

# World War 1

## Birmingham City Police

### PC C135 Harry HURCOMBE MM

**Gunner 69682**

**78<sup>th</sup> siege battery, Royal Garrison Artillery**  
**Died in France 27<sup>th</sup> August 1917**

Harry was born in Tewksbury, Gloucestershire. Harry's father was William Henry who was born in April 1858 and died in October 1899 aged 41, his mother was Sarah Ann nee Green. Harry was one of eight children

Harry's brother Charles was killed in action on 21<sup>st</sup> February 1915 with the 1<sup>st</sup> Btn of the Gloucestershire Regiment. At the time of Harry's death, his mother had already suffered the death of two of her young children, her husband, her son Charles and then the death of her surviving son Harry

Harry joined Birmingham City Police on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1913 as a 20-year-old packer, and a reservist. He served on the C Division with warrant number 8344 and collar number PC C135

Harry was a member of the Police gymnastic team as he is pictured in September 1913. *First on left second row.*



Harry resigned from the police on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1915 to enlist in the army and served with the Royal Garrison Artillery from 19<sup>th</sup> November 1915 and was posted to the 78<sup>th</sup> siege battery R.G.A. on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1915

During Harry's service, he was awarded the Military Medal which was confirmed in the London Gazette. There is no recorded citation but a newspaper entry in The Echo dated 5<sup>th</sup> August 1916 stated

*Tewkesburian Decorated*

*Mrs Hurcombe of Smith's Lane, Tewkesbury, has received news from her son, Gunner Harry Hurcombe that he has been awarded the Military Medal for conspicuous bravery in repairing communications under shell fire*

On 27<sup>th</sup> August 1917 Harry sadly died as he succumbed to gas poisoning and was declared dead on arrival at the 36<sup>th</sup> casualty clearing station in Zuydcoote

There was a court of enquiry which revealed Harry had been sent away for a few days rest at the seaside behind the British lines and went for a walk along the beach. It is assumed he walked unawares into a gas cloud which had no smell to give a warning and he was overcome and died

Harry is buried Zuydcoote Military Cemetery, (Nord France) Grave I A 14



*Photographs courtesy of Su and Paul Handford taken 2017*