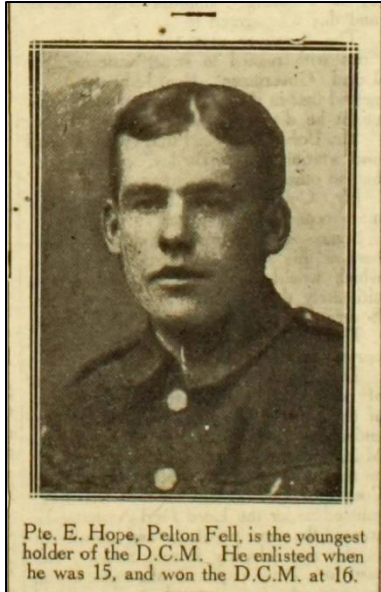


Edward **Hope DCM** – Private 21266 - 15<sup>th</sup> Btn. Durham Light Infantry

1 July 1916 – Aged 17

Thiepval Memorial to the Missing, Thiepval, France.



Born 1899 in Pelton Fell to parents Thomas and Mary Hope, in 1911 he is with his family in Dean Street, Newfield and is still at school.

He is the youngest soldier on the town's memorials to be killed, when he enlisted on 2 November 1914 he gave his age as 19 when in fact he was only 15. After his training he went to France on 9 October 1915.

Edward was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal and at the time was the youngest ever recipient of the award.

The following is part of an article printed in the Chester Chronicle dated 4 August 1916,

*"...The people of Pelton Fell recognising the honour he had brought to the village enthusiastically determined to show him how they appreciated his bravery under trying circumstances. Over £30 was subscribed in a few days, and a gold watch, valued at £25 was purchased for him...The only thing wanted was that he should get leave to come home and have the presentation made to him, and the authorities were asked to allow him to come home. Permission was refused, it is currently believed because it was feared that if he were once allowed to return to England his relatives would claim him, and that he would not again be available to return to the front, owing to his youth. And now – he is dead – dead for England. Poor Ned Hope"*

A letter from Edward's brother John dated 4 July 1916 was sent to the Infantry Records, based in York, enclosing a copy of Edward's birth certificate and requesting his relegation to the Army Reserve due to his age. Sadly Edward had perished 5 days earlier on the infamous first day of the Somme July 1<sup>st</sup>.

A memorial service for Edward was held on Sunday 6 August 1916 in the Primitive Methodist Church Pelton Fell. Reverend Farndale told the congregation that Edward had been sent a bible while at Barnard Castle (presumably under training) and in acknowledging the gift Edward wrote,

*"I thank you from the bottom of my heart. I am a regular goer to the chapel here. I was showing one of the teachers here and they say it is a splendid and very thoughtful of you. I shan't forget the good advice you have put in your letter, and will try my best to do it. I have so far succeeded from being tempted to drink and gamble and I hope I shall do so all the rest of my life"*

Edward's older brother James was also killed on July 1<sup>st</sup> 1916 and as with his brother has no known grave and is also remembered on the Thiepval Memorial. James was 36 and left a widow and three young children.