

The Heart of Midlothian FC Players' Roll of Honour

Those Who Fell

Sergeant John Allan, 9th Battalion, Royal Scots, born in Greenlaw, Berwickshire on 2nd March 1887, was the son of James Allan, a Joiner, and Mary Allan, of 18 Springwell Place, Edinburgh.

John Allan and his family moved from the land to Edinburgh searching for a better life. He became a Joiner with J Duncan & Sons of Grove Street, Edinburgh, and enlisted early in the war with the 9th Royal Scots - the only Royal Scots 'kilted' battalion and part of the 51st Highland Division who became the 'Shock Troops' of the British army. Casualties during the battle of Arras were very high, with a great deal of hard fighting through the many tunnels found in that region. The early stages went well, some 13,000 German prisoners being taken, nevertheless it soon became the usual prolonged slog, slowly making headway against a determined enemy. During the battle a patrol of the 9th Royal Scots, including John Allan were sent to reconnoitre a wood near Rouex. On 22 April 1917, following a path further than intended they were caught in deadly crossfire and John was killed. He was thirty years of age and is commemorated on the Arras Memorial..

Lance Corporal James Boyd, 16th Battalion, Royal Scots, born at Seafield, West Lothian, in 1895, was the son of James Boyd, a Shale Hewer, and Jane Boyd, of 50 Front Street, Mossend, West Calder.

He was the final Hearts player to die on the Somme. After being educated at West Calder Public School he became an underground worker in the shale mines. His brother Archie had been the Hearts goalkeeper for some time and James signed for the club on 24 August 1914. He was killed on a 'quiet day' on 3 August 1916, age 21, following yet another failed attempt to take an enemy trench in full daylight, and is commemorated on West Calder War Memorial and on the Thiepval Memorial.

Sergeant Duncan Currie, 16th Battalion, Royal Scots, born at Kilwinning on 13 August in 1892, was the son of John Currie, a Foundry Pattern Maker, and Lillian Currie, of 151 Slateford Road, Edinburgh.

He was born into a football family, his father being a goalkeeper and his brother Robert playing for Hearts and Bury, while another brother played for Leicester Fosse. He himself played as a full back. He died on 1 July 1916, age 23, and is commemorated on the Kilwinning Memorial and the Thiepval Memorial.

Private Ernest Edgar Ellis, 16th Battalion, Royal Scots, born at Sprowston, Norwich, on 30 November 1886 (St Andrew's Day), was the son of Harry William Ellis, a Shoemaker, and Maria Ellis, of 236 Sprowston Road, Norwich,

Having played for Norwich and Barnsley he signed in time to join Hearts on their successful summer 1914 tour of Denmark. His regiment left for France on 8 January 1916 which meant that he was never to see the daughter born to him after his embarkation. His wife Isabel lived at 25 Tarvit Street, Edinburgh.

On 1 July 1916, the first day of the Somme, age 30, he advanced with the remnants of 'C' company to the edge of Contalmaison itself. As they attacked he was killed near the enemy wire. Some time later his body was discovered and buried. His burial place was lost and he is commemorated on the Thiepval monument. Ellis was thirty years old.

Corporal Thomas Gracie, 16th Battalion, Royal Scots, born at Glasgow in 1889, was the son of Thomas Gracie, a Cattle Dealer, and Harriet Sangster Bell Gracie, of 44 Dunchattan Street, Dennistoun, Glasgow.

Employed as a Meat Salesman, Tom had played for several clubs beginning with the Juniors and progressing through Airdrie, Hamilton and Greenock Morton before joining Everton in 1910. A year later he moved across to Liverpool from where Hearts bought him in May 1914 to replace Percy Dawson - a high scoring forward who had joined Blackburn Rovers for £2,500. Gracie only cost Hearts a mere £400. In his first season, Tom was to score 34 goals from a total of 39 appearances, including 29 league goals, a club record. His scoring skill earned him an international cap against the Irish league in 1915. He was one of those who enrolled in the 16th Royal Scots and endured military training along with his team mates. During this time he was frequently ill, yet continued to rise from his sick bed to play, and score for Hearts. While the battalion was stationed at Ripon in 1915 Tom was sent home to Glasgow because of his ill health. He died in Stobhill Hospital, Glasgow on 23 October 1915, age 26, and is buried in Glasgow (Craigton (Cemetery)). His great goal-scoring success was even more remarkable when the truth came out that he had leukaemia. Only manager John McCartney knew.

Private James Hodge Speedie, 7th Cameron Highlanders, was the son of John Speedie, a Grain Merchant, and Janet Speedie, of 3 Polwarth Place, Edinburgh. Born in 1894, he died on 25 September 1915, age 21. His brother, Second Lieutenant John Gibson Speedie, Medaille Militaire (France), 4th Royal Scots, died on 14 June 1917, age 25.

S/116102 Pte James Hodge Speedie. Born 17 November 1893, St. George's, Edinburgh. Worked as an insurance clerk and played as an amateur at inside left for Hearts. Played eight games in season 1914-15, including the first game where goals from Wattie and Gracie gave Hearts a 2-0 win over Celtic before an 18,000 crowd. A significant win as Celtic were to be unbeaten until well into the next season! Hearts themselves took first place for 35 out of 37 weeks of the season, finishing a mere four points behind the winners in spite of military training. Training which Celtic, and Rangers, players were not to undergo for some time. Speedie joined the 7th battalion the Queens Own Cameron Highlanders soon after the outbreak of war.

He was also early in action and took part in the first 'Big Push' at Loos on the 25th of September 1915. Though his regiment swept past Loos and reached as far as Hill 70 he himself fell somewhere during the advance. He was twenty one. His body was never found. He is commemorated on the Loos Memorial, panel 119 or 124. His brother, a lieutenant, was also killed in the war.

Private Henry Wattie, 16th Royal Scots, was the son of William Wattie, a Coachman, and Jessie Wattie, of 20 Livingstone Place, Edinburgh. Born in Edinburgh, he died on 1 July 1916, age 23.

Henry Wattie who was born in Edinburgh on 2nd June 1893 was the youngest of five brothers. His brother John was to become chaplain to the fleet. Henry himself became one of 'The Sixteen'. Wattie was considered by some to be capable of replacing the great Bobby Walker, some compliment as Walker had played against England eleven times. As an inside forward Henry managed to score against all comers including a double at Ibrox in a two goals to one victory. Later a tackle on him by two Aberdeen players left one with a broken leg and the other unable to continue until half time! On the first day of the Somme Wattie attacked with his comrades and was seen by Annan Ness to fall. His body, like so many others that day, was never recovered. His was a great loss for all of Scottish football.

Those Who Served

Gunner Colin D Blackhall, Royal Garrison Artillery

Corporal Alfred (Alfie) Briggs, 16th Battalion Royal Scots, recovered from wounds but never played again. He scouted for Partick Thistle occasionally but suffered 'Black depression' around 1 July and Remembrance Day. When he died in 1950, he still had two machine gun bullets in his back.

Private Patrick James 'Paddy' Crossan, 16th Battalion Royal Scots, a native of Addiewell, was described as 'the handsomest man in the world', known as 'Pat' to his friends. He was a powerful defender unable, some said, to pass a mirror, though he could pass the ball. He was wounded at the Somme and later gassed. Paddy's wholehearted attitude would have been of great encouragement to all those around him in the trenches. This robust and popular player returned to play for three more seasons, earning two testimonials and later opened a pub 'Paddy's Bar,' in Rose Street, Edinburgh. He died suddenly in 1933 not yet forty years of age. His bar survived under his name until the nineties.

Corporal Norman Findlay, 16th Battalion Royal Scots, a Carpenter, he was released from the army in 1916 to work in shipyards.

Staff Sergeant James H Frew, Royal Garrison Artillery, a Farrier, played for Leeds United after the war, then became a coach and helped Jack Charlton and many others in their careers. He died in 1967.

Bombardier James Gilbert, Royal Garrison Artillery, only played four games for Hearts but did score once v Hibs.

Private Harry Graham, Gloucester Regiment and Royal Army Medical Corps, was a Dentist, and could have avoided service, but enlisted to serve in France and Russia. Afterwards he returned to Tynecastle but failed to hold down a regular place, then went on to play for Leicester City and Reading.

Sapper Charles Hallwood, Royal Engineers.

Private James Hazeldean, 16th Battalion Royal Scots, was severely wounded by an explosive bullet in his thigh and discharged.

Lieutenant Jimmy Low, 6th Battalion, Seaforth Highlanders, was wounded twice and discharged. After he was turned down by the Hearts directors in 1919, he played instead for the great Newcastle team of the twenties, alongside Hughie Gallagher amongst others.

Lance Corporal James Macdonald, 13th Royal Scots.

Gunner John Mackenzie, Royal Garrison Artillery.

Private Robert (Bob) Malcolm, Machine Gun Corps, played for Airdrie for a while and then returned to mining. He died in 1979.

Private James Martin, 5th Royal Scots, was wounded and discharged.

Private E M McGuire, 16th Battalion Royal Scots, was wounded in an arm.

Gunner Robert Mercer, Royal Garrison Artillery, was a centre half of distinction before the war and famed for his 'scientific' football and was a stalwart of the Hearts side. As a gunner he saw action at the Somme and was gassed there. Bob returned to Hearts at the end of the war but was discovered to have a weakened heart. He played instead for Dunfermline for two years, joined Hearts for a friendly at Selkirk, his first club, and sadly collapsed with a shriek and died after only ten minutes due to heart failure. He was 37 years of age.

Sergeant George P Miller, 9th Royal Scots.

Sergeant Neil Moreland, was a Territorial with the 8th Highland Light Infantry. He was wounded three times.

Lieutenant Annand B Ness, 16th Battalion Royal Scots, refused a commission to remain with the Hearts players and was wounded twice. However, he was promoted from Company Sergeant Major in the field. He died in 1942.

Private R Preston, 16th Battalion Royal Scots, survived and moved to Northern Ireland.

Wattie Scott, 16th Battalion Royal Scots, was twice turned down by the Battalion Doctor because of rheumatic fever. He was hailed as Heart of Midlothian's oldest surviving player in 1974 and died the following year.

Driver George L Sinclair, Royal Field Artillery, was quickly into the fray as he was a reservist. He is thought to have served at Mons, the first great battle the British army fought. Continued playing after the war and was running a pub in Abbeyhill in 1958, the year the Hearts won the league scoring a record 132 league goals. For George and the remnants of the Great War this was a welcome result, but it had taken the team forty-four years to get their just reward.

Private Philip J Whyte, Gloucester Regiment.

Private John (Jock) Wilson, 9th Royal Scots, was wounded twice and returned to the Hearts side after the war.

Private Willie R Wilson, 16th Battalion Royal Scots, returned to playing until 1923 though constantly troubled with a problem shoulder. This was caused by the recoil of a rifle but, while it limited his active service, as did trench fever, it probably saved his life. He scored three goals at Ibrox in a 4-0 win over Rangers - the first, but not the last Hearts player to do so. He died in 1956.

Sources: Roll of Honour from 'The Definitive History of the Heart of Midlothian Football Club' by Alex H. Knight, Club Archivist, with the permission of the Author; Commonwealth War Graves Commission; Soldiers Died in The Great War; Ancestry.co.uk; De Ruvigny's Roll of Honour; Scotland's People