

# Dinton Roll of Honour



*Lest we Forget*

## World War II



**5576973 PRIVATE**

**J. T. CLARK**

**WILTSHIRE REGIMENT**

**7TH AUGUST, 1944 AGE 21**

*A Devoted Son*

*Who Gave His All.*

*To The World Just One*

*To Us The World R.I.P.*

# James Thomas Clark

James Thomas Clark's birth was registered in March quarter, 1923 in the district of Wilton, Wiltshire to parents John M. Clark & Helena Clark (nee Cockbain).

James Thomas Clark enlisted in the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Wiltshire Regiment. He was given a service number of 5576973 & the rank of Private.

## **The Wiltshire Regiment:**

During World War 2, in addition to the two regular army battalions, the Wiltshire Regiment (Duke of Edinburgh's) raised six other war service battalions. Two of these would be used on foreign service (4th and 5th Battalions), while the other four remained in Great Britain as home defence units.

The 4th and 5th battalions of the Wiltshire Regiment were both Territorial Army (TA) units called up to active duty with the start of the Second World War. The 4th Wilts had been the original TA battalion assigned to the Wiltshire Regiment when the TA was reorganized during the 1920s. The 5th Wilts was formed as the second line TA unit as part of the expansion in March 1939. From 1939 to 1944, they remained in England, both attached to 129 Infantry Brigade, part of 43 (Wessex) Division. Although 5th Wilts was a second line TA unit, it was assigned to a first line brigade and division.

As part of 129 Brigade, the 4th Wilts and 5th Wilts, participated in the Normandy Campaign, landing in France on 24 June 1944. Upon arriving in theatre, the division became part of Lieutenant-General Sir Richard O'Connor's VIII Corps. Both battalions would be heavily engaged in many battles during the campaign across North-West France, the low countries, and Germany. During the Normandy Campaign, this included the Battle of Odom, the fight for Hill 112, and the capture of Mont Picon.

## **The 5th Battalion:**

The early part of 1944 was spent containing the hard training for the invasion of France. They were not destined to land on the 6th June but later with the rest of the 43rd Division who were designated as 'Break out' troops. They embarked on the 18th June landing at Arromanches. After landing they got organised and their first taste of action took place on the 26th when the 4th Battalion cleared the villages of Bouliesse Le Perron and Marcelet. What followed was prolonged fighting in very difficult country. They took up a position in an area known as 'The Oden Box' followed by a sustained attack on Hill 112 which was strongly held by the 10th SS Panzer Division, a tough, experienced and battle hardened division. This was very much a West Country 'battle with both battalions fighting alongside their comrades in the Dorset's and Duke of Cornwall Light Infantry. (All these units are now part of 'The Rifles) On the 22nd July they took part in the capture of the village of Maltot. On the 30th July the 43rd Wessex Division was transferred to the XXX Corps and there in the Bocage country captured Bois du Homme, near Caumont, On the 4th August both battalions played a significant part in the capture of Mont Pincon. In August they crossed the River Seine, the 4th Battalion providing support to the 5th Battalion who carried the main assault. Under a smoke screen they embarked in the assault boats and set off. Half way across they hit a submerged sandbank, and at the same time the wind dispersed the covering smoke. The German Machine gunners then opened up and only one of the original eight boats survived. One boat reached the far bank and effectively formed the bridgehead for the following troops.

Private James Thomas Clark died on 7th August, 1944, at the age of 21 years. Pte Clark was buried in Bayeux War Cemetery, France in Section XXVII. F. 23 and is acknowledged with a Commonwealth War Graves Headstone.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Pte James Thomas Clark as the son of John M. and Helena Clark of Teffont, Wiltshire.

### **War Diaries of 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment:**

Date - 1<sup>st</sup> August, 1944

Location – Bois du Homme, France

Entry -

*[1-2] Bn moved fwd to attack BOIS DU HOMME and Pt 361. Bn held up by lightly held enemy posn at R 728538. This was quickly dealt with, the Bn having 2 SP guns to its credit on move fwd to 361. Bn dig in def posn on 361. 2nd. Major Metcalf 2 IC captured with Mail 15 cwt.*

Date – 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 1944

Location – Bois du Homme, France

Entry –

*Quiet day.*

Date – 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1944

Location – Bois du Homme, France

Entry –

*Bn regroup for move to MOUNT PINCON. [4-5] Bn in all round def posn MONTAMY.*

Date – 5th August, 1944

Location – Mont Pincon, France

Entry –

*Bn moved fwd to attack MOUNT PINCON. Held up by hy Mortar and shell fire on X Rds 801449. "D" Coy crossed river and est brhead at 812448, but against hy opposition had to withdraw West of River. During this operation Major Thomas OC "D" Coy was killed. Padre killed.*

Date – 6th August, 1944

Location – Mont Pincon, France

Entry –

*Owing to hy cas "A" and "B" Coy join forces, also "C" and "D" Coys before reaching start line. 1430hrs. H for attack to clear MOUNT PINCON. "A" "B" fwd "C" "D" rear. Bn reached X Rds 821448 having suffered hy cas incl CO. Adjutant although badly wounded carried on. Major Roberts, 4 Som LI took command of Bn. When Major Roberts took over only 63 Riflemen out of 4 Coys were then in action. These were formed into all round defence to hold X Rds 821448, which was vital to keep open the communications of the other Bns of the Bde and protect right flank which was otherwise completely open. Arty fire was brought on to predicted counter preparation tasks.*

Date – 7th August, 1944

Location – Mont Pincon, France

Entry –

*Bn held this posn under continuous shell and mortar fire and against enemy counter attacks until finally relieved by 5 DCLI at 1900hrs. 1800hrs. Bn relieved by 5 DCLI 214 Bde, and returned to "A" Ech at 748460.*

*(Source: [The Wardrobe](#) – Home of Infantry Regiments of Bershire and Wiltshire)*

James Thomas Clark is also remembered on the Dinton War Memorial, which is located at the northern end of the Churchyard.



(Photos by Andrew Stacey)



*They Died That We Might Live*

## BAYEUX WAR CEMETERY

The Bayeux War Cemetery is the largest Second World War cemetery of Commonwealth soldiers in France, located in Bayeux, Normandy. The cemetery contains 4,648 burials, mostly of the Invasion of Normandy. Opposite this cemetery stands the Bayeux Memorial which commemorates more than 1,800 casualties of the Commonwealth forces who died in Normandy and have no known grave.

There was little actual fighting in Bayeux although it was the first French town of importance to be liberated. Bayeux War Cemetery contains burials brought in from the surrounding districts and from hospitals that were located nearby.

The cemetery grounds were assigned to the United Kingdom in perpetuity by France in recognition of the sacrifices made by the British Empire in the defense and liberation of France during the war. In addition to the Commonwealth burials, there are 366 graves of German soldiers. (CWGC)

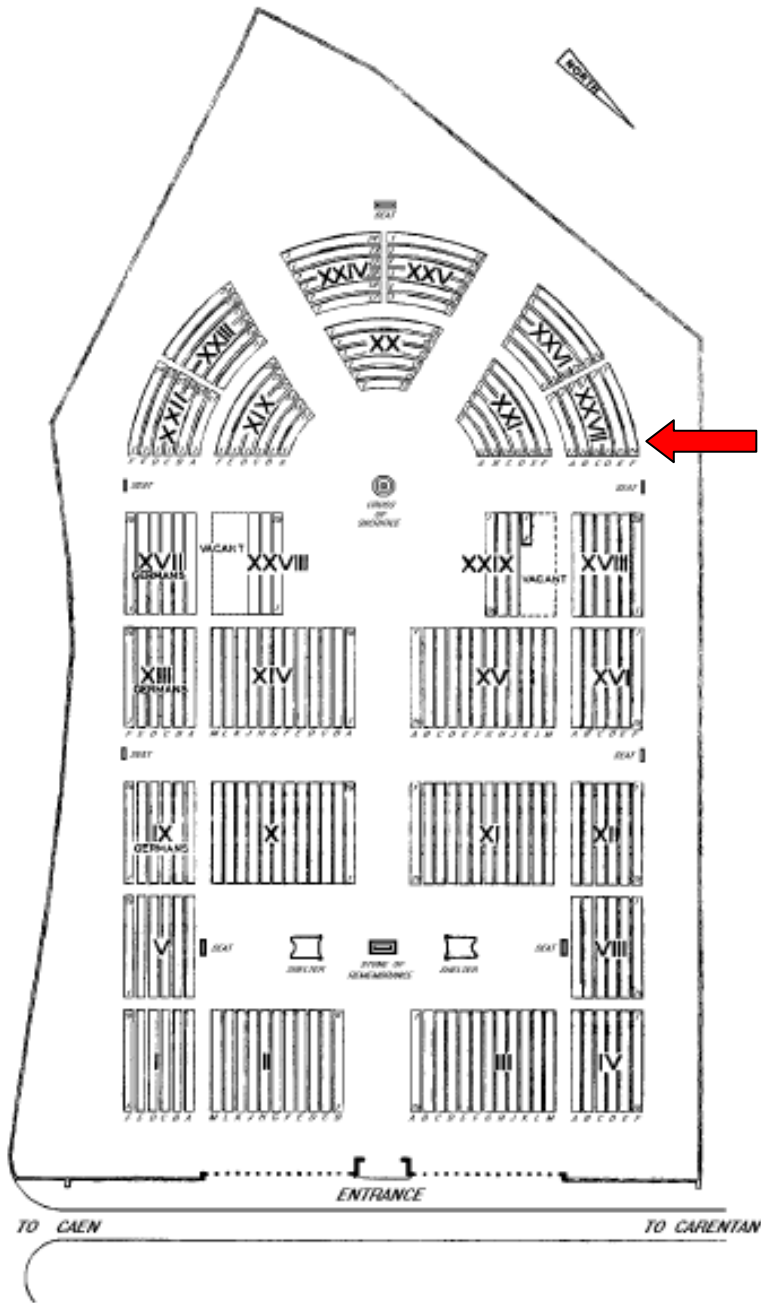


*(CWGC Photos)*





*(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)*



**BAYEUX WAR CEMETERY**

*Arrow shows location of Private James Thomas Clark's headstone*

