



JAMES DYKES BLACK, Wanderers, caps 6, cap number 58

James Dykes Black was born on 20th December 1878 in Pollockshields. He was the son of Archibald Campbell Black and his wife Agnes, nee Dykes.

He attended Glasgow University from 1896 to 1900 studying Art and Law. In 1901 he was staying at 27 Huntly Gardens and working as a law clerk. Also at the address was his older brother Archibald, again following in their father's footsteps and working as a law clerk.

Black first appears for the Wanderers club in the second team in February 1907 playing as a forward. By the 1908-09 season he was in the first team for the Maryhill based club and had settled into his long term position at left back. It was not long before his talent was recognised. He played for the colours in the final trial of February 1909 but didn't make the Scotland team. However, he was selected after the 1910 trial and went on to win three caps in each of the next two years, the maximum possible at the time. Black appears to have retired from all forms of hockey at the end of the 1910-1911 season.

James Black had been a territorial soldier, rising to the rank of Captain in the 1st Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers (LRV). He resigned his commission in March 1908 , possibly as a result of the Haldane army reforms which resulted in the LRV becoming a territorial force unit and renamed 5th Bn Cameronians (Scottish Rifles). However on the outbreak of war, Black again volunteered for service and was gazetted on 29th October 1914 as Captain in the 5th (City of Glasgow) Battalion of the Highland Light infantry (HLI).

The battalion initially were based in Dunfermline as part of the coastal defences, however, they then became part of 157th Infantry Brigade, 52nd (Lowland) Division. Captain Black is mentioned in the unit war diary as a member of a small group of officers who went South from Leven on 20th May 1915. This was the start of the 5th HLI's journey to be part of the Gallipoli campaign. The battalion landed at Gallipoli on the night of 2nd July. Captain Black survived the 5th HLI's first attack of the war, only to succumb to dysentery. He and several others were evacuated to Egypt on 20th May 1915. On recovering, Black returned to Gallipoli and was with the battalion when it was evacuated from the peninsula on 8th January 1916.

Black continued to serve with the 5th HLI during 1916 and 1917 while they took part in actions in Palestine including the first and second battles of Gaza. During a battle on the night of the 7th/8th November 1917, he was injured and invalided home. While at home at 27 Huntly Gardens, recovering from his wounds, he was promoted Major and awarded a Military Cross for his actions on 7th November. His citation reads

Capt. James Dykes Black, High. L.I.

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty He led his company with great skill and determination in an attack. He captured his objective four times, but was driven back on each occasion by enemy counterattacks. Whilst reconnoitring, with a view to making a fifth attempt, he was severely wounded. He set a magnificent example of courage and resource under the most difficult conditions.

Major James Dykes Black died at Yorkhill Hospital on 5th July 1918 aged 39 years. His cause of death is recorded as gunshot right thigh and fractured femur, 8 months, Appendicitis 4 days. He is buried in the family plot at Glasgow Necropolis

Sources

Scotland's People

British Newspaper Archive

Ancestry

Scottish Hockey Records

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

Long Long Trail web site

Friends of Glasgow Necropolis