

Gilbert Scott

..... played for Wests in 1910 at a time when they were struggling to put a team on the field. As such there has been some confusion regarding the playing record of some players. The Wests First Grade team lists printed in the Sunday Times newspaper on 21 August 1910 and the Referee newspaper on 24 August 1910 shows Scott at half and also in the forwards. There are eight forwards listed so there is some confusion as to where Scott was playing.

The Sunday Sun on 21 August 1910 only lists thirteen players and the player Scott was listed as a forward. The Sunday Sun is the publication that appears correct as Gilbert Scott When playing rugby union was in the forwards.

Given the confused team list it cannot be concluded either way as to whether the player Scott made it onto the field against Eastern Suburbs. As such, there needs to be a qualification against his playing profile.

However, the main question to address is how does all of this link together? There is a vital piece of information that was reported in the Sydney Morning Herald on 31 May 1915. The article refers to Private Gilbert Scott who was wounded at Gallipoli. The article states that he was; "a prominent member of the Western Suburbs First Grade Rugby League team."

From available records it is known that player Scott had likely played only one First Grade game with Wests. That hardly makes him a prominent member of the First Grade team. However there is a record of H. Scott playing regular First Grade football with the Wests Rugby Union Club in 1907 and 1908.

This would qualify him as being a prominent member of that Club's First Grade team. It is reasonable to assume that because he last played at the highest level with Wests Rugby League team that the writer of the news article melded his whole playing career together for the sake of providing a simple message rather than a curriculum vitae.

The name Scott is not that common and there is certainly no other players of that name that played premier level football in the Western Suburbs district at that time. It is not known why he would have used the name H. Scott when playing rugby union but it was not uncommon for players to use a nick name or had their names mis-reported.

It is known that his birth registration recorded him as Gilbert H Scott, the "H" possibly a reference to his father's middle name of Hubbard. However Gilbert throughout his adult life referred to himself as Gilbert Basil Scott.

Unfortunately when this player was included in the Wests rugby league team lists in 1910 and 1911, the only name that appeared was his surname. The information that is available, including the player's residential address and him being of the right age creates a strong case for Gilbert Basil Scott being West's First Grade player #77.

Gilbert Scott was from a sporting family. His maternal grandfather was George Henry Bayley Gilbert, who was a first class cricketer in England before he emigrated to Australia in 1852. George Gilbert captained the New South Wales cricket team to victory against Victoria in their inaugural first class match and for several seasons afterwards. Later in life he became the groundsman for the cricket ground in the Sydney Suburb of Burwood.

George Gilbert's younger brother, Walter Raleigh Gilbert, was a professional cricket player in England. Both men were first cousins on their maternal side to the cricketer immortal W. G. Grace

Gilbert Scott enlisted with the AIF in November 1914 and was posted to the 2nd Reinforcements, 13th Battalion. He embarked with his Battalion from Sydney in February 1915 and arrived at Heliopolis Cairo where they encamped at the aerodrome. The strength of the Battalion was just over one thousand officers and other ranks.

The 13th Battalion trained in the Egyptian Desert during March and early April 1915 and then set out from Alexandria on HMAT Ascot on 12 April 1915, arriving at Lemnos, Greece on 17 April where the Battalion undertook boat drills and practice in scaling ladders.

On 24 April the 13th Battalion sailed, arriving off Anzac Cove at 4.30 am on 25 April. Several Companies of the Battalion came ashore, under fire, before sun rise on 26 April and took up positions at the head of Monash Valley, Pope's Hill, and Quinn's Hill.

On the evening of 2 May until the evening of 3 May, the 13th Battalion was part of an offensive that involved New Zealand and British troops. The original objective was to capture the plateau above Anzac Cove but this was soon abandoned and the focus became the capture of high ground known as Baby 700.

The attack commenced in the evening with artillery fire and then machine gun fire at Turkish positions. The 13th were at the centre of the offensive but due to the nature of the terrain could only advance in single file. The nature of the country caused a disjointed attack, with some units not reaching their objective and one company missing a turn off point and never seen again.

The disorganisation was so acute that the Royal Naval Nelson Battalion who were sent to support the 13th Battalion mistook the Australians for Turks and opened fire on them. The other Battalions failed to reinforce the position held by the 13th leaving them alone, exposed and without communications in front of the line. Eventually a runner made it back and the Battalion was ordered to withdraw under darkness, bringing their wounded down with them.

One of the wounded was Gilbert Scott who received a gunshot wound to the left arm and was evacuated out. The wound was serious and the arm had to be amputated. The Battle for Baby 700 cost around one thousand lives and it was estimated that two hundred of these were men of the 13th Battalion.

Gilbert Scott sent a letter giving an account of his time at Gallipoli to his sister Mrs A H McCallum as he was recovering in Egypt. His sister was Grace Gilbert who had married Alexander McCallum, a South Sydney player who played the one First Grade game for Wests in 1909. The letter was published in the Sun newspaper on 27 June 1915 and is reproduced below.

FIERCE FIGHTING
SHIFTING THE TURKS
BAD LUCK OF THE LARKINS
MAJOR SWANNELL'S SHORT RUN

Mrs. A. H. M'Callum, Queen-street, Peter-sham, has received a letter from her brother, Private Gilbert Scott, who has been wounded in the Dardanelles. He was in the Heliopolis Hospital on May 15, the date on which his letter was written. He says:—

"Well, we met the Turks at daylight on Sunday morning, April 25. They gave us a warm greeting from their machine guns, which poured out about 600 shots a minute. It was just like a shower of rain, and not having any umbrellas with us we got a severe doing. Although our men were being wiped out, or rather mowed down, by the enemy's guns, those who were not shot did not wait for orders, but jumped out of the boats into the water, which at that particular spot was waist deep. I was one of the fortunate ones not to be hit during the landing. As soon as we reached the shore we fixed our bayonets and made our dash. The Turks were entrenched not far from the beach on high ground, which was devoid of trees, but growing plenty of scrub, which was good cover for them. There was an enormous number of the enemy, and they were well prepared too.

"The boys charged up the awful climb scattering Turks right and left in spite of the hail of bullets, and the fact that we were fast losing men. It was wicked to see our chaps falling. They reached the top in twenty minutes, and secured the Turks' first line of trenches, but our lads were not satisfied. The loss of so many comrades angered them, and they forged ahead determined on having revenge. With bayonets ready, they again attacked the Turks, and those of the enemy not killed jumped out of the trenches and ran. Our lads chased them for four miles and captured another of their trenches at the point of the bayonet.

CUT OFF AND BUTCHERED

"Further back a strong force of Turks were entrenched, and they had the range from their positions to where we were to a nicety. They poured shrapnel into us. On our fellows attempting to retire to a trench further back, some of them were cut off, and they were absolutely butchered. Nearly all the officers were shot, and there were no commanders, consequently it was every man for himself, which caused our fellows to become scattered. This went on until daylight the next morning, when our lads got together again. Reinforcements met with such a hot fire that it was some time before they could reach us.

"In the meantime the big guns on the war-ships, which were cruising up and down, about a mile from the shore, were raining shells into the Turks. What with the noise of the big guns and our own rifles, and men falling all around, it was just like hell let loose. The ground was shaking under our feet, just as if an earthquake had occurred. The Queen Elizabeth, as you no doubt know by this, was with us, and well we knew when she fired her big guns. I thought the earth would fall to pieces every time her shells would pass over us. You can guess how the Turks suffered when one of Liz's shells hit them. The navy did a lot of great work, and silenced a number of their big guns which were playing havoc with us. Our own batteries were not landed till the following day, and then only a few of them. It took hundreds of men to haul them up the awful heights.

SNIPERS' DEADLY WORK.

"We fought under frightful conditions for two days, until we made the positions we secured safe. The Turks kept their rifles and machine guns blazing away at us day and night. Snipers got through two weak positions of ours which we eventually had to abandon. They took full advantage of the scrub, and knowing the country so well, they got right behind us and picked us off just as if they were shooting rabbits. They practically cut off our supplies. The Red Cross stretcher-bearers suffered as badly as we—in fact, I think they had the worst end of the stick.

"The advantage of the Turks, however, was to be of short duration. An order was given to capture the positions, which our commanders considered were weak, and where we had lost a lot of our chaps. On Sunday evening, May 2, a bayonet charge was ordered, and the positions were to be captured at all costs. The honor fell to the 4th Brigade to do the work, and the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th battalions were passed the word for the impending attack. For an hour previous to the charge the naval guns shelled the positions so as to lighten our task, but the Turks were well sheltered in concrete trenches.

"It was an hour after dark that the music opened for the first waltz. We fixed bayonets and sneaked along a gully. The order was given, and we charged, most of us roaring, cheering, making cat-calls, or squealing like dingoes. About half-way up the valley our boys got a sudden check by the enemy en-flaming us with machine-gun fire, which was trained upon us with accuracy and deadly effect. A big number of our fellows dropped

and rolled down the steep incline into the gully below. Those who were not hit pushed ahead and reached the top. They met with a withering fire, and the losses were greater than in the earlier stages of the advance. Our chaps clung on for dear life, notwithstanding our heavy losses. As soon as they reached the crest of the hill they charged, and drove back the Turks. The boys who were fortunate enough to be in the attack started to sing *It's a Long Way to Tipperary*, but the song became fainter, and the lads were falling very quickly and in great numbers. Our chaps dug themselves in as best they could wherever they got a chance while on the ground blazing away at the Turks.

TURKS THROW HAND GRENADES

"We held on till daylight next morning, when the Turks crept up, and threw hand grenades into our trenches, blowing some of our fellows to atoms. We had to retreat, but retook the position later in the day. It was here that I received from the Turks a card of introduction to the Red Cross stretcher-bearers, who received me without delay. The welcome they gave me was splendid. I drank their health in water, and swallowed all they had in their bottles. They carried me half-way to the beach, along a gully strewn with wounded and dead. Some of those alive on the ground were in an awful state. The shrapnel was raining over them. Here the Red Cross

chaps dressed my left arm, through which, between the elbow and shoulder, a bullet had passed, just grazing the bone. On the way to the beach a sniper tried to finish me off, but he missed every time. My arm was numbed and paralysed for the time being.

"Sergt. Larkin had an unfortunate ending, being shot through the head just as he was leaving the boat. His brother, Pat, also met the same fate. Major Blair L. Swannell only lasted one day. He was also shot through the head. Aslett, my tent mate at Liverpool Camp, was shot in the head, but the bullet glanced off. I've since met him in Egypt, and he is getting on well.

CONCERTS IN EGYPT

"I am back again in Egypt with hundreds of others. We are being treated very kindly by everyone. Our casualty list so far is about 15,000. We are in the Luna Park Skating Rink, which has been converted into a hospital. It can hold 700 patients. There is a piano in the centre of the rink, and every night we are entertained by visitors, among them being Mr. J. J. Virgo, who was at one time the secretary of the Sydney Y.M.C.A. He is now the secretary of the World's Y.M.C.A., London. He is an Australian. He sings pretty well. He gave us two numbers one night—*He Shall Hold on Fast, and Are We Downhearted?* No, No, no."

Gilbert Scott returned to Australia in August 1915 and received a war pension to help him manage with the disability he received at Gallipoli. He was treated as a war hero and was invited to various meetings where he spoke about his time overseas.

PRIVATE GILBERT SCOTT.

Private Gilbert Scott, of the 13th Battalion, 4th Infantry Brigade, who was wounded on May 17, at the action at the Dardanelles, was 31 years of age. He was educated at Petersham public school, and after leaving school entered the Government Survey Department of New South Wales. He was one of the oldest members of the Eastern Suburbs Rifle Club, and a prominent member of the Western Suburbs first-grade Rugby League team. He is also a good shot. Private Scott lived at Rossmore-avenue, Punchbowl. He is the grandson of George Gilbert, the first captain of New South Wales in intercolonial cricket matches, and is also related to Dr. W. G. Grace.

SMH 31 May 1915

RIFLEMEN'S DINNER

EASTERN SUBURBS CLUB

The annual dinner of the Eastern Suburbs Rifle Club was held at Bray's Cafe, George-street, last night, Captain A. W. M'Callum presiding. Those present included Mr. W. H. Kelly, M.H.R., Mr. C. W. Oakes, Mr. T. L. Westbrook (president of the Metropolitan District Union), Mr. George Douglass (National Rifle Association), Mr. J. M. Black (chairman of the M.D.R.C.U.), and Captain Gilderthorp (Randwick Literary Institute Club). Opportunity was taken to welcome home one of the Gallipoli heroes, Mr. Gilbert Scott, who has lost his left arm, and also to bid farewell to several members of the club who are going to the front. Among the toasts honored were Parliament, The Heroes of Gallipoli, Our Boys Going to the Front, and the Eastern Suburbs Club.

When Mr. Scott rose to respond he was accorded a tremendous reception. It lasted so long that he missed his train to Punchbowl, where he was to be the guest at another welcome home. The members thereupon subscribed sufficient for a motor car to carry him thither.

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Gilbert Scott lived most of his life in the southern Sydney suburb of Caringbah, NSW and he died there in 1947. Gilbert Scott's memorial is at the Woronora Memorial Park, Sutherland, NSW, Congregational, Section 1, Grave 173.



Gilbert Scott's Memorial