton in 1920,³⁷ but no evidence was found to confirm this was the correct marriage. This was also the case for his sister **Nellie**, who may have married Albert E. Williams in 1926.³⁸

The youngest of the Wellstead siblings, **Mona**, married Arthur L. Jeavons in Wolverhampton in 1930.³⁹ Sadly, Arthur died just six years later.⁴⁰ In 1939, Mona was living with her parents at 6 Chequers Street. Harold L. Willis, a pharmaceutical department manager and air raid protection officer, was boarding with them.⁴¹ Mona married Harold in 1945 in Brentford, Middlesex.⁴² She died on 2 December 1956 in Wolverhampton.⁴³

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¹ The record of Bernard's death in the chaplains' journal at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station indicated that his regimental number was 236216. This number also appears on some of his military records ("UK, WWI Pension Ledgers and Index Cards, 1914-1923," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 April 2022), entry for B.V. Wellstead); whereas others have the 236126 number ("UK, Soldiers Died in the Great War, 1914-1919," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 8 May 2022), entry for Bernard Wellstead).

² "England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 March 2022), entry for Bernard Vincent Wellstead, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, England, Volume: 6b, Page: 643

³ "Staffordshire, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813-1900," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 April 2022), entry for Bernard Vincent Wellstead, Page number: 266

⁴ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 April 2022), entry for Mona L [sic], Line number: 40, Schedule number: 253, Sub-schedule number: 3, Enumeration district: Oqnf, Registration district: 369a/2

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- ⁵ "Dorset, England, Church of England Births and Baptisms, 1813–1906," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 April 2022), entry for Sydney [sic] Wellstead
- ⁶ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry*, entry for Mona L [sic]
- ⁷ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 29 April 2022), entry for Riggs, Ellen Jane, Registration district: Dorchester, Volume 05A, Page 389
- ⁸ "Staffordshire, England, Church of England Marriages and Banns, 1754–1900," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 April 2022), entry for Sidney Wellstead, Page number: 158
- ⁹ "England, Select Dorset Church of England Parish Registers, 1538–1999," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 April 2022), entry for Ellen Jane Riggs, FHL Film Number: 002427624
- ¹⁰ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 April 2022), entry for Lock, Francis William, Registration district: Dorchester, Volume: 05A, Page: 328
- ¹¹ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 April 2022), entry for Lock, Alice Gertrude Alice, Registration district: Dorchester, Volume: 05A, Page: 317
- ¹² "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 April 2022), entry for Francis William Lock, Death registration place: Dorchester, Dorset, United Kingdom, Volume: 5a, Page: 236
- ¹³ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 5 January 2022), entry for Bernard Wellstead, Registration district number: 369, Sub-registration district: Wombourn, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 09, Piece: 17008
- ¹⁴ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 April 2022) entry for Wellstead, –, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Volume: 06B, Page: 598; "England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 28 April 2022), entry for Female Wellstead, Death registration place: Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, United Kingdom, Volume: 6b, Page: 323
- ¹⁵ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 April 2022), entry for Wellstead, Beatrice Louise, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Volume: 06B, Page: 610; *FindaGrave* (<https://www.findagrave.com/>: accessed 27 April 2022), entry for Beatrice Louise Wellstead, Memorial ID: 199929695
- ¹⁶ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 April 2022), entry for Wellstead, Sidney Lock, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Volume 06B, Page 650; "Staffordshire, England, Church of England Deaths and Burials, 1813–1900," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 17 July 2022), entry for Sidney Sock [sic] Wellstead, Page: 63
- ¹⁷ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 April 2022) entry for Wellstead, Violet, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Volume: 06B, Page: 651
- ¹⁸ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 April 2022), entry for Wellstead, Beatrice Louise, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Volume: 06B, Page: 659
- ¹⁹ "GRO online index (birth)," *General Register Office* (<http://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>: accessed 27 April 2022), entry for Wellstead, Nellie Matilda, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Volume: 06B, Page: 584
- ²⁰ "1939 England and Wales Register," *Ancestry*, entry for Mona L [sic]
- ²¹ "1891 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 April 2022), entry for Elsey [sic] Lock, Registration district: Dorchester, Sub-registration district: Puddletown, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 3, Piece: 1654, Folio: 28
- ²² "1901 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 9 April 2022), entry for Bernard Wellstead, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Sub-registration district: Wolverhampton Western, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 52, Piece: 2678, Folio: 78, Page: 17, Household schedule number: 107
- ²³ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry*, entry for Bernard Wellstead
- ²⁴ "1911 England Census," *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk: accessed 27 April 2022), entry for Elsie Wellstead [sic], Registration district number: 369, Sub-registration district: Wolverhampton Western, Enumeration district, institution, or vessel: 07, Piece: 17016

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- ²⁵ 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; accessed 9 April 2022), entry for Bernard Wellstead
- ²⁶ “British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 29 April 2022), entry for Bernard Wellstead
- ²⁷ “UK, World War I War Diaries (France, Belgium and Germany), 1914–1920,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 27 April 2022), Division: 8th Division, Diary Dates: 1914–1919, 1918–1919, Diary Entry Location: 2nd Battalion East Lancashire Regiment War Diary for Month of May 1918, Regiments in Diary: East Lancashire Regiment, Princess Charlotte of Wales's (Royal Berkshire), Piece description: Piece 1729: 25 Infantry Brigade (1914–1919), Piece number: 1729
- ²⁸ A casualty clearing station was a [military medical](#) unit behind the front lines, usually located near transportation. Casualties who did not soon die or could not be adequately treated in the CCS were stabilized before being transported to a field or [military hospital](#). (Casualty Clearing Station,” *Wikipedia* (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casualty_Clearing_Station; accessed 2 May 2020))
- ²⁹ “Search Name Index,” *British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa* (www.bifhsgo.ca; accessed 17 February 2020), entry for Wellstead B.
- ³⁰ “Duisans British Cemetery, Etrun,” *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org; accessed 7 October 2015)
- ³¹ “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/>; accessed 17 June 2015)
- ³² “British Army WWI Medal Rolls Index Cards, 1914–1920,” *Ancestry*, entry for Bernard Wellstead
- ³³ *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (www.cwgc.org; accessed 17 February 2022), entry for Wellstead, Bernard Vincent
- ³⁴ “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 27 April 2022), entry for Sidney Wellstead, Death registration place: Wolverhampton, Inferred county: Staffordshire, Volume: 9b, Page: 1144
- ³⁵ “England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 28 April 2022), entry for Ellen J. Wellstead, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred county: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 323
- ³⁶ “England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 26 November 2022), entry for Violet Wellstead, Registration district: King's Norton, Inferred county: Warwickshire, Volume: 6d, Page: 141
- ³⁷ “England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 26 November 2022), entry for Beatrice L. Wellstead, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred county: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 1553
- ³⁸ “England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 26 November 2022), entry for Nellie M. Wellstead, Registration district: Wolverhampton, Inferred county: Staffordshire, Volume: 6b, Page: 1041
- ³⁹ “England & Wales Marriages 1837–2008,” *Findmypast* (www.findmypast.co.uk; accessed 28 April 2022), entry for Mona L. Wellstead, County: Staffordshire, Volume: 6B, Page: 1240
- ⁴⁰ “Staffordshire, England, Birth, Marriage and Death Indexes, 1837–2017,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 28 April 2022), entry for Arthur Jeavons
- ⁴¹ “1939 England and Wales Register,” *Ancestry*, entry for Mona L [sic]
- ⁴² “England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837–1915,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 26 November 2022), entry for Mona L Jeavons, Registration district: Brentford, Inferred county: Middlesex, Volume: 3a, Page: 720
- ⁴³ “England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858–1995,” *Ancestry* (www.ancestry.co.uk; accessed 28 April 2022), entry for Mona Lock Willis