

## National Archives of Scotland -- Military Service Tribunals

### William Fyffe, 1916 – 1918 (NAS reference HH30/25/3/13)

B-41. **MILITARY SERVICE ACTS, 1916.**

Name of Tribunal *Lothian and Peebles* Number of Case *4946.*

*Renewal.* **APPLICATION AS TO EXEMPTION.**  
(The attached duplicate must also be filed so by the Applicant.)

Any person making a false statement or false representation is liable to imprisonment.

1. Men in respect of whom application made:

(a) Name (in full) *William Fyffe*

(b) Age last birthday *33* Date of birthday *16<sup>th</sup> February 1885*

(c) Married or single *Married* If married, date of marriage *October 1904*

(d) Address (in full) *8 West Graham Str. Glasgow*

(e) Address at date of National Registration *Burdiehouse, Midlothian*  
(19th August, 1915) *Reg. No. 6177/4*

(f) Occupation, profession or business (Give full and exact details)  
*Variety Artist*

Extract from the records of William Fyffe's Military Service Tribunal  
(NAS reference HH30/25/3/13)

William Fyffe, comedian and actor, appealed against his military service on grounds of national importance and serious hardship. While his first appeal for conditional exemption was granted on grounds of his health, his second appeal was dismissed due to insubstantial evidence for both reasons given.

## Background

Fyffe originally applied for exemption to the Midlothian Local Tribunal on 7 June 1917 on the grounds of serious hardship and that his occupation was of national interest. His application was refused and he appealed to the Lothian and Peebles Appeal Tribunal against this decision. His first appeal was heard on the 21 September 1917 and after a medical examination he was granted a certificate of exemption until 20 March 1918 on condition that he remained in his present occupation. When this exemption expired he once again appealed to the Appeal Tribunal, his application this time being dismissed on 28 March 1918. The case papers which extend over 17 pages from 7 June 1917 to 28 March 1918, include applications to the Appeal Tribunal, his application to the Midlothian Local Tribunal as well as medical certificates.

**HH30/25/3/13 William Fyffe**

## Application for Exemption (Local Tribunal)

**Name of Local Tribunal:** Midlothian. **Age:** 32. **Address:** Burdiehouse, Loanhead, Midlothian

**Occupation:** Variety Artist **Employer:** George Gilbert, Palace Theatre, Aberdeen.

**Grounds for Application for Exemption:** national interest and serious hardship

**Nature of Application:** conditional exemption

**Reasons for application:** was rejected as medically unfit and as he and his wife work together if he was to go to war this would mean serious hardship for his family.

**Date of Application:** 7 June 1917

**Decision of Local Tribunal:** refused. Insufficient grounds. **Date of Local Tribunal:** 17 Aug 1917

### **Application for Exemption (Appeal Tribunal)**

**Age:** 33. **Address:** 8 West Graham Street, Glasgow. **Occupation:** Variety Artist

**Employer:** A.D. MacFarlane, Theatrical Agent, 136 Renfield Street, Glasgow.

**Grounds for Application for Exemption:** national interest & serious hardship.

**Nature of Application:** conditional exemption.

**Reasons for application: national interest:** 'The Applicant has, after strenuous work and heavy expenditure, attained a position in the theatrical world which entitled him to be classed as a first rate entertainer, and he is under contract to perform in various Theatres in London, Edinburgh, Glasgow and provincial various provincial towns up to the year 1919. In this connection it is pointed out that the entertainment offered by such artistes as the Appellant is, in the opinion of both Medical and Military Authorities, one of the best tonics for soldiers and sailors on leave from the front, and for men, who, having been wounded, are in convalescence.'

**Serious hardship:** Fyffe performed together with his wife, who would suffer 'financial loss' should he be called to the front. In addition, '[t]he Applicant [...] has two children who live with the Applicant's Father and Mother, and all four are dependent on him for their entire maintenance.' John Macintyre, MD in Glasgow certified: 'Mr. Fyfe is suffering from a septic catarrh of the nose and pharynx which has extended up through the Eustachian tubes to both ears causing middle ear mischief.'

**Date of Application:** 19 March 1918. **Decision of Appeal Tribunal:** application dismissed.

**Date of Appeal Tribunal:** 28 March 1918.

### **Notice of Appeal (Appeal Tribunal)**

**Date of Appeal:** 20 August 1917. **Grounds for Appeal:** national interest and serious hardship.

**Decision of Appeal Tribunal:** 'The Local Tribunal considered that the work in which the appellant was engaged was not of national importance and that a case of serious hardship had not been made.'

**Date of Appeal Tribunal:** 25 September 1917.