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**A CONCISE BIOGRAPHY OF:**

# **BRIGADIER D. S. MIDDLETON**

A concise biography of Brigadier Donald Stewart MIDDLETON, T.D., M.B., F.R.C.S.. He was an officer in the British Army between 1926 and 1942, dying in an air crash on active service. He was a distinguished surgeon in Edinburgh and served as a medical officer throughout his career.

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## **A Concise Biography of Brigadier D. S. MIDDLETON**

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## Brigadier Donald Stewart MIDDLETON, T.D., M.B., F.R.C.S.

Brigadier Donald Stewart MIDDLETON, T.D., M.B., F.C.R.S., who was known as 'Sam' MIDDLETON, was a distinguished surgeon in Edinburgh, who joined the Territorial Army in 1926. He rose to the rank of Colonel before the outbreak of the Second World War, being the Assistant Director of Medical Services for an anti-aircraft division. Appointed the Deputy Director of Medical Services for Anti-Aircraft Command in 1942, he was killed later that year on active service in an air crash.

### Family Background

Donald Stewart MIDDLETON was born in Natal, South Africa on 30 September 1899. He was the fourth son of George Hodson MIDDLETON and Nannie Esther MIDDLETON.<sup>1</sup> His father, George, was an Edinburgh man, but left his home city to become an engineer working on building railway lines in Canada. It was in Canada where George MIDDLETON met Nannie Esther HAZELWOOD. They married in St. James Cathedral, Toronto on 18 August 1886; he was thirty-five years of age and she was twenty-five. It appears they travelled to South Africa after leaving Canada circa 1892. After Donald was born, his family returned from South Africa to live at 38, Inverleith Place, Edinburgh. His father had died by 1915.

Donald was one of four sons, his three brothers being all killed during the Great War, Donald being too young to serve in that war. The eldest, J. R. MIDDLETON (born 1888) was an engineer working in Canada at the outbreak of war. He enlisted in Lord Strathcona's Horse, later transferring to the 7<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Cameron Highlanders. As a Lieutenant, he joined 11 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps. He died on 21 June 1917, aged twenty-nine years, and is buried in the Southern Cemetery at Cologne, Germany. Alexander Samuel MIDDLETON (born 1890) was a Second Lieutenant in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bn. The Cameron Highlanders when he died on 30 September 1915 in France, aged twenty-five years. He is buried in the St. Sever Cemetery, Rouen. George Hilton MIDDLETON (born 1894) was a Lieutenant in the Royal Army Medical Corps, attached to the Royal Field Artillery. He died on 10 August 1919, aged twenty-five-years, and he is commemorated on the Archangel Memorial in Russia.

MIDDLETON was educated at Edinburgh Academy, followed by Edinburgh University, from which he graduated with a Bachelor of Medicine (MB) degree in 1921. After qualifying as a house surgeon, he worked at Paddington Green Children's Hospital, and then became an assistant surgeon to the Royal Hospital for Sick Children at Edinburgh. MIDDLETON was also a surgeon to the Church of Scotland Deaconess Hospital, and he became heavily involved in the administration and surgery within the hospital. He is credited as being largely responsible for the reconstruction of the Hospital while he was the senior surgeon there.

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<sup>1</sup> On the marriage certificate, her second forename is shown as Esther. In the Commonwealth War Graves entries, it appears as 'Hestor'.

## MIDDLETON Joins the Army

Donald MIDDLETON joined the Territorial Army on 26 August 1926, being granted the rank of Lieutenant (service number 35769). He joined the 155<sup>th</sup> (Lowland) Field Ambulance, which was based at 33 Gilmore Place, Edinburgh 3. MIDDLETON was promoted to the rank of Captain on 20 February 1930.

MIDDLETON's career as a surgeon continued to be centred in and around Edinburgh. In 1934, he was elected assistant surgeon to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary. He was the clinical tutor in the Infirmary, and a lecturer in surgery at the Royal Colleges' School of Medicine. He was seen as an able surgeon, with an easy grace of technique, and a good teacher. He practiced as 40, Inverleith Place, i.e., next to where his parents had lived.

On 20 August 1936, Donald MIDDLETON was promoted to the rank of Major in the Territorial Army. In 1936, the British Army embarked on a programme to increase the number of anti-aircraft artillery units in the Army. In 1938, there were only two anti-aircraft divisions in the United Kingdom, so the Chiefs of Staff decided to raise an additional five divisions. One of these, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Anti-Aircraft Division, covered the whole of Scotland, with a particular emphasis on the Forth estuary, Glasgow and the Orkney and Shetlands Islands.

MIDDLETON was promoted from the rank of Major to the rank of Colonel in the Territorial Army on 7 October 1938, with his appointment as the Assistant Director of Medical Services (A.D.M.S.) of the newly formed 3<sup>rd</sup> Anti-Aircraft Division. The headquarters of the division was based in Edinburgh, so MIDDLETON was able to continue with his work in local hospitals as a surgeon.

## The Second World War

With the outbreak of the Second World War imminent, MIDDLETON was mobilised on 28 August 1939 with the rest of the Territorial Army, with war being declared on 3 September 1939. He continued as the A.D.M.S. for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Anti-Aircraft Division into the beginning of the war. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Anti-Aircraft Division provided anti-aircraft defences for the Forth and Clyde estuaries (including cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow) as well as for the ports along the north east coast of Scotland. The first General Officer Commanding (G.O.C.) was Major General Lancelot Daryl HICKES, but Major General L. R. HILL replaced him on 24 September 1939. In turn, on 14 August 1940, Major General H. G. MARTIN assumed the appointment. When Anti-Aircraft Command reorganised in November 1940, Major General MARTIN was promoted to command of III Anti-Aircraft Corps, so he was replaced as G.O.C. by Major General John Edward Talbot YOUNGER, *g.*. In January 1942, YOUNGER was posted to Washington, so Major General William Wyndham GREEN, D.S.O., M.C.\*, *g.* replaced him on 7 January.

On 15 April 1942, MIDDLETON was promoted to the rank of Acting Brigadier on appointment as the Deputy Director of Medical Services of Anti-Aircraft Command. Based at Stanmore in Middlesex, the headquarters of this command covered the entire United Kingdom. This meant a large amount of travelling for MIDDLETON as one of his key roles was visiting and inspecting medical facilities supporting the command, to ensure the male and female personnel were well cared for. On 2 October 1942, with sixteen years' service in the Territorial Army, MIDDLETON was awarded the Territorial Efficiency Decoration (T.D.), a mark of his commitment to the Army. On 15 October 1942, after six months holding the acting rank, he was promoted to the rank of Temporary Brigadier.

On 30 October 1942, Brigadier MIDDLETON boarded a Lockheed Hudson, Mk. III, V.8983, of No. 24 Squadron R.A.F.. This squadron provided transport for senior officers of the armed services, and important civil servants, around the U.K. and abroad. The aircraft had flown from R.A.F. Hendon to Belfast, and it was returning back to London when it crashed at Baldwin's Wood, near Wendover in Buckinghamshire. The aircraft crashed into the woods on a hillside in poor visibility. All those on board died instantly in the crash.

The pilot was twenty-nine-year-old 64275 Flying Officer Raymond COOK, R.A.F.V.R., and the Navigator was 1179044 Sergeant Walter John MORBIN, R.A.F.V.R.. The Wireless Operator/Air Gunner was twenty-one-year-old 637393 Sergeant Arthur George HUDD, R.A.F.. Apart from Brigadier MIDDLETON, there were two Royal Navy officers, two R.A.F. officers and four civilians on board the aircraft when it crashed. Forty-two-year-old Brigadier MIDDLETON was buried in Grave 95 of Section B of the Strathmiglo Parish Church, near Cupar in Fife, Scotland.<sup>2</sup> Although MIDDLETON was still living at 40, Inverleith Place, Edinburgh, at the time of his death, his father had originated from Strathmiglo, and his mother lived at a house in the village called Mansfield until her death in 1930, so he was buried there. He is also commemorated at the Murrayfield Golf Club in Edinburgh.

## Obituary

A memorial service was held for MIDDLETON on 4 November at St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh. Tributes paid to him included a testimonial describing *'his engaging personality, his exceptional charm of manner, his unselfishness and love of simple things'*. In addition, he was described as having an unusual endowment of common sense, which is taken to infer he was pragmatic and practical in conducting his duties. Even by the age of forty, he has established himself in a prominent position in the medical profession in Scotland. MIDDLETON was fond of outdoor sports, in particular riding and angling, and he also collected wild-flowers and stamps. During the war, he became an enthusiastic gardener. Sam MIDDLETON married Sheila CURRIE in 1930, who was the only daughter of Dr. J. R. CURRIE, the Professor of Public Health in the University of Glasgow. They had one son and one daughter.

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<sup>2</sup> His obituary states he was forty-three years of age. The Commonwealth War Graves entry states he was forty-two years of age.

## NOTED RAILWAY PIONEER BURIED IN FIFE

MR GEORGE HODGSON MIDDLETON OF  
MANSFIELD, STRATHMIGLO.

The remains of the late Mr George Hodgson Middleton, C.E., of Mansfield, Strathmiglo, who died in Edinburgh on Thursday, were yesterday interred in the churchyard of Strathmiglo, his native place.

Mr Middleton, who had a notable career, chiefly in connection with railway construction in the Colonies, received his education at Strathmiglo, and afterwards at St Andrew's Madras College and University, where he was a distinguished student. Having chosen civil engineering as his profession, he spent some years in the office of the late Mr John Sang, Kirkcaldy, and in 1870 went to Canada. From that time until 1893 he was engaged in various works in the Dominion, Newfoundland, and the United States. Amongst these were Nova Scotian railways, the Inter-Colonial Railway, the Canadian Pacific, and the Newfoundland Railway. In 1893 he went to Natal, and spent ten years in railway building there and in the Transvaal and Zululand. Since then he had resided in Edinburgh.

Mr Middleton was a man of great energy and ability, and had a rare capacity for making friends, of whom a wide circle at home and in the Colonies will hear with regret of his demise. He is survived by a widow and four sons.

### THE FUNERAL.

At the funeral yesterday the coffin, which was of polished oak with brass mountings, was entirely covered with beautiful wreaths. The Rev. J. M. Munro, U.F. Church, officiated at the grave.

The principal mourners were Messrs Alex. Hilton and Donald Middleton (sons), Messrs Alex. and Jas. Middleton (brothers).

The funeral was largely attended, many friends coming from a distance. The following were among those present:—Messrs Geo. Dunn, Woodmill; Jas. Tod, Easter Cash; Chas. F. Anderson, St Andrew's; Geo. Knox, Strathmiglo; Jas. Peggie, Strathmiglo; Robt. Morgan, Andrew Morrison, A. N. Thomson, R. D. Thomson, William Thomson, Millfield; Geo. Braid, teacher; Rev. Jas. Rankine; Wm. Steven, Royal Hotel; Henry Herd, jun.; Henry Skinner, Auchtermuchty; Jas. Rafferty, David Pearson; R. J. Melville, Falkland; &c.

Messrs Croal, Edinburgh, had charge of the arrangements.

## STRATHMIGLO LADY'S DEATH

### Mrs Middleton's Work in District

The death has taken place at an Edinburgh nursing home of Mrs Middleton, Mansfield, Strathmiglo.

She was the widow of Mr George Hodgson Middleton, and was well known in the district of Strathmiglo, where at her residence of Mansfield, she lived at different periods for a great many years.

She took a great interest in the aged and poor of the village, and many were the kind deeds she bestowed upon them in her quiet way. She will be sadly missed by them.

She also took a deep interest in church work, and was a member of St Martin's Church.

She was always ready to help with any work in connection with the church, and on various occasions sales of work and fetes in connection with the Women's Guild have been held in the beautiful grounds of Mansfield.

### Great Loss.

She suffered a great loss during the late war by the deaths of her three elder sons, Lieut. James Russell Middleton, of the R.F.C. and 7th Cameron Highlanders, who died of wounds at Mulheim, on the Rhur, in June, 1917; Lieut. Alexander Samuel Middleton, 1st Cameron Highlanders, who died at Rouen, September, 1915; and Lieut. George Hilton Middleton, M.B., Ch.B., of the R.F.A. and R.A.M.C., who was killed in the North Russian Expedition in August, 1919.

She leaves one son, Mr Donald Stewart Middleton, F.R.C.S., Edinburgh, to whom the sympathy of the district is extended.

The funeral takes place to-morrow from Mansfield to Strathmiglo Cemetery.

Above – Two newspaper reports regarding the deaths of Brigadier MIDDLETON's father and Mother.

Courtesy of: <https://www.bordersancestry.com/blog/the-middletons-of-strathmiglo-loved-ones-lost>





*Left – the grave of Brigadier MIDDLETON at Strathmiglo. Courtesy of: Borders and Ancestry website*

*Below – The Memorial Board at Murrayfield Golf Club Edinburgh, featuring the name of Brigadier MIDDLETON. Courtesy of: The Scottish Military Research Group.*





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