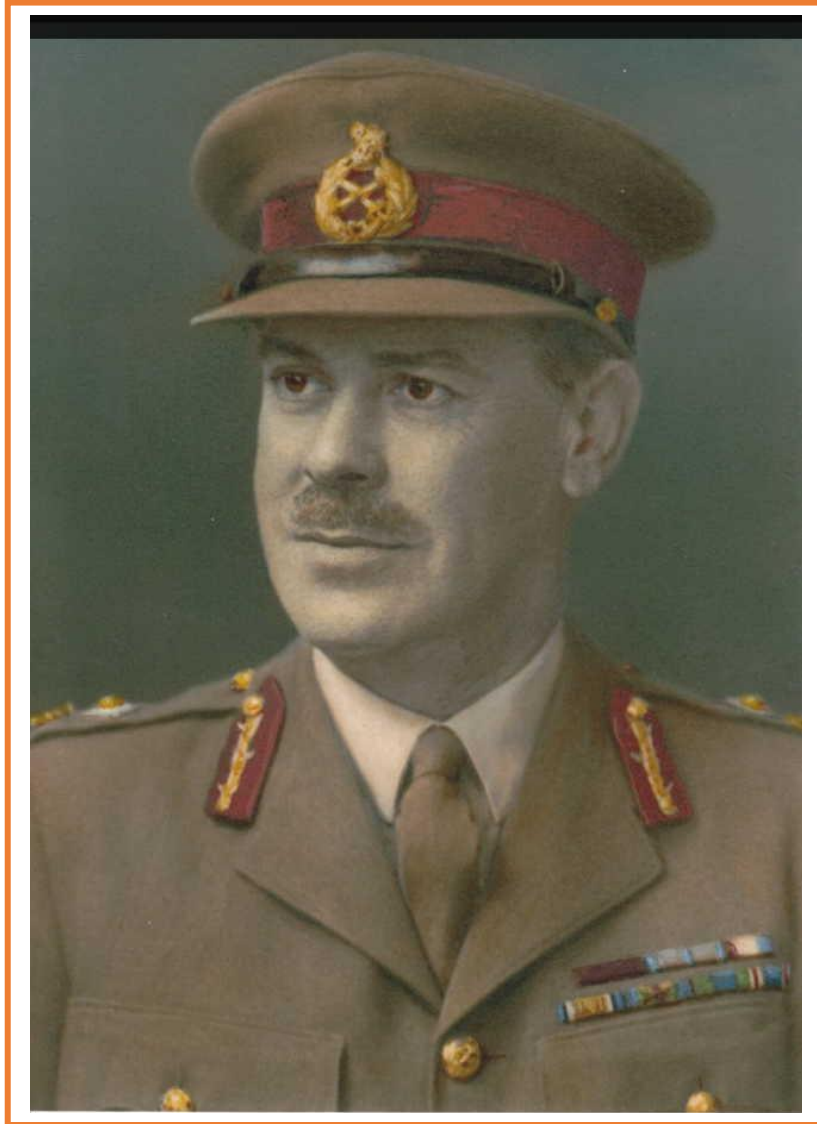


Major General Gordon West HODGEN, C.B., O.B.E.



Major General HODGEN was an officer in the British Indian Army, who served in the Royal Indian Army Service Corps (R.I.A.S.C.) to rise to the top of his branch and hold the appointment as Colonel Commandant of the R.I.A.S.C. for three years at the end of his service.

Gordon West HODGEN was born on 2 February 1894, in Allahabad, Bengal, India, and baptized there on 14 June 1894. He was the first child and eldest son of Alexander HODGEN (1864 – 1925), who himself had been born in Calcutta, and his wife Ellen Winnifred HODGEN (nee WEST) (1869 – 1922). The children of the family were:

- Gordon West HODGEN (1894 – 1968)
- Winifred Ellen West HODGEN (1898 – ?)
- Leslie Alick HODGEN (1900 – ?)
- Doris West HODGEN (known as Prue) (1903 – 1990)
- Ralph West HODGEN (1905 – ?)
- Eric W. HODGEN

Details of HODGEN's education are not known, other than he attended the Royal College of Science, University of London prior to the outbreak of the First World War. He was commissioned in the rank of Second Lieutenant on the Unattached List for the Indian Army on 16 September 1914 (his seniority dating from 19 August 1914), and as was usual for officers bound for the Indian Army, he was attached to a British Army regiment for a probationary period of about twelve months. In the case of Second Lieutenant HODGEN, he was attached to the 1st Bn. The Bedfordshire Regiment, and he arrived in France on 26 April 1915.

On 30 September 1915, he was transferred from the Unattached List to join the Indian Army as a Second Lieutenant, and he joined the 123rd Outram's Rifles as a company officer. On 1 September 1916, HODGEN was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant (with his seniority dating from 1 September 1915). On 20 August 1917, he was promoted to the rank of a Temporary Captain on appointment as an Assistant Recruiting Officer in India, and then on 19 August 1918, he was promoted to the substantive rank of Captain. For his service in the First World War, HODGEN was awarded the 1914 – 1915 Star, the British War Medal, and the Victory Medal.

HODGEN's next appointment was an Administrative Commandant (graded as a Deputy Assistant Quarter-Master General), in India, with effect from 26 July 1919, while he was still attached to the 1st Bn. 123rd Outram's Rifles. On 1 October 1919, he assumed the same role with the Waziristan Force, during the period when British India and Afghanistan were at war on the North-West Frontier of India. During both these appointments, HODGEN held the rank of Temporary Major. He was made a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (M.B.E.) on 12 September 1919 for distinguished services rendered in India, the award to be dated from 3 June 1919.

HODGEN ceased the role as an Administrative Commandant on 1 April 1921, relinquishing the rank of Temporary Major. On 19 December 1922, Captain HODGEN was elevated to become an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (O.B.E.) for his service with Waziristan Force in 1920 and 1921, with the award to be dated from 23 October 1921. For a period from 18 July 1927 until 17 October 1930, HODGEN was employed as an Embarkation Staff Officer. In this role, Captain HODGEN one of a team of officers was responsible for organising the large number of troops which arrived and departed from Bombay to and from the United Kingdom.

Circa 1922, HODGEN transferred to the Indian Army Service Corps. This period was one of significant reorganisation of the British Indian Army, and several officers either left the Army or transferred to other regiments or corps to continue their careers. In 1935, the Indian Army Service Corps was granted the prefix of Royal by the King, and henceforth was known colloquially as the R.I.A.S. (or RICE) Corps, a derivation of the initials of the abbreviation of the name.

The next promotion HODGEN received was to the rank of Major on 16 September 1932, but in the London Gazette of 23 December 1932, his dates of promotion were amended so that HODGEN's promotion to Lieutenant was now with effect from 1 September 1915; Captain from 19 August 1918, and Major from 19 August 1932.

On 1 October 1934, HODGEN was appointed a Deputy Assistant Director of Supplies. He was promoted Brevet Lieutenant Colonel on 1 January 1936, this rank being granted to long serving officers to allow them to act as a Lieutenant Colonel in staff roles, while his official rank remained as Major. On 22 March 1937, HODGEN was promoted to the rank of substantive Lieutenant Colonel and appointed to the role as Assistant Director of Supplies and Transport, Meerut District, India.

Promotion to the rank of Colonel came with effect from 16 September 1940 (his seniority dating from 1 January 1939), and HODGEN was appointed a Deputy Director of Supplies and Transport at G.H.Q. India. On 23 June 1941, HODGEN was promoted to the rank of Acting Major General and appointed as the Director of Supplies and Transport at G.H.Q. India. This meant HODGEN was now the most senior officer within the Royal Indian Army Service Corps in the Indian Army. He was made a Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath (C.B.) on 2 June 1943 in His Majesty's Birthday Honours List, this being a common award granted to Army officers when they reached the rank of Major General. He was promoted to the substantive rank of Major General on 3 April 1944. At this time, HODGEN was aged fifty years, and he had thirty years' service in the Army.

He relinquished the post as Director of Supplies and Transport on 15 July 1945, handing over to Major General Frederick ALFIERI. HODGEN took over from Major General Roy BUCHER as Major General in charge of Administration with Southern Command, India.

HODGEN did not stay in that role for long, as in November 1945, he was given the role as Director General of Lands, Hiring and Disposals within India Command. He was also made the President of the Claims Commission in India.

This was a busy and demanding role, as with the end of hostilities with Japan, and the likelihood of Indian independence in the near future, the Army in India needed to downsize, which included releasing property and land that had been requisitioned back to the civilian population. Various people also lodged claims against the Indian Government in respect of requisitioned property and goods, which had to be recorded, assessed, and if appropriate, for recompense to be paid to individuals or businesses.

Major General HODGEN was Colonel Commandant of the Royal Indian Army Service Corps between 12 November 1945 and 1 October 1948. He retired from the Army on 1 October 1947, i.e., shortly after the partition of British India and the Indian Army. His career was coming to a conclusion, and the partition of British India merely brought it forward slightly. The retirement age for Major Generals was fifty-seven years, and HODGEN was aged fifty-three years. He had completed thirty-three years' service in the Army, but as with many of the officers in the British Indian Army, there was no further employment within the British Army available to him.

Gordon HODGEN married Dorelle Geraldine RICE (1913 – 2007) on 3 September 1932 at St. Bonaventure's Roman Catholic Church, Ranikhet, Bengal, India. Their first child, a daughter, Nighean Dorelle HODGEN, was born on 15 July 1938 at the Portmore Nursing Home, Simla, in India. Gordon and Dorelle also had a second child, a son. The family in a house called 'Hurlwood', Firwood Drive, Frimley in Surrey.

In 1949, in Westminster, HODGEN married for second time. His new wife was Amy Jane ROPER-ROBINSON (1909 – 1973). Major General HODGEN emigrated to Spain, where he died on 1 March 1968, aged seventy-four years, at Casa Domingo La Loma, Fuengirola, Malaga, Spain.¹ His estate in England amounted to £4,248.

¹ This date is taken from the Probate records, whereas unithistories.com gives a date of death of 29 February 1968. That year was a leap year, so both dates are possible.