

= William Middleton Wallace =

William " Willie " Middleton Wallace (23 September 1892 ? 22 August 1915) was a rugby union player . He played fullback for Cambridge University RFC and was capped for Scotland in 1913 ? 14 .

Having grown up in Edinburgh , Willie Wallace went to King 's College , Cambridge in 1912 , where he was immediately noticed for his rugby @-@ playing ability . He was selected to play against Oxford in the Varsity Match in his first term . Later in the season , in March 1913 , Scotland picked him to play away against England , in a close game , which England won by just three points . The following season he played in all three Home Nations matches against Wales , Ireland and England .

He was commissioned second lieutenant in The Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort 's Own) at the start of the First World War and departed for the Western Front a few weeks later . In February 1915 , he was attached to the Royal Flying Corps and soon became No. 2 Squadron 's senior observer . In August 1915 , while on a photographic reconnaissance mission , his aircraft was shot down in northern France , near Lille . At the time of his death , it was suggested that he might have been the first undergraduate to see action in the war .

= = Early life = =

Wallace was born in Edinburgh , the son of Robert and Mary Wallace , on 23 September 1892 . He went to school at Edinburgh Academy from 1899 to 1912 then studied at King 's College , Cambridge until 15 July 1914 . At school , he was in the rugby team for his final three years and vice @-@ captain in the final year . He also played cricket , captaining the school team in 1911 , as wicket @-@ keeper .

= = Rugby career = =

According to the rugby journalist and author E. H. D. Sewell , Wallace was the best fullback in the United Kingdom between 1912 and 1914 . On arriving at Cambridge in 1912 , his performance in the freshers ' rugby match earned him his place on the Cambridge XV to play Oxford in the Varsity Match .

He was selected to play for Scotland against England in 1913 ; and Wales , Ireland , and England in 1914 .

Scotland 's first Five Nations Championship match of 1914 was on 7 February , played away to Wales at Cardiff . Scotland had not won in Cardiff since 1890 and Wales were favourites , having ' lost so unluckily ' against England . The match pitted Welsh forward strength against the swift threequarter line of the Scots . The first points came from a try for Scotland by W. A. Stewart , converted by Hamilton , giving the visitors a five @-@ point lead after four minutes . These were the only points they scored . Wales then attacked repeatedly and Wallace was kept busy in defence . With a 7 ? 5 lead at half time , the Welsh pressed their advantage and ended the game 24 ? 5 winners .

In the country 's final game before the outbreak of the First World War , on 21 March Scotland played host to an English team that had already defeated Wales and Ireland . The Scots , with the wind behind them , opened the scoring in the first half with a try but England equalised just before half time . After the break , England got up a lead of 6 ? 16 and the visitors seemed certain to win . Scotland responded and closed the gap to one point . The English were then playing with fourteen men after Cherry Pillman 's leg was broken in a tackle , since substitutions at the time were not allowed . They managed to hold on , beating Scotland 15 ? 16 , thereby winning both the Triple Crown and the Calcutta Cup , as well as the Five Nations . It was England 's last international test on British soil before the First World War : of the 30 players in the match , 11 went on to be killed in it , including the Englishman Arthur James Dingle , who died the same day as Wallace .

= = = International appearances = = =

= = Military service and death = =

Wallace , who was a cadet of the Officers Training Corps , was commissioned second lieutenant in the 5th Battalion , The Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort 's Own) on 5 August 1914 , while still an undergraduate . There were suggestions at the time that he was the first undergraduate to go into action but they were not substantiated . After two weeks ' training at Sheppey , he departed for France on 30 August . There , he participated in the First Battle of the Aisne and was active on the Western Front at Frelinghien and Ploegsteert Wood .

Wallace was attached to No. 2 Squadron , 1st Wing Royal Flying Corps (RFC) on 14 February 1915 as an observer , alongside William Barnard Rhodes @-@ Moorhouse , the first serviceman of the RFC to be awarded the Victoria Cross . By July he was the squadron 's senior observer and was made up to lieutenant on 21 July 1915 . On 22 August 1915 , Wallace was on a photographic reconnaissance mission in a B.E.2c piloted by his friend 2Lt Charles Gallie . The plane was hit by anti @-@ aircraft fire and came straight down at Sainghin , near Lille , northern France .

Both men were buried near to where they fell , but after the war their bodies were reinterred at the Cabaret @-@ Rouge British Cemetery (Grave reference XII . D. 11) , Souchez , near Arras , France .