

# Sutton Veny

## Roll of Honour



*Lest we Forget*

### World War I



**3/9272 PRIVATE**

**W. CROUCH**

**2ND BN WILTSHIRE REGIMENT**

**11TH APRIL, 1917 AGE 27**

## Walter CROUCH

Walter Crouch was born at Sutton Veny, Wiltshire in 1891 to parents Henry & Charlotte Crouch (nee Leversuch). His parents had married in 1872 at Amesbury Register Office, Wiltshire. Walter's birth was registered in the district of Warminster, Wiltshire in the June quarter of 1891.

The 1901 England Census recorded Walter Crouch as a 9 year old living with his family at Duck Street, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire. His parents were listed as Henry Crouch (Agricultural Labourer, aged 49, born Wyllye) & Charlotte Crouch (aged 50, born Shrewton). Walter was the youngest of 3 children on this Census – George H. (Groom, aged 28, born Shrewton), Rose E. (aged 13, born Sutton Veny) & Walter (born Sutton Veny).

The 1911 England Census recorded Walter Crouch as an 18 year old Farm Labourer (Army Pensioner) living with his family at Sutton Parva, Heytesbury, Wiltshire in a 4 roomed dwelling. His parents were listed as Henry Crouch (Farm Labourer, aged 59, born Wyllye) & Charlotte Crouch (aged 60, born Shrewton). Walter's parents had been married for 39 years & had 8 children, with one deceased. Walter was the youngest of 3 children listed on this Census also – Frederick (Farm Labourer, aged 36, born Shrewton), Frank (Farm Labourer, aged 26, born Shrewton) then Walter.

Walter Crouch enlisted at Devizes, Wiltshire with the Duke of Edinburgh's (Wiltshire) Regiment. His place of residence was Warminster, Wiltshire. He was given the rank of Private & a service number of 3/9272. Private Walter Crouch's records show that he was attached to 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment.

Private Walter Crouch died of wounds on 11<sup>th</sup> April, 1917, aged 27 years.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Wiltshire Regiment:**

**1914** - The 2nd Battalion mobilized on the 29th July 1914 when the 'Alarm in Fortress' was sounded in Gibraltar, sailing for England a month later. They landed at Zeebrugge as part of the 7th Division in October. Their initial deployment to defend Antwerp was abandoned after it was captured by the Germans. They redeployed to a position East of Ypres and very soon were in action at Reutel near Ypres. This first action for many was also their last as the battalion lost 450 men and 18 officers captured, 76 men and 7 officers were killed and 229 wounded after being assaulted by two complete German Regiments. After many other actions they ended 1914 in the line at Fleurbaix.

**1915** - The 2nd Battalion started 1915 in the Fleurbaix area remaining in the waterlogged trenches when they were relieved by the Canadians in March. They were removed from the line to prepare for a major assault at Neuve Chapelle which started on the 9th of March. By the 14th March the battalion had suffered nearly 400 casualties. After a few days rest they returned to the line at Laventie where they resumed trench warfare. In May the battalion took part in the battle of Festubert where they suffered 158 casualties for one mile of ground taken. This was followed by a rest period in the Bethune area where they were reinforced. In June they were one of the leading battalions in the attack at Givenchy where after taking significant casualties the operation was cancelled. This was followed by many months of trench warfare in different sectors leading up to the Battle of Loos in September where their casualty figure was 400. Rest and reorganisation followed and in early December they were again redeployed to another Division, the 30th ending the year at Authieux.

**1916** - The 2nd Battalion started 1916 in the area of Amiens. They remained in this general area reliving units in trenches and training for an offensive that was going to take place in July. On the 1st July they were in support in the area of Montauban, followed by two days of attacks. They remained in this area for most of July. On the 8th July they played a leading part in the attack on Trones Wood and at one point bayoneted their way through what remained of the German defenders in the wood. They suffered 240 casualties in this action but were awarded plus 23 decorations for gallantry. Further attacks followed in the Somme and Flers areas and they ended the year just South of Arras.

**1917** - The 2nd Battalion spent the first three months around Arras. On the 9th April they took part in the attack on the Hindenburg Line Very few men reached the objective and those that did found that the German wire was undamaged. On the 11th April they came out of the line weaker by 16 officers and 363 other ranks. After ten days rest they returned for a further weeks fighting in the same area. They then spent a month training before a long march north to the area of Ypres. For most of July they were in training. On the 31st July they took part in the Third Battle of Ypres near Hooze. In Late August they relieved the Australians on the newly capture Messines Ridge. They remained here for three months digging deeper and taking part in many trench raids. In November they moved to the Gheluvelt area, where they ended the year of 1917.

## 2nd Battalion – War Diary 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1917

### Location – France, Trenches

At 1.30 am a party of 100 OR of "D" company under the command of Lieut FRISBY went forward to attack the MILL near the HENIN - NEUVILLE VITASSE ROAD. The attack met with considerable resistance, and the attackers were forced to retire, having sustained heavy casualties. Lieut N FRISBY was wounded and Lieut SR PARSONS killed, and 35 other ranks became casualties. Lieut BEARNE and one platoon moved forward to cover the retirement. It was ascertained from prisoners taken later that the garrison of this MILL was at the time of the attack 120 other ranks and 2 machine guns. At 5.30am the main attack on the HINDENBURG LINE commenced. NEUVILLE VITASSE and ST MARTIN - sur - COJEUL, the villages on our flanks, were captured, and at 11.38am the 21st Brigade attacked with the 2nd Wiltshire Regt on the right, the 18th King's (Liverpool) Regt on the left, and the 19th Manchester Regt in support. The distance between the assembly positions of this Battalion and their objective varied between 2,000 and 2,400 yards. The Battalion advanced in artillery formation, the first wave being composed of "A" company on the right and "B" company on the left, the second wave was composed of "C" company on the right and "D" company on the left, each wave consisting of 2 lines of 2 platoons per company. Considerable hostile shelling was experienced throughout the advance, which became intense as it proceeded, causing heavy casualties before the attackers came in sight of their objective. To reach the objective (namely the HINDENBURG LINE) two sunken roads had to be crossed, at which considerable resistance was offered but was soon overcome, a machine gun and several prisoners being captured on the first. Between the first and second sunken roads the attackers came under fire from several machine guns, which together with the shelling formed a considerable barrage. The advance continued up to the enemy's wire, but by this time the ranks of the attackers were considerably depleted. The wire was found to be damaged but not cut sufficiently to allow troops to enter the trenches. The few unwounded men left took cover in all available shell holes, but eventually had to retire to the sunken road running from NEUVILLE VITASSE to ST MARTIN - sur - COJEUL, where they dug in on the EASTERN BANK. The enemy's artillery immediately commenced to shell this road heavily with shells of large calibre, causing further casualties. By this time most of the officers had become casualties, only three remaining, 2/Lieuts HC CLARK, FJ LONDON, and TW GLYNN. These officers collected all the unwounded men, 90 in all, and consolidated the position. Some little time afterwards two companies of the 19th Manchester Regt arrived in support, and also dug in on the same road. This position was held until the evening, when two companies of the 16th Manchesters came up and took over the position. After relief the remnants of the Battalion marched back to SWITCH LANE, South of MERCATEL. The total casualties sustained by the Battalion in the attack, not counting those previously sustained in the attack on the MILL, was Captains 2, Subalterns 12, other ranks 328. These were made up as follows:- Capt RW BROWN, 2/Lieuts WH BALKWILL, ST HORTON, AC CLAKE and CH MERRIMAN killed, and Capt CW WARD, DSO, Lieut LH BEARNE, 2/Lieuts CS GRAY, DJ CAMPKIN, GH KELLY, AVS GRANT, HS EDMONDS, FJ LONDON, and AS CARTER (att 21st TM Battery) wounded.

## 2nd Battalion – War Diary 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1917

### Location – France, Trenches

The Battalion rested and remained in trenches, SWITCH LANE. During the day the enemy retired on our front, leaving behind a few posts. A volunteer party went out at night and picked up 1 officer and 9 other ranks who had been wounded the previous day.

(Information on 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion & War Diaries from: [The Wardrobe](#) – Home of the Infantry Regiments of Berkshire and Wiltshire)

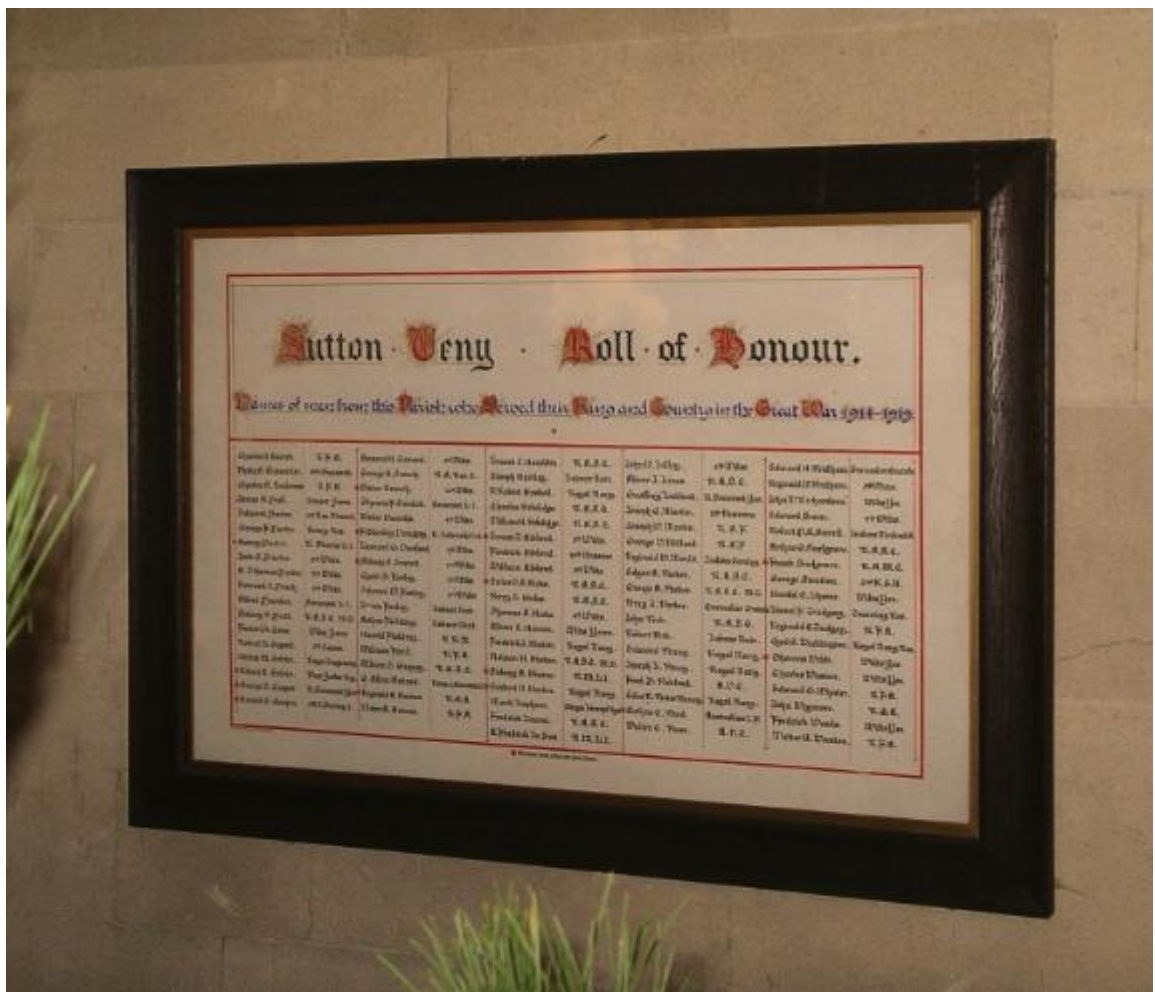
Private W. Crouch is buried in Warlingcourt Halte British Cemetery, Saulty, France – Grave No. VII. C. 3. His death is acknowledged by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Private W. Crouch, 3/9272 of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Wiltshire Regiment as the son of Henry Crouch, of 35 Sutton Veny, Warminster, Wilts.

Private Walter Crouch was entitled to the 1914 Star with Clasp, British War & Victory Medals. His Medal Index Card shows that he had entered a Theatre of War on 7<sup>th</sup> October, 1914. The Clasp with the 1914 Star was given to those who had served under enemy fire from the period of 5<sup>th</sup> August – 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 1914.



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

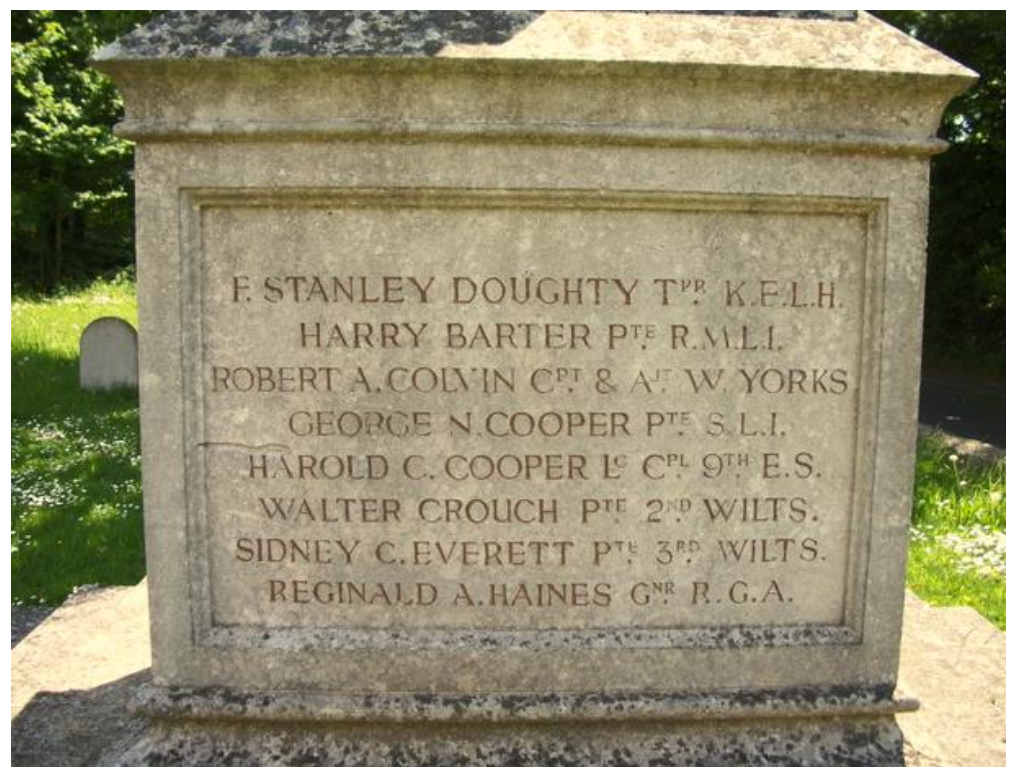


W. Crouch is also honoured in the Casualties of World War 1 Diocese of Salisbury Memorial Book.

Walter Crouch, Pte, 2<sup>nd</sup> Wilts., is remembered on the Sutton Veny War Memorial, located in foreground of St. John the Evangelist Church, Sutton Veny, Wiltshire.



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



## Warlincourt Halte British Cemetery, Saulty, France

Warlincourt and Saulty are villages on either side of the main road (N25) between Arras (22 kilometres) and Doullens (13 kilometres).

The site of the cemetery was chosen in May 1916. It was used from June 1916 to May 1917 by the 20th and 43rd Casualty Clearing Stations, in February 1917 by the 1/1st South Midland, and from April to June 1917 by the 32nd. The whole of plots VII, VIII, IX and X were filled in April and May 1917, the months of the Battles of Arras. From June 1917, the cemetery was practically unused until the fighting of May and June 1918, when field ambulances buried in it. After the Armistice the cemetery was increased by graves brought in from the following small military cemeteries:- Guadiempre Military Cemetery, Courturelle Communal Cemetery Extensions & La Herliere Military Cemetery. The cemetery now contains 1,266 Commonwealth burials of the First World War. There are also 29 German and two French war graves. (CWGC)



Warlincourt Halte British Cemetery, Saulty, France (Photos from CWGC)

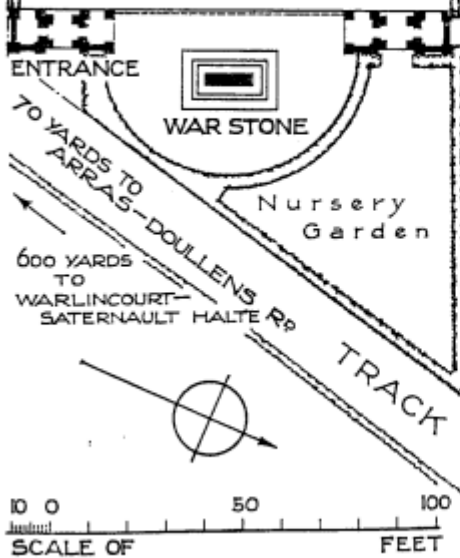


Photo of Pte W. Crouch's CWGC headstone in Warlincourt Halte British Cemetery, Saulty, France



*(Photo courtesy of David Milborrow)*

VI		V	
Rows			
16	J	14	14
16	H	14	14
15	G	14	14
16	PLOT F	14	14
16	IV E	14	14
16	D	14	14
16	4 C	14	14
16	4 B	14	14
16	A	14	14
15	J	14	14
15	H	14	14
15	II G	14	14
15	F	14	14
15	E	15	15
15	D	16	16



ROWS			
16	C	19	19
14	XII B	15	15
12	A	14	14
GREAT CROSS			
13	H	15	15
14	G	16	16
14	F	16	16
14	X E	16	16
13	D	16	16
14	C	16	16
13	B	15	15
13	A	15	15
14	J	15	15
13	H	15	15
14	G	16	16
14	F	15	15
14	VIII E	15	15
14	D	14	14
14	4 C	15	15
14	B	15	15
14	A	15	15
14	J	15	15
14	H	15	15
14	G	15	15
15	PLOT F	15	15
15	VI E	15	15
15	D	15	15
15	C	15	15
15	B	15	15
14	A	14	14
IV		III	

WARLINCOURT HALTE BRITISH CEMETERY.