

THE FALLEN OF SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN



NORMAN RILEY

DUKE OF WELLINGTON REGIMENT

DIED OF WOUNDS 21<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER 1915

BORN IN 1893 AT SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN, THE SON OF  
WALTER AND ELIZABETH RILEY

# Riley Family History

- 1901 census shows Walter, his wife Elizabeth and their 3 children living at 33, Main Street, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Walter H (Head)	32	Weaving overlooker worsted	Glusburn, Yorkshire	1869 - 1906
Elizabeth (wife)	34		Silsden, Yorkshire	1867 - 1945
Norman	8		Sutton-in-Craven, Yorkshire	1893 - 1915
Doris	5		Sutton-in-Craven, Yorkshire	1896
Clifford	baby		Sutton-in-Craven, Yorkshire	1901



Main St, Sutton-in-Craven  
(source: photo provided by Barbara & Allen Chapman)

- **1911 census** shows Elizabeth now widowed and that of her 4 children born alive, all 4 were still living. It also shows the Riley family now residing at 14, Walton Street, Holmefield at Holme Bridge, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Elizabeth (widow)	44	Worsted weaver	Silsden, Yorkshire	1867 - 1945
Norman	18	Worsted weaver	Sutton-in-Craven, Yorkshire	1893 - 1915
Doris	15	Worsted weaver	Sutton-in-Craven, Yorkshire	1896
Marion	12	Part school/ worsted spinner	Sutton-in-Craven, Yorkshire	1899
Clifford	10	School	Sutton-in-Craven, Yorkshire	1901



(source: original postcard owned by Andrew Monkhouse)

# World War 1



It had been **99 years** since Britain was last involved in a major European conflict following the defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815

## **August 4<sup>th</sup> 1914** **Britain declares war on Germany**

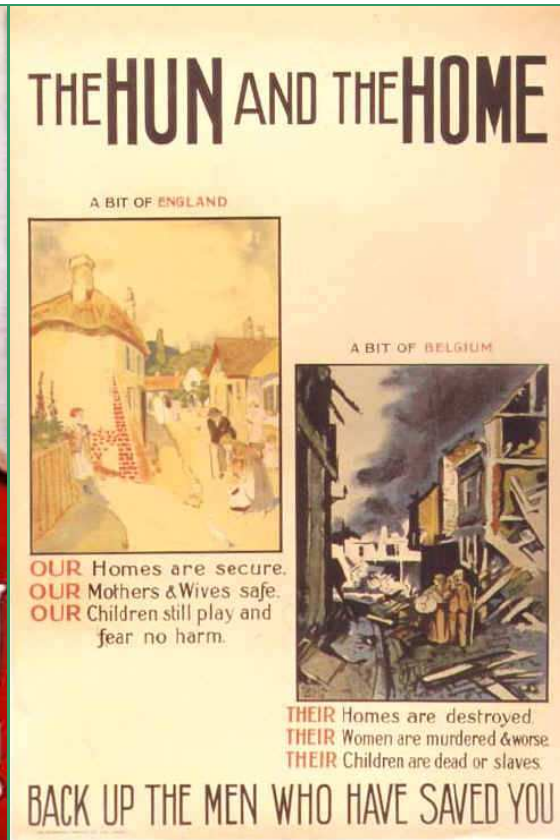
In the autumn of 1914, the young men of the nation came from town and village to take the King's shilling and to offer him their dedicated services in defence of their homeland. From mills and mines, from shops and farms, from office chairs and civic departments, from loom, lathe, bench, plough and counter they flooded into the recruiting centres in answer to their nation's call for young manhood. These new recruits came to be known as **'Kitchener's Volunteers'**

## **The New Armies: "Kitchener's Volunteers"**





Earl Kitchener recruitment poster 1914



Parliamentary Recruiting Committee  
London, 1915



British volunteers receiving their first drill in front of many sightseers, 1914  
These men would form Kitchener's New Army

Prior to enlistment, Norman Riley was employed by Messrs S. Thompson & Son, coal merchants.

At the outbreak of the Great War, Norman Riley responded to the call and volunteered to enlist into the 9th battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) in September 1914. His regimental number was 9/13285 and he commenced with the rank of Private. He was later promoted to Lance Corporal.

Norman Riley was trained at Bovington Camp in Dorset and later billeted at Wimborne, Dorset.

The West Riding Regiment raised 24 battalions during WW1 including the 9th (service) battalion at Halifax in September 1914.

Lance Corporal Riley entered the Theatre of War on 15th July 1915 when the 9th battalion West Riding Regiment landed in France.

33.			
Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
RILEY	W. Rid. Rgt	Pte (L. Cpl)	13285
	— — —	* Pte.	— — —
Norman			
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	* 0/2/101 B5	529	Killed 21.12.15
BRITISH	Do	Do	
15 STAR	0/2/313	B241	
Theatre of War first served in	1 France		
Date of entry therein	15.7.15		
K 1330.			

MEDAL INDEX CARD for Norman Riley (source: *The National Archives*)





WW1 Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) Cap Badge



Lance Corporal Norman Riley  
(source: *Craven's Part in the Great War* [www.cpgw.org.uk](http://www.cpgw.org.uk))

# The Western Front

The Western Front was the name applied to the fighting zone in France & Flanders, where the British, French, Belgian and later American armies faced that of Germany.

It was marked by a system of trenches and fortifications separated by an area known as No Man's land. These fortifications stretched 475 miles and precipitated a style of fighting known as trench warfare.

From the moment the German army moved into Luxemburg on the 2nd August 1914 to the Armistice on the 11th November 1918, the fighting on the Western Front in France & Flanders never stopped.

Just as there were quiet periods, there were also the most intense, savage, huge-scale battles the world has ever known.



German machine-gunners in action, WW1





Article Date: 13 August 1915

### SUTTON MAN'S LETTERS FROM THE FRONT

Lance-Corporal Norman Riley, of the 9th Duke of Wellington's West Riding Regiment, who left England for France on July 14th, in writing home to his mother, Mrs. Walter H. Riley, of Walton Street, Holm Bridge, says:- "Where I am I cannot tell you, but I can say that the Germans have been here, and have left their trademark in more than one place. We could get to know more if we could speak French, but we do fairly well. The French people can speak English better than we can speak French. I suppose that is because so many of our chaps have been about; you cannot go far without seeing somebody in khaki." In another he says:- "I am thinking about you all at home; just about a year ago I may have been going to the Crosshills pictures. To-night, about the same time (9 o'clock), I was going into the trenches. Well, we got there all right about 10 minutes to 12 o'clock, and I fired my first shot at the Germans about midnight. We were only about 80 yards from the German lines...The chaps that were in the trenches when we got there had been in fourteen days. They were splendid chaps-most of them had been out all the time, and told us lots of tales about engagements they had been in, such as the Battle of Mons, etc. There are only 200 left out of 1,100. They are the Royal Scots Fusiliers, and I handed my 'cigs.' round that you sent me. I had not many left when we came out the following night, but I did not mind so long as they were happy. They showed us the best way to make a good meal out of next to nothing, for which we were very thankful!

"I have seen some of the 6th Duke of Wellington's who are only about two miles away, but I have not seen any lads from Sutton. They are in the trenches, but are coming out to-night, and I am hoping to see them, all being well."

Later Lance-Corporal Riley tells how for over two hours they could not hear themselves speak because of the heavy bombardment of the German positions.

(source: *Craven's Part in the Great War* [www.cpgw.org.uk](http://www.cpgw.org.uk))



German sniper laying on the ground near barbed wire defences, WW1  
(source: [www.gwpda.org/photos](http://www.gwpda.org/photos))



A British stretcher party bringing in wounded soldiers on the Western front, WW1  
(source: <http://www.WW1Photos.com>)

Having served on the battlefields of the Western Front for just over 5 months, Lance Corporal Norman Riley was hit by gun-fire when he received gun-shot wounds to the head.

He **Died of Wounds** at 12.10pm on the 21st December 1915 at the 13th General Hospital in Boulogne, France.

Lance Corporal Riley had his name sent in for promotion the day he was killed. His officer at the time of his death wrote home to his parents and said that if he had lived he would probably have been mentioned in despatches for beating off a German bombing attack with his fifteen platoon bombers.

He was 23 years of age



## Casualty Details

**Name:** RILEY

**Initials:** N

**Nationality:** United Kingdom

**Rank:** Lance Corporal

**Regiment/Service:** Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment)

**Unit Text:** 9th Bn.

**Age:** 23

**Date of Death:** 21/12/1915

**Service No:** 9/13285

**Additional information:** Son of Walter and Elizabeth Riley, of 14, Walton St., Holmefield, Sutton-in-Craven, Keighley. Enlisted Sept., 1914.

**Casualty Type:** Commonwealth War Dead

**Grave/Memorial Reference:** VIII. C. 72.

**Cemetery:** BOULOGNE EASTERN CEMETERY

(source: *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* [www.cwgc.org/](http://www.cwgc.org/))





Article Date: 07 January 1916

### SUTTON SOLDIER DIES FROM WOUNDS

On Friday morning last week, Mrs. Walter H. Riley, 14 Walton Street, Sutton-in-Craven, received the sad news from the Infantry Records Office, York, that her son, Lance-Corp. Norman Riley of the 9th Duke of Wellington's, passed away at 12.10 p.m. at the 13th General Hospital, Boulogne, on December 21st, 1915, as the result of gunshot wounds in the head. Accompanying the intelligence was a printed note expressing the sympathy of the King and Queen in their great sorrow.

Lance-Corp Riley joined the colours in September, 1914, and was in training at Bovington Camp, Dorset, until July, 1915, when he went to the Front. After a few months in France he came home on leave for a few days. Prior to enlistment, Lance-Corp. Riley was employed by Messrs. S. Thompson & Son, coal-merchants, and was of a very cheery and sociable disposition, and was twenty-three years of age. He is survived by a widowed mother, two sisters, and one brother, to whom the sympathy of the whole district is tendered.

(source: *Craven's Part in the Great War* [www.cpgw.org.uk](http://www.cpgw.org.uk))



Article Date: 07 January 1916

### DEATH OF LANCE-CORPL. NORMAN RILEY

On Friday last Mrs. W. Harry Riley of Walton Street, Holme Bridge, Sutton, received official intimation from the Record Office, York, that her son, Lance Corporal Norman Riley, had died from wounds received on the 19th of November, his death taking place on the 21st in the hospital at Boulogne.

Lance Corporal Norman Riley was the eldest son of his widowed mother. He joined the 9th Duke of Wellington's at the outbreak of the war. He was trained at Bovington Camp, and last winter was billeted at Wimbourne, leaving for France in July last. The deceased, who was in his 24th year, made many friends while in camp. He spent a short but happy week at home nine weeks' ago, and although he acknowledged that the life at the Front was a very hard one, and not one that appealed to him naturally, yet he felt it is duty to be there, and he went back with his usual cheerfulness. In his last letter home he said he was looking forward to a good time at Christmas (which he never saw). He remarked that as they came out of the trenches last Friday the German shells were dropping about them, but no one was hit. He also referred to parcels they had received and the good things which might make them poorly, but he added, "I am going to risk it." He also referred with pride to one of the local lads winning the D.C.M., and in his jocular spirit said, "I shall go in for the V.C." Much sympathy is felt for the widowed mother, who has always found her son "a good lad for home". Lance Corporal Riley was a very popular young man at the entertainments given at St. Thomas's Church. On Sunday last the organist at St. Thomas's Church, in memory of the deceased soldier, played the Dead March in 'Saul'. The deceased is the fifth young man from Sutton who has made the 'supreme sacrifice'.

(source: *Craven's Part in the Great War* [www.cpgw.org.uk](http://www.cpgw.org.uk))

Lance Corporal Norman Riley's younger sister Doris Riley went on to marry Suttoner Lance Corporal Willie Hargreaves the following year on the 10th October 1916. Tragically he too was later **Killed in Action** on the 24th June 1917. This was the second loss his widow sustained during the Great War after the death of her brother Norman.

Ironically, the names of both these soldiers appear next to one another on the Sutton-in-Craven war memorial.



# BOULOGNE EASTERN CEMETERY



Boulogne Eastern cemetery

(source: *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* [www.cwgc.org/](http://www.cwgc.org/))

Boulogne, was one of the three base ports most extensively used by the Commonwealth armies on the Western Front throughout the First World War. It was closed and cleared on the 27 August 1914 when the Allies were forced to fall back ahead of the German advance, but was opened again in October 1914 until the end of the war. Boulogne was one of the chief hospital areas.

Boulogne Eastern Cemetery contains 5,577 Commonwealth burials of the First World War including that of Lance Corporal Norman Riley. The Commonwealth plots were designed by Charles Holden.

Lance Corporal Riley is also remembered on the Sutton-in-Craven war memorial





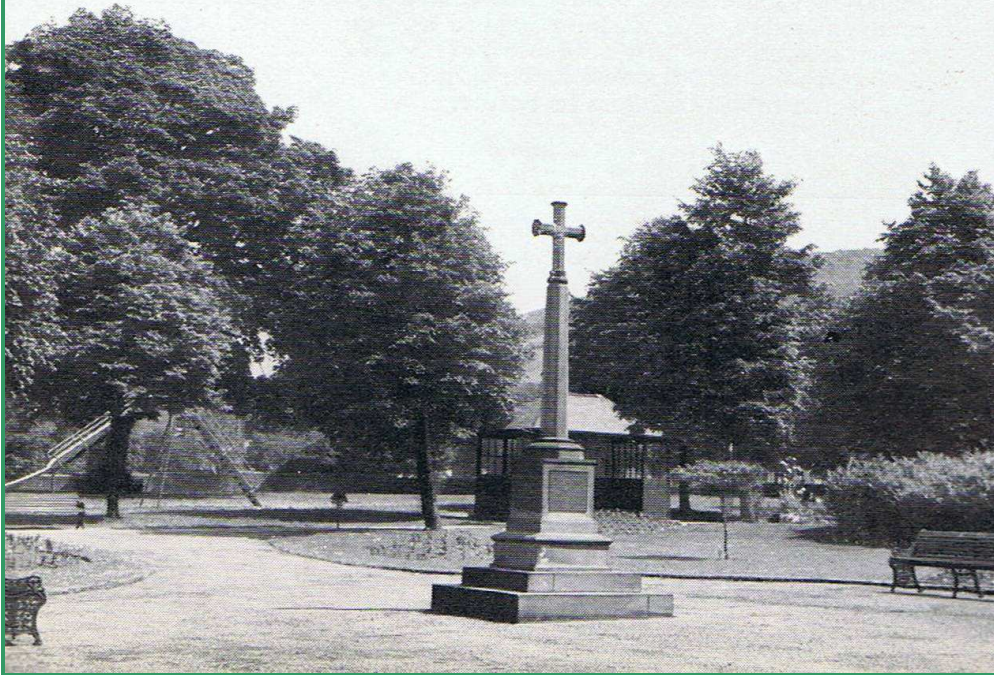
Boulogne Eastern cemetery

source: *Craven's Part in the Great War* [www.cpgw.org.uk](http://www.cpgw.org.uk)

(Photograph courtesy of Colin Chadwick of Harrogate)



WAR MEMORIAL, SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN PARK



(source: *South Craven, the official guide*, 1950)



Sutton-in-Craven War Memorial (photo taken by Paul Wilkinson)



Lance Corporal Norman Riley was posthumously awarded the  
1914/15 Star, British War Medal & Victory Medal



Original trio of WW1 medals, obverse (1914/15 star unnamed original)



Original trio of WW1 medals, reverse (1914/15 star unnamed original)  
(source: owned by Andrew Monkhouse)



A Memorial Plaque inscribed with the soldiers name was also given to the family of those who were killed during WW1



Original WW1 Memorial Plaque  
Also referred to as a Death Plaque or Dead Man's Penny  
(source: plaque owned by Andrew Monkhouse)



## Lest we Forget

### CRAVEN'S ROLL OF HONOUR



CORPORAL NORMAN RILEY, Duke of Well.'s Regt., son of Mr. Walter Riley, 14, Walton St., Sutton, died of wounds 21st December, 1915.

source: *Craven's Part in the Great War*

Original 1919 copy owned by Andrew Monkhouse

# FOR THE FALLEN

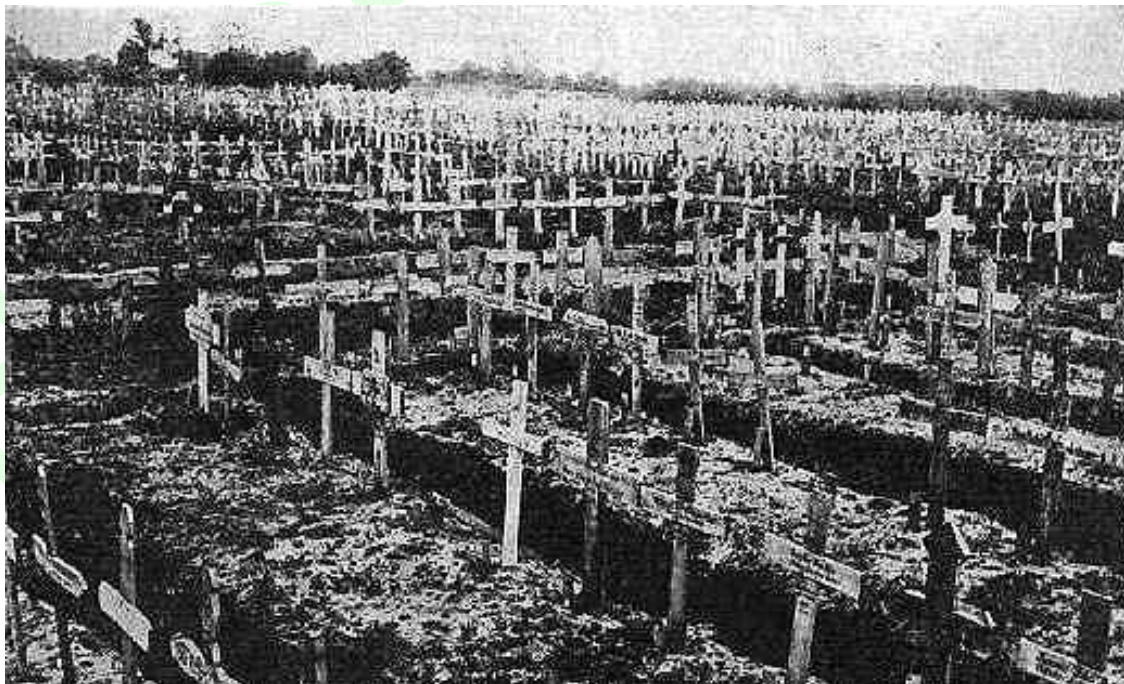
*THEY SHALL NOT GROW OLD, AS WE THAT ARE  
LEFT GROW OLD*

*AGE SHALL NOT WEARY THEM, NOR THE YEARS  
CONDEMN*

*AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN AND IN THE  
MORNING*

*WE WILL REMEMBER THEM*

**LAURENCE BINYON, 1869-1943**



(Information compiled by Andrew Monkhouse 2011)