

THE FALLEN OF SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN



PERCY STELL

DUKE OF WELLINGTON REGIMENT

KILLED IN ACTION 21ST AUGUST 1915

BORN IN 1897 AT SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN, THE SON OF
ALBERT AND JANE STELL

Stell Family History

- 1901 census shows Albert, his wife Jane and their 4 children living at 6, Harker Street, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Albert (Head)	40	Worsted combing overlooker	Sutton-in-Craven	1861
Jane (wife)	35		Lothersdale	1866
Sarah E	14	Worsted spinner	Sutton-in-Craven	1887
John William	12	Worsted spinner	Sutton-in-Craven	1889
Maurice	8		Sutton-in-Craven	1893
Percy	4		Sutton-in-Craven	1897 - 1915



Sutton Mill showing Harker Street
(source: *South Craven in old picture postcards Vol 2* by Alec Wood and Peter Whitaker)

- **1911 census** shows Albert and Jane had been married for 25 years and that of their 5 children born alive, all 5 were still living. It also shows the Stell family now residing at 15, Gordon Street, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Albert (Head)	50	Worsted combing overlooker	Sutton-in-Craven	1861
Jane (wife)	45		Lothersdale	1866
Sarah E	24		Sutton-in-Craven	1887
John William	22	Weaver	Sutton-in-Craven	1889
Maurice	18	Weft man preparing bobbins	Sutton-in-Craven	1893
Percy	14	Oiler in spinning yarn room	Sutton-in-Craven	1897 - 1915



Gordon St, Sutton-in-Craven (circa 1900)
(source: Rachel Simpson & Richard Whiteoak from the Glyn Whiteoak collection)

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 4th 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



Rifle drill, Manningham Park, 1914 (Kitchener's New Army)
(source: *The Bradford Pals* Ralph N. Hudson 2nd Ed, 1993)

At the outbreak of the Great War, Percy Stell responded to the call and volunteered to enlist into the 8th (Service) battalion Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) formed at Halifax in August 1914

His regimental number was 12574 and he commenced with the rank of Private.

From Halifax, Pte Stell moved with the 8th battalion to Belton Park at Grantham and afterwards to Whitley Common in April 1915.

In July 1915, the 8th battalion West Riding Regiment, as part of the 11th (Northern) Division, sailed from Liverpool for Gallipoli.

Pte Percy Stell entered the Theatre of War on 7th July 1915 when the 8th battalion landed at Suvla Bay on the Turkish Peninsula to join the **Gallipoli campaign**.

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Name.	Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
STELL HILL.	W. Rid. R.	Pt.	12574
Percy			

Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.
VICTORY	* 0/2/101 B5	469.	
BRITISH	do		
15. STAR	0/2/38.	230.	
Theatre of War first served in	(20) Balkans.		
Date of entry therein	7.7.15.		

Disc: 21-8-15
 Deleted from 1914-15 Star 0/2/38/201
 W. Riding Rgt. Auth 0/2/38.
 C.R.N. 472 by 20.8.20 2620/adr
 re-issued 17.11.5/A. 22.10.20. auths 2620/adr.

6/290733/ 2620/adr EF/9/4095 K. 1880.

MEDAL INDEX CARD for Stanley Archibald (source: The National Archives)

During the Great War the West Riding Regiment raised 24 battalions of which the 8th (service) battalion was the only one of the regiment to see service in the Gallipoli Campaign.

Gallipoli Campaign

The **Gallipoli campaign**, also known as the **Dardanelles Campaign** took place at the peninsula of Gallipoli in the Turkish Ottoman Empire between 25th April 1915 and 9th January 1916. It was one of the Allies great disasters during World War 1.

Germany and Austria-Hungary blocked Russia's land trade routes to Europe, while no easy sea route existed. Therefore the Allies were keen to capture the Ottoman capital of Istanbul and secure a sea route to Russia via the Black Sea. This would open an effective supply route to Russia and assist efforts on the Eastern Front, which in turn would help to relieve pressure on the Western Front.

The plan for attacking the Dardanelles was developed by Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, in an attempt to end the war early by creating a new war front that the Central Powers could not cope with.



Winston Churchill during WW1

The campaign was also the first major battle undertaken by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) during WW1 and is often considered to mark the birth of national consciousness in both of these countries. Anzac Day on the 25th April remains the most significant

commemoration of military casualties and veterans in Australia and New Zealand, surpassing Armistice Day/Remembrance Day.

Using ships of the Royal Navy, Churchill believed, partially due to faulty intelligence, that the straits could be forced, opening the way for a direct assault on Constantinople. This plan was approved and several of the Royal Navy's older and obsolete battleships were transferred to the Mediterranean.

Operations against the Dardanelles began on February 19th 1915 with British ships bombarding Turkish defenses in several attacks throughout February & March with little effect.



British fleet sailing up the Dardanelles, February 1915.

With the failure of the naval campaign, it became clear to Allied leaders that a ground force was going to be needed to eliminate the Turkish artillery on the Gallipoli Peninsula which commanded the straits.

The first landings began on April 25th 1915 and were badly mismanaged. Meeting stiff resistance and against difficult terrain, British troops took heavy casualties in establishing two beachheads at Helles and Gaba Tepe. Other Allied troops including the Australian's & New Zealander's also suffered heavy casualties during the Anzac landings.



Landings at Anzac Cove (Dardanelles) on 25th April 1915

The repeated failure of the Allies to make any progress at Gallipoli led to a new plan for the Dardanelles Campaign in the August offensive.

On the night of the 6th August 1915 a fresh landing of British troops, the 10th (Irish) Division and the 11th (Northern) Division, took place at Suvla Bay, five miles north of Anzac. The 8th battalion West Riding Regiment formed part of the 11th Division with Pte Percy Stell and Pte Stanley Archibald both involved in the Suvla Bay landings.



British troops landing at Suvla Bay, August 1915

Despite facing light opposition, the landing at Suvla Bay was mismanaged from the outset and quickly reached the same stalemate conditions that prevailed on the Anzac and Helles fronts.

Once again the Ottomans were able to win the race for the high ground of the Anafarta Hills, thereby rendering the Suvla front another case of static trench warfare.

Following the failure of the August Offensive, the Gallipoli campaign entered a hiatus while the future direction was debated. Attempts to sweep across the Turkish peninsula ended in failure and the persistent lack of progress was finally making a pessimistic impression in Britain.

By the end of August the Allies had lost over 40,000 men. Despite magnificent bravery by many British, Anzac and French soldiers, the Allied forces failed to achieve their objectives against the difficult terrain and stiff Turkish resistance they had severely underestimated.

In October 1915 the decision to evacuate from Gallipoli was made. The operation began at Sulva Bay on the 7th December. The last of the troops were evacuated from Helles on the 9th January, 1916.



View from the battleship HMS Cornwallis: Burning of British stores during the withdrawal from Gallipoli (source: www.gwpda.org/photos)

Casualty statistics for the Gallipoli (Dardanelles) campaign

Nations	Died	Wounded	Total Casualties
Great Britain	21,255	52,230	73,485
France (estimate)	10,000	17,000	27,000
Australia	8,709	19,441	28,150
New Zealand	2,721	4,752	7,473
India	1,358	3,421	4,779
Newfoundland	49	93	142
Turkey (Ottoman Empire)	86,692	164,617	251,309

Pte Percy Stell and Pte Stanley Archibald of the 8th battalion West Riding Regiment both survived the Suvla Bay landings on the night of the 6th August.

However Pte Percy Stell was reported as missing in action on the 21st August 1915. It was later confirmed that he had been **Killed in Action** on this day

He was 18 years of age

Pte Stanley Archibald survived the entire Dardanelles Campaign, but was **Killed in Action** the following year during the Battle of the Somme in France on the 7th July 1916.

Coincidentally, Percy Stell and Stanley Archibald had both previously lived in Harker Street, Sutton-in-Craven



Casualty Details

Name: STELL, PERCY

Initials: P

Nationality: United Kingdom

Rank: Private

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

Unit Text: 8th Bn.

Date of Death: 21/08/1915

Service No: 12574

Casualty Type: Commonwealth War Dead

Grave/Memorial Reference: Panel 117 to 119.

Memorial: HELLES MEMORIAL

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



Article Date: 17 September 1915

SUTTON SOLDIER REPORTED MISSING

News was received by Mr. and Mrs. Stell, Gordon Street, Sutton, on Monday afternoon, that their youngest son, Pte. Percy Stell, was reported missing in the Dardanelles from August 21st. Pte. Stell enlisted in Kitchener's Army shortly after war was declared. From Halifax he was removed to Grantham, and afterwards to Whitley Common, from which place he went out to the Dardanelles about eight weeks ago. Prior to joining the Army he was a member of the Sutton Scouts.

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

HELLES MEMORIAL



Helles Memorial, Turkey
(source: *Commonwealth War Graves Commission* www.cwgc.org/)



Helles Memorial, Turkey

The Helles Memorial is both the memorial to the Gallipoli Campaign and to the 20,763 men who fell in that campaign and whose graves are unknown or who were lost or buried at sea in Gallipoli waters.

Inscribed on it are the names of all the ships that took part in the campaign and the titles of the army formations and units which served on the Peninsula together with the names of 18,985 sailors, soldiers and marines from the United Kingdom, 248 soldiers from Australia, and 1,530 soldiers of the Indian Army.

In addition to the Helles Memorial, there are four other Memorials to the Missing at Gallipoli.

Pte Percy Stell is also remembered on the Sutton-in-Craven war memorial



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



Sutton-in-Craven War Memorial

(source: Rachel Simpson & Richard Whiteoak from the Glyn Whiteoak collection)

Pte Percy Stell 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 (name digitally altered)
Also referred to as a Death Plaque or Dead Man's Penny
(source: owned by Andrew Monkhouse)

FOR THE FALLEN

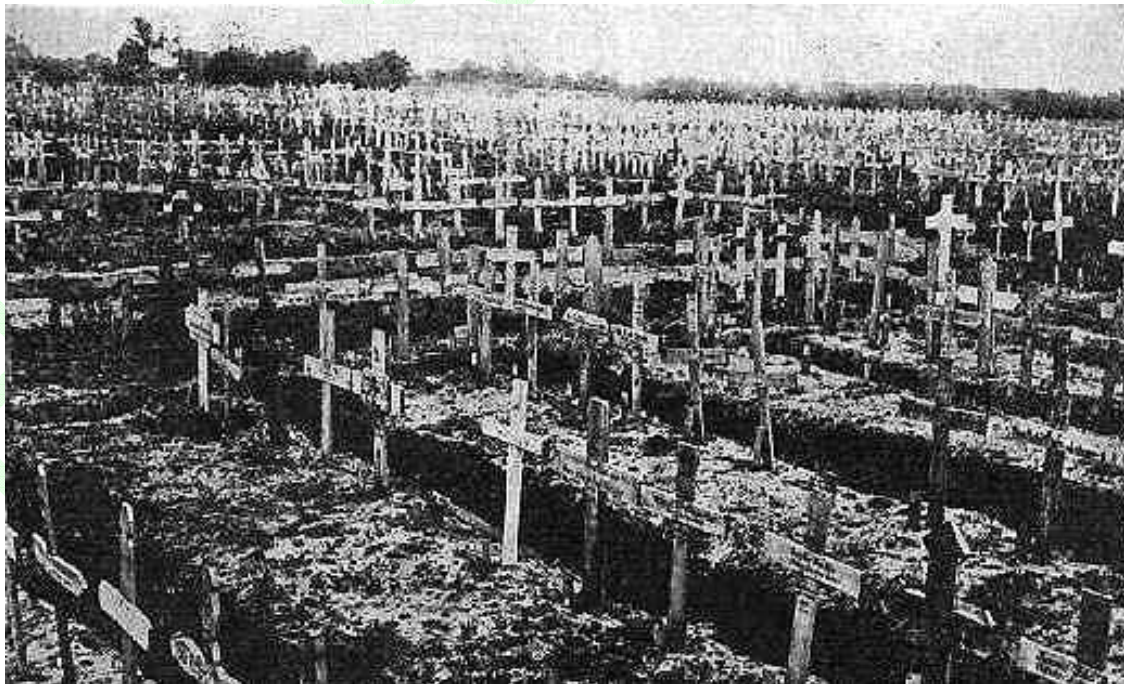
*THEY SHALL NOT GROW OLD, AS WE THAT ARE
LEFT GROW OLD*

*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)