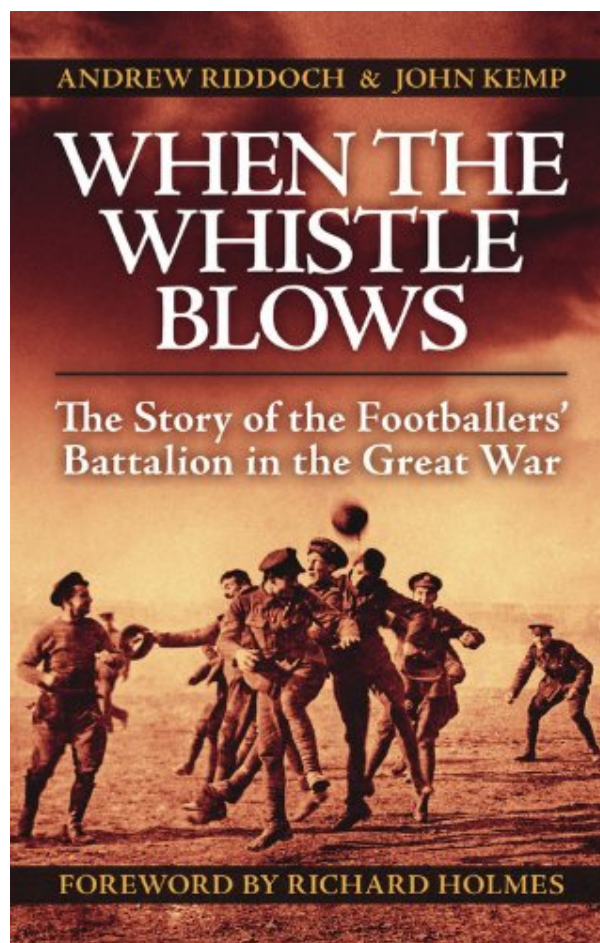


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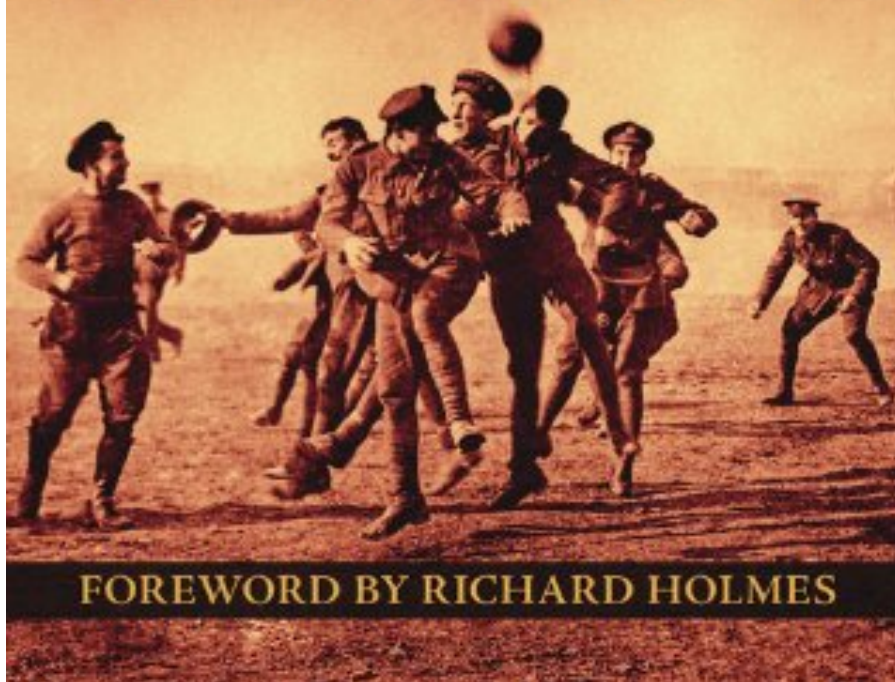
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# WHEN THE WHISTLE BLOWS

The Story of the Footballers' Battalion in the Great War



FOREWORD BY RICHARD HOLMES

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## About the Author

Andrew Riddoch is a military historian and lifelong football addict who works as a commissioning editor for a law publisher. He is a Sheffield Wednesday supporter.

John Kemp is also a football fan with a keen interest in military history. He supports West Ham.

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# **WHEN THE WHISTLE BLOWS: THE STORY OF THE FOOTBALLERS' BATTALION IN THE GREAT WAR BY ANDREW RIDDOCH, JOHN KEMP PDF**

Now available in paperback, this timely history tells the full story of the 17th Battalion Middlesex Regiment, the 'Footballers' Battalion'. Based on extensive original research, Andrew Riddoch and John Kemp draw on many previously unpublished letters, personal accounts and photographs to paint a vivid portrait of this legendary British Army battalion that fought in three of the fiercest battles of the Great War – the Somme, Arras and Cambrai. The authors show how this remarkable battalion helped shape football, as well as military history.

- Sales Rank: #3647749 in Books
- Published on: 2011-12-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .40" w x 5.00" l, .60 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 336 pages

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**A "BEAUTIFULLY RESEARCHED HISTORY" OF THE COURAGEOUS 17th MIDDLESEX PALS: THE FINE FOOTBALLERS BATTALION**

By Phillip Taylor MBE

**A "BEAUTIFULLY RESEARCHED HISTORY" OF THE COURAGEOUS 17th MIDDLESEX PALS: THE FINE FOOTBALLERS BATTALION**

An appreciation by Phillip Taylor MBE and Elizabeth Taylor of Richmond Green Chambers

The sickness of heart which one feels when receiving news of a bereavement runs through this brilliantly and extensively researched book on a special part of the Great War's Pals' battalions: the people of the

Footballers Battalion.

Andrew Riddoch and John Kemp have produced a challenging picture of the footballing lives lost 100 years ago in their updated work "When the Whistle Blows". The authors have updated this special history for the centenary of this terrible war and I am reviewing the title on the anniversary of the Battle of the Somme as a special tribute to those who died on that terrible morning.

Much will continue to be said and written of the Great War as we now look at the conflict historically as the participants have gone from the field. I found this book incredibly sad to read for two reasons: my great uncle served in a Pal's battalion and was killed in action, and I have also served in the British Army so I have a very small understanding (but not much) of what it was like although, as a volunteer myself, my motivation was, like the footballers, different from conscripted men.

I have also been a footballer (of sorts) as will all my generation and although very tall, it has never been a game that interested me much until I read this book and saw the special eye for the ball which these men all shared.

Football (or soccer) reigns as the greatest of all our games of sport played across the globe, so this book is a fitting tribute to all the keen-eyed men who gave their lives for their country from such a special and quite wide group of sportsmen.

And my sadness is tinged with the special waste of life associated with these particularly talented people although one could also write that of any specific group who died in World War One.

The excellent Richard Holmes wrote in 2008, quoting the authors, that "the spirit of the professional players, amateurs and 'club enthusiasts' within the ranks of the battalion made a lasting impression on everyone who encountered it".

Holmes sums up for me that this is a "beautifully researched history of a fine battalion" and "a lasting tribute to men who remained true to their salt when the whistle blew, not on manicured greensward, but in a muddy trench". Richard always put it so well!

Another splendid and sensitive comment about this book comes from Gordon Taylor who says "they paid the ultimate sacrifice" and "we will remember them" as the book "fully illustrates why it will be impossible to forget such heroes".

And remembering these brave and skilled men is the lasting legacy of Riddoch and Kemp's studious work with its excellent and careful chapter footnotes... and the book should find its way into most football club houses in the land as a memorial to football and footballers (one can but hope) and of that time in history, and possibly for today's fans to ponder their heroes' courage.

It is such sad imagery that when the army's whistle was blown and the grappling up the trench wall started as they went over the top, it was not like going out into the floodlit arena, but to no-man's land for their country and not their team, to the noise of a barrage and whistle and not to cheers.

From their research Riddoch and Kemp were able to make contact with the new generations whose forebears fought for today's freedom - we often ignore how evil the Kaiser and earlier versions of the Gestapo were.

"When the Whistle Blows" is not merely a tribute and an historic account of some very brave and special

men whose like we will probably not see again, there is a final special word from Major Buckley on 17th Middlesex: "I feel I cannot say too much for them, always cheerful and willing, and the first to volunteer for anything".

That was the way it was then, and has been since, and may well have to be again should we face what the First War British footballers faced: something we all hope will never, ever happen again.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Five Stars

By Jenny Mahon

Great insight into detailed history of one battalion in WW 1, in which my grandfather served.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Great history of a splendid battalion with many legendary names ...

By John Matthews

Great history of a splendid battalion with many legendary names from soccer who were part of the 17th Middlesex battalion and the sheer heroism of every man who fought. Many congratulations to Andrew Riddoch & John Kemp for a very readable history.

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