

16 Pte. George McCall d 14 February 1919: ex-prisoner of war



Barrow News 15 March 1919



Where is the grave? From the crematorium car park, take the path down the hill to the left. Ignoring two paths to the left, carry on down the hill. The McCall grave is half way down on the left, next to Collie and nearly opposite Pattinson and Wright.

The Royal Navy blockade of German ports, together with the Imperial German Navy's High Seas Fleet reluctance to come out of port after the Battle of Jutland in May 1916, meant that food was in short supply in Germany. Priority was given to their armed forces, then German civilians. Lastly, prisoners of war, who were permanently hungry it seems. For a more detailed account, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blockade_of_Germany

The *Barrow News* 15 March 1919 reported:

FORMER BARROVIAN'S SAD END "STARVED AND WORKED TO DEATH"

Many Barrovians, and especially those tradesmen who took part in the matches of, or supported the Tradesmen's Football Club in pre-war days, will regret to hear of the death of Pte. George McCall, of 23, Ferry-road, who was a playing member of the club, and who before joining up was in the grocery department of the Co-operative Society at Walney. Private McCall died in Portal Hospital, Cheshire. The Commandant, the Hon. Mrs. Marshall Brooks, has sent the following letter to be inserted as a tribute to a very gallant soldier: -

On January 6th, 1919, twelve prisoners of war were admitted into this hospital, and I, as commandant, was naturally busy over their reception. I noticed a small man pitifully emaciated sitting by the fire in the dayroom, a man with very bright eyes and a peculiarly infectious smile. I asked him a question or two, and got cheery answers. "How nice it was to be in Blighty. Oh yes, I was a sight when I got through the British lines, but now I am 'in the pink'." That was his expression; he was always 'in the pink'. He wrote this from Germany to his mother, when he was being starved and worked to death and racked with dysentery behind the German lines. It was always 'in the pink' with him. We got so fond of him, we women who nursed him to the end. Yesterday, February 14th, he 'crossed the bar', and even on that morning, when he noticed his father's distress, he motioned me to his side and gasped out, "Dad thinks I look bad. Tell him that I am champion, just champion." My nurses and I feel proud to have had the honour of doing what we could for such a gallant gentleman as Pte. Geo. McCall, 2nd Lincolns. — Yours truly, Florence Brooks, Commandant.