

- Walter Tull born 28th April 1888 Folkstone Kent
- Mother Alice Elizabeth Tull
- Father Daniel Tull
- Joined Middlesex 17th Battalion (1st Football) 12th Dec 1917
- Served on Western Front and Italy
- Died 25th March 1918 near Favreuil

Walter Tull should be remembered because of his many achievements as well as the insight his life gives us to how people of mixed heritage were treated in England in the early 20th century.

Walter Daniel John Tull was born on the 28th March 1888 to Alice Elizabeth Tull and Daniel Tull in Folkestone, Kent. His father was a black carpenter originally from Barbados and his mother was white. At this time the marriage of a black man and a white woman was very rare. It is likely that a child of mixed heritage would have experienced some challenges in Edwardian England.

Sadly, by the time Walter was 9 both his parents had died years old, his mother had died leaving Walter and his siblings orphaned. Walter and his brother Edward were sent to a Methodist Orphanage in East London. From there his brother was later adopted. Walter became an apprentice to a printer and found his love of and skill at football. His first game for Clapton FC was on 26th December 1908 when he played for Clapton FC. After this he played for many other teams including Tottenham Hotspur and earned himself a reputation for being a talented footballer.

On 12th December 1914 Walter volunteered for 17th Middlesex Battalion, the 1st "Football battalion". He quickly rose through the ranks until he became a 2nd Lieutenant in the British Army. He served well and accounts written about him show that he was respected by his fellow officers and by the men. He was



recommended for a Military Cross for leading his men in action in Italy.

The Germans began their Spring Offensive on 21st March 1918. On 24th March Walter Tull left the trenches with his battalion but unfortunately died near a village called Favreuil. Several accounts state that people tried to go out and find his body but he has no known grave.

Walter Tull deserves to be recognised as someone who succeeded against many odds. After a difficult start he became successful in his own right. He went on to serve and die for King and country.

The reason his life is of significance, as we think about Black History month, is because of the way he is described by people who knew him.

In an article printed in the Northampton Chronicle on 21st September 1926 Billy Lockett, who played with Walter Tull during his time at Northampton FC, wrote about "Memories of Walter Tull". It is clear Billy Lockett knew Walter, who he refers to as "Wally". Billy obviously has a high respect for Walter and admires him but the best compliment he feels he can give Walter is shocking to our modern eyes. Billy says that "If ever a man of his skin had red blood and a white man's heart it was Wally." He intends this to be a huge compliment and it appears to be said with no malice whatsoever but it shows that a black person could only be truly admirable if they were shown to have "white" qualities. (See last page)

Tull was often insulted by the fans while playing football. The people who knew him knew he was a man to be admired, "a gentleman". The people who didn't know him insulted him. The main difference here was knowledge. This is why we have Black History Month. We need to learn and understand before we judge.

# WINNING AND LOSING.

## A Study in Cup-tie Contrasts.

**BILLY LOCKETT**

### Tells Stories of Games on the East Coast.

Before plunging into exciting events of 1914-15 English Cup efforts, may I just state one or two memories of men I met early on, as commenced last week. I promised to refer once again to Fred Leonard.

Off the field he was ever ready to keep the team together. Of his skill in collecting and bargaining with players I have no knowledge, but it was on the field where he played his part best.

He was the quickest man I have ever met to weigh up the methods of the other side; consequently we could hear Fred directing affairs with no uncertain voice, and, without doubt, he was the best adviser on the field the Cobblers had during my career. What a loss his gallant but untimely end was to all with whom he was concerned.

#### MEMORIES OF WALTER TULL.

Next we come to another war hero. Dark skinned, massive in build, strong as a lion was Walter Tull. If ever a man of his skin had red blood and a white man's heart it was Wally. A half-back certain to win fame for himself and his club, a whole-hearted and whole timer every game.

For robust, perfectly fair, shoulder charges, given with effort, he has not been replaced; for his hard head and long, low shot we have often sighed.

He was in khaki nearly all the season, and yet how many crowds yelled remarks at him unfit for print! Off the field he was a gentleman, and the best musician the Cobblers had in my time. This is no mean ability when one is associated for long weary hours of waiting, as is often a footballer's lot.

I understand Wally expressed an opinion to Northampton friends that he was returning to the front as an officer, but also to his death. A gallant fellow!

**TWO GAMES AT ST. JAMES'S PARK.**