



STANLEY GEMMELL MILLAR, Cochrane Park, caps 4, cap number 75

Stanley Gemmell Millar was born on 20th February 1887. He was the 6th child of John Millar, a Drysalter, and his wife Jessie (nee Campbell). Stanley was born at East Knowe in the Castlehead district of Paisley. He was educated at Paisley Grammar School then attended Loretto School from 1899 to 1906. At school he was an all round sportsman and played in both the 1st cricket XI and 1st rugby XV at Loretto.

After school Stanley returned to Paisley to work for J & P Coats. During the summer months he played cricket for Ferguslie CC and was a noted lawn tennis player. He was captain at Ferguslie for the 1912 and 1913 seasons before joining West of Scotland in 1914. Stanley had been the leading amateur bowler at Ferguslie in both 1909 and 1910, while in 1911 he was the leading amateur batsman, an all round talent.

During the winter, Stanley played hockey for Cochrane Park. He made his representative debut playing for West District against East on 16th December 1911. His play for West District gained him a place in the 1912 final trial at Glasgow on the 17th February. Unfortunately, 1912 wasn't to be his year as the selectors went with the experienced A.B. Burt at centre half, flanked by J G Anderson and G G Paul. The presence of A.B. Burt at Millar's favoured position of centre half may have limited the Paisley man's caps, certainly Burt who went on to win 33 caps was an almost automatic selection for Scotland teams of that era.

In the 1912-13 season, Millar again represented West District and made the final trial at Murrayfield on 1st February 1913. Although he didn't make the original selection, Stanley was selected for the team to play Wales when A B Burt dropped out and Millar gained his first cap on 22nd February at Wrexham. His performance in a 3-1 win gained him a place in the team to play Ireland at Anniesland on the 15th March. To accommodate the return of Burt at centre half, Millar moved to right half. Sadly, Scotland lost 2-1 to Ireland. Stanley was initially dropped for the England game but was called up when Burt was again unable to play. A 5-0 drubbing ended the 1913 international calendar on a sour note.

Stanley Millar's 4th and final cap came as a late call up to replace A. M McCallum at right half in the 1914 international against England. The game played at Hamilton Crescent, Partick on 21st March was a 5-1 defeat which left Scotland with the wooden spoon after losing all three of their internationals that year. At 27, Stanley was still a young man and who knows how many caps he may have gained if the war had not intervened.

Like many of his generation, Stanley volunteered on the outbreak of war. He volunteered at Edinburgh on 14th August 1914, just ten days after war was declared. Stanley passed his medical examination on 18th August and he was gazetted 2nd lieutenant on 25th September 1914. Stanley initially served with the 8th battalion of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment.

Millar arrived in France on 26th April 1916 as the commanding officer of the 103rd Machine Gun Company, part of the 103rd Infantry Brigade, perhaps better known as the Tyneside Irish. The brigade spent the end of April and early May in the area of Tatinghem, before taking over trenches in front of La Boisselle on the night of the 8th/9th May

The Tyneside Irish were the reserve brigade for the 34th Division when it attacked La Boisselle on the 1st July 1916. When they advanced at 7.30am they suffered heavy casualties from machine gun and artillery fire. Stanley Millar lost his life during this advance. His body was recovered after the battle and some of his personal effects were returned to his family.

However after the war, his grave was not able to be identified and he is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial. He is also remembered on:

Paisley War Memorial
Fettes College Memorial
Ferguslie Cricket Pavilion War Memorial

Sources:

Ancestry
Stuart Black, Ferguslie cricket club personal communication
The Long Long Trail
Scotland's People
Ancestry
British Newspaper Archive
Scottish Hockey Records
Commonwealth War Graves Commission
National Archives