



ALEXANDER MEIKLE McCALLUM, Cartha, caps 1, cap number 82

Alexander Meikle McCallum was born 1st December 1885 at Fairlie in Ayrshire. He was the fifth child of John McCallum and his wife Elizabeth (nee Wark). His father John was a joiner and sometimes ship carpenter.

Alexander moved to Glasgow and in 1901 was staying with his uncle Alexander Meikle at 21 Melville Street, Glasgow. His occupation was Law apprentice. By 1910 Alexander was living at 73 Kenmure Street, Glasgow and was still a Law apprentice. By the outbreak of the war he was employed as a solicitor for the firm of Messrs. J.M. and J.H. Robertson, 120 Bath Street, Glasgow.

McCallum first appears in Cartha team sheets in the 2nd team of 1908. By December 1913 he was on the fringes of the Scotland team and played for the colours in the final trial. A B Baird's illness gave McCallum his first and only cap in the match against Ireland on 7th March 1914. The match was played at Sydney Parade, Dublin, although the Scots lost 4-2, the press were generally positive about the performance.

Like many of his generation, McCallum volunteered for the army when war broke out. He initially enlisted in the 9th Highland Light Infantry (HLI) as Private 3948. The heavy losses suffered by the BEF in France in 1914 and the rapid expansion of the army meant that there was a shortage of officers. Educated men like Alexander McCallum who had enlisted in the ranks were sought out as potential officer material. McCallum was commissioned in the 18th HLI on 7th April 1915.

McCallum stayed in the UK when the 18th HLI went to France in February 1916. He went to France to join the 16th HLI on 12th February 1917. The battalion war diary records him joining 79th Training Reserve while they were at Pierregot.

On the 2nd April 1917 the battalion were in bivouac near Vaux when they were called forward to fill a gap in the line in front of Roupy. Between 5 pm and 10 pm the battalion was heavily bombarded and Captain McCallum was injured. He was evacuated to 92nd Field Ambulance where he died of his wounds. He is buried at Foreste Communal Cemetery.

Alexander is commemorated on the Fairlie War Memorial.

Sources:

The Long Long Trail

Scotland's People

Ancestry

British Newspaper Archive

Scottish Hockey Records

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

National Archives