



***The Final Whistle by Stephen Cooper; ISBN
9780752499000***

***Spellmount,
paperback, 383 pages, illustrated.***

This is an unusual, but fascinating, book about the British Empire during the Great War, and consists of fifteen chapters on individual servicemen with widely differing histories. In its pages we read of: a South African in the RFC who was the first casualty

on the Western Front; a regular Army officer killed at Loos; an officer killed at Ypres; an Australian in the British Army killed on the Western Front; two Gallipoli casualties; another Australian in the British Army killed on the Western Front; the first British officer killed in the Dublin Easter Rising; an infantryman killed on the Somme; an officer killed by a sniper in Mesopotamia; an RFC pilot who died during an Anti-Zeppelin Patrol; a tank officer killed at Cambrai (and a French tank officer who suffered a similar fate in 1918); a Balloon Observer killed in Italy; a Naval officer at Zeebrugge; and a Welsh artillery officer killed on the Western Front. All had something in common: before the War they played Rugby in the red and white hooped jersey of London's Rosslyn Park Football Club.

The book is a distillation of the Empire's experiences, and the author has done a marvellous job of research. In summary, a wonderful read that I strongly recommend. – **Gareth Morgan**