

THE FALLEN OF SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN



SYLVESTER PETTY

WEST YORKSHIRE REGIMENT

KILLED IN ACTION 7TH OCTOBER 1916

BORN IN 1885 AT SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN, THE SON OF
WILLIAM AND JANE PETTY

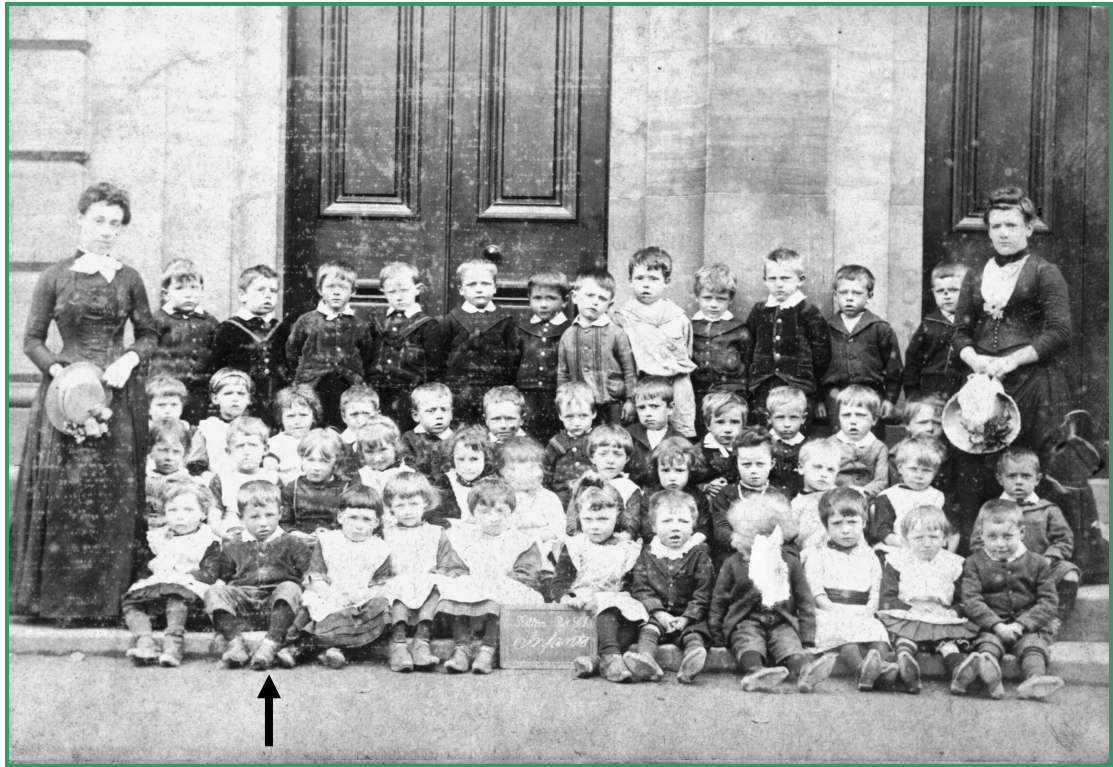
Petty Family History

- 1891 census shows William, his wife Jane, their 2 children and sister-in-law living at 20, Victoria Street, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

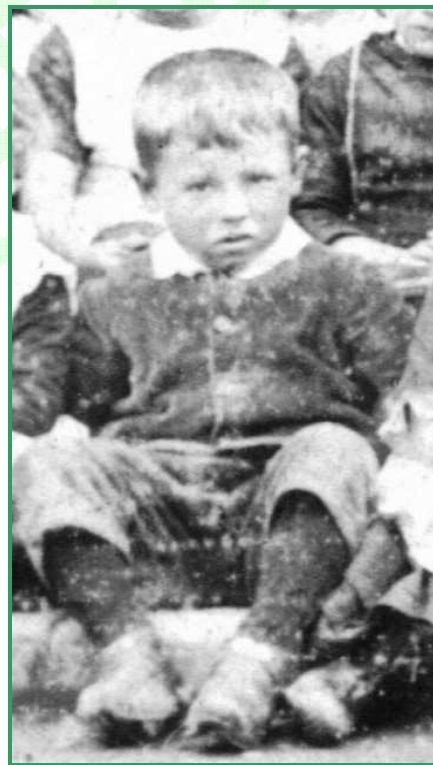
Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
William (Head)	51	Tailor	Sutton-in-Craven	1840 - 1902
Jane (wife)	44		Eastburn	1847 - 1906
Edith Ann	6		Sutton-in-Craven	1884 - 1964
Sylvester	5		Sutton-in-Craven	1885 - 1916
Sarah Ann Waite	38	Weaver	Eastburn	1853 - 1929



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



Sutton-in-Craven Parish Infants (circa 1890)
(source: Rachel Simpson & Richard Whiteoak from the Glyn Whiteoak collection)



Sylvester Petty
(source: as above)

- **1901 census** shows William, his wife Jane, their 2 children and sister-in-law still living at 20, Victoria Street, Sutton-in-Craven as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
William (Head)	61	Tailor	Sutton-in-Craven	1840 - 1902
Jane (wife)	54		Eastburn	1847 - 1906
Edith Ann	16	Woollen spinner	Sutton-in-Craven	1884 - 1964
Sylvester	15	Weft man, worsted Mill	Sutton-in-Craven	1885 - 1916
Sarah Ann Waite	48	Woollen weaver	Eastburn	1853 - 1929

- **1911 census** shows Sylvester and his sister Edith Ann both single (their parents now deceased), living at 170, Spencer Street, Keighley as follows:

Name	Age	Work	Birth place	Birth year
Sylvester (Head)	25	House painter	Sutton-in-Craven	1885 - 1916
Edith Ann (sister)	26		Sutton-in-Craven	1884 - 1964

World War 1



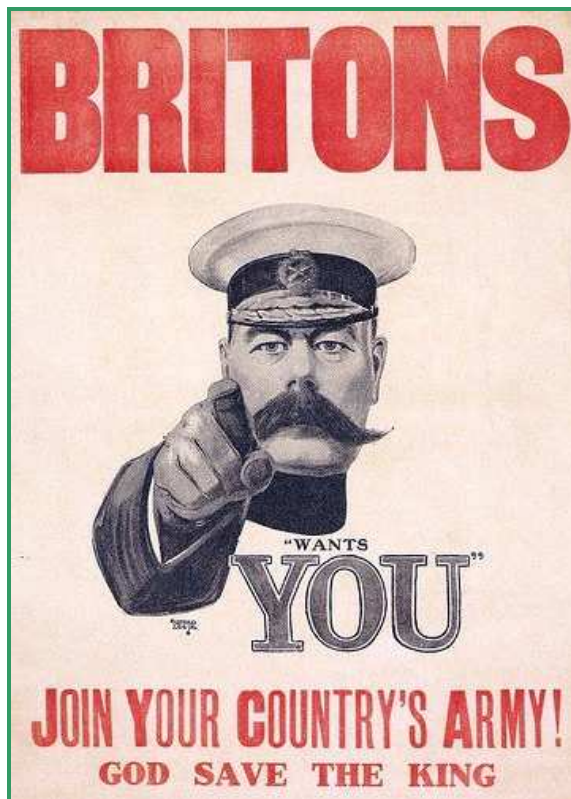
It had been **99 years** since Britain was last involved in a major European conflict following the defeat of Napoleon at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815

August 4th 1914

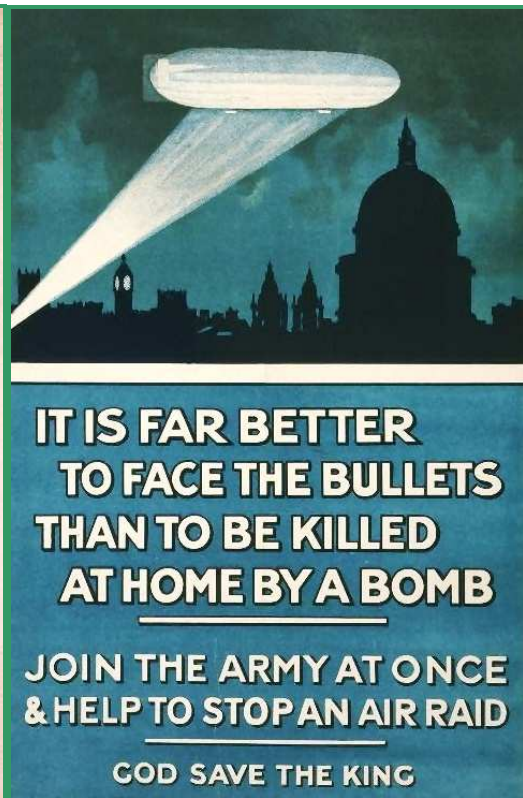
Britain declares war on Germany

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'**

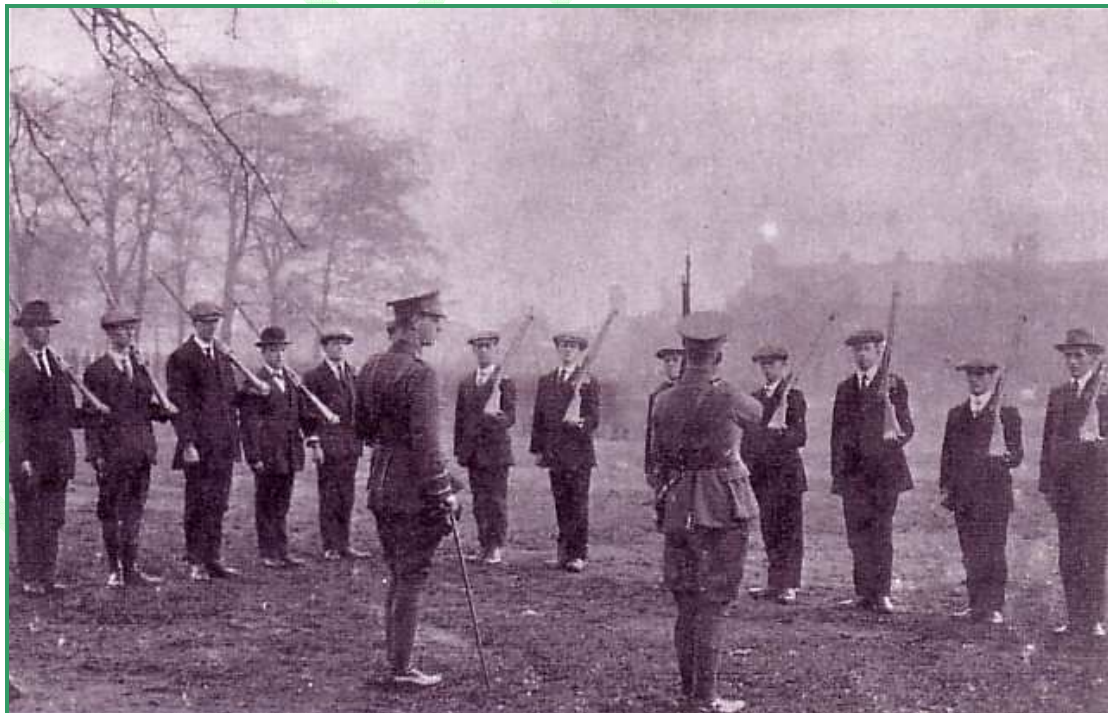
The New Armies: "Kitchener's Volunteers"



Earl Kitchener recruitment poster 1914



Parliamentary Recruiting Committee
London, 1915 (Feb)



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

Prior to the Great War, Sylvester Petty was employed as a house painter & decorator and was living with his sister Edith (his only sibling) at 170, Spencer St, Keighley. In the spring of 1915, Sylvester's sister Edith Ann Petty married Lynton Robinson in the North Bierley district of Yorkshire.

A couple of months earlier in February of 1915, Sylvester had responded to the call and enlisted into the 18th (service) battalion of the (Prince of Wales's Own) West Yorkshire Regiment. He commenced with the very low regimental number of 18-39 and with the rank of Private.

The 18th battalion West Yorkshire Regiment was otherwise known as the **2nd Bradford Pals battalion**. It was formed in Bradford on the 22nd January 1915 and training commenced at Manningham Park, before the battalion moved to Ripon. The 18th battalion was later attached to the 31st Division in June 1915

The 31st Division was the quintessential New Army Division, being made up entirely of **Pals battalions** from Accrington, Leeds, Bradford, Barnsley and Hull.

In December 1915 the 18th battalion moved to Egypt to complete its training before arriving in France in March 1916 in preparation for the **Battle of the Somme**.

During the Great War, the West Yorkshire Regiment raised a total of 37 battalions, including regular army, territorial, and battalions of the 'New Armies'. 66 Battle Honours were bestowed and 4 Victoria Crosses were awarded to the West Yorkshire Regiment.



WW1 West Yorkshire Regiment Cap Badge

After completing his training at Manningham Park, Sylvester Petty moved with the **2nd Bradford Pals battalion** to Ripon.

However prior to the 18th battalion relocating to Egypt in December 1915, Sylvester had been transferred to the 11th (service) battalion of the (Prince of Wales's Own) West Yorkshire Regiment. The reason for this battalion transfer is not known, but it may have been due to ill-health or some other cause.

As a consequence, Sylvester remained on home soil until he finally entered the Theatre of War arriving in France with the 11th battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment in April 1916. The 11th battalion had earlier been attached to the 23rd Division in October 1914.

On the 11th of June 1916 the 23rd Division infantry and artillery began intensive training for the upcoming **Battle of the Somme**.

Name:		Corps:	Rank:	Regt. No.
PETTY Sylvester		NO YORK R	1st Lt	18/39
Medal:	Roll:	Page:	Remarks:	
VICTORY	5/9/10415	18	K in A 7/10/16	
PARTIAL				
STAR				
Theatre of War first served in				
Date of entry thereof				

MEDAL INDEX CARD for Sylvester Petty
(source: *The National Archives*)



Pte Sylvester Petty
(source: photo supplied by Robert Smith)

Battle of the Somme

1st July – 18th November 1916

The Battle of the Somme was fought from the 1st July – the 18th November 1916 and claimed more than 1.5 million casualties.

The Battle of the Somme is best remembered for its first day, 1st July 1916 on which the British suffered 57,470 casualties, including **19,240 dead** - the bloodiest day in the history of the British Army.

Ironically, going 'over the top' at the Somme was the first taste of battle many of these men had, as many formed part of "**Kitchener's Volunteer Army**" persuaded to volunteer by posters showing Lord Kitchener himself summoning these men to arms to show their patriotism.



Going 'over the top'

The Somme campaign finally came to and end on the 18th November 1916 when the British 51st Highland Division took Beaumont Hamel just 5 miles into enemy territory, which had in fact been an objective for the first day.

The Somme became a metaphor for futile and indiscriminate slaughter. Over the course of the entire 142-day Somme campaign, the British Army suffered some 415,000 casualties, which worked out to be around 3,000 per day. The French lost 200,000 men and the German's nearly 500,000.

The 11th battalion West Yorkshire Regiment (part of the 23rd Division)

The 11th battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment was involved in numerous actions throughout the 142-day Somme campaign from July to November 1916. These actions included:

- The Battle of Albert including the capture of Contalmaison,
- The Battle of Bazentin Ridge
- The Battle of Pozieres
- The Battle of Flers-Courcelette
- The Battle of Morval
- The Battle of Le Transloy including the **capture of Le Sars**.

The **capture of Le Sars** was the task allotted to the 23rd Division and was ordered to take place on the 7th October 1916, having previously been postponed due to bad weather.

On the 7th October 1916, the day that Pte Sylvester Petty was killed in action, the southern parts of Le Sars was to be attacked by the 9th Yorkshire Regiment on the right and the 11th battalion of the West Yorkshire Regiment on the left.

As the 11th battalion West Yorkshire's moved in to the assault at 14:00 hrs they were at once met by heavy rifle and machine-gun fire from both the front and left flanks. The German artillery also shelled the area over which the attack was coming forward with devastating effect.

The attack lasted for several hours. From Le Sars along the Second Flers Line, British bombing parties pushed westwards and eventually drove the enemy 50 yards out of their trenches and away from their secured positions.

Finally the village of Le Sars was secured and held by the British and consolidated that evening by the 69th Brigade. The 11th battalion West Yorkshire's however were left very weak having lost a large number of men.

Pte Sylvester Petty was **Killed in Action** on the 7th October 1916 during the **capture of Le Sars**.

He was 30 years of age



Supplies for the troops fighting near Le Sars



Article Date: 27 October 1916

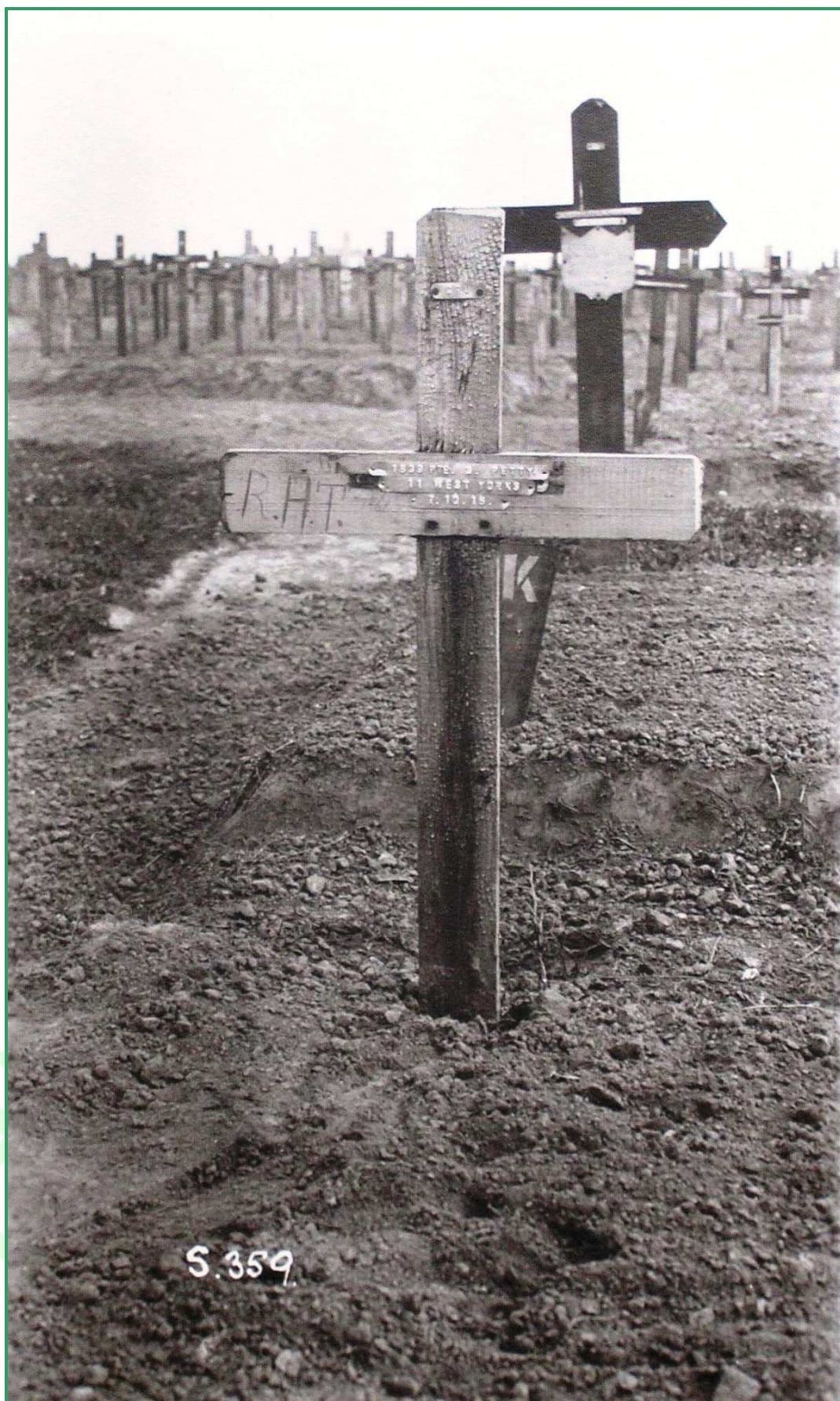
SUTTON-IN-CRAVEN - PRIVATE SYLVESTER PETTY KILLED

News has been received that Private Sylvester Petty, a former Sutton boy, has been killed in action 'somewhere in France'. Private Petty was a member of an old Sutton family, and when he resided in the district was an ardent follower and supporter of the Sutton United Football Club. He was also closely connected with the Sutton Baptist Church and Sunday School. He was employed as a house painter and decorator, an occupation which he relinquished at the outbreak of hostilities to join the West Riding Regiment (Bradford 'Pals'). After training at Ripon and other places he went with his regiment to France. Private Petty left the district a few years ago to take up his residence, along with his sister, in Keighley. He was about 31 years of age.

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



Grave site of Pte Sylvester Petty on the battlefield, France
(source: photo supplied by Robert Smith)



Grave site of Pte Sylvester Petty on the battlefield, France (as above)
(source: photo supplied by Robert Smith)

SUTTON SOLDIER KILLED IN FRANCE



PRIVATE SYLVESTER PETTY.

The death in action of **Private Sylvester Petty** has been officially notified. Pte. Petty had been in France since April last and had taken part in several engagements prior to his death, which is said to have been instantaneous. It is inferred that his Battalion took part in the capture of Le Sars on the Somme on the 7th of October, on which day he was killed.

Pte. Petty joined the West Yorkshire Regiment in February, 1915, and had therefore served 20 months with the Colours. He was born at Sutton Mill 30 years ago and his family have had a very long settlement at Sutton. He was for many years connected with the Sutton Baptist School and Chapel and was a fine type of soldier. For the past few years Pte. Petty had resided in Spencer Street, Keighley, with his sister, both parents having pre-deceased him.

Craven Herald report dated Nov 10th 1916
(source: photocopied by Robert Smith)

In Memory of

Private

Sylvester Petty

18/39, "A" Coy. 11th Bn., West Yorkshire Regiment (Prince of Wales's Own) who died on 07 October 1916

Age 30

Son of William and Jane Petty, of Sutton Mill, Keighley, Yorks.

Remembered with Honour

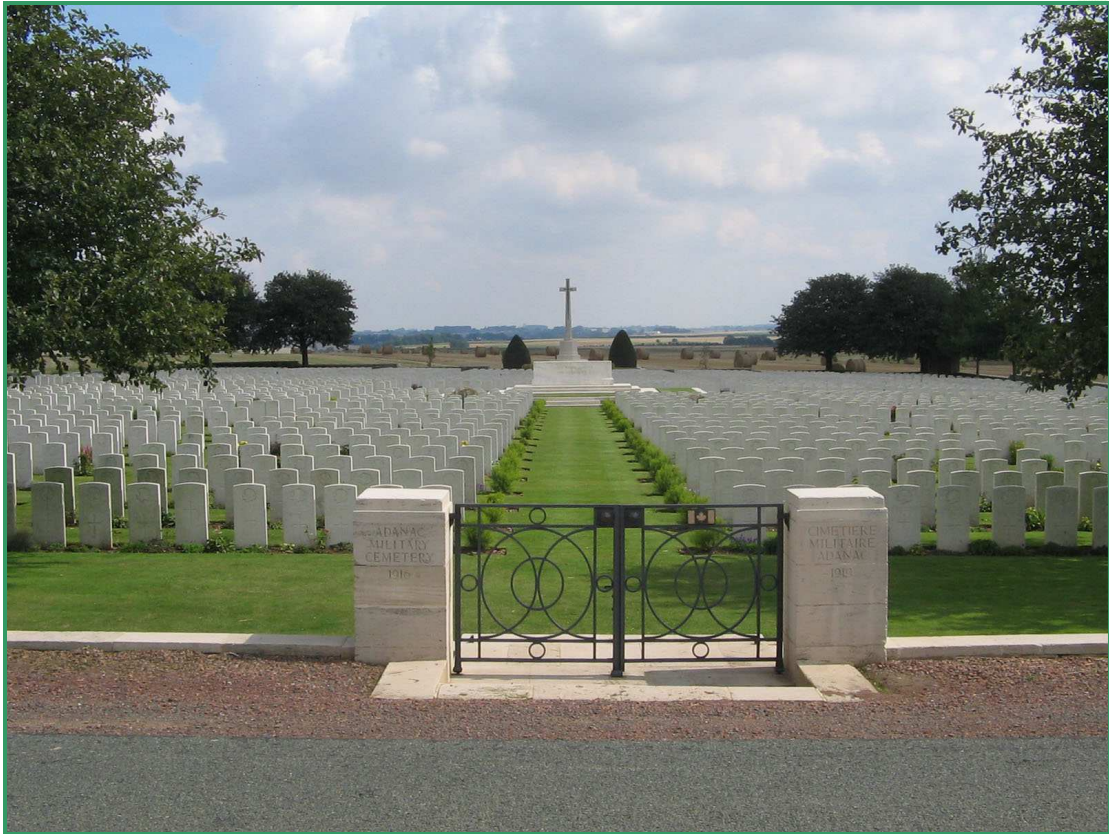
Adanac Military Cemetery, Miraumont



Commemorated in perpetuity by
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

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

ADANAC MILITARY CEMETERY



Adanac Military Cemetery, France

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

The Adanac Military Cemetery in France was constructed after the Armistice when graves were brought in from the battlefields and small surrounding cemeteries.

There are 3,186 Commonwealth burials and commemorations of the First World War in this cemetery including that of Pte Sylvester Petty.

Sylvester Petty's name was not recorded on the Sutton-in-Craven war memorial, or on the St 'Thomas' Church Roll of Honour recording the Great War '**Fallen**' of Sutton-in-Craven.



Adanac Military Cemetery, France
 (source: *Craven's Part in the Great War* www.cpgw.org.uk)

PETTY, Pte. Sylvester, 18/39. "A" Coy. 11th Bn. West Yorkshire Regt. Killed in action 7th Oct., 1916. Age 30. Son of William and Jane Petty, of Sutton Mill, Keighley, Yorks. III. J. I.

Index of Adanac Military Cemetery, France
 (source: www.Ancestry.co.uk)

Pte Sylvester Petty was posthumously awarded the
British War Medal & Victory Medal



Original pair of WW1 medals (source: Andrew Monkhouse war medal collection)

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: **Andrew Monkhouse war medal collection**)

Lest we Forget

CRAVEN'S ROLL OF HONOUR



PRIVATE SYLVESTER PETTY, Duke of Well.'s Regt.,
of Sutton, killed in action 7th October, 1916.
Aged 31 years.

Photo source left: Glyn Whiteoak collection

Photo source right: Robert Smith

(Craven's Part in the Great War original 1919 volume 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 2013)