

Walter Tull - the Army years

Shortly after the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 Walter Tull had made the decision that he could no longer continue as a professional footballer and became the first of his team mates to join up for the British Army in December 1914. Walter did not want to make a complete break from football, however as he joined the Football Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment. Walter served in France and Italy, and survived the first battle of the Somme, however he was invalided home on a number of occasions with 'trench fever' and 'shell shock'. Walter won several medals during the war, including the '1914-15 star'.

TASK:

Look at Documents Eight and Nine and answer the following questions:

- 1) How old was Walter when he joined the Army?
- 2) What was the date that Walter joined the Army?
- 3) Read sources A and B - can you think of a reason why the Northampton Newspapers published these articles?
- 4) Read source C - Write a few sentences that describe what kind of a soldier Walter was (use quotes from the source).



It was after receiving treatment for 'trench fever' in 1916 that a truly remarkable event took place. Walter was asked to go to the Officer training school in Scotland, where he graduated, becoming the first Black Infantry Officer in the British Army. Walter had broken the 'Colour Bar' that existed in the army - no 'Negroes' were allowed to take 'actual command'. Walter Tull was promoted to the rank of Second Lieutenant and joined the 23rd (2nd Football) Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment.

TASK:

Write a postcard from Walter to his brother Edward after his promotion to Officer. You might want to use examples from source C to explain why Walter was chosen to become an Officer. You should include a description of how Walter felt at the time, and why this was such an important event in British history.



SHORT SERVICE.

(For the Duration of the War.)

ATTESTATION OF

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No. *55* Name *Walter Daniell Tull* Corps *Middlesex Regiment*

Questions to be put to the Recruit before enlistment.

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|---|--|
| 1. What is your Name? | 1. <i>Walter Daniell Tull</i> |
| 2. What is your full Address? | 2. <i>33 Albany Road</i>
<i>Northampton</i> |
| 3. Are you a British Subject? | 3. <i>Yes</i> |
| 4. What is your Age? | 4. <i>26</i> Years <i>7</i> Months |
| 5. What is your Trade or Calling? | 5. <i>Professional Footballer</i> |
| 6. Are you Married? | 6. <i>No</i> |
| 7. Have you ever served in any branch of His Majesty's Forces, naval or military, if so, * which? | 7. <i>No</i> |
| 8. Are you willing to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated? ... | 8. <i>Yes</i> |
| 9. Are you willing to be enlisted for General Service? ... | 9. <i>Yes</i> |
| 10. Did you receive a Notice, and do you understand its meaning, and who gave it to you? | 10. <i>Yes</i> Name <i>W. G. Smith</i>
Corps <i>Staff</i> |
| 11. Are you willing to serve upon the following conditions provided His Majesty should so long require your services? | 11. <i>Yes</i> |

For the duration of the War, at the end of which you will be discharged with all convenient speed. If employed with Hospitals, depots of Mounted Units, and as Clerks, etc., you may be retained after the termination of hostilities until your services can be spared, but such retention shall in no case exceed six months.

Walter Daniell Tull do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and that I am willing to fulfil the engagements made.

Walter Daniell Tull SIGNATURE OF RECRUIT.
Stanley Bright Signature of Witness.

OATH TO BE TAKEN BY RECRUIT ON ATTESTATION.

Walter Daniell Tull swear by Almighty God, that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Fifth, His Heirs and Successors, and that I will, as in duty bound, honestly and faithfully defend His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, in Person, Crown, and dignity against all enemies, and will observe and obey all orders of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, and of the Generals and Officers set over me. So help me God.

CERTIFICATE OF MAGISTRATE OR ATTESTING OFFICER.

The Recruit above named was cautioned by me that if he made any false answer to any of the above questions he would be liable to be punished as provided in the Army Act.

The above questions were then read to the Recruit in my presence. I have taken care that he understands each question, and that his answer to each question has been duly entered as replied to, and the said Recruit has made and signed the declaration and taken the oath before me at *London* on this *21st* day of *December* 191*4*

Signature of Justice. *C. P. ...*

* Certificate of Approving Officer.

I certify that this Attestation of the above-named Recruit is correct, and properly filled up, and that the required forms appear to have been complied with. I accordingly approve, and appoint him to the *Middlesex Regiment*. If enlisted by special authority, Army Form B. 203 (or other authority for the enlistment) will be attached to the original attestation.

Date *21st Dec* 191*4* *C. P. ...* Approving Officer.

Place *Stungway, London*

*The signature of the Approving Officer is to be affixed in the presence of the Recruit. Have insert the "Corps" for which the Recruit has been enlisted.

*If so, the Recruit is to be asked the particulars of his former service, and to produce, if possible, his Certificate of Discharge and Certificate of Character, which should be returned to him conspicuously endorsed in red ink, as follows, viz: (Name) re-enlisted in the (Regiment) on the (Date).

Source A from the Northampton Mercury 18 August 1916

WAR ITEMS.

Walter Tull, the Cobblers' half back, who is in the Players' Battalion, has been in hospital three months with pneumonia, but is now convalescent.

Source B from the Northampton Independent 19 January 1918

Lieutenant Walter Tull, the old Northampton player, is now in Italy, where Pte. Billingham, of the reserves, has also been serving.

Source C from the Northampton Independent 16 March 1918

Town Footballer's Heroism.

The many friends of Sec.-Lieut. Walter Tull, the old Northampton half-back, will join me in hearty congratulations upon his exceptional gallantry which has brought him the following fine tribute from Major-General Sir Sydney Lawford, commanding officer of one of the British divisions on the Western front:—

"I wish to place on record my appreciation of your gallantry and coolness. You were one of the first to cross the river prior to the raid, and during the raid you took the covering party of the main body across and brought them back without a casualty, in spite of heavy fire."

Tull, who is attached to the Middlesex Regiment, joined the Footballers' Battalion when war broke out, and won rapid promotion by his many soldierly qualities.