

## PRIVATE NICHOLAS JOSEPH MANN

9543, 9th Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment

Died aged 38 on 15 December 1916

Remembered with honour on *Basra Memorial, Iraq*; Panel 18 and 63

Commemorated in Tewkesbury at the Cross, in the Abbey and on the Grammar School Memorial



*Basra Memorial: Rolls of Honour\**



*1914-15 Star Medal*



*Worcestershire Regiment*

**NICHOLAS JOSEPH MANN** came from a long-established military family. He was born in Tewkesbury in 1878 to Nicholas George Alexander Mann and Sarah Ann (formerly Dart) from Exeter in Devon. Nicholas senior was one of twin brothers born at Newry Army Barracks in Ireland in 1842; his father came originally from Tewkesbury but was a regular soldier. Upon leaving, he worked as a cabinet-maker and was a long-serving member of part-time Tewkesbury Volunteers after 1908. By 1877 Nicholas senior had moved to Tewkesbury and married; he had six children surviving in 1911. The family lived in Bull Court, Church Street, by 1911.

Nicholas Joseph was a former pupil of the Abbey Schools and the Grammar School. He spent time in both the County Volunteer and Militia Battalions, before attesting as a regular in January 1900; he was *'one of first batch of volunteers to serve in the South African War'*. He fought at the *Battle of Belmont* where soldiers *'suffered awfully ... our men never flinched ... Boers are so cowardly and will not stand to a man'*. Subsequently Nicholas was employed by Haywards before moving to Pershore. He married Anna Maria Witts in 1902 and had three children. In 1911 the family was living in Pershore, Nicholas working as a labourer.

Like his brothers, Nicholas volunteered soon after the outbreak of war, enlisting on 7 September 1914 in the Worcestershire Regiment. He was transferred in 1915 to the 9th Battalion, part of Kitchener's Army and of the 13th (Western) Division. The division was sent to Gallipoli in July 1915 to fight against Turkey; Private Mann joined his battalion three months later on 5 October. The division was involved in the Gallipoli campaign until evacuation in 1916

to Egypt to defend the Suez Canal.

The division then transferred to Mesopotamia (now Iraq) to relieve the garrison at Kut al Amara, to which British units had retreated. Having landed at Basra on 23 April 1916, the relief effort failed and Kut fell to the Turks. The British forces were strengthened, after which another attempt was made at the end of 1916. This time Kut was captured and the army pressed on towards Baghdad. The British attack, in which the Worcesters played a prominent role, was launched on the night of 13/14 December 1916 but it took two months to capture Kut.

**Private Nicholas Joseph Mann** was killed on 15 December 1916, at the beginning of the offensive. His body was not recovered and he is commemorated instead on the *Basra Memorial* in Iraq\*. He is also remembered on the War Memorial in Pershore Abbey. Nicholas was awarded the *'1914-1915 Star'* medal.

Nicholas's widow, Anna, re-married in Pershore in 1918 to George W. Barstow. She was awarded a War Gratuity of £10 in September 1919. Her eldest son, Maurice Edward, took his step-father's name and married in Dublin, Ireland, in 1923. Nicholas's younger brother, **Sgt. Louis V. Mann** [†] of the Essex Regiment, was killed on the Somme on 11 August 1916. His other brother, **L/Cpl. Frederick E. Mann**, survived the war despite being wounded.

\*In 2014 the CGWC advises that it is not possible to visit Memorials in Iraq. The photograph caption is:

*'The Rolls of Honour held at the Commission's Head Office commemorating by name all the Commonwealth casualties who died in Iraq during the two World Wars'*