



# Wilfred Ernest Hamp

1884 - 1917

22 Statham Street



By the time Wilfred's family moved to Statham Street in 1911 he was already 27 and had an established career in Lincoln as a Clerk to a Brush Manufacturer.

Wilfred's father worked as an Agent for the Railway which seems to have involved frequent moves: – Hertfordshire, Lincoln and Ireland (where Wilfred was born in 1884). Wilfred must have known Derby quite well – the family had lived in Shardlow for a time and presumably Wilfred would visit Statham Street during periods of leave from the army.

Wilfred was one of six children but sadly his older brother Hubert died in 1902 and his little sister Laura died in 1909.

Wilfred enlisted some time in 1914 and by 1 March 1915 he was posted to France as a Lance Corporal with the 1/5th Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment.

In October 1915 his regiment engaged in an attack on the German line at the Hohenzollern Redoubt and here Sergeant Hamp earned the Military Medal.

On 12 June 1917 while the regiment was fighting to gain ground among the slag heaps around Lens, a coal mining community in Northern France, he earned himself the Distinguished Conduct Medal, an award for outstanding bravery regarded as second only to the Victoria Cross.

The citation described his bravery:

*“For conspicuous gallantry & devotion to duty in taking command of his company when his officers had been wounded. He showed the greatest initiative and energy in leading them to the objective and superintending the withdrawal, afterwards assisting his wounded officer and a badly wounded NCO back to our trenches. His conduct was admirable, and set a splendid example to the men”.*



Distinguished conduct medal  
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Sadly Wilfred never knew of the recognition of his bravery. On 26 June 1917, whilst resting in a forward trench, he was killed by a booby trap left by the retreating German forces. One of his comrades Lieutenant Wrigglesworth reported the circumstances to The Lincolnshire Echo in July 1917:



# Wilfred Ernest Hamp

## continued

Lincolnshire Echo 16 July 1917

### HOW C.S.M. HAMP DIED

*Particulars have now reached us, contained in a letter from an officer to a friend, as to how Company Sergeant-Major Wilfred E Hamp of the Lincolnshire Regiment, who was killed at the Front at the end of last month, met his death.*

*On June 26<sup>th</sup>, writes Lieut. H. Wrigglesworth, at two in the afternoon, an explosion occurred in the centre of the dug-out (which was the part where Hamp and his fellow CSM's were), and this part was completely blown in on poor Hamp, his batman, CSM Pickard, Pickard's son (who was batman to his father), and two of the company's stretcher bearers.*

*Pickard was got out with great difficulty. He was, of course, unconscious, but I hear is getting on well.*

*Poor Hamp and the others could not be got out, for later on (at night) there were three more explosions in this same dug-out.*

*Luckily, no casualties occurred, for everyone was cleared out immediately after the first explosion. Quite a lot of the dug-outs in this line were blown up in the same way. I think certain papers were got out of Hamp's pocket. I know for a fact his crown and his wristlet watch were got and were sent on to his people. I can say with certainty that the poor fellows were killed instantaneously. I actually saw to what extent the side of the dug-out had fallen in.*

*It does not require any words of mine to express the very great sorrow we all felt at our Company's great loss by the death of poor Hamp. He was loved and admired by all, and it really is very heartbreaking to read the expressions on the men's faces when I told them of the sad news.*

*P.S. - The line we took over had only the night before been captured from the Boche, and, unfortunately no search had been made of the dug-outs. It was a callous trick of the Boche, but I suppose all's fair in warfare.*

Reports on Wilfred's death also appeared in the *Derby Mercury* and the *Derby Daily Telegraph*. His name is on the war memorial in St. Alkmund's Church. He is remembered on the Arras memorial in Northern France

William and Harriet Hamp must have been devastated by the loss of their only surviving son. They lived in Statham Street for many years – William died in 1942, Harriet in 1945 and two of their daughters, Nellie and Edith lived on in the house until the mid 1970s. Neither married, and neighbours recall that the two sisters both worked at "Boots" the Chemist. Edith died in 1974 in Derby, aged 85, and Nellie died, aged 90, in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire in 1976.

### ***Interested in reading more?***

A full account of the Hohenzollern Redoubt, October 1915 and the attack on Lens in June 1917 was written after the war by Colonel T. E. Sandall of the 5<sup>th</sup> Lincolnshire Regiment and can be found at <http://www.5thlincs.investigationsofadog.co.uk/>. Wilfred Hamp is named on pages 47-50 and pages 122-124.



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