

Harry Sutton. M.S.M.

Driver TISR/793 Army Service Corps.



Baptised, on the 12th May 1878 in the church of St. Leonard, Charlecote, Warwickshire, **Harry Sutton** was the son of David and Harriett Sutton. David worked as a Labourer and a Waggoner. His



family had lived in Charlecote for most of the nineteenth century when his grandfather, Anthony Sutton, moved there from Brailes, Warwickshire. Harry was one of seven children and lived much of his early life in one of the Gravel Pit terraced farm cottages¹, Charlecote and attended the local school there.

Harry joined the Army and served with the Coldstream Guards during the Boer War and was awarded the Queens South Africa Medal Clasp. At the end of his term of service he returned home.

On the 18th April 1906, Harry married Elizabeth Freeman in the Church of St. Peters, Wellesbourne and they lived together at Friz Hill Lodge, Walton. Harry worked for Lady Mordaunt as a gardener on the Walton Estate. They had no children.

In 1909 Harry bore the loss of his younger brother William who, suffering from depression as the result of his wife's death, took his own life.



Gravel Pit Cottages, Charlecote.

At the commencement of the War in 1914, Harry applied to rejoin his former Regiment but was told that at 36, he was too old. Undeterred, on the 31st August, he visited the Recruiting office in Warwick and was initially passed fit for one year's service in the Army Service Corps where he was to work as a driver. The A.S.C.'s function was to keep the Army supplied with food, equipment and munitions etc. without which it could not operate. It was to become the unsung hero of World War 1. He was given the service number TISR/793. By the 22nd September Harry Sutton had landed in France.

From initial postal wagon duties and following a week in hospital with Influenza, Harry was sent in June 1915 to the Base Depot in Rouen of the 4th Company of the 1st Divisional Trainⁱⁱ which provided requirements for the Royal Engineers. He served spells at the Base Depots in Honfleur and Le Havre during 1917 before returning to Rouen. He was granted leave in November 1915 and again in 1917 so that he could spend Christmas at home. There were 2 short periods spent in hospital including one as the result of scabies. Following the Armistice in 1918 Harry went with the 1st Divisional Train as it advanced into Germany and formed part of the Army of Occupation in the area surrounding the City of Bonnⁱⁱⁱ.

On the 11th March 1919, now surplus to requirements, Harry was discharged from the Army.

At the end of the war he received the British, Victory Medals and the 1914 (Mons) Star, the Mons Star Ribbon being presented to him at The Front^{iv}. In the 3rd June 1919 edition of the London Gazette it was announced that Harry had also been awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, an award for acts of gallantry or meritorious conduct whilst not in front of the enemy.

He also received a letter from the Commander- in-Chief of his Division, Major General E.W. Strickland^v, in which he wrote – *‘You take away with you the priceless knowledge that you have played a man’s part in this Great War for freedom and fair play. You will take away with you also the remembrances of your comrades, your pride in your regiment and your love for your country. You have played the game, go on playing it, and all will be well with the great Empire you have helped to save. I wish you every prosperity and happiness’*.

After the war Harry and his wife lived at No. 7 Walton. He worked as a Waggoner and was the standard bearer for the British Legion, officiating at many of the funerals for those with whom he had served, in the Boer or the Great War. In 1963 he moved from No. 7 to 4 Church St, Wellesbourne^{vi} where on the 28th April 1965 he died aged 87



Harry (sitting on the wagon)

years from broncho pneumonia and renal carcinoma^{vii}. He was buried on the 1st May in Walton churchyard (grave no. 248), in what is now an unmarked grave. His wife Elizabeth lived to the grand age of 97 years

and died in Alcester but was buried in Walton on the 16th January 1974, with her husband.

The name of Harry Sutton appears on the Roll of Honour, St. James's Church, Walton and on the Charlecote School Roll of Honour.

Researched by Grev Hudson (Aug 2014)(grev.hudson@tinyworld.co.uk)

ⁱ The 1881 and 1891 census records indicate that Harry lived in Farm Cottage and Cottage Farm respectively, however an entry in 'Charlecote, a Warwickshire Village' published by Countryside Publications suggests that it was actually Gravel Pitt Farm cottages.

ⁱⁱ A divisional train initially comprised 26 officers and 402 other ranks of the Army Service Corp, 378 horses, 17 carts, 125 wagons and 30 bicycles.

ⁱⁱⁱ Within Harry's service record are details of what would have been his pre-discharge medical examination. This was carried out in Rheinbach (close to Bonn), Germany and is dated as 5th Feb. 1918. This is clearly an error and should be 5th Feb. 1919 as the 1st Divisional Train did not enter Germany until after the Armistice.

^{iv} Stratford upon Avon Herald 15/2/1918

^v Stratford upon Avon Herald 13/6/1919.

^{vi} Ken Olorenshaw

^{vii} Death Cert.

Other sources

Thanks to Janet Curr and Sandra Hawtin for photos etc.

Harry Sutton's Service record via Ancestry.com.

The Long, Long Trail (www.1914-1918.net)