

# World War 1 - Upper Hopton Village



## Harry Cole

**Rank: Private**

**Killed in action: 3rd  
September 1916  
(France & Flanders)**

**1st/5th Battalion  
Duke of Wellington's  
(West Riding  
Regiment)**



### Summary

Harry Cole is remembered on the memorial in St John's church but unfortunately very little is known of Harry. It is believed that he came from Kirkheaton and that he enlisted in Lower Hopton.

He was killed in action in September 1916 on the Western Front and is remembered with honour at Mill Road Cemetery, Thiepval, Somme, France. Harry was in the same Regiment as Joe Castle and lost his life on the same day as Joe.

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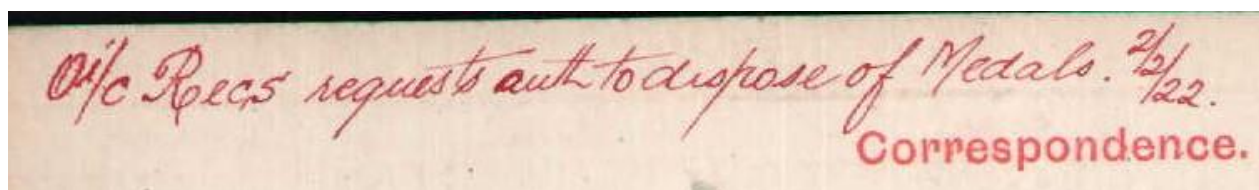
# Harry Cole

### Medal Card Extracts



Extracts from his medal card above and below shows that he died intestate with no next of kin and that his medals were disposed of on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1922.

The 'Army Register of Soldier's Effects' shows that if he had any next of kin they would have received £9-1s-10d for his outstanding pay and gratuity. The military records also show that he enlisted in Lower Hopton and served with the Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment).



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## Harry Cole

### Family details

Date of Birth	No further details could be found for Harry.
Date of Baptism	
Church Baptised	
Father	
Father's occupation	
Mother	
Siblings	The notes on the Medal Card below states that Harry died intestate with no next of kin.
Parents residence	
Soldiers residence	Military records state that his residence was Kirkheaton
Soldiers Occupation	
Married	
Spouse	
Children	
Burial / Memorial	Mill Road Cemetery, Thiepval, Somme, France
Age at death	

# World War 1 - Upper Hopton Village



## Harry Cole

### Military Details

Attestation / Enlistment

Enlisted - Lower Hopton

Deployment

Rank

Private

Medals

British War Medal

Victory Medal

See Harry's medal card. He died intestate and his medals were disposed of on 2nd Feb 1922.

Regiment number

241340

Regiment

1/5th Battalion Duke of Wellington's  
(West Riding Regiment)



Regimental Badge

Killed in Action

3rd September 1916 (France & Flanders)

Cemetery or Memorial

Mill Road Cemetery, Thiepval,  
Somme, France

Age at death

# World War 1 - Upper Hopton Village



## Harry Cole

### 1 / 5th Battalion Territorial Force

**14 April 1915** Mobilised for war and landed at Boulogne.

**12 May 1915** The formation became the 147th Brigade of the 49th Division which engaged in various actions on the Western Front including;

**1915** - The Battle of Aubers Ridge, The defence against the first Phosgene attack.

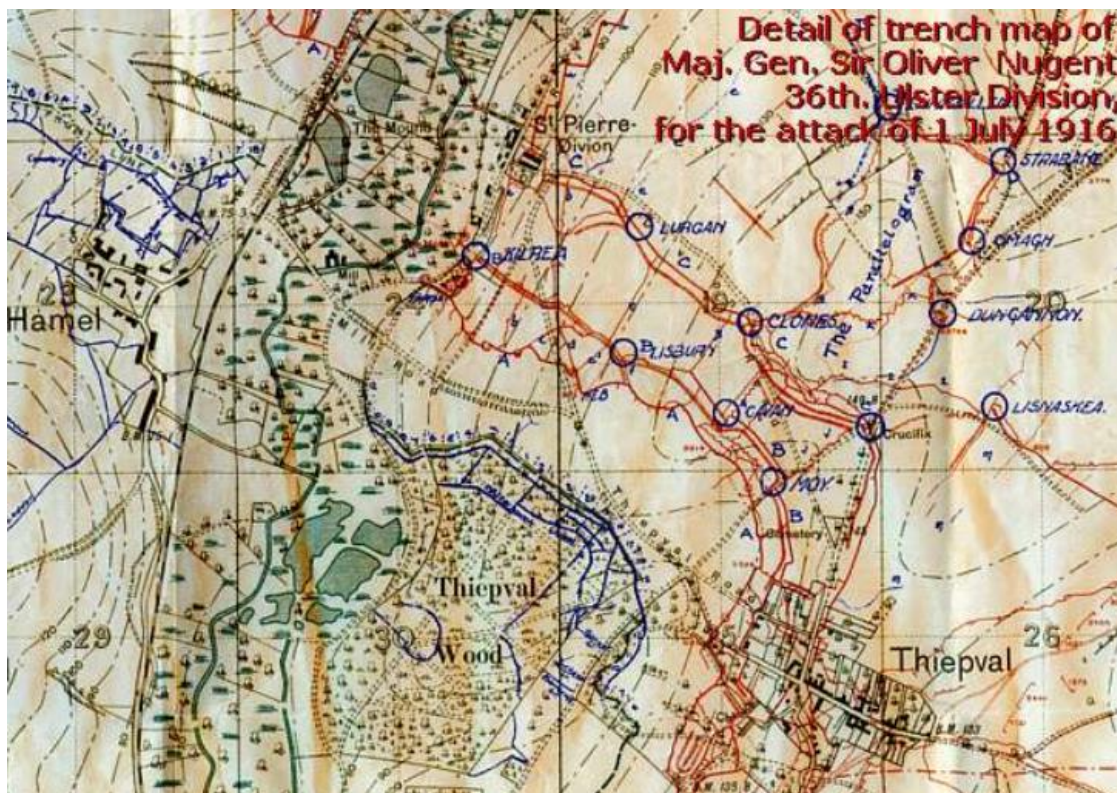
**1916** - The Battle of Albert, The Battle of Bazentin Ridge, The Battle of Pozieres Ridge, The Battle of Flers-Courcelette.

**1917** - Operations on the Flanders Coast (Hush), The Battle of Poelcapelle.

**30 Jan 1918** Absorbed the 2/5th Battalion to become the 5th Battalion and transferred to the 186th Brigade of the 62nd Division.

**1918** - The Battle of Bapaume, The First Battle of Arras 1918, The Battle of the Tardenois (part of the Battles of the Marne 1918), The Battle of the Scarpe, The Battle of the Drocourt-Queant Line, The Battle of Havrincourt, The Battle of the Canal du Nord, The Battle of the Selle, The capture of Solesmes, The Battle of the Sambre.

**Harry lost his life on the 3 September 1916 and the actions of the 1/5th are described in the War Diaries below on that fateful day. The role of Harry's Battalion was to attack the German Front and Support lines from Thiepval Wood.**



Blue trenches - British    Red trenches - German

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## Harry Cole

**The following War Diary describes in great detail the involvement of the 1/5th Regiment in the battle in which Harry sadly lost his life. (The entire transcript has been included for reference).**

### **War Diary – Army Form C.2118**

#### **1/5 West Riding Regiment**

#### **September 1916**

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> September 1916**

The Battalion left Forceville at 5.30pm to go into action. A halt was made at Martinsart Wood where a hot meal was served to the men. The battalion moved forward via Pioneer Road – Aveluy – Hamel Road, track about Q.35.C.7.O via tram line, Authuille Bridge, North Bluff, Ulster Avenue, Elgin Avenue to new assembly parallels in front of our old British line about Q.24.d.8.4 – R.19.C.1.1½ (Ref. Map Beaumont 1/10,000).

The battalion was in position about 3.45am. A, B & D Coys occupied the assembly parallels and C Coy in dug outs in the old British front line. Battalion Headquarters and the H.Q. Coy were accommodated in Whitchurch St. (about Q,30.b.8.6)

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> September 1916**

(Ref. map: Beaumont 1/10,000 and special divisional operation map)

The 39<sup>th</sup> and 49<sup>th</sup> Divisions assaulted the German lines astride the River Ancre simultaneously at 5.10am. The task of the 49<sup>th</sup> Division was to capture and consolidate the German front line and support trenches as follows, front line from R.19.c.8.4 (inch) to River Ancre. Support line from R.19.c.9.5 (inch) to River Ancre. The objective of the 39<sup>th</sup> Division was the German trench from Q.18.b.½.2 to Q.17.b.5.8. The assault was preceded by an intense Artillery barrage on the German front line for 3 minutes, under which the assaulting infantry advanced. The barrage lifted from the front line at 5.13am on to the support line for a further 5 minutes. Heavy artillery, in addition to 18 pounders, fired within limits of safety, on Thiepval, Trench System R.25.b.40.95 – 15.90- R.19.c.85.20, R.19.d.05.30 Trench System forming South front of Schwaben Redoubt, Strassburg Trench and St Pierre Divion. The attacking troops of the 49<sup>th</sup> Division were 146<sup>th</sup> and 147<sup>th</sup> Brigade. The dispositions of the **147<sup>th</sup> Brigade** were as follows:

**1/4<sup>th</sup> West Riding Reg't**, Right assaulting battalion with its objective, front line R.19.c.8.4 to R.19.c.5.4, German support line from R.19.c.9.5 to R.19.c.6.6.

**1/5<sup>th</sup> West Riding Reg't**, Left assaulting battalion with its objective , front line from R.19.c.5.4 to R.19.c.1.6. German support line R.19.c.6.6 to R.19.c.3.8.

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## Harry Cole

### War Diary – Army Form C.2118 - continued

#### 1/5 West Riding Regiment

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1916 - continued

1/7<sup>th</sup> West Riding Reg't in the Brigade Support and accommodated in assembly slits in Forres Street, Thiepval Wood.

1/6<sup>th</sup> West Riding Reg't in Brigade Reserve accommodated at the North Bluff (Q.36.d).

**The whole attack failed.** The 146<sup>th</sup> Brigade did not reach its objective and although the 147<sup>th</sup> Brigade reached their objective they were unable to hold it.

The 1/5<sup>th</sup> West Riding Regiment was commanded by Lieut. Col. H.A.S.Stanton.

.....full *list of officers not included*

The dispositions of the battalion were as follows: A & D Coys had to capture the German front line. B Coy had to capture the German support lines. C Coy was in Reserve. ½ Coy in dugouts N.W. of Elgin Avenue in the front line, and ½ Coy in dug-outs N.W. of Elgin Avenue at Junction of Elgin and Whitchurch Street. Headquarters and H.Q. Coy were accommodated in Whitchurch Street.

D Coy seemed to take its position under our barrage fairly correctly but the 4<sup>th</sup> Platoon instead of assaulting on both sides of East K.O.Y.L.I. Trench seemed to get the whole platoon on the east side of the trench leaving a serious gap in the middle of the Company and actually at point 25. This would not have mattered if the Battalion on our left had reached its objective. As it was D Coy had to withstand bombing attacks on its left, from its centre and later on from its right. It was impossible to get bombs up to the ½ Company or between points 16 and 25. The Right half Coy did receive bombs about 7.30am taken up over the open. The company, according to the report of 2/Lieut. Da Costa, evidently made a very good fight for it and only retired when they had no more bombs, having previously seen the troops on the right retire to the front parallels. They retired from the German line about 9.30am.

As regards A & B Coys no accurate information could be obtained. In the case of B Coy no officers returned at all and of A Coy only one came back.

What seems to have happened is as follows: 'A' Coy seems to have got mixed with the left of Company of the 4<sup>th</sup> W.R.R and assaulted with them. The result was that there was a bad "bunch" of men opposite the re-entrant between points 25 and 54. The Germans turned a machine gun on to this party causing several casualties. The party must then have swung to its left and right leaving a disastrous gap at the point where the communication trench meets the top of the re-entrant between points 25 and 54, enabling the Germans later on to bomb to the East and West along the front line

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## Harry Cole

### 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1916 - continued

B Company assaulted the support line but only about one third of them seems to have reached it. They lost heavily coming out of the parallels and lost all their officers. So far as can be ascertained no officer reached the German support line.

No messages were received back at H.Q. during the whole operation. The only information which was obtained was from wounded men returning and they, for the most part said we occupied both German lines and had had very few casualties.

The Germans held the block in East K.O.Y.L.I. Trench and it proved a serious obstacle for us and was not cleared. Communication of any sort was bound to go over the open.

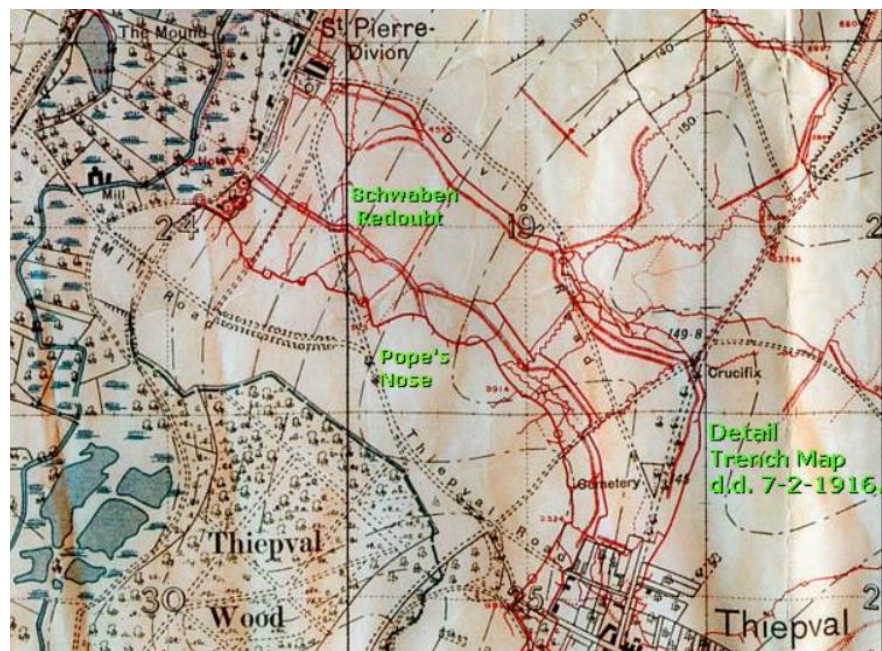
From the reports of the 2 officers who returned to Battalion H.Q. from the battle it was ascertained that for the most part a really good fight was put up. If Battalion H.Q. had been able to have got any information back it is practically certain that the position would not have been lost. The men fought splendidly and in many case without N.C.O's or officers and the loosing of the captured position was a piece of bad luck. As proof of the hard fighting there were 350 casualties out of 450 who assaulted the German lines.

The battalion after retiring to the parallels, re-established itself in the original British line with posts out in the parallels.

### 4<sup>th</sup> September 1916

The battalion was relieved at night and during early hours of September 4<sup>th</sup> by ½ Coy of 4<sup>th</sup> York & Lancaster Reg't. On relief it was accommodated in bivouacs in Aveluy Wood.

The battalion moved to Hedauville, was accommodated in bivouacs and engaged in reorganising itself.





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## Harry Cole

### Harry's Medal Card

Name.		Corps.	Rank.	Regtl. No.
COLE		W. Rid. R.	Pte	241340
Harry.				
Medal.	Roll.	Page.	Remarks.	
VICTORY	O/2/101 B <sub>20</sub>	2852	Died, intestate to N/A	
BRITISH	do-	do-	C.R. V744 B 4/30/5/22. Auth. ♂	
STAR				
Theatre of War first served in				
Date of entry therein				
E/F/9/450. E/377099 K 1380				

*O/c Regts request auth to dispose of Medals. 2/122.*  
Correspondence.

Address.

E 1905. (1246) Wt. W 2884—R.P. 6267 1,000m. 17/12/20. E. 6989.

# World War 1 - Upper Hopton Village



## Harry Cole

### Harry's Medals



**British War Medal**



**Victory Medal**

# World War 1 - Upper Hopton Village



## Harry Cole

In Memory of  
Private

**H Cole**

241340, 1st/5th Bn., Duke of Wellington's (West Riding Regiment) who died on 03 September 1916

Remembered with Honour  
Mill Road Cemetery, Thiepval



Commemorated in perpetuity by  
the Commonwealth War Graves Commission

# World War 1 - Upper Hopton Village



## Harry Cole

### MILL ROAD CEMETERY, THIEPVAL

The German Army took the area around Thiepval at the end of September 1914. It then established a line through the area with troops from its 26th Reserve Division. Men from this Division were still in occupation when Commonwealth forces launched their assault on the 1 July 1916. During this attack, the 36th (Ulster) Division were detailed to attack the German positions north of Thiepval, known as the Hansa Line and the Schwaben Redoubt. Launched from Thiepval Wood, initially their assault was successful and some leading elements even reached as far as the German's second line of defence (Stuff Redoubt). However, by the end of the day, as a result of the units on either side of it failing to take their objectives (in particular the 32nd Division's failure to take Thiepval), it had been forced back to the original German front line. It would take until the 26 September 1916, before Thiepval finally fell to the 18th Division. Thiepval then remained under Allied occupation until 25 March 1918, when it was lost during the great German offensive, but it was retaken on the following 24 August by the 17th and 38th (Welsh) Divisions.

Mill Road Cemetery (called at one time Mill Road Cemetery No.2) was made during the spring of 1917, when the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg line allowed the battlefield to be cleared. At the Armistice, it contained 260 burials, but was then greatly enlarged when graves were brought in from the battlefields of Beaumont-Hamel and Thiepval and from smaller cemeteries.