

# Sutton Veny

## Roll of Honour



*Lest we Forget*

### World War I



37490 PRIVATE

**G. N. COOPER**

12TH BN (WEST SOMERSET YEOMANRY)

SOMERSET LIGHT INFANTRY

27TH DECEMBER, 1917 AGE 25

## George Nelson COOPER

George Nelson Cooper was born at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire in 1893 to parents George & Annie Cooper. His birth was registered in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire in the September quarter of 1893.

(George Cooper, father of George Nelson Cooper, may have previously been known as George Stevens Trollope. The 1891 England Census recorded George Trollope (Thatcher, aged 31, born Sutton Veny) living at 13 Longbridge Deverill Road, Sutton Veny with his wife – Mary A. Trollope (possibly nee Collins) (aged 30, born Sutton Veny) & their 5 children – all born Sutton Veny – Katherine Trollope (Scholar, aged 7), Alice M. Trollope (Scholar, aged 5), Gertrude Trollope (aged 3), Elsie J. Trollope (aged 1) & Alma (aged 3 months). The last 3 Trollope children – Gertrude, Elsie & Alma match those in the 1901 England Census (listed below) but with the surname Cooper. Previously in the 1871 England Census - a George Trollop, (Farm Boy, aged 11, born Sutton Veny) was living with his Uncle & Aunt at Sutton Street, Sutton Veny. The Uncle & Aunt were listed as Thomas Cooper (Thatcher, aged 57) & Mary Cooper (aged 49).

The 1901 England Census recorded George N. Cooper as an 8 year old living with his family at Deverill Road, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire. George's parents were listed as George Cooper (Thatcher, aged 41, born Sutton Veny) & Mary A. Cooper (aged 39, born Sutton Veny). George was one of six children listed on this Census – Gertrude L. (General servant, aged 13), Elsie (aged 11), Alma (aged 10), then George, Florence M. (aged 7) & Harold C. (aged 5). All the six children on this Census had been born at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.

The 1911 England Census recorded George Nelson Cooper as an 18 year old Farm Labourer, living with his parents & younger brother in a 7 roomed dwelling at Deverill Road, Sutton Veny, Warminster. Harold's parents were listed as George Cooper (Thatcher, aged 51) & Annie Cooper (aged 49). George & Annie Cooper had been married for 28 years, having had a total of 9 children, with 1 child deceased. Harold's older brother was listed as Harold Charles Cooper (Farm Labourer, aged 15).

George Nelson Cooper married Elizabeth Amy Blackmore in the September quarter, 1916 (possibly 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 1916 at St. Katharine's Church, East Woodlands, Somerset).

George Nelson Cooper enlisted with the West Somerset Yeomanry & was given the rank of Private & a service number of 2190. Private George Nelson Cooper's records show that he was transferred to Somerset Light Infantry & was given the service number of 37490. He had enlisted at Frome, Somerset & was last attached to 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

Private George Nelson Cooper was killed in action on 27<sup>th</sup> December, 1917, aged 25 years in Egypt.

### 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry

On the outbreak of war the Somerset Light Infantry consisted of two Regular, one Special Reserve (3rd) and two Territorial battalions (4th and 5th). During the course of the war the two Territorial battalions each formed a second and third line battalion (2/4th, 3/4th, 2/5th and 3/5th), and in addition four Service battalions (Kitchener) were raised, 6th to 9th, two Home Service battalions, 10th and 13th, and two more Territorial battalions, 11th and 12th.

The Somerset Light Infantry saw action in the Middle East as well as the Western Front.

In February, 1916 the 1/4th battalion arrived at Basra to take part in an attempted relief of Kut el Amara, where General Townshend's forces were under siege, before taking part in localised actions in and around Basra. The other battalions in the Middle East, the 12th (formerly the West Somerset Yeomanry), 1/5th and 2/4th were occupied with the recapture of Palestine from the Turks. These battalions took part in the second and third

battles of Gaza. The third battle of Gaza, launched on 31 October 1917, was a success and by mid-December the British had regained control of Jerusalem.

The 12th (West Somerset Yeomanry) Battalion was converted from a yeomanry regiment to infantry in Ismaila, Egypt in January 1917, serving with the 74th Division. In 1917, the 74th Division was involved in the Second Battle of Gaza (17 – 19 April, 1917), the Third Battle of Gaza (27th October – 7th November, 1917, including the Capture of Beersheba on 31st October and the capture of the Sheria Position on 6th November), The capture of Jerusalem (8 – 9th December, 1917) & the Defence of Jerusalem (27 – 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1917).

The 74<sup>th</sup> Division were sent to France in May 1918.

At the eleventh hour, of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918 the war ended, 4,756 soldiers from the Somerset Light Infantry had died for King and Country and one soldier had been awarded the Victoria Cross.

### **The Defence of Jerusalem (27 – 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1917)** *(Wikipedia)*

[The defence of Jerusalem, 26 -30th December 1917, was the last significant action during the British invasion of Palestine in 1917. Jerusalem had fallen on 9th December, but the British line north of the city was rather ragged. General Allenby decided to mount one further offensive, with the aim of pushing the Turks back to a line ten miles north of the city, running from Beitin to Nalin. This would then join up with the right flank of XXI corps, on the coastal plains.]

Officially recognised by the British as one of three battles which made up the "Jerusalem Operations", along with the Battle of Nebi Samwil and the subsidiary Battle of Jaffa, this engagement occurred a month after the Ottoman armies had launched their counterattacks; between 26th and 30th December 1917. The XX Corps' infantry divisions, the 10th (Irish), the 60th (2/2nd London), and the 74th (Yeomanry) Divisions with support from infantry in the 53rd (Welsh) Division fought the Seventh Ottoman Army's III Corps' 24th, 26th and 53rd Divisions.

After the evacuation of Jerusalem by the Ottoman Seventh Army, the British XX Corps held a line which ran across the Jerusalem to Jericho and Jerusalem to Nablus roads 4 miles (6.4 km) north and east of Jerusalem. This line continued to the west through the hills to Beit Ur el Foka and Suffa. Jerusalem was still within range of Ottoman artillery and with the opposing sides in such close proximity there was still the risk of counterattack. An offensive to push the Ottoman Army further northwards was planned for 24 December 1917, but was delayed due to bad weather.

In a letter to the War Office, Allenby had written on 4th December of his desire to capture Bireh. The plan now was for infantry from the 60th (2/2nd London) Division to advance north astride the Jerusalem to Nablus road with infantry from the 74th (Yeomanry) Division advancing eastwards from Beit Ur el Foka to converge on the Bireh-Ramallah ridge.

The British were prepared for battle when an Ottoman Army counterattack was launched at 01:30 on 27th December, which fell on the infantry from the 179th (2/4th London) Brigade, 60th (2/2nd London) Division, on the Nablus road. The Ottoman force's initial objectives were a line of villages, including Nebi Samweil 1 mile (1.6 km) in front of their starting positions. They were focused towards Tell el Ful, a hill east of the Nablus road about 3 miles (4.8 km) north of Jerusalem defended by the 60th (2/2nd London) Division. This Ottoman attack on Tell el Ful initially drove the British outposts back and captured several important places. However, the engagement continued for two days and was ultimately unsuccessful.

Also during the morning of 27th December the British infantry from the 10th (Irish) and the 74th (Yeomanry) Divisions advanced about 4000 yds (4000 m) on a front of 6 miles (9.7 km). And the next day Chetwode, commander of XX Corps, ordered infantry in the 10th (Irish) Division to attack towards Ramallah.

The 60th (2/2nd London) Division took El Jib, Er Ram, and Rafat while the 53rd (Welsh) Division covered their left. The 74th (Yeomanry) Division captured Beitunia and the 10th (Irish) Division pushed to the east of Ain Arik. With Ottoman and German machine guns hard to locate amongst the boulders, the fighting was severe and stubborn. On 29th November the 60th (2/2nd London) and 74th (Yeomanry) Divisions were joined by the 53rd (Welsh) Division. A general British infantry advance on a 12-mile (19 km) front moved their front line 6 miles

(9.7 km) on the right and 3 miles (4.8 km) on the left. They pushed the whole line along the Nablus road to beyond Ramallah and Bireh by 30th December. Final objectives were gained and the line along the whole front secured.

The Ottoman Army lost over 1,000 casualties and 750 prisoners; the British infantry captured 24 machine guns and three automatic rifles.

Private George Nelson Cooper is remembered on the Jerusalem Memorial, Israel and Palestine – Panel No. 16. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private George Nelson Cooper, 37490, 12<sup>th</sup> (West Somerset Yeomanry) Battalion, Somerset Light Infantry as being the son of George and Annie Cooper, of High Street, Sutton Veny, Warminster, Wilts; husband of Amy Elizabeth Lindsay (formerly Cooper) of Park Rd, Cabramatta, Sydney, Australia.

Private George Nelson Cooper was entitled to the British War & Victory Medals. His Medal Index Card does not show a date that he had entered a Theatre of War.

Research has shown that George Nelson Cooper may be remembered on the War Memorial in St. Katharine's Church, East Woodlands, Somerset. The information provided states that George Nelson Cooper, born Sutton Veny, was chauffeur to the Rev. Dr Dunn of East Woodlands Vicarage & had joined the West Somerset Yeomanry on 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1916.

George N. Cooper is remembered on the 1914 -1919 Roll of Honour located inside St. John the Evangelist Church at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.

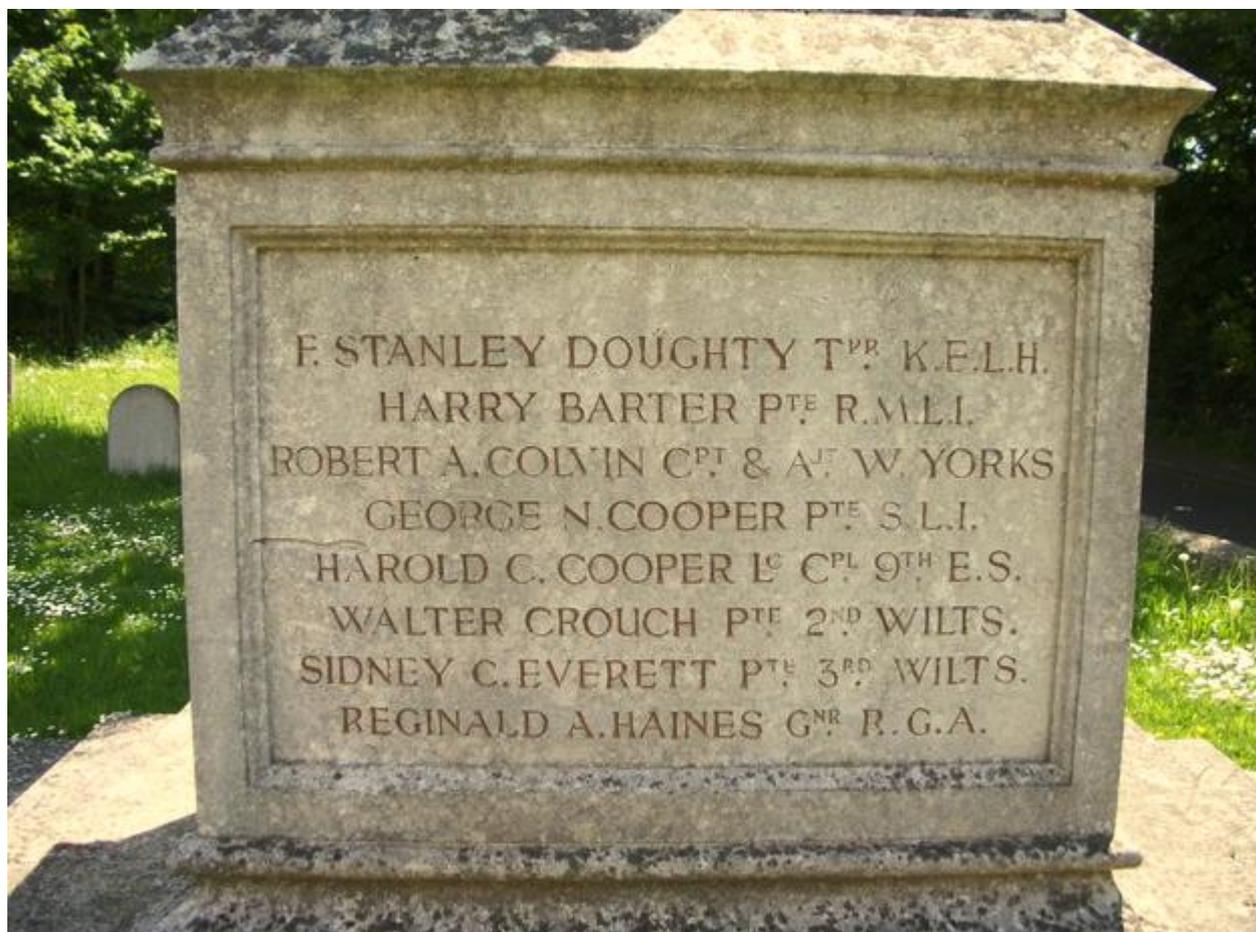


G. N. Cooper is also honoured in the Casualties of World War 1 Diocese of Salisbury Memorial Book.

George N. Cooper is also remembered on the Sutton Veny War Memorial located in the foreground of St. John the Evangelist churchyard.



**Sutton Veny War Memorial** (Photos courtesy of Andrea Charlesworth)



## Jerusalem Memorial

The Jerusalem Memorial stands in Jerusalem War Cemetery, 4.5 kilometres north of the walled city and is situated on the neck of land at the north end of the Mount of Olives, to the west of Mount Scopus. The cemetery is found on Churchill Blvd, sandwiched between Hadassah Hospital and the Hyatt Hotel. An Australian Memorial is opposite the cemetery entrance.

At the outbreak of the First World War, Palestine (now Israel) was part of the Turkish Empire and it was not entered by Allied forces until December 1916. The advance to Jerusalem took a further year, but from 1914 to December 1917, about 250 Commonwealth prisoners of war were buried in the German and Anglo-German cemeteries of the city.

By 21 November 1917, the Egyptian Expeditionary Force had gained a line about five kilometres west of Jerusalem, but the city was deliberately spared bombardment and direct attack. Very severe fighting followed, lasting until the evening of 8 December, when the 53rd (Welsh) Division on the south, and the 60th (London) and 74th (Yeomanry) Divisions on the west, had captured all the city's prepared defences. Turkish forces left Jerusalem throughout that night and in the morning of 9 December, the Mayor came to the Allied lines with the Turkish Governor's letter of surrender. Jerusalem was occupied that day and on 11 December, General Allenby formally entered the city, followed by representatives of France and Italy.

Meanwhile, the 60th Division pushed across the road to Nablus, and the 53rd across the eastern road. From 26 to 30 December, severe fighting took place to the north and east of the city but it remained in Allied hands.

JERUSALEM WAR CEMETERY was begun after the occupation of the city, with 270 burials. It was later enlarged to take graves from the battlefields and smaller cemeteries in the neighbourhood.

There are now 2,514 Commonwealth burials of the First World War in the cemetery, 100 of them unidentified.

Within the cemetery stands the JERUSALEM MEMORIAL, commemorating 3,300 Commonwealth servicemen who died during the First World War in operations in Egypt or Palestine and who have no known grave.

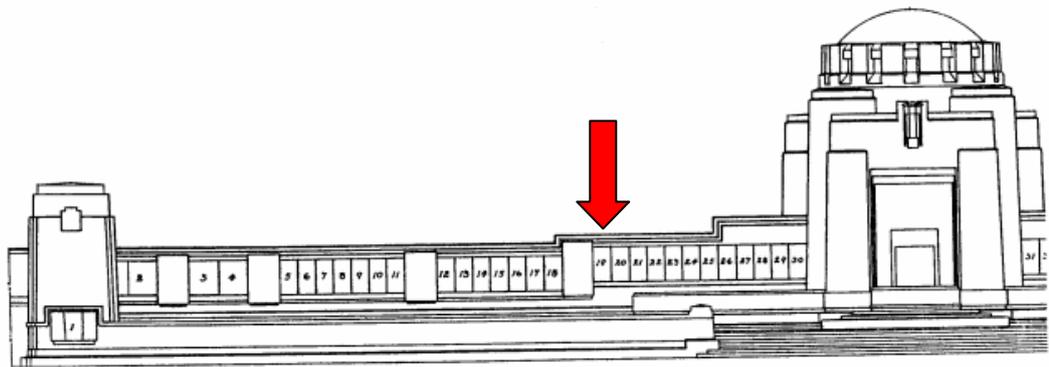
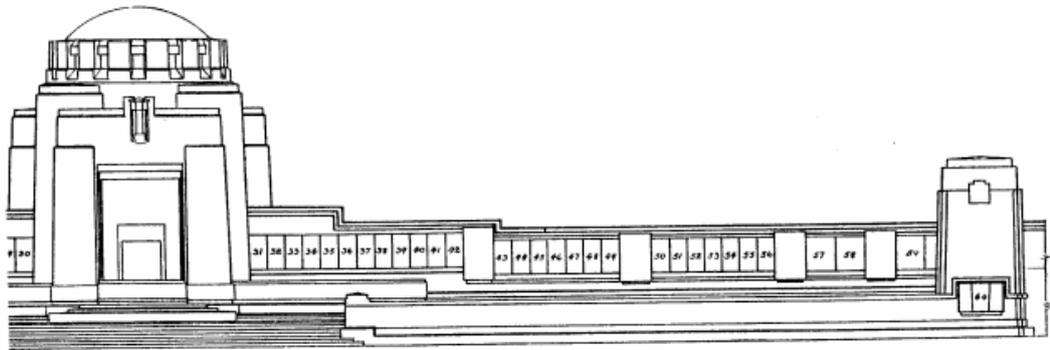
*(Information & Jerusalem Memorial photos from CWGC)*





Panel 16 Upper and Lower

<b>SUFFOLK REGIMENT</b>		No. 16 UPPER
SECOND LIEUT. VINCENT W. M.	PRIVATE CAMERON G. W.	
CORPORAL WRIGHT H.	COLE J.	
LANCE CORPORAL SMITH S. M.	PEAKES F. H.	
PRIVATE BLYTHE H. R.	HARROD F.	
SOMERSET LIGHT INFANTRY	HAWKES R.	
SECOND LIEUT. FEAR E. L. B.	POULSON E. G.	
SERJEANT HADLEY A. T.	SADLER W. C.	
	SIMMONS F. W.	
	STIFF J.	
	TAYLOR E.	
<b>SOMERSET LIGHT INFANTRY</b>		
SECOND LIEUT. FEAR E. L. B.	PRIVATE GOOD W.	
SERJEANT HADLEY A. T.	HAYSHAM E. M.M.	
	HILL H. J.	
	PAYNE G.	
<b>SUFFOLK REGIMENT</b>		
LANCE CORPORAL HOLT R. L.	RASELL W. O.	No. 16 LOWER
PRIVATE ADAMS W. M.M.	ROBINSON T.	
BARNES F. C.	ROWE G.	
BRAIN J.	SMITH J.	
COOPER G. N.	SMITH W.	
COTTERELL B. E.	SPENCER W. J.	
CRAIG J.	STOCK S.	
FOOTE L. P.	SULLY A.	
FOXFORD A.	THORNE A.	
BEDFORDSHIRE REGIMENT	TURNER J.	
COY. QMR. SERJT. TOPHAM A.	VALLANCE W. R.	
LANCE SERJEANT HULL C.	WHARTON J.	
	LANCE CORPORAL BOON S.	
	GILLETT I. F.	
	MOATE R. J. C.	
	SNOXELL H.	
16		



LAY-OUT SHOWING THE NUMBERING OF THE PANELS