

In Memory of

Private GEORGE HENRY COLE

**47153, 16th Battalion, Lancashire Fusiliers
who died at Cambrai age 37 on 11 December 1917**

**Son of John and Lucy Cole
of 76 Church Road, Christian Malford**

Remembered with honour TYNE COT MEMORIAL, BELGIUM

The Tyne Cot Memorial is located 9 kilometres north east of Ieper. 'Tyne Cot' or 'Tyne Cottage' was the name given by the Northumberland Fusiliers to a barn which stood near the level crossing on the Passchendaele-Broodseinde road. The barn, which had become the centre of five or six German blockhouses, or pill-boxes, was captured by the 3rd Australian Division on 4 October 1917, in the advance on Passchendaele. The Tyne Cot Memorial is one of four to the missing in Belgian Flanders which cover the area known as the Ypres Salient. Broadly speaking, the Salient stretched from Langemarck in the north to the northern edge in Ploegsteert Wood in the south, but it varied in area and shape throughout the war. The Salient was formed during the First Battle of Ypres in October and November 1914, when a small British Expeditionary Force succeeded in securing the town before the onset of winter, pushing the German forces back to the Passchendaele Ridge. The Second Battle of Ypres began in April 1915 when the Germans released poison gas into the Allied lines north of Ypres. This was the first time gas had been used by either side and the violence of the attack forced an Allied withdrawal and a shortening of the line of defence. There was little more significant activity on this front until 1917, when in the Third Battle of Ypres an offensive was mounted by Commonwealth forces to divert German attention from a weakened French front further south. The initial attempt in June to dislodge the Germans from the Messines Ridge was a complete success, but the main assault north-eastward, which began at the end of July, quickly became a dogged struggle against determined opposition and the rapidly deteriorating weather. The campaign finally came to a close in November with the capture of Passchendaele. The German offensive of March 1918 met with some initial success, but was eventually checked and repulsed in a combined effort by the Allies in September. The battles of the Ypres Salient claimed many lives on both sides and it quickly became clear that the commemoration of members of the Commonwealth forces with no known grave would have to be divided between several different sites. Those United Kingdom and New Zealand servicemen who died after 16 August 1917 are named on the memorial at Tyne Cot, a site which marks the furthest point reached by Commonwealth forces in Belgium until nearly the end of the war. There are now 11,956 Commonwealth servicemen of the First World War buried or commemorated in Tyne Cot Cemetery, 8,369 of these are unidentified.



The Battle of Cambrai was the first large scale tank battle in history. Earlier bombardments had required a preliminary period of "registration" in which each gun battery had fired practise rounds to determine where their shots were landing. This alerted the defenders to the possibility of an

assault and allowed them to gather reserves. For Cambrai a new system had been devised to register guns without the need to fire practise rounds. At 6.20 am on 20 November 1917 the attack at Cambrai was launched by just over 300 tanks spread out along a 10,000 yard front and supported by eight infantry divisions. The two German divisions at Cambrai, were caught entirely by surprise. Along most of the line the British tanks crawled their way through the German wire, across the trenches, and with close infantry support reached as far as four miles into the German lines. While the British were moving forward, the Germans were preparing for a counterattack. On 30 November 20 German divisions launched a massive counterattack that forced the British out of many of the areas they had captured on 20 November and even captured some areas held by the British before the start of the battle. On 4 December a British withdrawal was ordered to shorten the lines. The battle which had started with such a dramatic breakthrough ended with the restoration of the status quo. The British lost 43,000 men, many during the German counterattack. Germans losses were similar, between 40,000 and 50,000 men.

From the Parish Magazine: The sad news—which always brings with it a thought of admiration and triumph as well as of bereavement—has come to us of the instantaneous death in action on the Western Front of Private George Henry Cole on the 11th of December. For many mouths he had been engaged in useful Canteen work behind the lines, and was then transferred to the Lancashire Fusiliers, in which regiment, after a short training, he was serving when the great sacrifice was offered. With his mother and the whole family we sympathise, so far as that is possible, with real sincerity.

George's father was a shoemaker.