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Author: Robert PALMER, M.A.



The Taukkyan War Cemetery
Rangoon.

A CONCISE BIOGRAPHY OF:

CAPTAIN F. C. N. GWATKIN & LIEUTENANT A. W. GWATKIN AND THEIR FAMILY'S SERVICE TO THE BRITISH CROWN OVER THREE GENERATIONS

A concise biography of brothers Captain F. C. N. GWATKIN, and Captain A. W. GWATKIN, and their father's and grandfather's service in the British Indian Army from 1875 until 1945.
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A Concise Biography of Captain F. C. N. GWATKIN & Captain A. E. GWATKIN, and their family's service to the British Crown over three generations

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Author: Robert PALMER, M.A. (copyright held by author)
Assisted by: Stephen HEAL
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Mr Alastair HOWIE
Son of Nan GWATKIN

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Introduction

If you have the privilege to visit the large Commonwealth War Graves Commission Taukkyan War Cemetery, just to the north of Yangon (also known as Rangoon), in Myanmar (formerly known as Burma), you will be struck by the peace and tranquillity of the cemetery, and delight in the care exhibited in maintaining the cemetery in its pristine state. Yet, it must be remembered that this is a war cemetery, the men and women who are buried here, or commemorated here, died during the Second World War, on active service, many miles away from their homes and families.¹

The Taukkyan War Cemetery is the largest of the three British war cemeteries in Myanmar, the others being the Rangoon War Cemetery, which has 1,426 burials, mainly from those who died in Rangoon Goal as prisoners of war, and the Thanbyuzayat War Cemetery in southern Myanmar. The cemetery at Thanbyuzayat has 3,770 graves, of Australian, British, Dutch and Indian men who died while engaged as prisoners of war in building the Burma – Thailand railway.² The Taukkyan War Cemetery is home to the graves of 6,444 men (867 of which are unidentified), and is the location of the imposing Rangoon Memorial, on which is inscribed the names of 26,851 men, who have no known grave, or whose grave has been lost over time. In addition, the site houses the Taukkyan Cremation Memorial with 1,060 names inscribed, and the Taukkyan Memorial with 46 names of men who died and were buried elsewhere in Burma, but could not be retrieved.

Work commenced on the Taukkyan War Cemetery in 1951, as the concentration cemetery for the four battlefield cemeteries at Akyab, Mandalay, Meiktila and Sahmaw (a Chindit cemetery near Myitkyina) that were proving difficult to access and maintain. The graves at Taukkyan were grouped together to reflect the original burial locations, however, there is one notable exception to this rule. In Grave 20. A. 2. lies Lieutenant A. W. GWATKIN, 19th K.G.V.O's Lancers, and in Grave 20. A. 3. is Captain F. C. N. GWATKIN, The Royal Deccan Horse. Both graves bear the same inscription: *'Your knightly virtue proved, your memory hallowed in the land you loved.'*

Their obituary in a newspaper is equally poignant, stating:

Were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided.

Lieutenant A. W. GWATKIN, and his colleague, Lieutenant J. SKINNER, were buried originally in Graves 1 and 2, Plot A. Row 21, of the Akyab War Cemetery in the Arakan. They were exhumed on 10 May 1952, and brought to the Taukkyan War Cemetery for reburial. Captain F. C. N. GWATKIN was buried initially in the Meiktila War Cemetery, in Plot 1, Row G Grave 2, but was exhumed and brought to Taukkyan to be reburied. The fact that Lieutenant A. W. GWATKIN and Captain F. C. N. GWATKIN died on the same day is not why they are buried next to each other, the reason is that they were brothers.

¹ There are fifty-two burials here from the First World War at Taukkyan.

² The term India in this booklet refers to pre-partition British India, which now comprises the countries of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

Archibald Willoughby GWATKIN was aged twenty-one years, and Frederick Charles Nicol GWATKIN was aged twenty-two years, when they died. This is their story: a story of a family's service to the British Crown, and two boys desire to serve their country.

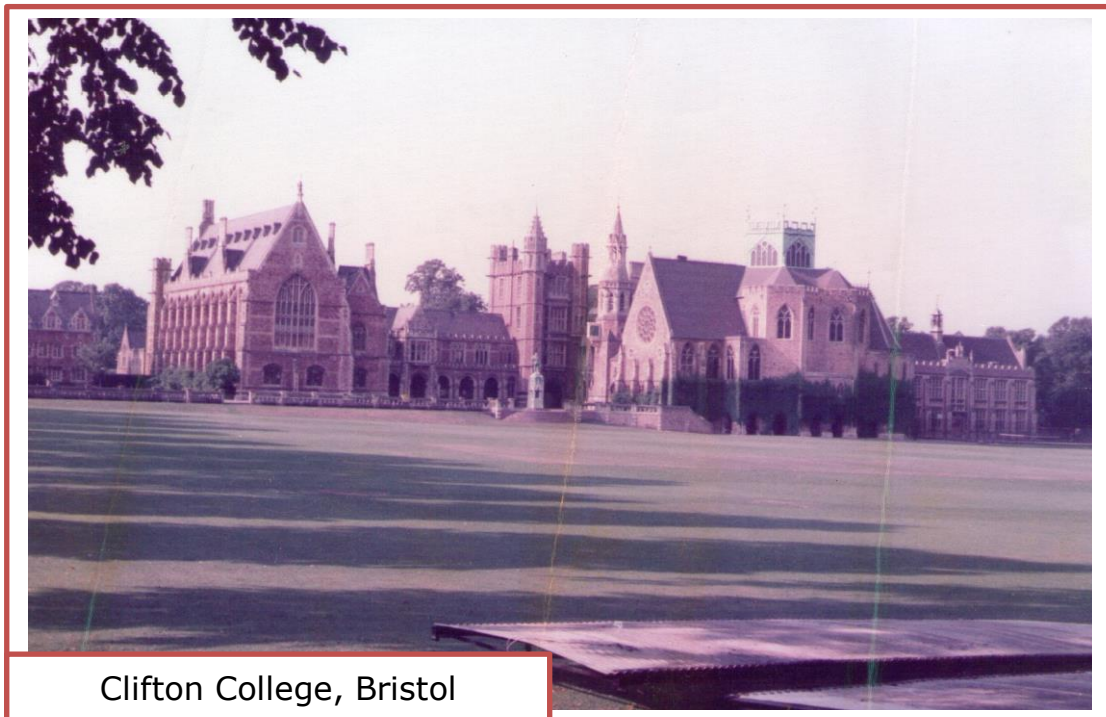


The graves of Lieutenant A. W. GWATKIN and Captain F. C. N. GWATKIN, in Taukkyan War Cemetery, near Rangoon, in Myanmar.

Author – 2011

Captain Frederick Charles Nicol GWATKIN & Lieutenant Archibald Willoughby GWATKIN

Freddy and Archie GWATKIN were the third generation of the family to serve the British Crown. Their father, then Major Frederick GWATKIN, married Lydia Winifred STANTON on 27 April 1920 at Fairford, Gloucestershire. They had one daughter, and two sons. Their daughter was named Agnes Helen GWATKIN, and their sons, Frederick Charles Nicol GWATKIN (born 15 December 1922) and Archibald Willoughby GWATKIN (born 18 December 1923).³ Both sons attended Clifton College in Bristol, the same school where their father had been educated. Known as Freddy and Archie GWATKIN, the two brothers became prominent members of the school. They were very different in character, differently gifted, and physically less alike than many brothers, yet, for most of their time together at school, they were inseparable.



While they were at Clifton College together, they shared a study together, and while work and games would separate them, most of their leisure hours were spent together. Archie was the more volatile, yet the more able academically, and relied on his elder brother's judgement and good sense. Archie looked up to his brother, and looked to him for a final decision, which he accepted without question. Freddy derived enormous pleasure from sharing in his brother's successes, and encouraged him to achieve more with his talents. Individually, they would have made a mark on the school, but together, their complementary qualities enhanced both of their reputations. Freddy was in Oakeley's House from 1936 until 1941, and played cricket for the House for two years, and rugby union for three years.

³ Agnes was born in Fairford, Gloucestershire, and Freddy and Archie were born in India (see Page 30).

Freddy gained his School XV cap for rugby in 1940, and was Captain of the School Boxing Team. He became a House Sixth (Sixth-Form student) in September 1940, and at the request of the Headmaster, Freddy stayed on for an extra term to be Head of House to assist in the School's move from Bristol to Bude in Cornwall.



School portraits of Freddy (Left) and Archie (Right)

Courtesy of Alastair HOWIE

With his father a senior officer in the British Indian Army, there was a degree of inevitability that Freddy would feel obliged to join the British Indian Army himself. He enlisted, and he gained the rank of Lance Corporal before being commissioned on 6 May 1942, in the rank of Second Lieutenant (service number EC/4681).⁴ He joined his father's current regiment, the Royal Deccan Horse (9th Horse), and was posted to join the regiment on active service in Burma. Freddy GWATKIN was promoted to the rank of War Substantive Lieutenant on 6 November 1942.⁵

Freddy's regiment was a pre-war Indian Army Cavalry regiment, which joined the 255th Indian Armoured Brigade in September 1943. Raised as the 5th Indian Armoured Brigade on 15 June 1941, this formation was based at Sialkot under the command of Brigadier H. H. STABLE, C.I.E.. It was redesignated as the 255th Indian Armoured Brigade in October 1941.

⁴ The British Indian Army had different classes of officers, and all those (British and Indian) granted an Emergency Commission had their service number prefixed with EC. The number was issued consecutively upon their commissioning, so 4681 was issued before 6681.

⁵ Army List April 1945 Part II Page 2583e

The brigade came under command of the 31st Indian Armoured Division at Sialkot, and Poona, as one of the two armoured brigades. In April 1943, the brigade moved to Bolarum and Secunderabad to join the newly raised 44th Indian Armoured Division. In April 1944, the Japanese launched their major offensive towards Imphal and Kohima, leading to the disbandment of the 44th Indian Armoured Division, so the brigade became independent. In August, it was retitled as the 255th Indian Tank Brigade. The brigade moved forward for active operations in October 1944, moving to the Imphal Plain to come under command of IV Corps. In what was a massive logistical operation, the brigade followed the corps down the Kabaw valley to the Irrawaddy River.

By early 1945, the Royal Deccan Horse was equipped with American Sherman Mk. V tanks. Under command of the 17th Indian Infantry Division, the brigade crossed the River Irrawaddy and reached Taungtha on 23 February. It looped around to the north and east of the town, taking the important airfield on 2 March. Saturday, 3 March 1945, was a key day in the battle for Meiktila, and the recapture of central Burma. This was the day that the troops of the 48th Brigade captured the town after a day-long fierce battle, entering the town from the east. On this day, Lieutenant W. B. WESTON of the West Yorkshire Regiment was awarded the Victoria Cross, posthumously.

The Japanese reacted violently to the loss of Meiktila, with reinforcements advancing towards the town from the north and north-west. The 17th Indian Division met this threat by a series of vigorous offensive actions. The 48th Indian Infantry Brigade formed a series of all-arms columns that struck out from the besieged town to strike at the Japanese attackers. This form of aggressive defence caused the Japanese to withdraw eventually, allowing IV Corps to advance down the main road towards Rangoon.



A Sherman tank of the 9th Royal Deccan Horse, advancing with infantry, Burma 1945.

From: <https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=1974-09-79-120>

Captain Freddy GWATKIN was the second-in-command of 'A' Squadron during the battle of Meiktila. At 08.30 hours, on Wednesday, 14 March 1945, the regiment (less 'C' Squadron) moved to Milestone 334 on the Rangoon Road, to come under command of the 48th Indian Infantry Brigade. The object of the brigade, and its supporting armour, was to exploit towards the village of Okshitkon. The first phase of the operation, was an attack by two companies of the 1st Bn. The West Yorkshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's Own), supported by 'A' Squadron, commanded by Major E. O. STEPHENSON. The aim of the attack was to secure the villages of Kandaung and Hletaikon, where Japanese troops were confirmed as being present, although their strength was not known.

At the same time as this attack was taking place, 'B' Squadron, commanded by Major NIXON, was to support the 1st Bn. 7th Gurkha Rifles in moving around to the east and securing Kokkogaing. The Reconnaissance Troop was to maintain positions to prevent enemy infiltration on the rear of the advancing British and Indian troops. At 09.15 hours, 'A' Squadron advanced astride the main road to Kandaung, together with 'A' Company of the West Yorkshire Regiment, under the command of Major J. K. PARK. Kandaung was cleared rapidly, with resistance limited to a few snipers and one machine gun. As 'A' Squadron advanced beyond Kandaung towards Hletaikon, the Japanese resistance increased. The Japanese were found to be well dug-in, in considerable strength, with artillery support. The Troop commanded by Lieutenant Ian LAMOND, which was on the right flank, was called in to support the main attacks. Lieutenant Tony LAMB's Troop on the left flank, was ordered to provide fire support to the east and rear of the village. An additional platoon from 'D' Company was sent to reinforce 'A' Company.

The attack followed a familiar routine, a slow, steady and methodical advance, dealing with each Japanese defensive position individually, and having to kill every Japanese soldier before moving on. The Japanese fought with their usual tenacity, and so it was not until 18.00 hours that the village was cleared completely. 'C' Company cleared the village of Natkyigon, and then the whole brigade returned to Meiktila to harbour for the night. The Japanese suffered about one-hundred men killed, with two 70 mm battalion guns, one 37 mm anti-tank gun, one mortar and two machine guns captured.

It was during the main attack that Captain Freddy GWATKIN was killed. He had been wounded earlier in the day, while outside his tank liaising with the infantry. This was a common practice in the Burma campaign, as direct and clear communication between the infantry and their supporting tanks was essential to clear Japanese bunkers and defensive positions. Major STEPHENSON had ordered Captain GWATKIN to 'go back', but he continued to fight his tank, with what was described as *'the utmost determination'*, until a 75 mm shell hit the turret of his tank, killing him instantly. His death was described as the loss of *'an old friend, gallant leader, and irreplaceable officer'*.

Fighting down that corridor, the brigade assisted in the capture of Pyawbwe, Toungoo and Pyu, before attacking and securing the key town of Pegu. With Rangoon captured by the 26th Indian Division at the beginning of May, the brigade went into Corps Reserve. It then transferred to 14th Army command until November 1945, when it moved back to Meiktila. It travelled back to India overland in February and March 1946 to Secunderabad. In June 1946, it was again redesignated as the 1st Indian Armoured Brigade in the 1st Indian Armoured Division.



Official portraits of Freddy (Left) and Archie (Right) taken at their Officer Cadet Training Units (O.C.T.U.) in India. The white band around their caps, and on their epaulettes, signify their status as Officer Cadets.

Courtesy of Alastair HOWIE



Top Left – Archie with his best friend, John SKINNER, together at the O.C.T.U.

Top Right – A proud father with his two sons in India.

Bottom Left – Second Lieutenant F. C. N. GWATKIN, Royal Deccan Horse

Bottom Right – Second Lieutenant A. W. GWATKIN, 19th K. G. V's Own Lancers

All courtesy of Alastair HOWIE.



Archie followed his older brother's lead, and was commissioned in the Indian Army on 29 October 1942, with the service number EC/6638. He joined his father's previous regiment, the 19th King George V's Own Lancers, and joined the regiment in Burma. Six months after his commissioning, as was usual with Army Regulations, Archie was promoted to the rank of War Substantive Lieutenant with effect from 29 April 1943.⁶

In August 1944, the brigade gained its third regiment with the posting of the 19th King George V's Own Lancers from the 255th Indian Armoured Brigade. This was a pre-war Regular Indian Army cavalry regiment, which recruited Rajput Mussalmans, Sikhs and Jats. The horsed Indian Army cavalry was supplemented in India by armoured car and light tank units of the British Royal Tank Corps. In March 1938, G.H.Q. The Army in India announced the mechanization of the first two Indian Army cavalry regiments, the 13th Duke of Cambridge's Own Lancers, and the Scinde Horse (14th Prince of Wales's Own Cavalry). In April 1939, the Royal Tank Corps and the Cavalry merged to form the Royal Armoured Corps, in the U.K. and India. The declaration of war against Germany on 3 September 1939 saw the 19th King George V's Own Lancers based at Lahore, and still a horsed regiment. It had begun to receive motor-cycles for the signals personnel in the regiment. The last course at the Equitation School at Saugor, India, finished in June 1939, with Lieutenant WOODROFFE and A.L.D. Chhotu Ram from the regiment attending that last course. The buildings at Saugor became the Small Arms School.

The last officers to hold Regular Indian Army commissions joined the regiment in 1938 and 1939 as Second Lieutenants. They were J. M. E. WAINWRIGHT, A. T. H. CRIPPS, T. R. GLANCY, W. N. SAMPLE and R. G. SATTERWAITE. On 1 January 1940, the officers of the regiment were:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| • Lieutenant Colonel FORBES, M.C. | – Commanding Officer |
| • Major POCOCK | – Second-in-Command |
| • Captain CAUVAL | – Adjutant |
| • Lieutenant LANCE | – Quarter-Master |
| • Lieutenant WIGRAM | – Signals Officer |
| • Captain WOODROFFE | – Machine Gun Officer |
| • Captain LORING | – O.C. 'A' Squadron |
| • Lieutenant BULL | – 'A' Squadron |
| • Lieutenant GLANCY | – 'A' Squadron |
| • Major WILSON | – O.C. 'B' Squadron |
| • Captain CRITCHLEY | – 'B' Squadron |
| • Lieutenant WAINWRIGHT | – 'B' Squadron |
| • Major SPENCER | – O.C. 'C' Squadron |
| • Captain STILL | – 'C' Squadron |
| • Lieutenant CRIPPS | – 'C' Squadron |

⁶ Army List April 1945 Part II Page 2597a states that he was promoted to the rank of Captain before his brother, as Acting Captain on 31 July 1943, and Temporary Captain on 31 October 1943. The regimental history describes him with the rank of Lieutenant, as does the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The presumption is that this is an error in the Army List, and these dates apply to his brother, Freddy, who did not hold rank of Captain.

Detached

- Major MOSTYN-OWEN – Commandant, Governor-General's Bodyguard
- Brevet Lieutenant Colonel CURRIE – D.A.A.G, Army H.Q.
- Major THOMPSON – D.A.A.G., Deccan District
- Captain CHAPLIN – Indian States Forces
- Captain KEIGHLEY – A.D.C. to the Viceroy of India
- Captain CROYSDALE – Remount Department
- Lieutenant WILKINSON – Training Regiment

The first Emergency Commissioned Officers joined the regiment in mid-1940, namely Second Lieutenants E. R. McM. WRIGHT, C. H. CAMPBELL, and R. L. MONCK-MASON. The regiment received orders to mechanize in the same period, with the last mounted parade taking place on 27 November 1940. This regiment was the last in the Indian Army to retain its horses, and it fell to the new Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel E. J. FULTON from Skinner's Horse, to oversee the conversion to armoured cars. Lieutenant Colonel FORBES left on promotion to the rank of Colonel in Northern Command.

The first vehicles the regiment received were a diverse collection of civilian lorries and buses, but with these vehicles, the regiment moved to Sialkot to join the newly formed 1st (later 31st) Indian Armoured Division. By the end of October 1941, the regiment had given up the buses for about eighty Ford 15 cwt trucks, one home-made armoured carrier, and eight Humber armoured cars. The number of wireless sets was, however, severely limited. On 1 April 1941, the regiment sent half its Jat and Punjabi Mussalmans personnel to the newly raised 48th Cavalry, with three officers and nine Viceroy Commissioned Officers. Ironically, in December 1943, the 48th Cavalry was disbanded, and those personnel returned to the regiment, bringing with them their Stuart light tanks. The Indian Armoured Corps came into existence formally on 1 May 1941.

On 9 October 1941, the divisional headquarters ordered the regiment to complete its mobilisation by 10 November, in anticipation of the 31st Indian Armoured Division being deployed to the Middle East. In the middle of November, the division concentrated around Malir (near Karachi) in India, with some personnel being sent to Egypt for attachment to the 7th Armoured Division in the desert. In April 1942, the regiment was ordered to move to Madras, in case of an invasion of southern India. It arrived on 13 May 1942, having covered 3,000 miles in its move across India.

In May 1942, it came under command of the 19th Indian Infantry Division, then from April until December 1943 it served on internal security duties in the Madras area being equipped with armoured cars. It came under command of XXXIII Indian Corps, and performed flag marches, and undertook training. In July 1943, Lieutenant Colonel G. H. CRITCHLEY succeeded Lieutenant Colonel FULTON as Commanding Officer. The Rissaldar-Major Ram SARUP retired on 1 March 1943, to be succeeded by Rissaldar-Major Chhotu RAM.

Rissaldar-Major Ram SARUP's son, Major Risal SINGH, was killed on 21 June 1944 leading his company from 3rd/9th Jats in action on the Kohima to Imphal road. He had been wounded at the Arakan, awarded the Military Cross in March 1944, and wounded again the following month.

The younger son of Major General Sir Frederick GWATKIN, a former Commandant of the regiment, Second Lieutenant Archibald Willoughby GWATKIN, joined the regiment on 7 November 1942 from the Officers' Training School at Bangalore. In December 1943, the 19th King George V's Own Lancers joined the 44th Indian Armoured Division, and then in April the 255th Indian Armoured Brigade. When it joined this brigade, Lieutenant Colonel G. H. CRITCHLEY commanded the regiment, and it was equipped with Sherman tanks that had begun to arrive with the regiment in March 1944, to join the Stuart tanks the regiment already had on its establishment. The Rissaldar-Major was now Teja SINGH. When the regiment moved to Nasik, it had forty-eight Shermans and twenty Stuart tanks. The officers of the 19th King George Vs Own Lancers on 23 October 1944 were:

King's Commissioned Officers	34 Authorised	35 Present
Viceroy's Commissioned Officers	40	42
Other Ranks	566	628
Non-Combatants	43	32

Commanding Officer	– Lieutenant Colonel G. H. CRITCHLEY
Second-in-Command	– Major G. E. V. KEIGHLEY
Adjutant	– Captain T. L. BRAYNE
Quarter-Master	– Captain E. J. SMITH
Technical Officer	– Captain D. G. PAGE
Signals Officer	– Captain F. V. ELLVERS
Intelligence Officer	– Lieutenant E. W. BEVINGTON

Headquarter Squadron	
Officer Commanding	– Major C. H. CAMPBELL
Second-in-Command	– Captain N. L. HARDING
Medical Officer	– Captain G. A. FLANN, R.A.M.C.
Light Aid Detachment	– Captain E. V. HORNE, I.E.M.E.
Light Air Detachment	– Lieutenant B. S. HAYLEY, I.E.M.E.

'A' Squadron	
Officer Commanding	– Major W. N. SAMPLE
Second-in-Command	– Captain W. J. KINGDON
Troop Officer	– Lieutenant A. B. MERRIAM
No 1 Troop Officer	– Second Lieutenant H. W. LAWRENCE
Troop Officer	– Lieutenant J. M. BILLIMORIA
Troop Officer	– Second Lieutenant K. S. S. FITZE
No. 4 Troop Officer	– Lieutenant B. R. PRYDE

'B' Squadron

Officer Commanding	– Major R. G. SATTERWAITE
Second-in-Command	– Captain B. B. WEATHERILL
Troop Officer	– Captain T. H. AINSLIE
No. 1 Troop Officer	– Lieutenant Gurbachan SINGH
No. 2 Troop Officer	– Lieutenant A. W. GWATKIN
No. 3 Troop Officer	– Lieutenant J. SKINNER
No. 4 Troop Officer	– Second Lieutenant E. L. CURZON

'C' Squadron

Officer Commanding	– Major P. G. BROOKE
Second-in-Command	– Captain R. C. DENING
Troop Officer	– Captain D. J. MORIARTY
Troop Officer	– Lieutenant D. E. WREFORD
Troop Officer	– Lieutenant Bhupindar SINGH
Troop Officer	– Lieutenant D. J. PARRY-CROOKE
Troop Officer	– Lieutenant E. R. JESSOP

Reinforcements

Reinforcement Officer	– Lieutenant M. B. STRAKER
Reinforcement Officer	– Lieutenant D. M. LITTLE (Died 5 November 1944 from Polio)
Reinforcement Officer	– Lieutenant D. E. BARTELS
Reinforcement Officer	– Second Lieutenant J. H. BRAY

On 1 November 1944, the brigade was still based at Nira Camp, near Poona, but then it was ordered to move to Chittagong under command of the XV Indian Corps for operational deployment in the Arakan. On 20 November, the 150th Regiment, R.A.C. had arrived at Kayagyaung, and then by 31 December, it was located at Waybin. The move of the 19th Lancers from Poona to the Arakan was not straightforward. The regiment was split up into two personnel parties, three road parties and three tank trains. The personnel had to change and embark on river steamers for the six-hour journey down the Brahmaputra to Gaolundo, where it entrained again for Chittagong. The tanks and vehicles went to Calcutta to be embarked on ships and Landing Craft Tanks.

The armoured units deployed in Burma developed new techniques for defeating Japanese positions. The Japanese soldier was extremely adept at seizing ground and then rapidly digging to prepare formidable bunkers and defensive positions. These bunkers could be impervious to normal artillery fire, and as they usually were prepared to be mutually self-supporting, they were very difficult for infantry to destroy on their own. The fighting in the Arakan in early 1944, and the battles of Kohima and Imphal in April through to July of that year, had shown the need for infantry to support the tanks in operations. This included the use of an officer on foot to guide the tanks, to liaise with the infantry and to identify key targets for the tanks to engage.

The commanding officer of the 19th Lancers, Lieutenant Colonel CRITCHLEY spent some time with the 25th Dragoons in the Arakan in early 1944 learning the best techniques for the deployment of tanks. He returned to his regiment to designate and train Forward Tank Officers (F.T.Os.) to a high standard of efficiency. The gunners in the regiment were required to hit a 4-gallon petrol tin at a range of 800 yards, which due to their proficiency and the gun control equipment in the Sherman tank proved possible for most of the tank crews.

These techniques were spread around the 50th Indian Tank Brigade and the other two armoured formations operating in Burma. The preferred method for the British troops to tackle defended locations in the Indian and Burmese countryside was firstly to identify the defended localities. Usually, these were hills or ridges and were often well covered by trees and foliage, and were discovered by patrolling or intelligence provided by 'V' Force, other irregulars or local villagers. The artillery Forward Observation Officer (F.O.O.) would then arrange an air strike by fighter-bombers, or an artillery concentration, or a combination of both. If possible, the air strike would include the use of napalm in order to strip the vegetation back, although flame-throwers could be used instead. With as much of the vegetation cleared as possible, the infantry would begin their assault. The tanks would show themselves and usually attracted the majority of the enemy fire. The F.T.O. and F.O.O. would work together to coordinate a fire programme to support the infantry. The F.T.O. identified bunkers and emplacements for the tanks to fire at using high explosive ammunition.

As the infantry closed to about fifty yards from the objective, the tanks switched to armoured piercing shot and fired directly into the bunkers and emplacements. When the infantry were only about five yards short of the objective, the tanks ceased firing to provide machine gun fire if required. This operational technique required considerable training for armoured, infantry and artillery units, but from this, an element of trust between the different arms developed that further improved effectiveness. The F.T.O. deployed forward with the infantry and communicated with the tank commanders by radio; the adoption of a throat microphone proving useful.

The initial object set for XV Indian Corps was to clear the Mayu peninsula of the enemy, and capture Akyab Island. Once the Japanese were retreating from Akyab, other offensive operations would be launched to cut in behind their forces, and the capture of Ramree Island. Lieutenant General CHRISTISON had under his command:

- 81st (West Africa) Infantry Division;
- 82nd (West Africa) Infantry Division;
- 25th Indian Infantry Division;
- 26th Indian Infantry Division;
- 3rd Commando Brigade;
- 50th Indian Tank Brigade.

The divisions of the XV Indian Corps began their advance in December 1944, with the 82nd (West Africa) Infantry Division moving down the Kaladan valley, while the 25th Indian Infantry Division moved down the Mayu peninsula towards Akyab. The first task was to clear the road from Maungdaw to the Kalapanzin River, which was given to the 2nd (West African) Infantry Brigade. The Punjabi Mussalman 'C' Squadron Group, of the 19th Lancers, commanded by Major P. G. BROOKE, were designated to support the West Africans. The Squadron fired the regiment's first shots in action on 15 December, when No. 1 Troop (Lieutenant Bhupindar SINGH) destroyed an enemy bunker near Buthidaung. This was their only action in this locality, as the West Africans met little resistance as they advanced. No 4 Troop (Lieutenant JESSOP), supported the 4th (West African) Infantry Brigade as it advanced down the Kalapanzin River, aided by Lieutenant BRAY who acted as Forward Tank Officer.

'B' Squadron of the 45th Cavalry assisted in clearing some bunkers in the Goppe Bazaar area, with 'B' Squadron of the 19th Lancers supporting the 25th Indian Division on the Mayu peninsula. 'B' Squadron (Major SATTERTHWAITHE) worked with a company of the 2nd Bn. 4th Bombay Grenadiers, and although the terrain was unsuitable for tanks, they supported attacks on bunkers and other positions. No. 1 Troop (Lieutenant Gurbachan SINGH) and No. 2 Troop (Lieutenant A. W. GWATKIN) were in action on 31 December 1944, with No. 3 Troop (Lieutenant SKINNER) and No. 4 Troop (Lieutenant BEVINGTON) in action on 1 January 1945 in support of the 2nd Bn. 2nd Punjab Regiment. As the Mayu peninsula proved far easier to clear, 'B' Squadron was sent back to Waybin to prepare for the next phase. The advancing Indian and British troops found that the Japanese were withdrawing down through the Arakan, and so reached Foul Point at the end of the Mayu peninsula on 27 December.

The speed of the advance surprised the British forces, so the original plans for the 25th Indian Infantry Division to seize the Mayu peninsula for the 26th Indian Infantry Division to then assault Akyab island were modified. The 74th Indian Infantry Brigade, supported by the 3rd Commando Brigade and 'A' Squadron of the 19th Lancers (with Major WILSON's company from the 2nd Bn. 4th Bombay Grenadiers) were to seize Akyab by a rapidly prepared landing. The landing craft and ships were loaded at Maungdaw and Tek Naaf, with the invasion convoy sailing at 04.00 hours on 3 January 1945. The landing was carried out without opposition, with Lieutenant General CHRISTISON meeting the troops on the beach.

Before any landing took place, the British forces found that the Japanese had evacuated Akyab, allowing the island to be reoccupied without conflict. Attention moved to the possibility of assaulting the Myebon peninsula to reach Kangaw, thus cutting off the Japanese line of retreat. The same forces that had been warned for the assault landing on Akyab were switched to the new landing site at Myebon.

The men of the 3rd Commando Brigade commenced landing on the 12th January 1945, supported by air and naval firepower. 'A' Squadron of the 19th Lancers formed part of the assaulting forces, being conveyed on landing craft up the river to the relevant beaches. The Squadron had under command 'C' Company, 2nd Bn. 4th Bombay Grenadiers (Major WILSON), an Engineer Troop commanded by Lieutenant ROZARIO, and recovery detachments with Conductor HOOLACHAN, Sergeant HAINES and Sergeant BUCK.

At 07.45 hours on 12 January, eighteen landing craft carrying Commandos, and two Landing Craft Tanks carrying 'A' Squadron set off for the five mile run in to the selected beach. The landing craft dropped its ramp some 300 yards from the shore, but the first tank off, commanded by Lieutenant BILLIMORIA, found that there was four feet of water covering deep mud underneath, so the tank stranded before it could get ashore. The tank was not recoverable. The second-in-command, Major KEIGHLEY decided to find a more suitable landing beach, but the alternative site had to be worked on by engineers before the remaining two tanks of Lieutenant BILLIMORIA managed to get ashore. A D8 recovery vehicle and Major SAMPLE's tank from the second L.C.T. landed next, but now the beach was under accurate shell-fire. Major SAMPLE's tank was hit, slipped one track and became bogged. Sergeant HAINES using the D8 vehicle managed to extricate it, but Major KEIGHLEY decided not to land No. 4 Troop (Lieutenant PRYDE). The landing craft had to withdraw and the other two tanks were not landed until the following day. The next day, with the two troops now ashore, the tanks moved across the countryside to support 44 (Royal Marine) Commando on the outskirts of Myebon village.

No 4 Troop landed on the morning of 13 January, and with No. 3 Troop, was guided forward to support No. 5 (Army) Commando in an attack on a position called Rose. An air strike preceded the assault, then the tanks engaged enemy positions, and the Commandos advanced. When the Commandos met any significant machine gun or rifle fire, Lieutenant NELSON the Forward Tank Officer directed the fire of the tanks on each enemy position as it was discovered. Slowly, but steadily, the feature was captured.

The tanks from No. 3 and 4 Troops were then ordered to support the Royal Marines as they moved forward to capture Myebon village. The tanks used their machine guns on any position that appeared to be occupied by the Japanese as the commandos from 42 (Royal Marine) and 44 (Royal Marine) Commando worked their way through the village. Outside the village was a hill feature that the Army called 'Cabbage'. Two machine guns opened up on the Commandos, wounding Lieutenant Colonel H. D. FELLOWES, the commanding officer of 42 Commando and another officer. The F.T.O., Lieutenant Peter NELSON, arranged for one of the tanks of Lieutenant Ben PRYDE's troop to come forward so the commandos could evacuate their wounded men. The men of 42 Commando and 1 (Army) Commando then undertook a planned assault on Cabbage supported by the tanks firing at the position for about an hour before the attack went in. Using both their 75 mm guns and machine guns, the tanks helped subdue the defenders allowing the Commandos to capture this position and two others. After this, the tanks went into harbour, and Conductor HOOLACHAN managed to get the other vehicles landed at Easy Beach.

On 14 January, the Commandos occupied various lightly held positions as identified by a captured Japanese map, aided by the tanks which carried out patrolling and reconnaissances of positions due for attack on 15 January. No 1 Troop under Lieutenant LAWRENCE landed early on 15 January in time for the attack. To the north of the village of Myebon were found other positions defended by Japanese troops. These were called 'Point 200', 'Point 163', 'Brother' and 'Father', and although patrols found Point 163 unoccupied, the others were defended. The three positions were attacked on 15 January, with Captain Robin WRIGHT acting as F.T.O., the troop led by Lieutenant PRYDE supported No. 1 Commando in their attack on Point 200, while Lieutenant LAWRENCE took his troop and moved to the north of Father to potentially cut off Japanese troops. The attack on Point 200 was delayed as the requested air strike did not take place. Only one target could be identified for the tanks, so Lieutenant PRYDE concentrated on that one bunker. The commandos managed to reach the top of the hill, but then met machine gun fire and grenades from other positions so had to pull back.

Captain WRIGHT attempted to identify the new bunker to Lieutenant PRYDE, but he could not see it because of the jungle. No. 1 Commando tried again but the same thing happened and as they reached the top, they were fired upon and had to pull back. Captain WRIGHT suggested that Lieutenant PRYDE bring his tanks up a path onto the lower slopes and bounce their shots through the trees into the bunkers. Lieutenant PRYDE decided instead to drive his tanks up to the top of the hill, even though the gradient and nature of the slopes seemed to make that impossible. Knocking down trees as they drove slowly uphill, the three tanks moved towards the top of the hill. They met up with the commandos, and decided to simply charge at the Japanese positions, tanks first, followed by the commandos. The three tanks moved forward, running over one Japanese soldier as he tried to escape, and cleared the position. Unfortunately, at his moment of glory, Lieutenant PRYDE failed to notice the steep drop on the other side, and his tank went over the edge. Rolling over three times, it came to rest on its turret. PRYDE and his crew were injured, but not too seriously, so they managed to get out of the Sherman as it lay over a dip in the ground. The Commandos and Bombay Grenadiers rushed to their aid and escorted them to safety. Lieutenant PRYDE had to be evacuated to hospital, but the tank was recovered six days later.

The other two tanks of Lieutenant PRYDE's No. 4 Troop joined Major SAMPLE, and together with No. 3 Troop, they supported the other Commando attacks. Lieutenant BILLMORIA's tank was hit three times by a captured British 2 pounder anti-tank gun before it was knocked out. All the tanks with Major SAMPLE were hit by a 75 mm gun, but without serious damage. In particular, the tanks shelled bunkers on 'Father' with considerable effect. All opposition on 'Father' ceased by 17.00 hours, and the tanks withdrew to harbour and refuel.

The tanks of Lieutenant LAWRENCE's No. 1 Troop having just landed were tasked with covering the bridge over the chaung north of Gaungpu, but found the going very difficult. One tank was bogged down, and was recovered, but a second, Dafadar (Serjeant) Piara SINGH's tank, became stuck on the bank of a chaung, with a tree preventing easy recovery of the tank.

SINGH and his crew stayed in their tank and sprayed the area with machine gun fire to keep the Japanese away from his location. It was, however, in a position to cover the bridge. Lieutenant LAWRENCE and Risaldar SHANGARA maintained their tanks in action in and around the village, during which time LAWRENCE's tank was hit by a Japanese 75 mm shell, which damaged the tank, but did not put it out of action. The tanks and supporting infantry had many good targets, but were subjected to fire from a 75 mm gun and from mortars. The position held by this small group of soldiers was isolated, and the bogged down tank even more so. The Bombay Grenadiers, managed to drive off two enemy attacks aimed at reaching the stranded tank. Brigadier HARDY ordered his reserve Commando to go forward and support this bridge position, but they became involved in heavy fighting as the day progressed. Captain MERRIAM, the Squadron Second-in-Command came forward at about 17.00 hours, with Serjeant HAINES and the D8 bulldozer, supported by No. 3 Troop and a platoon from the Bombay Grenadiers. It took them about an hour to recover Dafadar SINGH's stranded tank, during which a cock sat roosting on top of the turret!

The three battalions of the 74th Indian Infantry Brigade were now ashore and they began to relieve the commandos, who were to be withdrawn in order to move up river to capture Kangaw. There was still fighting to be done at Myebon, so on 1 January, the tanks of 'A' Squadron supported the 3rd Bn. 2nd Gurkha Rifles in their attack on Hill 262, also known as Pagoda Hill. This hill had two peaks, on one of which was a former pagoda that was now ruined. Although a chaung ran in front of the hill, a position was found from which the tanks could provide fire support for the Gurkhas.

At about 11.30 hours, some Thunderbolt fighter-bombers launched an air strike onto the hill, which was delivered accurately. This managed to clear away some of the vegetation, so the Gurkhas began their advance with Captain WRIGHT alongside them acting as the F.T.O.. The Gurkhas wound their way up through the lower slopes and began climbing up. The nature of the jungle around the base of the hill made their advance slow. Captain WRIGHT began communicating fire orders back to the tanks, which started engaging the targets. The tank commanders could see nothing through the smoke from grenades, but they reached the ground that had to some extent been cleared by the air strike and the tanks. Hill 262 had twin summits, one of which was crowned with a battered pagoda. A bunker in the saddle between the two peaks proved very difficult to clear having stopped two attacks by the Gurkhas, until the tanks destroyed it by accurate and repeated shooting. The Gurkhas were held up again at the pagoda, so Captain WRIGHT spoke with Major SAMPLE and they agreed to have a major concentration on the pagoda. They had to wait for the tank's ammunition to be replenished, and then engaged the pagoda with all seven tanks present. On the orders of Captain WRIGHT, all firing ceased and Gurkhas went in with the bayonet and kukri, clearing the entire hill successfully. Eighty-one Japanese dead were found on that position. The tanks had fired close to one-thousand rounds, and the Browning machine guns were so tired that the rounds went out in a corkscrew direction.

With the Myebon peninsula now under British control, the next phase in the operation was further landings to be made at Kangaw. 'A' Squadron remained under command of the 3rd Commando Brigade for this operation. At 12.30 hours on 23 January 1945, its reconnaissance party landed with Brigade Headquarters. The Commandos landed and worked their way inland to secure a feature called Hill 170 that dominated the beach area. The Reconnaissance party, and Brigadier TODD decided that there was no beach suitable for the landing of tanks at Kangaw, but the Commander Royal Engineers felt it was feasible, so it went ahead. No. 2 Troop under Lieutenant FITZE attempted to land, but the first tank dug its nose deep into the mud of the chaung and stuck fast. Fortunately, Captain KENT of R.E.M.E. was present. He devised a plan where the D8, with its winch-cable attached to the rear of the tank, was shackled down to the deck of the L.C.T.. The L.C.T. went astern, as the D8 winched in its cable, and the tank drove in reverse, and although three shackles broke, and the D8 was nearly catapulted into the tank, the tank was recovered successfully. All the time, the enemy were dropping shells in and around the L.C.T.. The appearance of Captain MERRIAM and Lieutenant NELSON covered from head to foot in mud convinced everyone that a landing was not feasible.

This frustrating operation led to tensions between the engineers and tank commanders. There was lack of understanding of the limitations of landing craft and tanks, which can be seen as a consequence of the lack of combined training. The 19th Lancers were not to be defeated, so a plan was devised for tanks to be loaded onto small Landing Craft Mechanised (L.C.M.) and two days later, they were landed safely. This was just as well, as the Japanese reacted quickly and savagely against the Commandos dug in on Hill 170. Major SAMPLE had established his tank group in a harbour behind the northern end of Hill 170. The enemy shelled the area heavily on 31 January, and then attacked with about ninety men, thirty of whom carried pole charges to disable the tanks. Some Japanese managed to get through the perimeter manned by Commandos and men from the Bombay Grenadiers. The Japanese set one tank on fire, and a truck as well. Captain MERRIAM described how they were awakened at 05.45 hours by accurate shell-fire, which continued until about 06.20 hours, when voices could be heard followed by machine gun fire. A shower of grenades from both sides, with Major 'Bing' WILSON of the Bombay Grenadiers shooting dead the Japanese leader of the men carrying the pole charges with his Sten gun.

Captain Ron KENT, R.E.M.E. and Lieutenant Sam FITZE were having a fierce battle from underneath the D8. Major WILSON led a section to drive out some Japanese who had established themselves on a feature nearby. Two tanks, those commanded by Lieutenant FITZE and Jamadar Piara SINGH had managed to start up and pull out of the harbour. The third tank was burning fiercely, consuming the entire crew of Dafadar Dalip SINGH, Lance Dafadar Bahadur SINGH, Acting Lance Dafadar Sohan SINGH, Sowars Kashmira SINGH and Sowar Hazara SINGH. Major Bill SAMPLE got the two remaining tanks to fire on the noises coming from the jungle in front of them. Jemadar Piara SINGH's tank was out of action because of broken track connectors. Major SAMPLE went to see what had happened and was wounded. This turned out to be the end of his military career, and he ended up with one leg shorter than the other, although this did not stop him riding in National Hunt race meetings.

Lieutenant FITZE's tank remained in action throughout the battle, which came to a conclusion thirty-six hours later. Over three-hundred Japanese soldiers were noted as lying dead on the feature. Captain KENT managed to get a track off the burnt out tank, and fit it on Jemadar Piara SINGH's tank, which was again 'on the road'.

The 74th Indian Infantry Brigade, advancing from Myebon, with support from 'A' Squadron, 19th King George V's Own Lancers, as and when required, British and Indian troops pushed forward and made contact with troops from the 82nd (West Africa) Infantry Division advancing on Kangaw from the north. The 51st Indian Infantry Brigade had landed near Kangaw, and following some bitter and fierce fighting, took control of the area effectively blocking the escape of the retreating Japanese soldiers.

The overall campaign in Burma was now focused on the main, central front. In consequence, the supporting air forces and supply aircraft were to be concentrated on this front. This meant that the forces under command of XV Indian Corps in the Arakan had to be reduced. The 81st (West Africa) Infantry Division was already back in India, with the 25th Indian Infantry Division, 3rd Commando Brigade, and 50th Indian Tank Brigade to follow. As a result, the units of the tank brigade were withdrawn progressively between mid-February and the end of March 1945 back to India. Only 'A' Squadron of the 19th King George V's Own Lancers was to remain in the Arakan for the time being. XV Indian Corps was still able to continue its advance down the coast of Burma, towards the towns of An and Taungup.

The operations in the locality of An commenced with a landing by the 82nd (West Africa) Infantry Division at Dalet. Two weeks later, on 16 February 1945, the 74th Indian Infantry Division landed and captured the small town of Ruy-Wa. The brigade was subjected to strong counter attacks by the Japanese, so additional forces had to be landed to support them. Lieutenant Colonel G. H. CRITCHLEY, Commanding Officer of the 19th Lancers, received orders to send one Troop Group to Ruy-Wa. This comprised himself, Major WRIGHT (who was now commanding 'A' Squadron) with one tank, Captain BILLAMORIA and Jemadar Chhotu RAM with their tanks from No. 3 Troop, and one tank commanded by Jemadar Kundan SINGH from No. 4 Troop. Major WILSON was in command of one platoon of the 2nd Bn. 4th Bombay Grenadiers, with Sergeant BUCK in command of the Recovery Detachment, with Lieutenant SKINNER acting as Forward Tank Officer, and Lieutenant GWATKIN in charge of other vehicles.

Lieutenant Colonel CRITCHLEY went on ahead to reconnoitre the area, the group embarked on 25 February 1945, with the tanks on board a L.C.T., and the other vehicles under Lieutenant GWATKIN on separate vessels. The tanks were transferred onto smaller L.C.M. vessels at Charterhouse Island, while Lieutenant GWATKIN and his party went up the creeks to the landing site. The tanks followed, with the tanks brushing the trees on each side of the mangrove swamp, and reached the site constructed by Lieutenant GWATKIN, and a few sappers and miners.

Lieutenant Colonel CRITCHLEY was there to oversee the operation, and the tanks were landed safely. The group had to manoeuvre their way out of the swamp in order to go to the support of the infantry.

On 2 March, all four tanks were in action supporting a battalion of the 10th Baluch Regiment. A hidden 37 mm anti-tank gun scored four hits on Major WRIGHT's tank, although none penetrated the front armour. A sapper located the position of the gun, which was then destroyed by Captain BILLAMORIA and artillery fire. Sergeant BUCK got to work immediately on the damaged tank, which was back in action the next morning. It was in time to join the other three in supporting a battalion of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry, which had secured two hill features in preparation for an advance by the rest of the 74th Brigade. This meant the four tanks had to cross the Mee Chaung. The first two crossed successfully, but the third tank became bogged down and slipped a track. Sergeant BUCK came to the rescue again, and managed to get the tank to reverse back onto its track. Once repaired, this tank crossed the chaung successfully, followed by the fourth tank, the D8 tractor and other vehicles.

The 74th Brigade was now operating in open country, moving over paddy fields. It was exhausting work for the men of the 19th Lancers, who were in action for nine hours continuously. The close friends, Lieutenant SKINNER and Lieutenant GWATKIN acted as Forward Tank Officer alternately, and as Major WRIGHT noted, they achieved perfect coordination of the wireless nets.

The next phase of the operation required the clearing of the Tamandu to An road by the 7th Bn. 16th Punjab Regiment. It encountered very strong opposition from the Japanese occupying a hill feature called 'Strong'. The terrain was too difficult to allow the tanks to get forward, although Major WRIGHT tried to get two of them to the front. As they were trying to make their way along a narrow track, one tank tried to make room for some Jeep ambulances to make their way to the rear, when it slid down a bank, slipping both tracks. It appeared that this tank would become a total loss, but once again, Sergeant BUCK and Sergeant HAINES worked miracles in the field, and with the Jat crew of the tank, cut away part of the hillside, repaired the tank over the next three days, and then got it up and running to rejoin the troop.

The tanks were in demand, and as the 4th (West Africa) Infantry Brigade arrived to advance down the An road, 'A' Squadron was ordered to support them. On Monday 12 March, Colonel Dick CRITCHLEY, who was the second-in-command of the Tank Brigade, came to see the detached squadron, and will have met Archie GWATKIN for what turned out to be the last time. On Tuesday, 13 March, the tanks were ordered to support an attack by the Nigerians, with Lieutenant GWATKIN acting as Forward Tank Officer (F.T.O.).

The attack commenced at about 16.00 hours, and the operation ended successfully. The Troop Commander, Lieutenant EC/6100 John SKINNER, and Captain GWATKIN were guiding the tanks back to their harbour location across a difficult chaung, when the Japanese began shelling the area. A shell landed between Lieutenant SKINNER and Lieutenant GWATKIN, killing John SKINNER instantly, and mortally wounding Archie GWATKIN. Archie GWATKIN died in the early hours of the following morning, unaware that later on that same day, his brother was to be killed several hundred miles away in central Burma. The Regimental history states that he died having shown great fortitude and consideration for others.

The loss of two young officers and leaders in one incident affected the regiment badly. The Commanding Officer personally came to conduct the burial service, with the two officers being laid to rest near where they died. Archie was buried in Grave No. 1, Row A., Plot 21, in the Akyab War Cemetery in the Arakan. His close friend, John SKINNER, was laid to rest alongside him.

By 27 March, the British and Indian troops had advanced twenty-eight miles down the coast against sporadic opposition. It was not until the brigade reached Taungup that significant Japanese resistance was found.

In August 1950, the Imperial War Graves Commission decided that four out of the six Army cemeteries in Burma were too remote meaning that satisfactory construction and maintenance could not be carried out, nor could relatives visit them except with great difficulty. The four remote cemeteries were those at Akyab, Meiktila, Mandalay and Sahmaw. The Commission agreed to construct a new cemetery near Rangoon, and the graves of each battlefield cemetery were to be grouped together. The two other cemeteries at Rangoon (near the Gaol) and at Thanbyuzayat were to be constructed in their existing locations.

Major General Sir Frederick GWATKIN, the boy's father, received a letter dated 7 March 1951 explaining these arrangements. He wrote to the Imperial War Graves Commission formally requesting that the four graves of officers of the Royal Deccan Horse and the two graves of officers of the 19th Lancers be reburied at the new Taukkyan War Cemetery together. The six officers were:

- Lieutenant J. SKINNER – Plot XX Row A Grave 1
- Lieutenant A. W. GWATKIN – Plot XX Row A Grave 2
- Captain F. C. N. GWATKIN – Plot XX Row A Grave 3
- Lieutenant E. N. HOUSE – Plot XX Row A Grave 4
- Captain J. W. YOUNGER – Plot XX Row A Grave 5
- Captain J. H. A. SMITH – Plot XX Row A Grave 6

EC/6100 Lieutenant John SKINNER, who was twenty-four years of age when he died, is buried in Grave 20. A. 1., of the Taukkyan War Cemetery in Myanmar (formerly Burma). He was a son of Colonel Edward John SKINNER, and Emmeline Louisa SKINNER, of Victoria, London.⁷ Archibald Willoughby GWATKIN and Frederick Charles Nicol GWATKIN lie side by side in the Taukkyan War Cemetery in Burma, Archie in Grave 20. A. 2., and Freddie in Grave 20. A. 3. The death of Freddy is recorded in the National Probate Calendar, which gives his address at Crossways, Woldingham, Surrey. He left an estate of £1,093 12s 6d to his father.⁸

Major General GWATKIN received a letter dated 26 October 1953 from the Secretary of the Rangoon Diocesan Association, advising him that the Burma Book of Remembrance was now complete. The letter states:

Your own two sons will be much in your thoughts and prayers over Remembrance Sunday, and I hope that it will bring satisfaction to know that their names, with the names of all those other Burma men, are preserved in permanent form both in Rangoon Cathedral and in Westminster Abbey.



*The set of medals awarded to Captain F. C. N. GWATKIN (left), and Lieutenant A. W. GWATKIN (right)
Left: 1939-45 Star, Burma Star, Defence Medal, War Medal 1939-45 – all privately engraved Capt F. C. N. GAWTKIN
Right: 1939-35 Star, Burma Star, Defence Medal, War Medal 1939-45 – all privately engraved Lieut A. W. GAWTKIN.*

These medals also came up for sale on 1 and 2 March 2017, being estimated at between £300 and £400, but were sold for £500 by Dix Noonan Webb Ltd in London. Fortunately, they are now back in the extended GWATKIN family, where they are treasured as a physical reminder of the service of two young men, and their family, to the British Crown.

⁷ See: <http://www.cwgc>

⁸ England & Wales, National Probate Calendar, 1946. See: www.Ancestry.co.uk

Agnes herself served in the British Army during the Second World War. In July 1946, she married Nigel Christopher HOWIE, who had served in the British Army. Both had served with the Royal Regiment of Artillery. They had three children, Fiona, Jean and Alastair



Left – Nigel HOWIE in the uniform of a Captain, Royal Artillery, and Right – Nan GWATKIN as a Subaltern in the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

Courtesy of Alastair HOWIE

Nan was very close to her brothers, and missed them terribly. In 2005, she travelled to Myanmar with her son, Alastair, on a Royal British Legion trip to the country. At Taukkyan War Cemetery, she had an emotional reunion with Freddy and Archie, and laid poppy wreaths on their graves. She died on 30 December 2011, in Cheshire.



Left – Nan HOWIE was able to visit Taukkyan War Cemetery in 2005, and pay her respects to her much loved, and deeply missed, brothers.

Above – The two poppy wreaths on Archie's and Freddy's graves, laid by their sister.

Courtesy Alastair HOWIE

Major General Sir Frederick GWATKIN, Kt, C.B., D.S.O., M.C., *i.d.c.*, *p.s.c.*



Freddy and Archie's father had a distinguished career in the British Indian Army on his own account. Major General Sir Frederick GWATKIN, Kt. C.B., D.S.O., M.C., was reaching retirement age at the outbreak of the Second World War, but he played a key role in the development of the armed forces of the Indian Princely States in the first half of that war. This war, however, was to leave a bitter legacy for GWATKIN with the loss of his only two sons, on the same day, near the end of the war.

Frederick GWATKIN was born on 12 April 1885 at Murree, in what was then part of the Punjab in India, but is now in Pakistan. He was the son of Colonel F. S. GWATKIN, C.B., and received his initial education at the United Services College. This was a privately run school, dedicated to the education of the sons of military officers, and was located in a grand parade of Victorian buildings at Westward Ho! near Bideford, in North Devon. GWATKIN was at this college from January 1893 (aged seven years), until January 1897 (aged eleven years).⁹



The United Services College, Westward Ho!

Authors Collection (Postcard)

From the United Services College, GWATKIN progressed onto Clifton College, in Bristol. From Clifton, he gained a place at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, graduating from there on 19 August 1903; commissioned in the rank of Second Lieutenant, on the Unattached List for the Indian Army. GWATKIN was admitted to the Indian Army with effect from 19 December 1904. His initial posting, on 27 December, was an attachment to the 40th Pathans; an infantry regiment.¹⁰

⁹ See: <https://www.haileybury.com/medals/dso%20USC.htm>

¹⁰ *Supplement to the Indian Army List January 1939* p.205

On 17 August 1905, he transferred from the Unattached List to be a Second Lieutenant in a cavalry regiment, namely the 18th (Prince of Wales's Own) Tiwana Lancers.¹¹ GWATKIN was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant on 19 November 1905. His early service was focused on regimental duties, and he was promoted to the rank of Captain on 19 August 1912.

Captain GWATKIN served during the Great War with the 18th (King George's Own) Lancers, which on the outbreak of war, were stationed in Meerut, in Uttar Pradesh, India. The regiment comprised three squadrons of Punjabi Mussalmans, and one squadron of Sikhs.¹² The regiment was part of the Meerut Cavalry Brigade, which mobilised in August 1914 as the 7th (Meerut) Cavalry Brigade. Together with the newly raised 5th (Mhow) Cavalry Brigade, this brigade left Bombay on 19 November 1914, bound for Marseilles in France. The two brigades arrived between 14 and 16 December, and having disembarked, were transported up through France. GWATKIN himself landed in France on 14 December.

The two cavalry brigades joined the newly formed 2nd Indian Cavalry Division, which concentrated around Orleans around 20 to 24 December, moving up to the front on 1 to 4 January 1915. While serving in France, the brigade was usually known simply as the 'Meerut Cavalry Brigade' to avoid confusion with the British 7th Cavalry Brigade, also serving on the Western Front. The cavalry formations were generally held in reserve, so the Meerut Cavalry Brigade saw little action on the Western Front. Parties were sent to the trenches for short periods, the regiment would hold the line in quiet sectors, and act also as pioneers if required. In June 1916, the brigade reorganised prior to being sent to Mesopotamia, with the 18th (King George's Own) Lancers transferring to the 3rd (Ambala) Cavalry Brigade. This brigade had been deployed to France as part of the 1st Indian Cavalry Division, but had transferred to the 2nd Indian Cavalry Division on 15 September 1915.

The brigade did see some action in the Battle of the Somme, being involved in the fighting at Bazentin between 14 and 17 July 1916, and at Flers between 15 and 22 September. The following year, the brigade had a role in the Battle of Cambrai, supporting the tank attack on 21 and 22 November 1917. In addition, it participated in holding the German counter attacks between 30 November and 3 December 1917. In March 1918, the brigade was broken up and disbanded, the Indian units (including the 18th Lancers) being sent to Egypt.

During his service in France, Captain GWATKIN was appointed a General Staff Officer 3rd Grade between 1 April and 12 April 1917, and a Staff Captain from 8 June 1917, until 25 February 1918. He assumed another appointment as a Staff Captain on 26 February 1918, and was in this role when the brigades left for Egypt. Captain GWATKIN left France on 7 March, and arrived in Egypt with his regiment on 18 March 1918. His regiment was part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force fighting the Turkish Ottoman forces in Egypt and Sinai.

¹¹ With the accession of the Prince of Wales to the throne on 6 May 1910, the regiment was retitled as the 18th King George's Own Lancers.

¹² See: <http://www.researchingww1.co.uk/18th-king-georges-own-lancers>

Top Right – Frederick GWATKIN in uniform as a Lieutenant in the 18th Lancers.

Centre – Captain GWATKIN with the officers, and non-commissioned officers of his Squadron, in France during the Great War.

Bottom – Major GWATKIN, with General ALLENBY and other senior officers, at a memorial to the capture of Beirut in Syria in October 1918.

Courtesy of Alastair HOWIE



*Self
Major G. Gwatkin*

Allenby

GWATKIN received three gallantry awards for his service during the First World War, the highest order being made a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (D.S.O.) on 3 June 1919, '*For distinguished service in connection with military operations in Egypt*'. During his service in France, Captain GWATKIN was awarded the Military Cross (M.C.), which was published in the London Gazette on 3 June 1918, and the Belgian Croix du Guerre announced in the London Gazette on 9 July 1918. In addition, he was Mentioned in Despatches on 5 June 1919.

GWATKIN relinquished his role as Staff Captain on 9 June 1918. More staff appointments followed, as a Brigade Major from 12 June until 2 October 1918, and then Staff Office 2nd Grade, Egyptian Expeditionary Force from 3 October 1918, in the rank of Temporary Major. His substantive promotion to the rank of Major dated from 19 August 1918.

Major GWATKIN served with the 5th Cavalry Division in Kurdistan between May and December 1919, and relinquished the post as G.S.O. 2 on 20 February 1920. On 23 August 1921, with the contraction of the Indian Army post-war, the 18th and 19th Lancers merged to form the 19th King George V's Own Lancers, with GWATKIN becoming a Major in the new, combined regiment. GWATKIN attended the Staff College, at Camberley in Surrey at about this time, as a student on the course to equip him to serve as a Staff Officer in the Indian Army.¹³ Following the First World War, where several officers had performed staff roles, even though they were not graduates of either Staff College at Camberley or Quetta, priority was given to these officers to gain the formal qualifications, and the letters *p.s.c.* after their name in the Army List. This was seen as important to their own career prospects, and the future leadership of the Indian Army.

Major Frederick GWATKIN married Lydia Winifred STANTON on 27 April 1920 at Fairford, Gloucestershire. She was born on 6 January 1887, the eldest of two daughters to Lieutenant Colonel Edward Charles STANTON and Catherine Josephine BROOKE. She had two elder brothers, and her father was an Army officer. Lydia was baptised on 6 February 1887 in Mandla, Bengal, India. A family aunt called Agnes, was married to the vicar of Fairford, and it was at The Vicarage, in Fairford, that their daughter, Agnes Helen GWATKIN (who was always known as 'Nan') was born on 15 August 1921. Their two sons, Frederick Charles Nicol GWATKIN (born 15 December 1922) and Archibald Willoughby GWATKIN (born 18 December 1923) were both born in India, with the three siblings forming a close knit family.¹⁴ When Major GWATKIN attended the Staff College at Camberley, the family lived with his parents in a house called 'Kesteven', Heatherdale Road, Camberley, which was close by to the Staff College.

¹³ Major GWATKIN attended the British Staff College at Camberley. Officers from the British Indian Army attended both colleges. Although the majority attended Quetta, usually two places at Camberley were allocated to officers of the British Indian Army.

¹⁴ Freddy and Archie do not appear on English Birth Registers, which is in accord with the family's understanding that both were born in India.



Major GWATKIN's next role was that of Brigade Major, 2nd Indian Cavalry Brigade, which he assumed on 13 March 1921. This formation was based at Sialkot, in the Lahore District, and usually had under command one British Army, and two (or three) Indian Army Cavalry regiments. The role of the Brigade Major was that of the senior staff officer of the brigade, organising events and parades, exercises, deployments, visits and inspections.

Archie (Left), Agnes 'Nan' (Centre) and Freddy (Right)

Courtesy of Alastair HOWIE

He left the role as Brigade Major on 2 February 1925, after the usual four years in a staff appointment. His next appointment was as an Instructor at the Staff College, Quetta, which he assumed on 1 January 1927. He was promoted to the rank of Temporary Lieutenant Colonel, albeit without the pay and pension attributed to that rank, as all instructors held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel or Colonel. His subsequent promotion to the rank of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel was dated from 1 January 1927.¹⁵

Lydia and her three children visited the U.K. in 1926, probably to see family following the birth of Freddy and Archie. On 26 November 1926, Mrs Lydia GWATKIN boarded the P & O liner, Ranpura, to travel to Karachi, with her three children. Agnes was aged five years, Freddy three, and Archie two. She gave their address in the U.K. as Kesteven, Heatherstead Road, Camberley, Surrey, her parents-in-law address.

Whilst based at the Staff College, GWATKIN was promoted to the substantive rank of Lieutenant Colonel with effect from 19 August 1929, and transferred to the Royal Deccan Horse (9th Horse). The role as Instructor was a high status position within the Indian Army.

¹⁵ The promotion to Brevet Lieutenant Colonel was a Regimental promotion, and based upon seniority. An officer holding a Brevet rank could wear the badges of that rank while holding staff appointments, but would revert to their substantive rank on operational duties. There was no additional pay or allowances for this promotion. The promotion to Temporary Lieutenant Colonel meant that GWATKIN held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel while employed in that appointment, but would have reverted to Major if he had left that role before his substantive promotion.

Major General B. T. HUMPHREYS, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., *p.s.c.*, commanded the Staff College at Quetta with effect from 6 February 1928, with Colonel E. de BURGH, D.S.O., O.B.E., Indian Army, *p.s.c.*, and Colonel E. F. NORTON, D.S.O., M.C., *p.s.c.*, as the two General Staff Officers 1st Grade. The six General Staff Officers 2nd Grade in this period were Lieutenant Colonel (Temporary) B. V. G. HORN, D.S.O., O.B.E., M.C., R. S. Fus., *p.s.c.*; Lieutenant Colonel F. GWATKIN, D.S.O., M.C., R. Deccan Horse; Lieutenant Colonel (Temporary) A. R. SELBY, Aust Staff Corps, *p.s.c.*; Lieutenant Colonel P. J. MACKESY, D.S.O., M.C., R.E., *p.s.c.*; Brevet Lieutenant Colonel H. G. MARTIN, D.S.O., O.B.E., R.A., *p.s.c.*; and Lieutenant Colonel (Temporary) G. O. De. B. CHANNER, M.C., 7 G.R., *p.s.c.*.

He left the Staff College on 14 January 1930, having completed three years in the role, and assumed command of the Royal Deccan Horse. He remained the regiment's commanding officer until 4 August 1934, when he was promoted to the rank of Colonel, with his seniority dating from 1 January 1931. On the date of his promotion, he was appointed to command the 2nd (Sialkot) Indian Cavalry Brigade, and granted the rank of Temporary Brigadier. The 2nd (Sialkot) Cavalry Brigade was part of the Lahore District, in Northern Command, with which GWATKIN had served as Brigade Major.

The family returned to the U.K. in 1930, and went to live at 23, Claremont, Avenue, Farnham, Surrey, which was a rented property. This allowed the two boys to attend Clifton College in Bristol, where their father had been educated previously. The GWATKIN family bought their first family home in the village of Merriott, in Somerset, in 1938. The house was called Merriott House, and is remembered as a happy family home.



The GWATKIN family home in Merriott, near Crewkerne, Somerset.

Courtesy of Alastair HOWIE

In 1938, GWATKIN attended the Imperial Defence College, in London. This was a strategic course for senior Army officers from the British and Indian Armies, with students from the Canadian and Australian forces, and the Royal Air Force. The course lasted for twelve months, during which the students had to complete a study on a military subject, and prepare a paper for submission.

Colonel GWATKIN was promoted to the rank of Major General on 1 April 1938, one of only twenty-one officers of that rank in the Indian Army. On 9 June 1938, he was made a Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (C.B.), a common award for Army officers who reached the rank of Major General. It appears, that the now Major General GWATKIN, was still a student on the Imperial Defence College course, when he was transferred to the Semi-Effective List, without an appointment and probably on half-pay, to take effect from 8 July 1938.

Once he finished his course, Major General GWATKIN, now aged fifty-three years, found that there were no vacancies for him in the Indian Army. He remained on the semi-effective list until 16 April 1939, when he was appointed Military Advisor-in-Chief to the Indian State Forces. This role involved him working with the armies that were under the control of the rulers of the various Princely States, which had pledged allegiance to the British Empire in times of War. The size and capability of these forces varied considerably, with states such as Gwalior, Hyderabad, and Jammu and Kashmir, having large armies modelled, to a great extent, on the British Indian Army. Other states had small, battalion sized forces. With the outbreak of the Second World War, several battalions from the Indian States Forces were deployed to Malaya, where they were captured with the fall of Singapore, and the Middle East, which is a testament to the role played by Major General GWATKIN in their preparation.

Meanwhile, on 2 August 1939, GWATKIN had been appointed Colonel of his regiment, the Royal Deccan Horse. He was knighted at the Viceroy's House, New Delhi on 21 February 1942, and six days later, on 27 February, he was promoted to Local Lieutenant General.¹⁶

¹⁶ It appears that Major General GWATKIN was posted to the Middle East in some form of advisory or enquiry role, and for this appointment, received promotion to the rank of Local Lieutenant Colonel.

Right – Polo was an important part of the life of an Indian Army Cavalry Officer, with Captain GWATKIN (top left) pictured with the winning team in 1913.

Below – Major General GWATKIN on an official visit to an Indian State, with the Maharaja and other officials.

Bottom – An official photograph of Major General GWATKIN, probably with his staff of the Advisory Team to the Indian States Forces.

Courtesy Alastair HOWIE



Major General GWATKIN retired from the Indian Army on 12 April 1943, his fifty-eighth birthday, handing over his role to Major General Charles Offley HARVEY, C.B., C.B.E., C.V.O., M.C.. He had completed forty years' service, having received a total of fifteen awards and medals. These were:

1. KNIGHT BACHELOR'S BADGE, 2nd type breast badge, silver-gilt and enamel, London 1940;
2. THE MOST HONOURABLE ORDER OF THE BATH, C.B. (Military) Companion's neck badge, silver-gilt and enamel, with neck riband;
3. DISTINGUISHED SERVICE ORDER, G.V.R., silver-gilt and enamel, with integral top riband bar;
4. MILITARY CROSS, G.V.R., unnamed as issued;
5. 1914-15 STAR (Capt. F. Gwatkin, 18/Lncrs.);
6. BRITISH WAR AND VICTORY MEDALS, with M.I.D. oak leaves (Maj. F. Gwatkin);
7. GENERAL SERVICE 1918-62, 1 clasp, Kurdistan (Major F. Gwatkin);
8. AFRICA STAR; WAR MEDAL 1939-45;
9. INDIA SERVICE MEDAL; DELHI DURBAR 1911, silver;
10. JUBILEE 1935; CORONATION 1937;
11. CROIX DE GUERRE (BELGIUM), A.I.R., bronze.

These sold at auction for £4,800 in September 2012, at Bonhams in London.

The medals and awards granted to Major General Sir Frederick GWATKIN.

Top Row – C.B., and Knight Breast Badge

Bottom Row (from left to right) – D.S.O., M.C., 1914 – 15 Star, B.W.M., V.M., G.S.M. (1 Clasp – Kurdistan), Africa Star, B.W.M. 1939 – 45, India S.M., Delhi Durbar, 1935 Jubilee, 1937 Coronation, Croix de Guerre (Belgium)



Sir Frederick GWATKIN eventually relinquished the role of Colonel of the Royal Deccan Horse on 1 September 1950, following the partition of the Indian Army. He became a collector of, and an expert on, the Burma postal service and its stamps. In retirement, he and his wife lived at Brooms Down, Wateringbury, Kent, in the beautiful Medway valley. He died in 1969 in Maidstone, Kent.

It is known that Sir Frederick and his wife were affected deeply by the deaths of Freddy and Archie, as their inscription on their graves makes clear. Their daughter went on to marry, and have her own family, that gave them some comfort and joy, but the loss of his two sons must have stayed with Sir Frederick to his death. His loyal and valued service to the United Kingdom, and British India in particular, cannot match the sacrifice of his two sons to his country's cause.



Colonel Frederick Stapleton GWATKIN, C.B.

The first generation of the GWATKIN family to serve with the British Indian Army was Frederick Stapleton GWATKIN, who was born on 30 January 1849, in St. Pancras, Middlesex, England. His father, Frederick GWATKIN, was a barrister, and died on 17 November 1873 in Twickenham, having moved his family to Grove House, Twickenham, Middlesex. His mother, Louisa Isabella GWATKIN (nee STAPLETON), died at Richmond, Surrey on 10 October 1903. His siblings, one older and seven younger, were:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| 1. Mary Dugleby GWATKIN | – 21 November 1847, St. Pancras, London. |
| 2. Arthur John Campbell GWATKIN | – 17 July 1850, Twickenham; |
| 3. Caroline Winifred Casmajor GWATKIN | – 1 October 1851, Twickenham; |
| 4. Alexander George Stapleton GWATKIN | – 11 November 1853, Twickenham; |
| 5. Louisa Florence Camilla GWATKIN | – 28 August 1856, Twickenham; |
| 6. Willoughby Garnons GWATKIN | – 11 August 1859, Twickenham; |
| 7. Walter Henry Trelawney GWATKIN | – 27 August 1861, Twickenham; |
| 8. Hugh Fortescue Wilmshurst GWATKIN | – 28 July 1863, Twickenham. |

Frederick Stapleton GWATKIN married Christina Helen Grahame FRASER (born 1862), on 20 April 1882, in Rawalpindi, India. Their first child, a daughter, Louisa Helen Fraser GWATKIN, was born on 2 May 1884 in Twickenham, Middlesex, at the family home. Their first son, Frederick, was born on 12 April 1885, in Murree, Bengal, India. His second son, Archibald GWATKIN, was born in Naina Tal, in India, on 7 September 1886.

Frederick Stapleton GWATKIN attended Rugby School, from 1864 until achieving his matriculation in 1867.¹⁷ He went onto Trinity College, Cambridge, where he obtained a B.A. degree in 1871, and a M.A. degree in 1874. He was commissioned in the British Army on 27 March 1872, joining the 73rd (Perthshire) Regiment of Foot in the rank of Sub-Lieutenant. In 1877, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant, back-dated to 27 March 1872, still serving with the 73rd Foot. In 1875, GWATKIN transferred to the Indian Staff Corps, serving with the 19th Punjab Infantry. He served and saw active service in Afghanistan, Egypt, and The Sudan. His next promotion, to the rank of Captain, was effective from 27 March 1884. In 1890, Captain F. S. GWATKIN was appointed Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General of the Assam District, under Brigadier-General H. COLLETT, C.B., while still serving with the 13th Bengal Lancers. While serving at Shillong with the Assam District, he was appointed Staff Officer to Brigadier-General W. P. SYMONS, during the operations of the Chin-Lushai expedition in northern Burma. He was described as being of invaluable assistance, carrying out his duties in a sound, energetic manner, and with the greatest tact. He was a most reliable and excellent officer, of whom the commanding officer could not speak too highly. In 1891, he was the Assistant Adjutant-General for the Manipur Field Force, commanded by Major General H. COLLETT, C.B..

¹⁷ Clifton College was not opened until 1862, but it had close links with Rugby School, which is why subsequent male generations of the family attended Clifton College in Bristol.

Major GWATKIN relinquished his appointment as Deputy Assistant-Adjutant-General on the Bengal Establishment of the Indian Staff Corps, with effect from 24 April 1894. In November 1890, he was promoted to the rank of Brevet Major, and to the rank of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel on 22 January 1896. In 1898, and now holding the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, Frederick Stapleton GWATKIN, still serving with the 13th Bengal Lancers, was the Assistant Adjutant and Quarter-Master-General of the Peshawar Column, that operated on the North-West Frontier against the Afghan tribesmen. On 14 January 1899, he was appointed Military Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief, India, and on 22 January, he was promoted to the substantive rank of Colonel in the Indian Army. He did not hold that post for long, for on 1 April 1900, he was transferred to become an Assistant Adjutant-General of the Peshawar District in India. This post was confirmed as that of a Colonel on the Staff, with effect from 20 December 1900. On 25 June 1902, he was appointed to be an Ordinary Member of the Third Class, or Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (C.B.). On 1 July 1902, Colonel F. S. GWATKIN, C.B., was appointed to command a Second Class District. This was the Sialkot District, within the Rawalpindi District. Colonel GWATKIN had a staff of a Major as Staff Officer (1st Class), a garrison engineer, a Lieutenant Colonel as senior medical officer, a senior veterinary officer, a Cantonment Magistrate (a Lieutenant Colonel on the Supplementary List), and two Chaplains.

Within his District, GWATKIN had command of the Depot of the 3rd Hussars, one British cavalry regiment, one British infantry battalion, one Indian cavalry regiment, and two Indian infantry battalions, plus ancillary support staff. On 7 June 1903, his rank was uprated to that of Temporary Brigadier-General while employed in his current post. On 18 October 1904, Colonel F. S. GWATKIN relinquished command of the Sialkot District, and with it his temporary promotion, and retired from the Indian Army, aged fifty-five years. This was prompted by the ill-health of his wife, with the family returning to the U.K..

On retirement from the Indian Army in 1904, the family went to live in a house called Kesteven, Heatherdale Road, Camberley, Surrey. There, in January 1905, Frederick's wife Christina died. Their second son, Archibald, joined the Indian Army, being commissioned in the 15th Lancers (Cureton's Multanis). He had reached the rank of Lieutenant, when on Friday, 26 February 1909, he was killed in action in the Zhob Valley, on the North-West Frontier of India. He was twenty-three years' of age.¹⁸ In 1912, Colonel GWATKIN returned to India, to live in Calcutta. With the outbreak of the Great War, Colonel GWATKIN was recalled to active service, filling a staff role with effect from 4 November 1914. He was Specially Employed (Class GG) throughout the war, until 24 July 1919, when he returned to retired pay.¹⁹

During the war, his brother Alexander died on 14 February 1915 in Middlesex, England, and Hugh (the youngest sibling) died in Poole, Dorset, on 9 November 1916. Frederick's brother Arthur died in December 1920, in Rugby, Warwickshire, England, and his sister Louisa died on 26 October 1922 in Wiltshire, England.

¹⁸ https://archive.org/stream/visitationofengl16howa/visitationofengl16howa_djvu.txt

¹⁹ <https://www.thegazette.co.uk>



The three generations, Sir Frederick (Left), Frederick Stapleton (Left Centre), Agnes (Right Centre) Lydia (Right) and Freddy (sat in foreground).

Courtesy of Alastair HOWIE

Willoughby Garnons GWATKIN had also enjoyed a distinguished military career, retiring as Lieutenant General Sir Willoughby Garnons GWATKIN, K.C.M.G., C.B.. Willoughby was educated at Shrewsbury College, before progressing on to King's College, Cambridge. He gained entry to the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and commissioned into the Manchester Regiment in 1882. After a period of Regimental service, Willoughby GWATKIN was appointed to a post as Assistant Adjutant-General. In 1905, he was seconded to Canada, spending two years there, before returning to the U.K. when he attended the Staff College.

By now promoted to the rank of Colonel, in July 1913 Willoughby GWATKIN was appointed as Chief Staff Officer of the Canadian Army. In 1916, he was promoted to the rank of Temporary Major General, and remained in Canada until his retirement in 1920. GWATKIN then spent two years as Inspector-General of the Canadian Air Force, holding the rank of Air Vice-Marshal. In 1922, with his retirement from active service, and in honour of his service to Canada, he was awarded the honorary rank of Lieutenant General in the Canadian Militia Reserve of Officers. Willoughby GWATKIN was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath (C.B.) in 1916, and Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George (C.M.G.) in 1918. In January 1920, he was elevated to Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George (K.C.M.G.), a diplomatic award, and became Sir Willoughby. He died in Twickenham, England, on 2 February 1925, aged sixty-five years. He had married Edith Campbell ROWLEY in June 1888, but they had no children. Frederick Stapleton's younger sister, Caroline GWATKIN died on 16 February 1931, in Twickenham, England; and his older sister, Mary Dugleby GWATKIN, died on 14 February 1932 at Wallingford, Oxfordshire. Colonel Frederick Stapleton GWATKIN, C.B., died on 29 January 1940, while living at Kesteven, Heatherdale Road, Camberley, Surrey, aged ninety years (one day short of his ninety-first birthday), and was buried at Frimley, Surrey. His only surviving sibling was Canon Walter Henry Trelawney GWATKIN, who died in 1945.

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