

Hank Gowdy, Baseball's Doughboy Hero

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Hank Gowdy was at the peak of his career in 1917 when he volunteered as an infantryman and fought in France. To quote the punch line of Grantland Rice's ode. "Lank Hank had been the first to go." In 1914 he had been the hero of the World Series for the "Miracle Braves." He batted .545 in that Series.

Stars & Stripes idolized him. Upon his return, Gowdy drew cheers, even from fans of opposing teams.

By the time he hung up his glove in 1930, he had caught 1050 games, all for the Braves and Giants. His lifetime average was .270. He then managed and coached for another 20 years. The army named a stadium in his honor at Fort Benning. With the coming of World War II, he reentered the army and as a special services officer managed some army all-star teams.