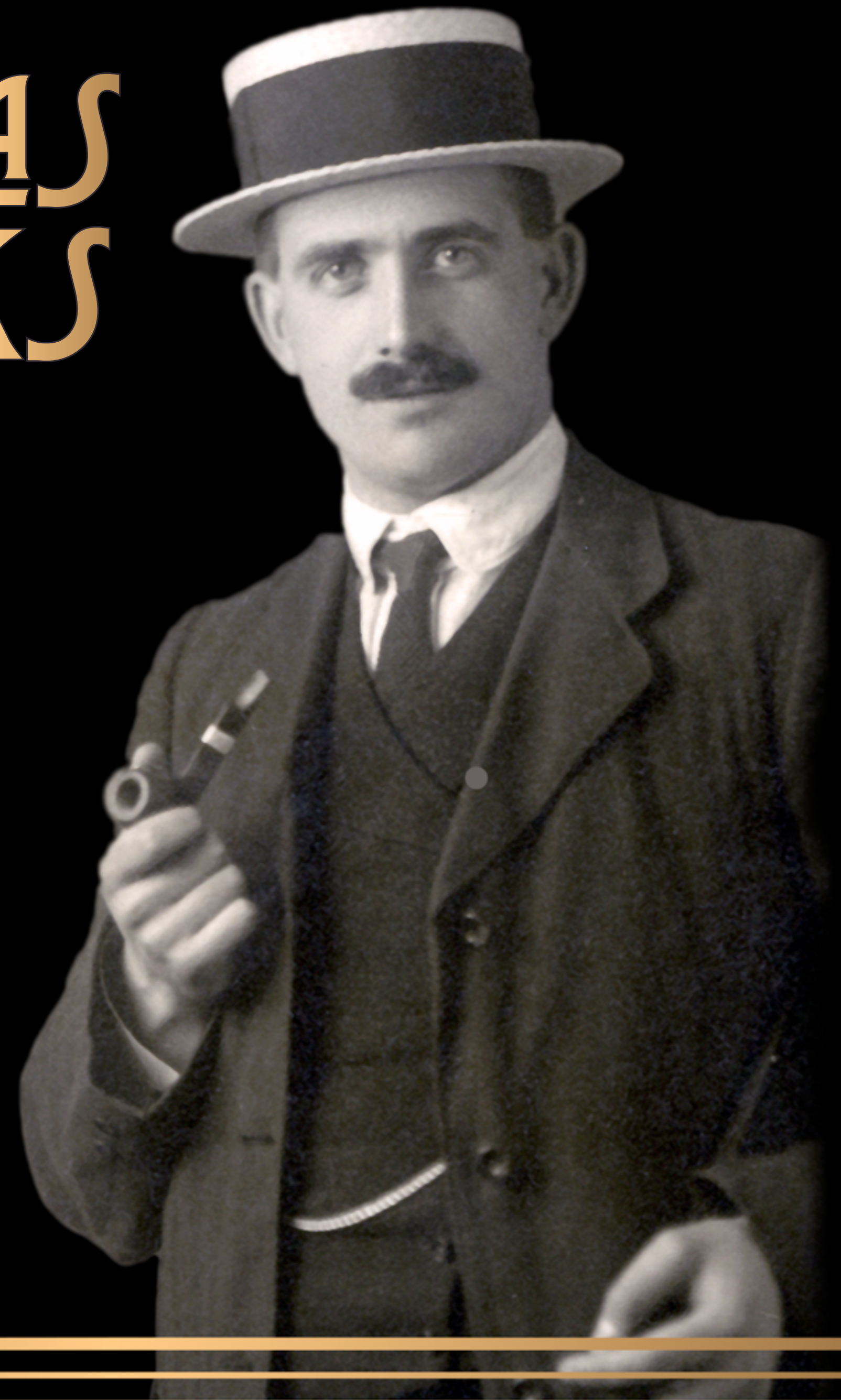


# THOMAS BROOKS

*In Pleasant  
Recollection  
1916 - 1922*



THOMAS BROOKS: IN PLEASANT RECOLLECTION was originally inspired by Ian Brooks.

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# PREFACE

Many of you will have received our earlier Brooks family printed book “Norman Dearest” about our parents’ courtship in post-WWII London as told through our mother’s letters that started two weeks after our parents met.

Now, we have found amazing early-20<sup>th</sup> century family photos and documents covering the life of our paternal grandfather, Thomas Brooks, who served in WWI in North Africa.

The central 26 photos come from a photo album Thomas received from a fellow British Army Officer in 1919 and, with detailed captions, form the heart of this eBook.

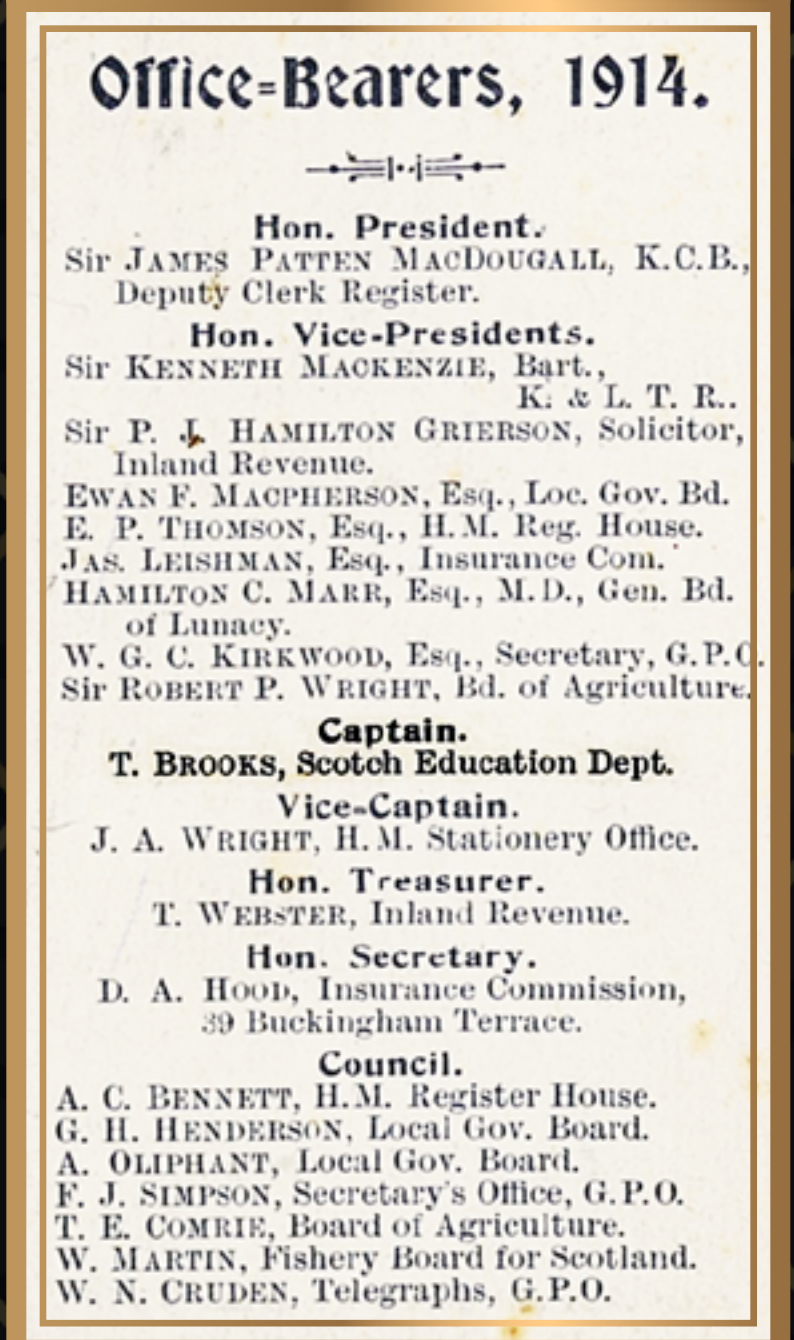
Thomas’ life story continues into his courtship and into his subsequent marriage to a much younger school teacher.

It’s our pleasure to tell his story in a digital format ~100 years after the period where these family events took place...

# EARLY LIFE

Thomas Brooks was born on May 29, 1883 in Bridge of Weir (pop 5,000) a “dormitory settlement” west of Glasgow. He was the second oldest of eleven children & educated at the local village school in a neighbouring village, Kilmalcolm.

After his “elementary education” he passed the Civil Service entry exam and worked in local government offices in London until WWI.



MEMBERS OF THE  
BROOKS FAMILY

1899



Front Row ~ left to right.

**George** : ~ twin. Delicate throughout his life and fond of the drink (not a good combination!) Married Elizabeth Bisset (Aunt Liz) and lived at 141 Crewe Road South, Edinburgh. No children. Aunt Liz's father, whom she adored, was a miner and part-time politician with strong Communist sympathies. Friend of Manny Shinwell.

**Tane** : ~ My father's favourite sister whom he supported through college and with whom he corresponded until the end of his life. Tane married Walter Zumstein, an Australian soldier with pioneering spirit. After the end of World War I he took her back to Victoria and away up country. I think she had quite a hard life although she never complained. Their only daughter had to be sent away to boarding school because the area was so remote (i.e. Tearn Zumstein, later to become Tearn Eckert, mother of Bunky Tane always spoke of Scotland as her 'home' and retained a strong west-coast accent but it wasn't until after the death of Walter and 49 years spent in her adopted country that she actually 'came home' in 1967 or thereabouts. I then understood why my father had been so fond of her. Though crippled by arthritis, she was still an amazing personality ~ warm, good-humoured, determined to make the most of her visit and unfailingly appreciative of anything you did for her. Norman will back me up on this.

**Catherine (Cath)** : ~ twin Emigrated to Australia and had two daughters. I can remember seeing her only once during my childhood when three strange ladies came to visit wearing fancy hats and lots of make-up. One of them managed to knock over and smash a prized vase belonging to my mother. The visit was NOT a success!

MISSING FROM THE PHOTO

**Ann (Nan)** youngest of the eleven children.

Big brother Tom paid for her further education too. Nan rose to a high position in the Civil Service (Forestry Commission?) She remained unmarried and took care of her mother for many years. Nan was an extrovert with a good sense of humour and an attractive personality. She enjoyed cigarettes, whisky and life in general.

Second i.e. Middle Row ~ left to right.

**John** : A bit of a loner. After his marriage failed, he continued to pay alimony to his ex-wife until the day he died. John worked as a civil servant in Edinburgh, never had a house of his own but lived in rather depressing lodgings. He turned up out of the blue at my graduation. Towards the end of his life I visited him in hospital several times along with Aunt Liz (George's widow.)

**William Brooks Sen.** : Shoemaker in Bridge of Weir, Renfrewshire. He made leather boots and shoes by hand which he then delivered to the gentry in neighbouring Kilmalcolm. Died in his fifties (of diabetes, I think.)

**Agnes** : Married Tom Dewar and emigrated to Victoria, British Columbia. Apart from one trip 'home' in 1970 or thereabouts, she remained there all her life. No family. She wrote to my father regularly and then to me. Her letters were always rather sad and wistful and she herself appeared a bit prim and strait-laced.

**Mary Brooks Sen. (née Rennie)** Of Irish origin and very much the matriarch. She deeply resented the marriage of Tom and Elsie and was never spoken of at home. In fact, I didn't know I had a grandmother until I was about fifteen when she decided that her time was probably limited and a reconciliation might be sensible. She lived for many years with Nan, the youngest of the family.

**James** : Killed in World War I

Back Row ~ left to right

**Mary (Molly)** : Reckoned to be the family beauty. I think she married Jack Vertanis (of Maltese origin?) and had two children: Paul and Rennie. (I always imagined Molly died young but don't really know.)

**Thomas (Tom)** : Second oldest ~ Born May 29th 1883.

A very loyal son who helped support financially the younger members of the family. After an elementary education at Kilmalcolm Public School he passed entry exam for the Civil Service. As a young man he worked in London for some time. Served in the Camel Corps during World War I. Married Elsie Grant Hamilton of 'Ardeer', Stuart Street, Burnbank, Hamilton in 1922. (This caused a schism in the Brooks Family since Tom was supposed to remain a bachelor.) Two children: ~ William Norman, born 11.3.24 and Irene Elsie Hamilton, born 2.11.31. Tom Brooks ~ a gentleman in the true meaning of the word and the very best of fathers. Worked in the Education Department and later in the Department of Agriculture. A fine golfer in his younger days and then an enthusiastic bowler. He enjoyed walking throughout his life and was so fit, healthy and contented that everyone thought he would live to be ninety at least. Alas, prostate cancer spread to the spine and he died January 23rd 1961.

2nd. ?  
lieutenant

**William (Willie)** : Eldest of the family.

He carried on the shoemaking business in Bridge of Weir after the death of his father. Married Bessie and had one daughter ~ Harriet. I never met him but was told he was fond of the bottle!

**Elizabeth (Lizzie)** : Married Jackson James and had a daughter, Lucy. Lizzie inherited two stepsons, Eric and Jackson Jr. lived in Norwich latterly.

Temporary

George R. I.

George

by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India, &c.

To Our Trusty and well beloved Thomas Brooks Greeting:  
 We, reposing especial Trust and Confidence in your Loyalty, Courage, and good Conduct, do by these Presents Constitute and Appoint you to be an Officer in Our Land Forces from the Fifth day of February 1917. You are therefore carefully and diligently to discharge your Duty as such in the Rank of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant or in such higher Rank as We may from time to time hereafter be pleased to promote or appoint you to, of which a notification will be made in the London Gazette, and you are at all times to exercise and well discipline in Arms both the inferior Officers and Men serving under you, and use your best endeavours to keep them in good Order and Discipline. And We do hereby Command them to Obey you as their superior Officer, and you to observe and follow such Orders and Directions as from time to time you shall receive from Us, or any your superior Officer, according to the Rules and Discipline of War, in pursuance of the Trust hereby reposed in you.

Given at Our Court, at Saint James's, the Twentieth day of March 1917 in the Seventh Year of Our Reign.

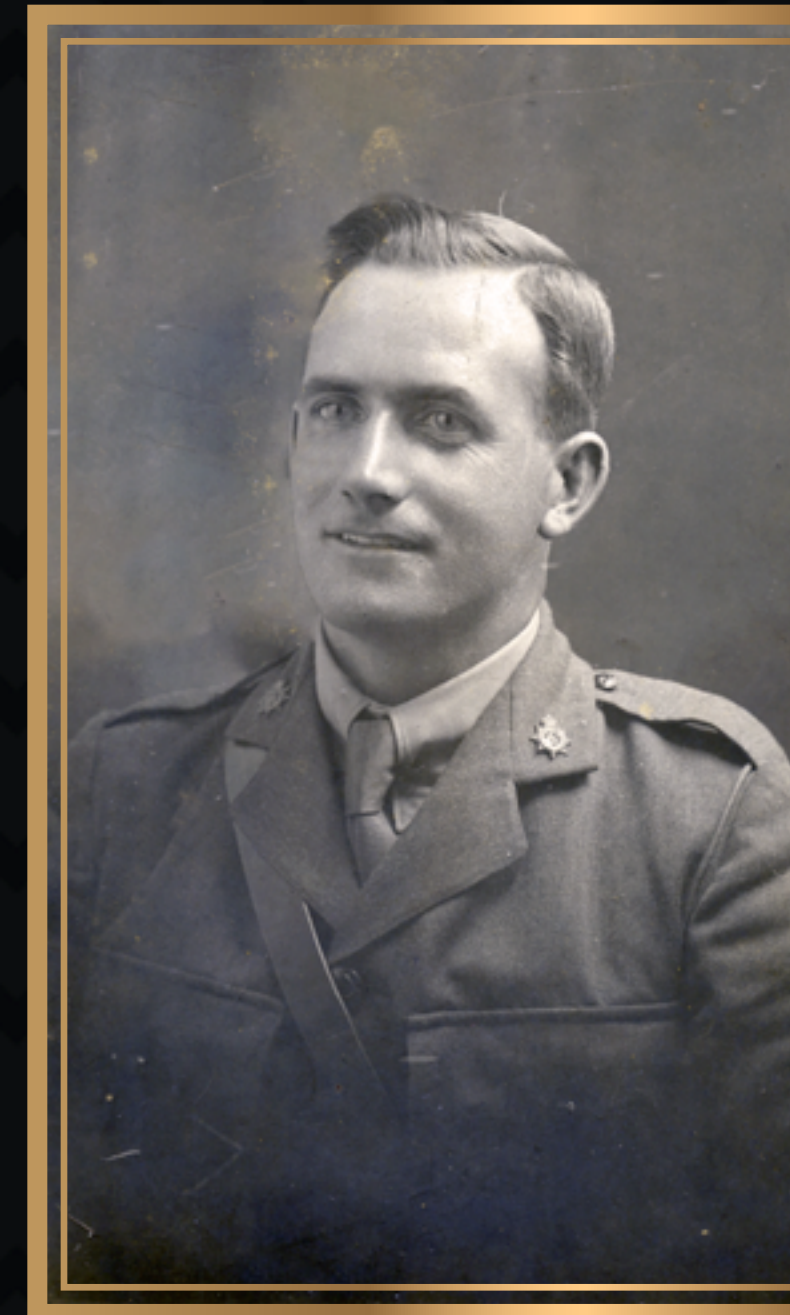
By His Majesty's Command.

Thomas Brooks,

2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant

Land Forces

*R. W. Wade*



# WORLD WAR I

Thomas Brooks was working as a civil servant when he was called up to the British army in 1916 in the Land Forces of the Army Service Corps.

He was assigned to the North African war theatre.

On Feb 5 1917, Thomas was appointed as a 2nd Lieutenant Officer in a commission confirmed on March 20, 1917.

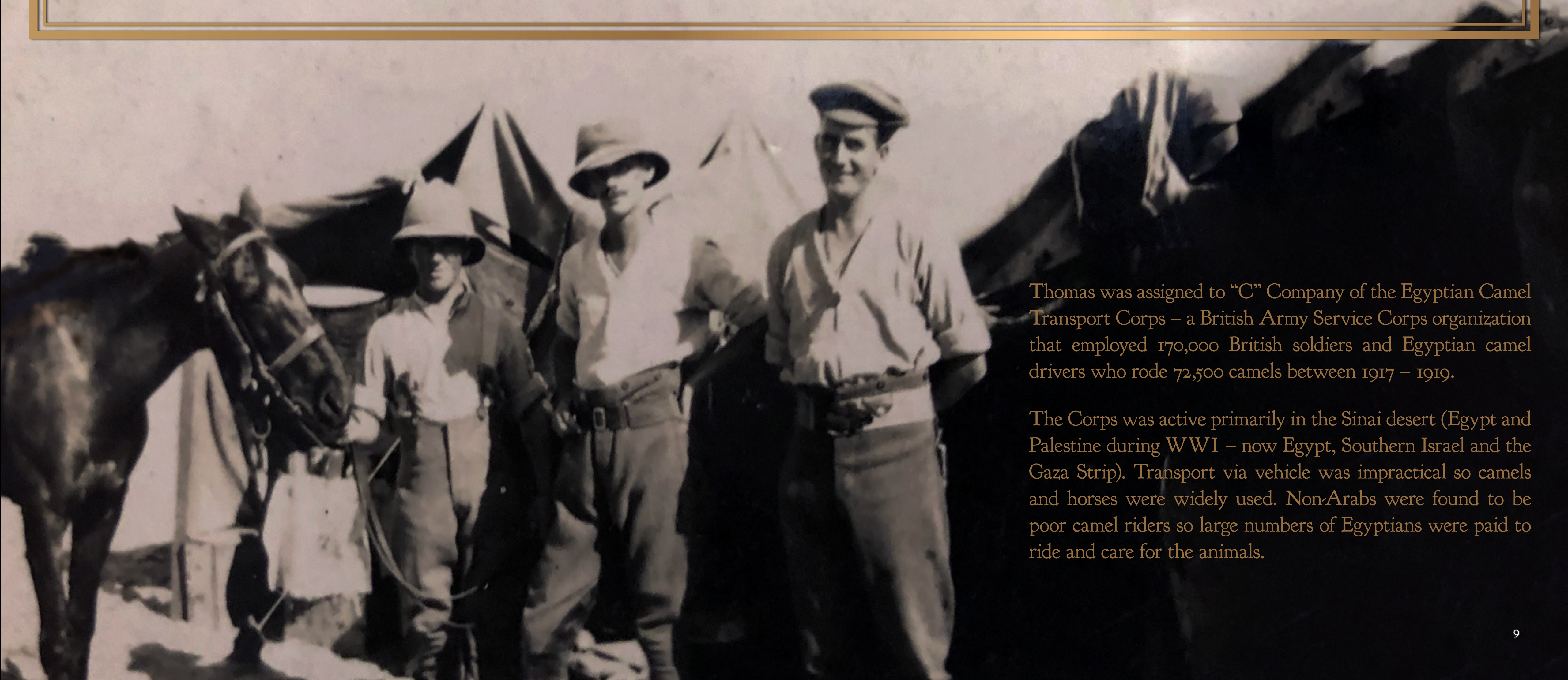
# WWI OFFICER'S REGALIA



Upon his commission, Thomas was issued standard Officer's regalia. Thomas' sword and dagger, pictured here, have remained in the Brooks family for over 100 years.



# THE NORTH AFRICAN THEATRE IN WWI



Thomas was assigned to “C” Company of the Egyptian Camel Transport Corps – a British Army Service Corps organization that employed 170,000 British soldiers and Egyptian camel drivers who rode 72,500 camels between 1917 – 1919.

The Corps was active primarily in the Sinai desert (Egypt and Palestine during WWI – now Egypt, Southern Israel and the Gaza Strip). Transport via vehicle was impractical so camels and horses were widely used. Non-Arabs were found to be poor camel riders so large numbers of Egyptians were paid to ride and care for the animals.

10 20 miles



# WWI ERA MAP OF NORTHERN EGYPT & PALESTINE

Shows locations featured in  
Thomas Brooks' photos



The images on the next 26 pages were discovered in this roll top desk at Thomas' Edinburgh house. This photo album was a gift from his close WWI friend, Capt. Hyatt.



The original photo album from the roll top desk.

Despite being over 100 years old, the pages and photos were well preserved.

To

T. Brooks

in pleasant recollection of  
many happy hours, many weary treks  
and many intimate chats  
while together in

"C" Company, Egyptian Camel Transport Corps,  
1917 - 1919. Egypt, Sinai, Palestine, Syria.

E. G. Hyatt  
Capt.

Rafa, Palestine  
May, 1919.

To

T. Brooks

In pleasant recollection  
of many happy hours,  
many weary treks and  
many intimate chats  
while together in "C"  
Company, Egyptian  
Camel Transport Corps.  
1917-1919. Egypt, Sinai,  
Palestine, Syria.

E.G. Hyatt  
Capt

Rafa, Palestine

May, 1919

## SHEPHEARD'S HOTEL

Built in 1841, Shepherd's Hotel was the leading hotel in Cairo and one of the most celebrated hotels in the world until it burned down in 1952 in the Cairo Fire that led to the Egyptian Revolution. Started by Samuel Shepherd, "an undistinguished apprentice pastry cook", Shepherd was a successful entrepreneur who once followed soldiers to Crimea to secure a large hotel payment. Frequented by the Allies in WWI, the hotel created the "Suffering Bastard" cocktail as a joke due to the legendary wait for drinks at the "Long Bar". The "Long" also related to the waiting time. Part of "The English Patient" was set here but the scenes were actually filmed in Venice.

## MAHMOUDIYAH CANAL

The Mahmoudiyah Canal moves fresh water, food etc. along a 45 mile (70 km) length from the port of Mahmoudiyah on the River Nile west to Alexandria and then to the Mediterranean Sea. The canal was ordered built by Viceroy Mohammed Ali and finished in 1820.

The photo mentions the Suez Canal being in the background – but that’s unlikely as it’s >100 miles (150 km) to the east. If the photo was taken near Mahmoudiyah, it’s likely to be the River Nile in the background.

# EL FERDAN (SUEZ CANAL) RAILWAY STATION

This train station, located by the El Ferdan Railway Bridge, was built at the same time as the El Ferdan bridge (over the Suez Canal) in 1918. As it was a hindrance to shipping it was dismantled a few years later. Rebuilt in 1942 as a swing bridge it was damaged by a steamship and removed again. Built once again in 1954 as a double swing bridge it was destroyed in the Anglo-French-Israeli War of 1956 (known as the Suez Crisis in the UK). Rebuilt in 1963 it was destroyed in the Six Day War of 1967. Finally rebuilt in 2001 it is now the longest double swing bridge in the world (1,100 feet, 340 meters).





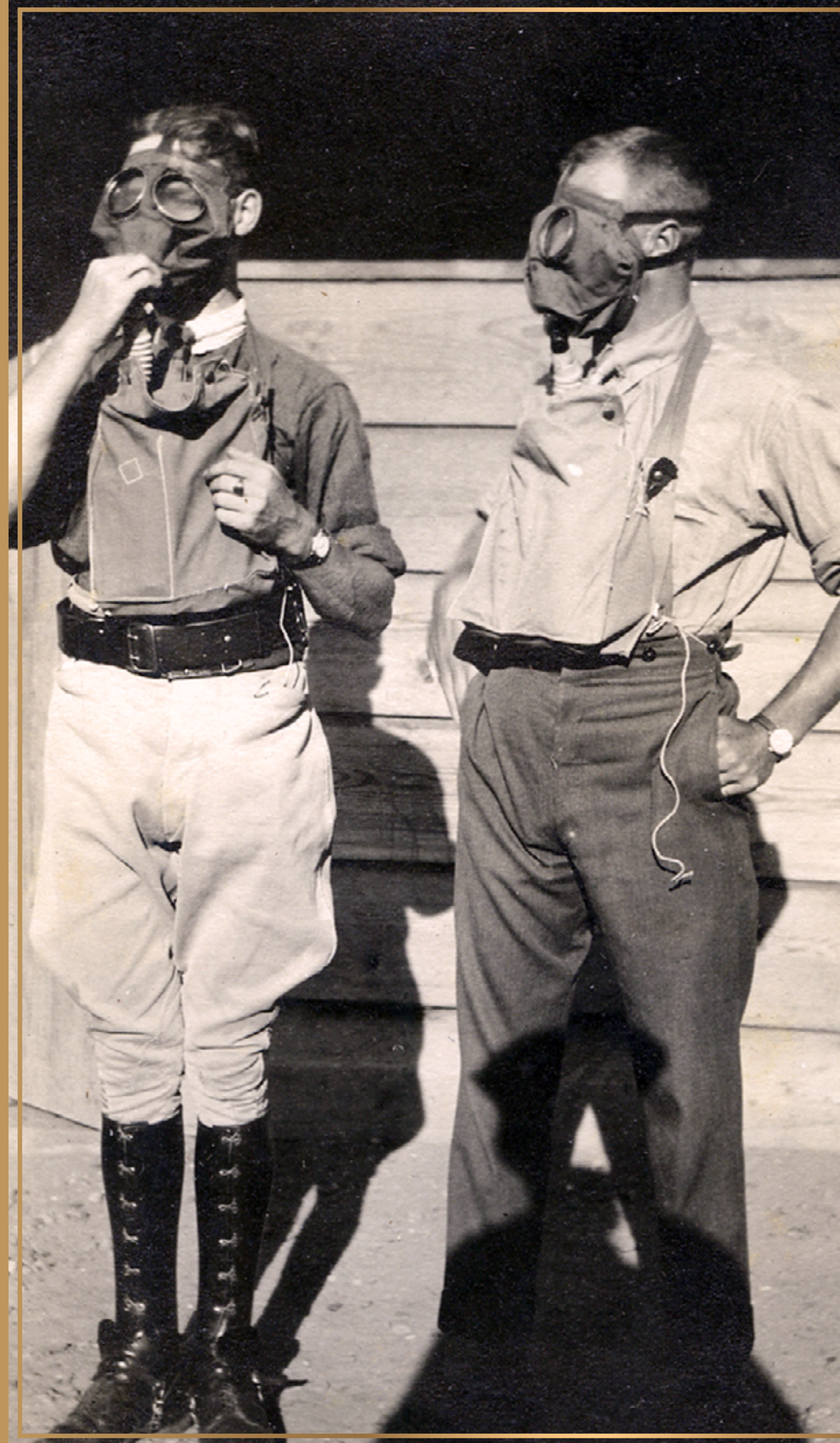
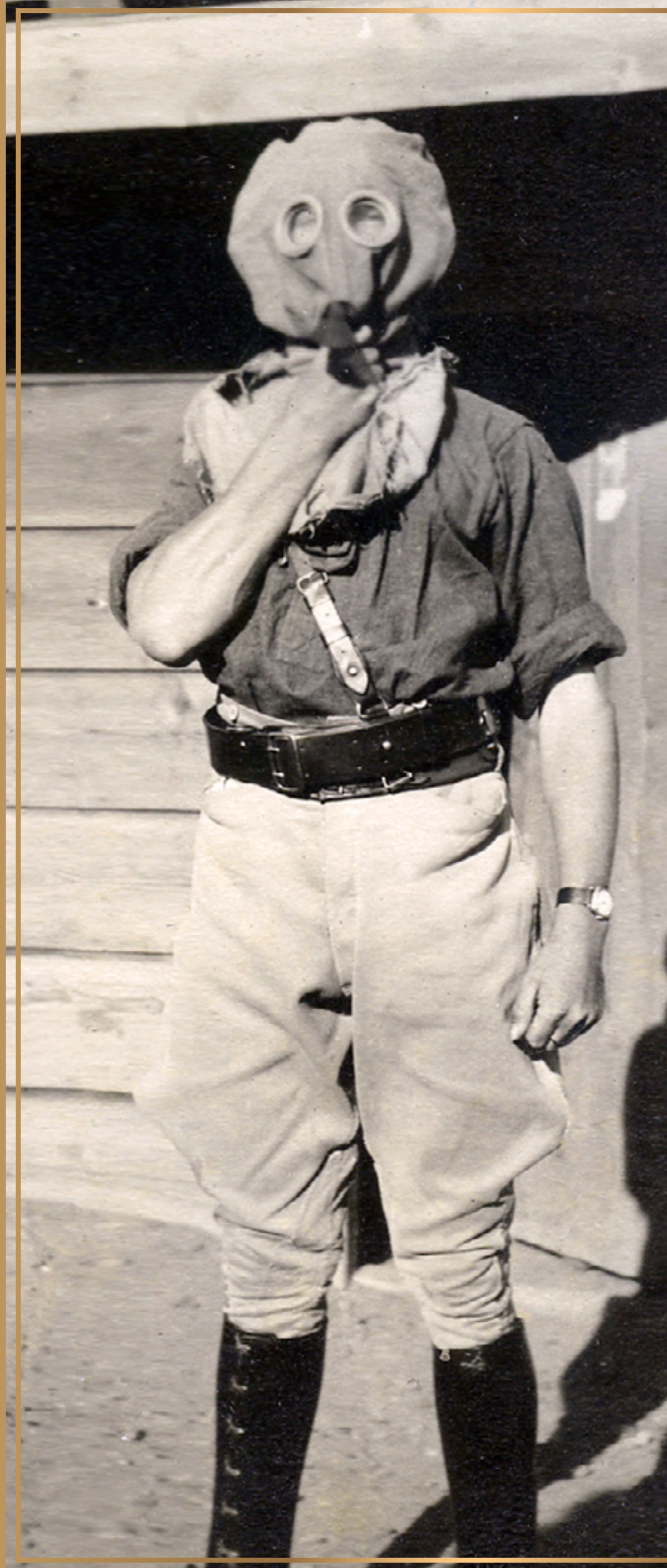
## NEAR SUEZ PORT

Suez Port is an Egyptian Port located at the southern end of the Suez Canal. It now comprises an enlarged area including additional smaller product and petroleum shipping/receiving ports.



"GAS OVER"  
BOX RESPIRATOR  
"CAM" MILNE

Poison gas (Chlorine) was first used in WWI at Ypres, Belgium in 1915. Initially, the gas was released directly from the storage cylinders but the winds could change. Therefore, by 1916, artillery shells were used for direct and long distance delivery of the poison gas. As a terror weapon, phosgene (the most used gas) was extremely effective. Initial counter-measures included face masks of fabric impregnated with Bicarbonate of Soda. By 1918, charcoal filter gas masks were the standard. Treatment for the terrible effects of poison gas was simply bed rest and oxygen. There are no dates on these 2 photos which seem to show gas masks from the latter part of WWI.



GAS SCHOOL  
TEL EL KEBIR  
REG AINSWORTH

Tel el Kebir literally means "the great mound". The nearby city "On", now Matariyah, is mentioned in Genesis 41:45 and is reputed to be the first village where cotton was grown. The town is also famous for the battle of Tel el Kebir (1882) where the British prevailed over the Egyptians. During WWI, Tel el Kebir was a major training centre for Australian troops who lived in a small tent city 6-miles long. A military railway was constructed to transport the soldiers to troop ships, in 1916, to Alexandria for embarkation to Gallipoli (now in Turkey). Tel el Kebir was initially described by an Australian soldier in 1916 as "a very dirty little place with a few dirty shops in it".

# EGYPTIAN LABOUR CORPS, ROMANI AUGUST 1916

The Egyptian Labour Corps (ELC) was a group of Egyptian labourers who worked for the British Army in Egypt during the Sinai and Palestine Campaign. At the beginning of WWI, Britain set up the Protectorate of Egypt and imposed martial law, whilst giving a solemn pledge to defend Egypt and not call on the Egyptian people to aid in the conflict. However, due to need, this promise was quickly broken. The ELC was formed in 1916. By 1917 there were 55,000 labourers in service. In that year a British officer mentioned in a dispatch to London "the great value and importance of their service, their steadiness under fire and devotion to duty under difficult conditions".

**TURKISH  
PRISONERS  
AFTER THE  
BATTLE OF  
ROMANI  
AUGUST 1916**

The Battle of Romani was the last ground attack on the Suez Canal in WWI and was fought in early August 1916. The British and Anzac troops prevailed over the joint German-Ottoman (Turkish) forces which had previously marched across the Sinai desert. This was the first British victory of WWI against the Ottoman Empire and ensured protection of the ports at the north end of the Suez Canal. The Anzac mounted troops pursued the Ottomans until August 12 during which time thousands of prisoners were taken. This was a turning point in WWI after the British Allies had been defeated at Katia three months earlier.

**TURKISH  
OFFICER  
PRISONERS,  
ROMANI  
AUGUST 1916**

In early 1916, the German-Austrian-Ottoman troops had control of the Romani area. Through 1916, the British-Australian-NZ troops were building major infrastructure that, critically, included railways and water pipelines. These infrastructure investments enabled the Allies a victory at the Battle of Romani. It's estimated the Ottoman casualties were ~ 9,000 with 1,250 being buried right after the battle. Additionally, ~4,000 officers and troops were taken prisoner. The Allies casualties were much lower.

# CAMEL CONVOY

## KILO 47 TO KATI'A

### SEPTEMBER 1916

Thomas Brooks served in the British Army's Egyptian Camel Transport Corps (known as the CTC, Camel Corps or Camel Transport) which primarily consisted of Egyptian camel drivers who supported the British Army during the WWI's Sinai and Palestine Campaigns. From Dec 1915 through 1919, the work done by the 170,000 men of the Corps helped British war operations in the Sinai desert, Palestine and Syria. The CTC transported supplies to the troops in extreme geographic and weather conditions by camel and by horse. The known statistics are: 222 killed, 1,458 wounded, 4,010 died of disease, 78 went missing and 66 were taken prisoner.



MASCOTS "B"  
COMPANY  
EGYPTIAN CAMEL  
TRANSPORT  
CORPS

Within a year of being formed, the CTC consisted of 35,000 camels organized in 2,000 strong camel companies. Ultimately, 72,500 camels were employed. The Egyptians were very familiar with camel care as the Allied officers and NCOs were often sent to the hospital with camel bites! As the Allies moved forward, all wheeled vehicles had to be left at Kantara so only the CTC accompanied the patrols across the Sinai desert. A camel could carry 2 soldiers (or bodies) or 140 liters of water on trips of up to 25 miles. Planes had to be transported too after being broken down into components.



# GYMKANA CAMEL CORPS CAIRO

Camel racing has always been a popular sport in North Africa and globally. Camels can run at speeds up to 40 mph (65 kph) for short sprints. They can also run at 25 mph (40 kph) for an hour. Until recently child jockeys (under 15 years old) were popular due to their light weight but that practice is finally being discontinued.

Another WWI desert sport was camel wrestling (where 2 males fight over a female in heat). It was popular around the WWI period and banned later in the 1920s due to animal cruelty.





GYMKANA  
CAMEL CORPS  
CAMEL BETTING  
CAIRO

Betting on camel racing has always been part of the sport as seen here. Today, Australia hosts the 2 highest prize purse camel races globally. Their major Queensland race pays a prize purse of AUS\$ 500,000 (US\$ 350,000).



## NEAR KANTARA

Kantara literally means “the bridge”. It is an Egyptian city of two parts – one on each side of the Suez Canal connected by a high level fixed road bridge. Beginning in January 1916 a railway (and water pipeline) were constructed by the British Royal Engineers from Kantara to Romani and eastwards through the Sinai desert to El Arish and Rafa on the border of the Ottoman Empire (originally Palestine – now Israel). In WWI, Kantara was the site of the British HQ No 3 Section, Canal Defence Forces which protected the Suez Canal in the Sinai Campaign of 1916.



# KATIA

## SEPTEMBER 1916

An Ottoman force made a surprise attack on the Allies position at Katia in the Sinai desert on the 23rd of April 1916 during the Defence of the Suez Canal Campaign. It was St George's Day, a Christian Feast day in Britain, so the Allied troops were relaxed. British Empire reinforcements were sent from Romani and surrounding areas but they arrived too late to be effective. The huge success of the Ottoman Army's operations in this battle were due to their infantry's determination to march across the Sinai desert quickly and their unusually effective battle tactics.

# OUR WOUNDED GOING TO BASE ROMANI! AUGUST 1916

Between August 4 - 9, 1916 the Anzac troops' "field ambulances" (camels) carried the wounded to the trains for evacuation from Romani after the August 3 - 5 battle. There were 1,314 wounded including 180 Ottoman soldiers. Transportation for the British troops only started on the evening of August 6 as wounded prisoners of war took priority! Open train trucks with no straw or cushioning were used. "Every bump in our 'spring less' journey was extremely painful", a British medic wrote describing the 5 hour, 25 mile journey.



# THE MOSQUE EL ARISH DECEMBER 1916

El Arish (literally meaning “palm huts”) is the capital and largest city of the North Sinai desert area lying on the Mediterranean Coast and bordering the present day Gaza Strip & Israel. It’s located by a big wadi (a valley that’s dry until flash floods arrive from the surrounding areas). Today, it’s a resort town with luscious blue water and white sand. In WWI the British bombed and destroyed a fort built by the Ottoman Empire in 1560. Subsequently a hospital was built to treat the British casualties from the Palestine Campaign.



# ELC (EGYPTIAN LABOUR CORPS) BATHING AT EL ARISH 1917

The ELC labourers worked on construction of railways, roads and water pipelines as well as assisting in “horse and camel hospitals”. Once, they laid ~100 miles of railway, road and pipelines in 3 weeks to aid the defence of the Suez Canal. They also worked on the Mediterranean Sea coast & travelled to Aqaba (the only coastal city in Jordan) to assist Lawrence (of Arabia) who was working for the Arab Revolt (against the Ottoman Empire) in 1916. Lawrence was a multi-lingual archaeologist, army officer, diplomat and renowned writer throughout WWI.



TAKING THE  
"BHALASS"  
TO THE  
"BIR" FOR  
"MOYAH"  
EL ARISH  
MARCH 1917



“Taking the water jug to the well for water”. In the hot climate of the Sinai desert and Palestine, access to water was critical. One of the strong efforts made by the British was to have very effective supply lines and constant access to water. Clearly, the tens of thousands of Egyptian labourers in Thomas Brooks’ Camel Transport Corps were instrumental in supporting this effort. Besides the Egyptian Camel Transport Corps there was a parallel (smaller) Imperial Camel Corps that also started in (Dec) 1916. It ultimately consisted of 3,400 men and 3,900 camels.

## BLACK & WHITE FISHING AT MAHOMDIYAH

Mahomdiyah (present day Muhammadiyyah) is part of Damietta, a Mediterranean Sea port city with a stable attractive climate, many mosques and a thriving furniture industry. Its known history starts in the 6th century. The area featured strongly in the Crusades in the 12th-13th centuries. When the British army occupied Egypt at the beginning of the 20th century, Damietta was taking the first steps towards modernization. The outbreak of WWI slowed this growth which picked up rapidly after WWI.



"LET GO"  
KHAN JUNIS  
JULY 1917



In the Sinai desert and surrounding areas Desert Goats (also called Mountain Goats) are preferred by farmers over all other livestock (except sheep) due to their adaptability to the environment. They primarily provide milk and meat.

THE BELLE OF  
KHAN YUNIS  
JUNE 1917



Khan Yunis has been a famous “way station” town for centuries. In WWI it was located in Palestine and is now in the Gaza Strip ~3 miles east of the Mediterranean sea and 15 miles from Gaza itself. The British forces lost 2 battles in April 1917 but the town of Khan Yunis was not taken by the Ottoman troops.

FELLAHEEN  
KHAN YUNIS  
JULY 1917

“Fellaheen” (plural) are “farmers” or “agricultural labourers”. They are described as “the true Egyptians” as there is a continuity of beliefs and lifestyle that go back to the time of Ancient Egypt. When the Arabs conquered Egypt they called the indigenous people (Copts) Fellaheen due to their agricultural work. This contrasted with the Jews who were known as traders and the Greeks who were then the ruling class. Over time, Fellaheen came to mean “indigenous Egyptians”.

**ABDU DAIM WITH  
"BULLER" WADI  
DEIR EL BELAH  
MAY 1917**

Deir el Belah ("Monastery of the Date Palm") is a Palestinian city now located in the middle of the Gaza Strip. It has a rich history dating back to the late Bronze Age. A Christian Monastery was built here in the 4th century. Palestine's revered Saint George (Mar Jirjis) or al-Khidr (in Arabic), is traditionally believed to be buried in the Mosque. Deir el Belah was captured by the British Army following the Allies capture of Khan Yunis on 28 February 1917. By April 1917 an aerodrome had been built to support attacks against the Ottoman-held areas of Gaza & Beer-Sheba (a large city in the Negev desert which is now in Israel).

# POST OFFICE PORT SAID

1917

Port Said is a city along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea at the northern end of the Suez Canal. It was established in 1859 during the building of the canal (which opened in 1869). The greater area now comprises ~1 million residents extending to both the African and Asian sides of the Suez Canal. The only other city to span 2 continents is Istanbul which spans Europe and Asia. Traditionally, Port Said has always been a cosmopolitan and religiously tolerant city. The Post Office in the picture reminds us of a Brooks family story. Thomas Brooks wrote at length to his parents, without fail, every 2 weeks throughout WWI. Sadly, we now have only a single letter that Thomas Brooks wrote (much later in 1960).



# LAST GLIMPSES OF PORT SAID

## — GOOD-BYE, EGYPT

Today, Port Said is a large economic presence on the Mediterranean Sea due to fishing, chemical and food production and, of course, the movement of fine Egyptian cotton, rice, oil and countless other commodities through the Suez Canal. It has the world's first building made of reinforced concrete – the Port Said Lighthouse – which is the only remaining building from the founding of the city. It was completed a week before the Suez Canal opened and is no longer on the coastline due to silt build up. The grand tall Lighthouse tower is now located in the middle of the Port Said city.

# ELSIE HAMILTON

Elsie Hamilton was born on Aug 31, 1896 in Burnbank, 12 miles southeast of Glasgow in a small village that was later incorporated into the larger town of Hamilton.

Elsie's father raised 9 children on a miner's wage. Their house was called "Ardeer" (named after a town on the west coast of Scotland), on Stewart Street where other relatives also lived.

Standing in front of her childhood home, Elsie (Hamilton) Brooks is in the white blouse on the right-side.



# ELSIE HAMILTON

## SCHOOL TEACHER



Elsie graduated as a primary school teacher at age 20. She taught a class of 50 at the nearby Greenbank school.



These class photos show her 1920 class students with the girls and boys separated for the pictures.

After raising her 2 children, Elsie went back to teaching in the 1950s responding to a national teacher shortage. She said the smaller class from the 1950s was much more difficult to handle than her huge 1920s classes.

*Glasgow Provincial Committee for the  
Training of Teachers.*

### Training Record

*(Chapter III. of the Regulations for the Preliminary Education, etc.,  
of Teachers.)*

It is hereby Certified that

*Elsie Grant Hamilton*  
completed at Midsummer 1916 an approved Course of Training  
extending over *Two* Years.

*Her* Standard of Proficiency in the various Subjects of the  
Course is as follows:

I. Professional Subjects.		II. General Subjects.	
Subject.	Standard of Proficiency.	Subject.	Standard of Proficiency.
1. School and Personal Hygiene (including Physical Exercises), ... ..	<b>GOOD</b>	1. English, ... ..	<b>GOOD MINUS</b>
2. Principles of Teaching, including:—	<b>GOOD PLUS</b>	2. History, ... ..	<b>GOOD PLUS</b>
(a) Psychology, ... ..	<b>VERY GOOD</b>	3. Mathematics (including Arithmetic), ... ..	<b>VERY GOOD</b>
(b) Ethics, ... ..	<b>GOOD MINUS</b>	4. Nature Study, ... ..	<b>GOOD PLUS</b>
(c) Logic, ... ..		5. Geography, ... ..	
3. Primary School Curriculum:—		6. ....	
(a) Methods of Teaching, including Discipline and Organisation, ... ..	<b>GOOD</b>	7. ....	
(b) Practical Skill in Teaching, ... ..	<b>GOOD</b>	8. ....	
4. Theory and History of Education, ... ..	<b>GOOD</b>	9. ....	
5. Phonetics and Voice Training (Speaking and Reading), ... ..	<b>GOOD</b>	10. ....	

*Religious Knowledge.*

Standard of Proficiency as determined by relative Church Authority **—VERY GOOD—**

General Estimate of Capacity as a Teacher **—Promising—**

*L. Macleod*

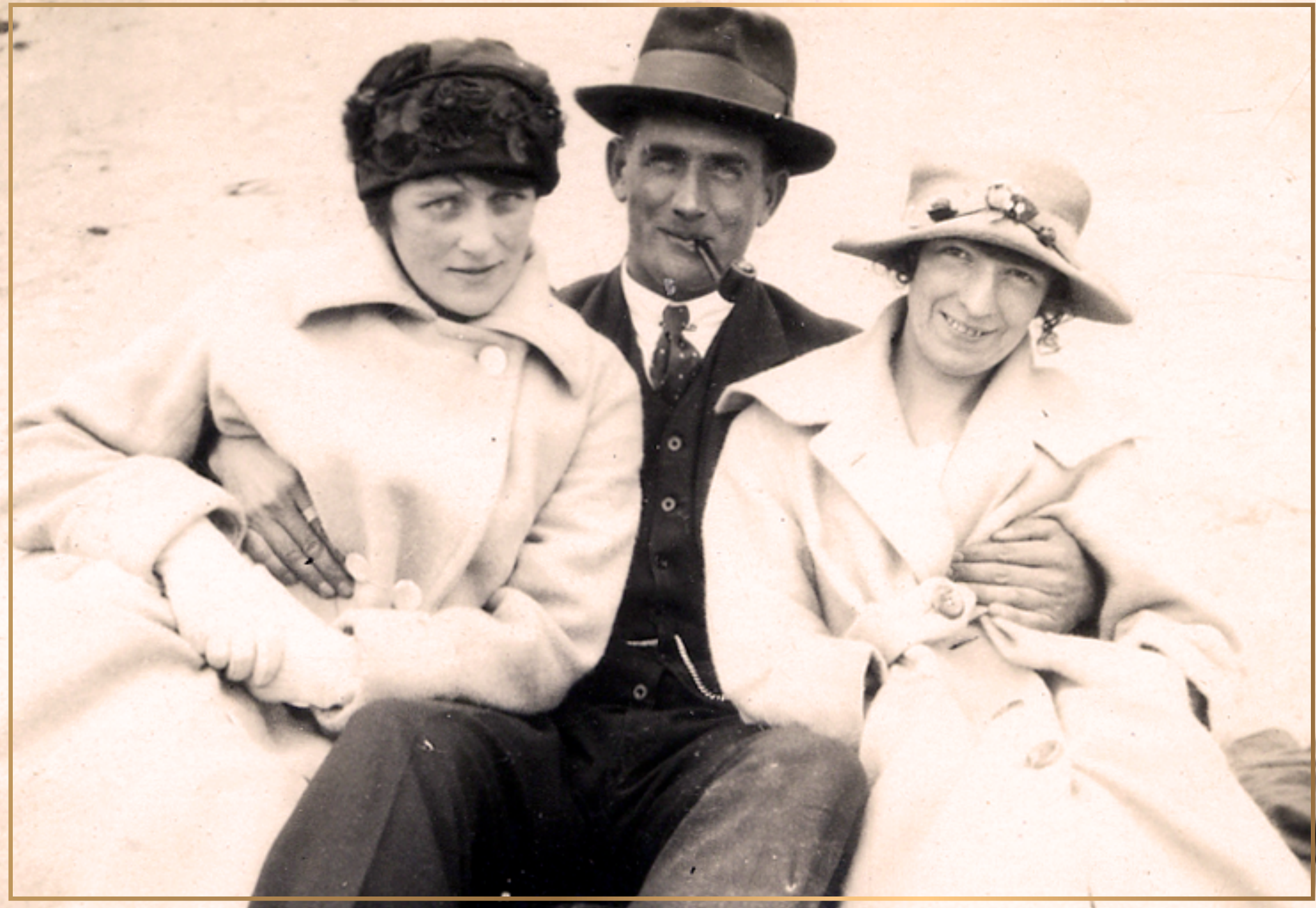
Director of Studies.

JUNE 29 1916

650—17/5/16.



# COURTSHIP 1920 - 1922



Thomas was older than Elsie and a popular single man.

From the day he met Elsie, Thomas was completely smitten and remained so for the rest of his days.



# THOMAS & ELSIE'S WEDDING - JULY 1922



EDINBURGH, SATURDAY, JULY 15, 1922.

## Marriages.

BROOKS—HAMILTON.—At "Ardeer," Burnbank, on 11th July, by the Reverend John Douglas, M.A., West U.F. Church, Hamilton, THOMAS BROOKS, second son of the late William Brooks, Bridge of Weir, to ELSIE GRANT, youngest daughter of the late JAMES HAMILTON, "Ardeer," Burnbank.

When Thomas' father died in 1912, his family decided that Thomas should remain single in order to look after his mother.

A loyal, popular and generous man, Thomas courted and married Elsie on July 11, 1922 at her family's "Ardeer House" in Burnbank.

In the group photo on the following page, everyone is a relative of Elsie except for the minister and the best man. Thomas Brooks had no relatives at his wedding. The family schism between Thomas and his family was, sadly, never resolved.



# THOMAS & ELSIE'S WEDDING



Front Row left to right

I think the little girl must be Barbara Duke, big sister to Baby George.

Aunt Mary, a formidable lady who remained a spinster but was, nevertheless, the 'mother superior' of the Hamilton clan. She continued to live in the family house ~ 'Ardeer', Stewart Street, Burnbank, Hamilton, Lanarkshire. A tailoress to trade, she was in charge of numerous apprentices so knew how to be bossy.

Elsie Grant Hamilton, the bride

Aunt Barbara's daughter, also Barbara, the bridesmaid who was actually older than her aunt.

Aunt Barbara, easily the most generous of the family. She and Uncle George kept a very popular baker's shop. The bakehouse in the adjoining yard was Paradise for a child with a sweet tooth! We never went short of sweet things during the period of harsh rationing in the Second World War.

Aunt Susan with George on her lap. She was my favourite aunt, although your Dad thought her too prim and proper.

Libby, Aunt Barbara's second daughter. She married Bob Massey and had one son, Kenneth. Unfortunately, at the age of ten months, he contracted meningitis which rendered him mentally handicapped.

Back Row left to right

best man (name unknown), Thomas Brooks, Aunt Lizzie and Uncle Frank (Stobson) They lived in Motherwell, Lanarkshire where Uncle Frank worked in the steel works and, as a hobby, grew the most succulent tomatoes I have ever tasted. Aunt Jeanie, the eldest of the family, I think. She died when I was about five or six (the first dead body I ever saw!) Not sure about the next gentleman but it could be Uncle Willie, (Duke) husband of Aunt Susan who has a youthful Cousin George on her lap, the minister, Uncle George, the baker, wife of Aunt Barbara, third from the right in the front row and father of young Barbara, Libby and Agnes, the last-named not yet born. She was about the same age as your dad and his favourite cousin. Just in front of Uncle George is Uncle Dim, the only son of the Hamilton clan and an ambitious business man, He worked for a Jewish firm in the city of Glasgow but died in early middle age. Next to him is his wife Dorothy, known as Dolly. She was English ~ horror of horrors! ~ thought to be flighty and extravagant and never really fitted in.

# JANE BROOKS THE FAVOURED SISTER



In this October 1916 hospital photo, Jane is shown in the middle of the photo with the dark hat.

The lady on the left of the photo, with the hat, is Thomas' mother, Mary McKay.



Of his ten siblings, Thomas' favourite sibling was his much younger sister, Jane, shown here in July 1916 with her husband Walter Zumstein.



Jane and Walter went to Wartook in the Australian bush after WWI and lived on a game reserve. The little girl in this 1927 photo is their daughter, Jean, whose daughter, January, has offered considerable assistance in the preparation of this book.

Jane returned to her Scottish homeland after spending 49 years abroad.

# JAMES BROOKS THOMAS' CLOSEST BROTHER



This photo of James was kept by his twin sister Jane, for the 55 years after his death.

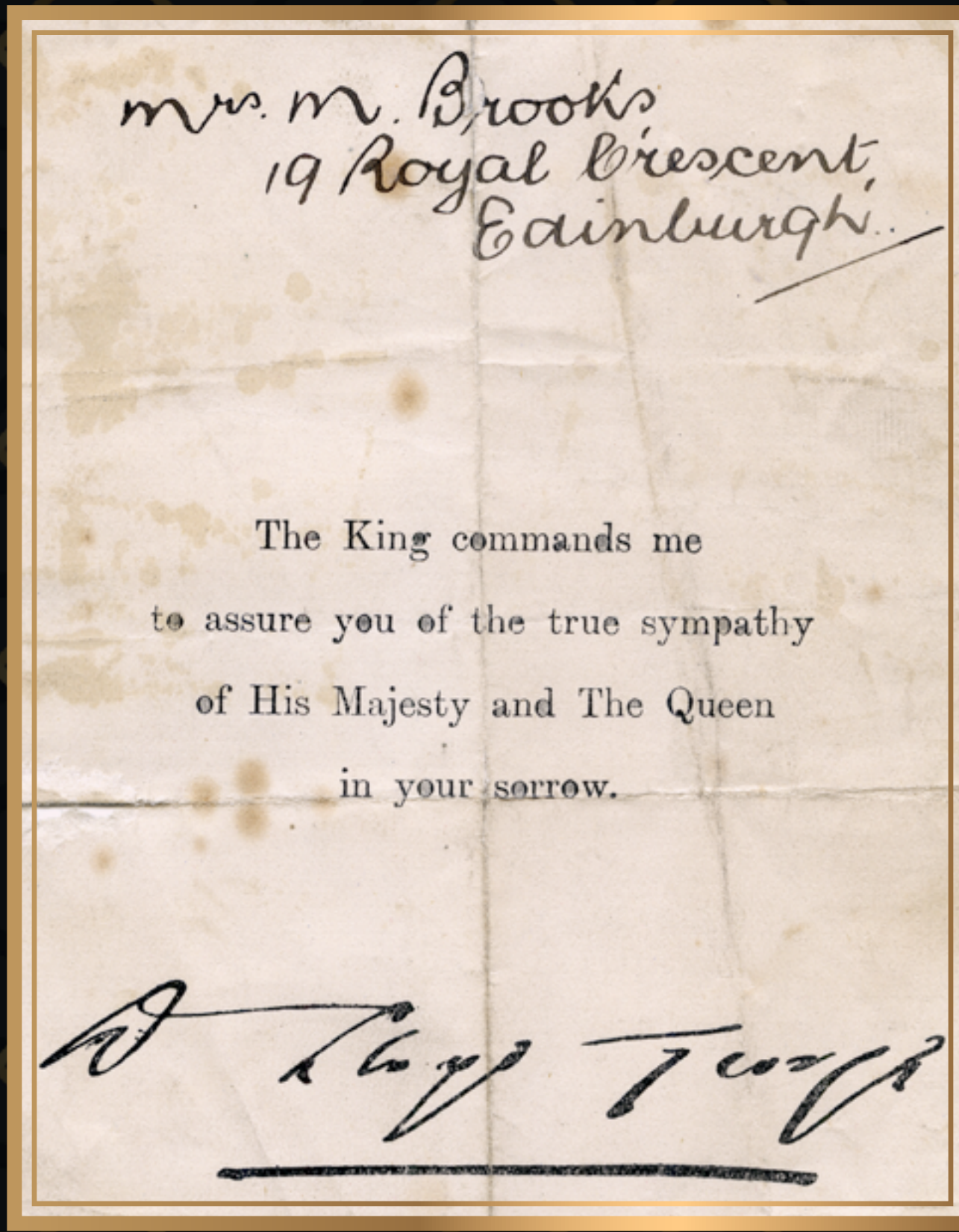


Jane and James were twins born in July, 1896 making them 13 years younger than Thomas (and the same age as his future wife, Elsie).

James served in WWI in France. He fought at the Battle of the Somme where his brother, John (pictured in the photo on the right), saw him briefly.

John did not see his brother again before he died in that battle.

James had just turned 20 years old.



John Brooks

# LATER YEARS

After marrying, Thomas and Elsie lived on the magnificent Royal Crescent in the New Town of Edinburgh before buying a house in the suburban Blackhall section in 1926. They lived here for the rest of their lives.

This house remained in the Brooks family into the 21st century.





# FAMILY LIFE



**THE SCOTSMAN**

EDINBURGH, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 1924.

**Births.**

**BROOKS.**—At nursing home, 14 Brandon Street, Edinburgh, on 11th inst., to **ELSIE GRANT** (née Hamilton), wife of **THOMAS BROOKS**, 19 Royal Crescent, a son.



Thomas enjoyed a long career as a “senior executive” in the Scottish Education Dept.

Thomas and Elsie were blessed with 2 children: Norman (b. 1924) and Irene (b. 1931).

# DAUGHTER IRENE BROOKS



"Marylea",  
Crosshill,  
Maybole,  
Ayrshire

21st November, 1960

Miss Irene Brooks was an Assistant teacher of Primary V pupils for about two years in Ayr, Braehead Primary School when I was headmaster.

When she joined my Staff as a young and only slightly experienced teacher I soon realised that here was a young lady of exceptional promise and rare ability and it is a great pleasure for me to record that she more than confirmed my first impressions.

Her outstanding qualities were:-

1. Well directed energy
2. good understanding of the needs of young pupils
3. excellent presentation of the subject matter of her lessons
- 3a. blackboard work that I have never seen surpassed
4. beautiful records of work
5. neat and tidy written work in all subjects by her pupils
- and 6. a warm sympathetic attitude as the foundation of all her teaching.

I rarely indulge in the use of superlatives in characterising the performance of teachers but no one I have ever known has qualified for their use more than Miss Brooks.

I only hope that in her future appointments her services will be utilised where they are of most use to the community. That, in my opinion, would be where most pupils proceed to courses of Senior Secondary Education.

John McGarvie, M.A.

Retired Headmaster.

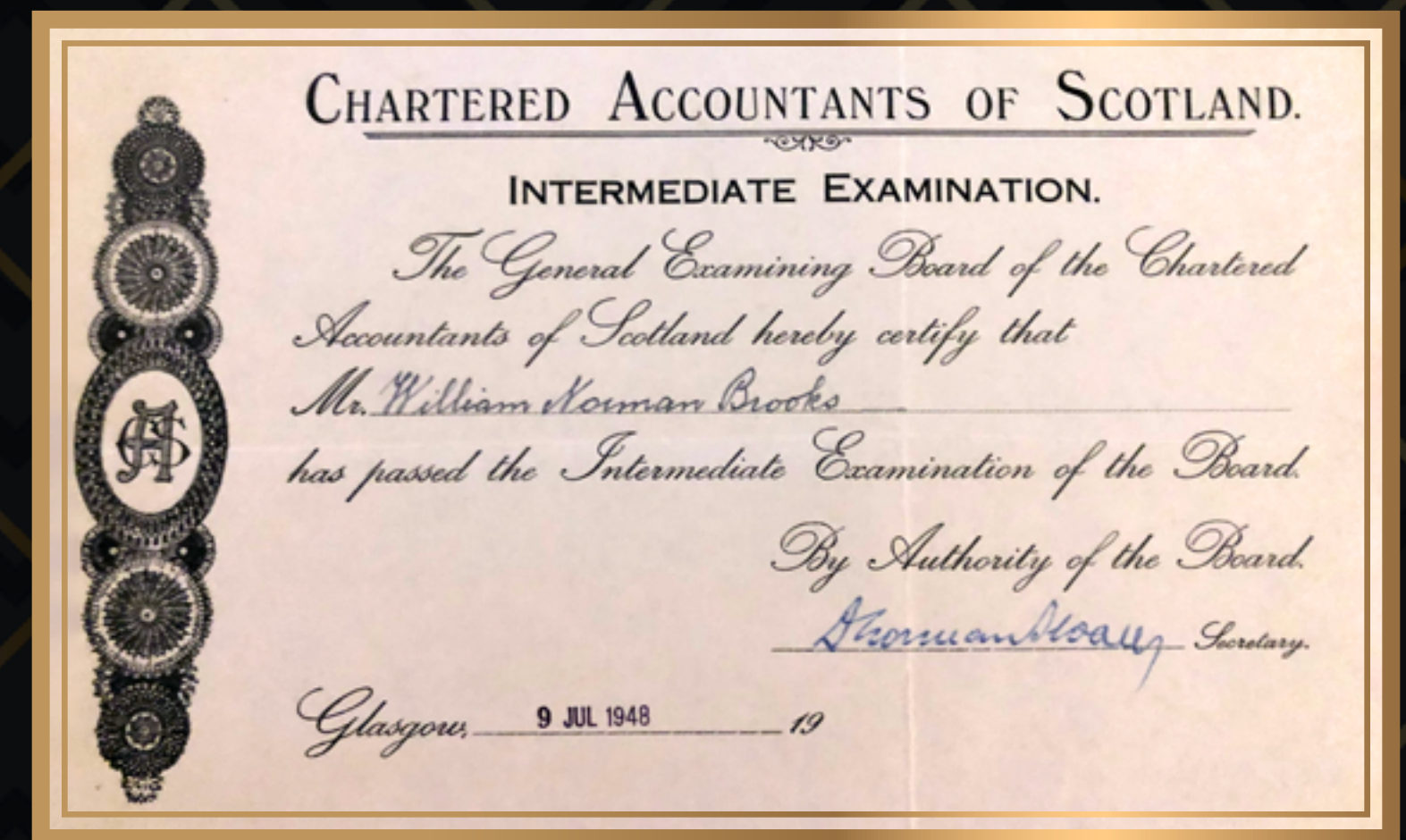
Irene taught primary school children (of the same age range as Elsie) in Ayr, Scotland, for many years. Later, she returned to the Brooks family house in Blackhall to care for Elsie and taught in some of the rougher areas of Edinburgh. The amazingly clear block printing on the prior pages was Irene's standard handwriting developed over a lifetime of writing on blackboards. Irene did not marry and had no children of her own. Much of the information in this book comes from her carefully stored photos and her wonderfully written notes.



# SON NORMAN BROOKS

Norman was a navigator in the RAF in WWII. He subsequently became a Chartered Accountant, and worked in London throughout his career. Norman married an American in London in March 1953. His family lived south of London from the 1950s through the 2000s. They had three children, five grandchildren, four step-grandchildren and, so far, no great grandchildren.

Norman's children all emigrated to the greater New York area where his 2 sons settled with their families and still remain. His daughter initially moved to Connecticut before settling in Cape Town. His five grandchildren are all settled in major UK/USA cities.



# ELLEN LI HOLCH

Ellen Li Holch was born in New York City in 1925. One of 5 children, she was raised in the USA, UK and Denmark through her college graduation (Chemistry). In her mid-twenties she took a temporary break from her Chemistry Lab position (in Connecticut). Ellen went to live in a boarding house off the Portobello Road in West London. Norman Brooks was also living there. They bonded very quickly over the house's group dinners and their walks after dinner.



# NORMAN & ELLEN'S WEDDING - MARCH 1953



EDINBURGH, TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 1953.

## MARRIAGE

**BROOKS—HOLCH.**—At Marylebone Presbyterian Church, LONDON, on 7th March 1953, by the Rev. Leslie D. Weatherhead, M.A., Ph.D., D.D., WILLIAM NORMAN BROOKS, son of Mr and Mrs T. Brooks, 3 House o' Hill Terrace, Edinburgh, to ELLEN LI HOLCH, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs N. F. Holch, of Rye, New York.

Thursday, March 12, 1953

### Miss Ellen Li Holch Bride Of William Norman Brooks

The marriage is announced of Miss Ellen Li Holch, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Neils F. Holch of 60 Mendota Avenue to William Norman Brooks, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Brooks of Edinburgh, Scotland at the Marylebone Presbyterian Church, London on March 7. Dr. Leslie Weatherhead officiated.

Miss Mary Parker of Upper Beeding, Sussex, attended the bride. Erik Olsen of Bergen, Norway, was best man. The ushers were Hunter Holch and Richard Holch, brothers of the bride; Hamish Hamilton, cousin of the bridegroom, and Alexander Miller.

Mrs. Brooks is a graduate of Smith College. The bridegroom attended the University of Edinburgh after serving with the Royal Air Force. After a wedding trip, the couple will reside in Cheam, Surrey.



Mrs. William N. Brooks

D 663258

CERTIFIED COPY of an ENTRY OF MARRIAGE Pursuant to the Marriage Act, 1949.

M. Cert. A.P.

Registration District *St. Marylebone*

1953 Marriage solemnized at *Marylebone Presbyterian Church, George Street, W.1.* in the District of *St. Marylebone* in the County of *London*

No.	When married.	Name and surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or profession.	Residence at the time of marriage.	Father's name and surname.	Rank or profession of father.
826	7th March 1953	William Norman Brooks	28	Bachelor	Bachelard Accountant	38 Oxford Garden, W.10.	Thomas Brooks	Retired Executive Officer (Education Dept)
		Ellen Li Holch	27	Spinster	—	9 Shattmore Gardens, W.8.	Neils F. Holch	Expert of Food Machinery

Married in the *said church* according to the rites and ceremonies of the *Presbyterians* by *Leslie D. Weatherhead*

This marriage was solemnized between us, *Ellen Li Holch* and *W.N. Brooks* in the presence of us, *Neils F. Holch* and *Erik Just Olsen* and in the presence of *Leslie D. Weatherhead* Authorized Person for the said church

I, *Leslie D. Weatherhead*, Authorized Person under the Marriage Act, 1949, do hereby certify that this is a true copy of the Entry No. *826* in the Register Book of Marriages of the above-named Building.

WITNESS MY HAND this *twelve-seventh* day of *March*, 1953. *Leslie D. Weatherhead* Authorized Person.

CAUTION.—Any person who (1) falsifies any of the particulars on this Certificate, or (2) uses it as true, knowing it to be falsified, is liable to Prosecution.



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