Obituary

Lieut.-Colonel DANIEL LITTON HARDING

In Dublin on February 13, 1951 (his birthday), Lieutenant-Colonel Daniel Litton Harding, F.R.C.S.I., R.A.M.C., Retired. Third son of the late Falkiner Harding, Esq., of Dublin, he was born March 13, 1877. He took the L.R.C.P. and S.I. in 1900; the F.R.C.S.I. and the D.P.H. in 1907. Having served as a civil surgeon 59 days—February 26 to April 25, 1901—he was appointed Lieutenant, R.A.M.C., April 26 the same year. Promoted Captain April 26, 1904, Major April 26, 1913, and Lieut.-Colonel July 29, 1923, he retired January 7, 1926.

He took part in the operations in Cape Colony in 1901 and 1902, being awarded the Queen's Medal with three Clasps.

He served in France August 20, 1914, to March 17, 1919. Thrice mentioned in despatches, he was awarded the D.S.O., 1914 Star, British War and Victory Medals.

A man greatly beloved. His genial kindly cheerful manner endeared him to children. What a dear man, as an old lady said and, all will agree. We have indeed lost a good officer and gentleman.

A great traveller, he had travelled several times round the world and during the later thirties, used to spend the winter in South Africa, but being a tremendously keen fisherman always returned in the late spring to Waterville for the fishing. There can be few who had a greater knowledge of Lough Curran.

He suffered from arthritis, which caused intense pain and greatly hampered his movements, as years went on.

Colonel Harding presented the Dennis Cup to the R.A.M.C. Golfing Society in 1924, which later was renamed The R.A.M.C. Golfing Society Championship Cup. He also presented two dies for striking the Dennis Gold and Silver Medals. The winner of the cup hold it only for one year. The winner retains the gold medal and the runner up the silver medal. He will be specially remembered at the spring meeting this year.

The nickname Dennis, by which he was always known, was conferred on him; being an Irishman, by Sir Arthur Sloggett.

M.F., T.I.D., J.G.F.

Lieut.-Colonel MORTIMER JOHN CROMIE

In Surbiton, Surrey, on March 15, 1951, Lieut.-Colonel Mortimer John Cromie, R.A.M.C., Retired.

Born October 2, 1880, he took the M.R.C.S. England; and the L.R.C.P. London, in 1904, and entered the service July 31 the following year.

Promoted Captain January 31, 1909, and Major October 15, 1915, he was
placed on half-pay April 22, 1921, and retired on account of ill-health contracted on active service May 30, 1923.

He served in Gallipoli from April to October 1915, on the Salonika Front October 1915 to June 1916, in Mesopotamia December 1917 to June 1919, and in North Russia July to September 1919. He received the Order of the White Eagle 4th Class, the 1914-15 Star, British War and Victory Medals.

J. G. F.

Lieut.-Colonel WALTER JAMES WATERS

In St. Aubin's, Jersey, suddenly on February 16, 1951, Lieut.-Colonel Walter James Waters, O.B.E., R.A.M.C., Retired. Born May 19, 1876, he took the M.R.C.S.England, and the L.R.C.P.London, in 1899, and was appointed Civil Surgeon October 25 the same year, commissioned Lieutenant, R.A.M.C., November 14, 1900, he was promoted Captain November 14, 1903, Major November 14, 1912, and Lieut.-Colonel February 1, 1923, he retired April 20, 1923. He held the Retired Pay appointment at Mill Hill from June 1, 1923, till September 30, 1945, and then settled in St. Aubin's, Jersey.

In South Africa 1899-1901, he took part in the advance on Kimberley, including actions at Belmont and Modder River, the Relief of Kimberley, operations in Orange Free State including operations at Paardeberg, and operations in Transvaal, being awarded the Queen's Medal with six Clasps. He served in France from February 1915 to March 1919. Thrice mentioned in despatches, he received the O.B.E., 1914-15 Star, British War and Victory Medals and 1939-45 Home Defence and War Medals.

J. G. F.

Lieut.-Colonel CUTHBERT GARRARD BROWNE

Suddenly on February 27, 1951, in Rapallo, Lieut.-Colonel Cuthbert Garrard Browne, C.M.G., D.S.O., R.A.M.C., Retired, of Lakers Farm, West Chillington, Sussex. Son of the late Walter P. Browne of Bidston, Gipsy Hill, he was born March 3, 1883, and took the L.R.C.P.London, and the M.R.C.S. England, in 1905, and entered the R.A.M.C. July 31 the same year, taking the de Chaumont Prize.

Promoted Captain July 31, 1909, Major October 15, 1915, and Brevet Lieut.-Colonel June 3, 1918, he retired May 23, 1926, having been on half-pay from July 22, 1922, till May 13, 1923.


He served in France from August 19, 1914, till November 26, 1919. Seven times mentioned in despatches, he was created C.M.G. and D.S.O., received the Brevet of Lieut.-Colonel, the 1914 Star and Clasp, British War and Victory Medals.
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1939-45. For two years Registrar, Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley. Then President Medical Board H.Q. Shaftesbury and also worked at Taunton, Exeter and Dorchester. Defence and War Medals.

J.G.F.

Major-General HAROLD JOHN HIGGINS

At Dublin on March 4, 1951, Major-General Harold John Higgins, C.B., O.B.E., F.D.S., K.H.D.S., Director of the Army Dental Service at the termination of a severe illness. Born November 2, 1894, he received a Commission as Temporary Lieutenant June 24, 1918, becoming Temporary Captain June 1919. He was posted to the newly formed Army Dental Corps in May 1921 with the rank of Temporary Captain. His subsequent promotions were:

Captain, 24.12.21; Major, 24.6.30 (acting Lieut.-Colonel, 22.9.39-21.12.39; Temp. Lieut.-Colonel, 22.12.39-16.10.41); Lieut.-Colonel, 17.10.41 (acting Colonel 18.9.42-17.3.43; Temp.-Col. 18.3.43-28.6.43, and 16.12.43-15.8.46); Colonel, 17.10.44 (16.8.46); Maj.-Gen., 1.9.48.

He was employed under Air Ministry 25.1.27-5.1.27; as A.D.D.S., B.E.F., 22.9.39-17.8.40; D.D.D.S. East Africa, 18.8.40-29.11.41; A.D.D.S. Egypt, 22.12.41-17.9.42; A.D.D.S. Middle East, 4.7.43-15.12.43; D.D.D.S. B.A.O.R., 16.12.43-12.6.47; D.D.D.S. Home Forces, 7.8.47-14.8.48; and was selected as Director of the Army Dental Service September 1, 1948. He received the O.B.E. in January 1946 and was made K.H.D.S. October 27, 1948.

J.G.F.

Sir Neil Cantlie, the D.G.A.M.S., writes of him:
The Medical Services have suffered a grievous blow in the untimely death of the Director of Army Dental Services.

Harold Higgins was a man who was universally liked and I imagine he had few if any personal enemies. I had known him for over 20 years and feel an acute personal loss as well as sorrow at the passing of a Director for whom I had the highest regard. He was, I am sure, the most widely known amongst senior dental officers and he had served in most places and had travelled widely. A bachelor who enjoyed good cheer and the good fellowship of his friends, he was straightforward and honest in everything he did, with a practical common-sense outlook. He had a habit of getting a lot of work done without fuss or bother. Kindly in speech and manner, he loved to recount tales of life which he had encountered in many parts of the world, from Darjeeling to Nairobi.

Higgins began life in the dental service of the Royal Air Force before joining the R.A.D.C. and in this way had an unequalled personal knowledge of not only nearly everyone in his own Corps and the R.A.M.C., but the R.A.F. Medical Services as well.

In the last war he had an unrivalled experience of the dental services in the field from service spent in East Africa, the Middle East, Paiforce and in Europe. Who has not heard of his experiences in Nairobi when he shared a bungalow with Major-General Barnsley and Major-General Orenstein? I think he ran not only the dental services of the force, but being willing as always to turn his hand to anything useful, was transport officer to headquarters as well.

But we will remember him chiefly for his kindly humanity and his charm of manner, a man who had many friends who will sincerely mourn his loss.
Major-General Sir PERCY STANLEY TOMLINSON

In Hove on March 6, 1951, Major-General Sir Percy Stanley Tomlinson, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., F.R.C.P. Son of the late Lieut.-Colonel William Winslow Tomlinson, R.A.M.C., who served from 1864 to 1894, he was born November 11, 1884. Educated at Clifton College, Bristol, and University College, Bristol, he took the L.R.C.P. and M.R.C.S. in 1909. In 1931 he took the M.R.C.P. and the F.R.C.P. was conferred on him in 1943. Appointed Lieutenant, R.A.M.C., January 30, 1909, he was promoted Captain July 30, 1912, Brevet Major January 1, 1918, Major January 30, 1921, Brevet Lieut.-Colonel January 1, 1932, Lieut.-Colonel March 2, 1934, Colonel January 1, 1935, Major-General August 10, 1941, and retired November 11, 1944.

He was Adjutant 56 (1 London) Division T.A. October 1928 to October 1931 and a D.A.D.M.S. in India January 1934 to January 1937. He was appointed Honorary Physician to the King August 10, 1941, and Colonel Commandant August 27, 1945. He was Representative Commandant for 1947.

He served in France in September and October 1914 and again from September to December 1915 when he proceeded to the Macedonian Front. Thrice mentioned in despatches, he received the Brevet of Major, the D.S.O., 1914 Star, British War and Victory Medals.

He served in the Middle East first as D.D.M.S. and then as D.M.S. from September 1, 1939, to August 12, 1943, and in North-West Europe June 17 to October 11, 1944, as Director of Medical Services. Four times mentioned in despatches, he was created C.B. in 1941 and K.B.E. in 1943. He received the Legion of Honour, the Croix de Guerre, and in 1947 the Legion of Merit of the U.S.A.

He was a Commander, Order of St. John.

In 1920 he married Miss Gertrude Muriel Barr, and they had one son, who was killed on active service in 1941 and one daughter.

J. G. F.

The funeral, a short and most impressive ceremony, was held at Golders Green Crematorium. In addition to Lady Tomlinson and immediate relatives there were present the Director-General, Sir Neil Cantlie; Major-Generals Monro and Dowse; the Representative Colonel Commandant, Lieut.-General Sir Treffry Thompson; Major-General Mollan, Commandant R.A.M. College; Colonel A. E. Campbell, Department of Army Health; Lieut.-Colonel A. N. T. Meneces and Major Chapman who was for many years at the Q.A. Hospital, Millbank.

The Service was conducted by the Chaplain General to the Forces, The Rev. Canon F. Le Hughes, C.B., C.B.E., M.C., T.D., M.A., K.H.C.

Major-General D. C. Munro to whom we are indebted for the loan of the photograph of General Tomlinson which forms our frontispiece writes of him:

"I hope the enclosed photograph of the late Major-General Sir Percy Tomlinson will be considered satisfactory from the technical point of view, for reproduction in the Corp Journal. Those who served under him in the early years (1940-41) in the 'Middle East,' will agree with me that this lucky snap has caught him just as we knew him in his happiest
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moments. It was taken at Gebeit in the Sudan in February 1941, while we were on tour with the D.D.M.S. (Sudan) (Colonel Pride) and I had it extracted from the group I snapped and then enlarged. In offering it for publication I am confident that it will serve far better as a tribute to his memory from myself and my colleagues of the Medical Directorate, M.E.F., than any words I could write. Our old Chief’s whole character and kindliness are here manifest. Furthermore, I believe, with confidence, that Percy Tomlinson himself would have agreed that his life was at its zenith when this snap was taken. It was a time of intense activity, a time of bustle and build-up. The weight of our arms were just beginning to be felt and the enemy were on the run in the north and south. Above all we had the exhilarating excitement of daily increasing experience. To all these stimuli our Chief responded like the great officer he was. In spite of numerous shortages and other ‘headaches’ he planned, improvised and stimulated those under him as he conveyed to them his own enthusiasm and optimism.

“Later in the year we were to see a very different picture. We had suffered serious reverses in the Western Desert and in that forlorn hope in Greece. On top of these anxieties came the tragic news that his only son had been killed. I shall never forget the signs of obvious strain which were apparent when he was ordered to inform his staff that Rommel was knocking at the door of Alexandria and that we were to burn all non-essential files in case G.H.Q. had to be evacuated. My most lasting memory of my old Chief is the way in which he remained working calmly and for long hours at his desk during this period of intense personal strain and by so doing inspired us all with hope and confidence.”

Major-General Macie writes:

My first meeting with Sir Percy Tomlinson takes memory back to August 1915.

With a large batch of newly (Temporary) commissioned subalterns R.A.M.C. licensed by a Scottish University to practise medicine some fourteen days previously, I joined a Training Centre at Bulford on August 2. Some of us had infantry training in an Officers’ Training Corps, some wore His Majesty’s Uniform for the first time. We then knew little of the practical application of the learning achieved in five crowded years and less of the ways of the Army.

After a week at the Training Centre, many of us were posted to bring up to strength the Field Ambulances of the 26th Division, a Kitchener formation of excellent material which had commenced its build up in the Autumn of 1914. The Field Ambulances of the Division were numbered 78, 79 and 80 and with us there arrived for each a new Regular Commanding Officer—Gerald Stevenson, Percy Tomlinson and Ben Johnson. Outstanding officers all of them, we were indeed fortunate in our C.O.s and, despite our lack of preliminary training, soon felt that, under their instruction and example, we were pulling some weight in efficient units. Many of us remained with our units for the remainder of the war. We had got to know one another pretty well.

I did not meet my future chief much between the wars. Too senior to do the College Course, he was posted to a Territorial adjutancy in London and, while in this appointment, obtained his Membership. The Fellowship followed in 1943 when he was D.M.S. Middle East Force.

It was early in 1939 that we came to serve together again. He was appointed D.D.M.S. British Troops in Egypt, his task to prepare the Medical Services in Egypt and the Sudan for mobilization. It was a start from scratch. The only field unit in the Command was a very small cadre of a Light Field Ambulance. It was known that if war broke out, all three military hospitals in Egypt, in the Citadel, at Ras-el-Tin, and at Moascar would have to move.

In early 1940, the Services of G.H.Q. Middle East Force began to form and Colonel Tomlinson was appointed from Headquarters British Troops in Egypt to be Director of Medical Services at G.H.Q. There he remained until the North African war came to an end when he was transferred to England to become General Montgomery’s Director of Medical Services to 21 Army Group.
The medical directorate of G.H.Q. Middle East was first located in a houseboat on the Nile, moored opposite the Semiramis Hotel; later it moved into various villas of the enclave in Garden City. The houseboat was locally known as H.M.S. “Overflow.” From these small beginnings was built up under General Tomlinson the vast medical organization of Middle East Command and his was the guiding hand. Difficulties arose every day and there were many shortages but none of them in essentials, many valuable lessons were learned for later campaigns. He gathered round him a grand team of consultants who raised the professional work to a high standard. The administrative work continued at high pressure over many months but his grip of essentials never failed. There were days, not unnaturally, when he seemed to his staff to be anxious and would look in to see how things were going but he was always big enough, at such difficult times, to accept from them the advice to let them get on with details.

He was supported by a strong Christian faith and, outwardly at any rate, heard with great fortitude, on a hot Sunday afternoon in Cairo, the news that his son, newly commissioned in the Royal Air Force, had been killed on an early flight.

He was most happily married and owed much to the strength and understanding of his wife. With her and with his daughter we mourn our loss.

Another contemporary also writes of “Tommy” as follows:

By the untimely death of Percy Tomlinson at the comparatively early age of 66, the Corps loses one of the ablest Medical administrators and outstanding personalities of the second world war.

The outbreak of war found him in Cairo as D.D.M.S., Middle East, a relatively minor appointment, if rank be any criterion. But minor or no, it was soon to become, major indeed as operations in this theatre developed and he was confronted with the formation of a vast medical organization to cope with the field armies which began to spring up on all sides. Eritrea, Palestine, Greece and Crete, the Western Desert and for a time Iraq as well, were all within his sphere and the resultant heavy responsibilities coupled with the constant work entailed and distances to be travelled would have quickly exhausted most men: it says much for his ability and fortitude in the face of many difficulties and heartrending setbacks that he always remained cheerful and emerged triumphant.

As the war horizon lightened following the victory of Alamein, the rapid advance to Tunisia with its long L. of C. did little to diminish his burden, a burden which was not relieved by the urgent need to plan for the forthcoming invasion of Sicily. Once this successful manoeuvre was well established and the responsibility for the further support of the operations in Sicily and Italy handed over to Army H.Q. in North Africa, he gained only a short respite before being appointed D.M.S. 21 Army Group in U.K., there to plan again, but on this occasion to plan for the greatest military enterprise of our time, the one which was to liberate Europe from Hitler’s domination. When Kneller Hall, so long associated with military music, was selected as the home of 21 Army Group’s Medical Directorate, it became the home of very different melodies from those to which it had been accustomed. The success of the resultant “D-day” Concert which it produced was entirely due to its brilliant composer, whose efforts right down to the minutest detail, were well rewarded by the unforgettable smoothness which consummated the result of his labours. No so long after the landing in Normandy he himself followed, and there, from his H.Q., first near Bayeaux and later in Brussels, he directly controlled the medical operations and witnessed the fruition of all his careful planning.

His retirement in the winter of 1944 was a great loss not only to 21 Army Group, where he was so popular and held in great esteem, but also throughout the whole Corps and he left many sad hearts especially among those who knew him best and would have wished that he could have led the team, whose inspiration he had been, to the final phase of victory in Germany.

During all these trying times from the Middle East to N.W. Europe, and despite all vicissitudes, “Tommy” as he was always affectionately known maintained his cheery outlook and his ever helpful attitude: with his kind and sympathetic nature one felt that the
rare occasions on which he “bit” were well justified, and were, after all, but transient clouds on a summer’s day. Had he not been a man of great determination and so clear a thinker, success could not have crowned his efforts as they did, while his tactful approach to many a controversial question had the same effect as oil on an angry sea.

It was the writer’s misfortune not to have been associated with him until the war, but in that short period, he, like so many others, learned to love and admire the man, respecting and appreciating his sterling character, while for those serving under him it was always a source of great comfort and satisfaction to feel that the ubiquitous “Tommy” was not far away.

The loss of his son was a staggering blow and the strenuous war years must have taken their toll even of a man of his calibre: the reaction no doubt was a contributory cause to the cutting short of a well-earned retirement. During the few years he was on the retired list he continued to take a lively interest in the Corps and his loss will be mourned by all who knew him, while his name will long be honoured in the annals of the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Having served with and met Percy Tomlinson at many times and places I too would like to pay a small tribute to his memory:

He had always seemed to be to me one of the best type in the Corps: First and foremost very keen on his job and the efficiency of the service, combining high professional ability and knowledge with an aptitude for administration; human and knowledgeable in the ways of officers and men, with a keen interest in their doings; meticulous as to detail but with a clear grasp of main essentials and their meaning.

But it was at his headquarters in Normandy, to which I had come from an eastern theatre to learn how things should be done, that I really realized what a great man he was, how medical planning and execution centred on him, how efficiently the Medical Services functioned under his guidance, and how he knew his staff and personnel and consequently held their confidence and esteem. Lucky it was for the Corps, the Army and the Empire that we had men like Percy Tomlinson to organize and control the medical affairs of Middle East and the Normandy invasions.

T. O. T.

Extracts from the “London Gazette”

Honours and Awards

London Gazette 16.2.51

The King has been graciously pleased to confer the award of “4 Clasps” to the Territorial Efficiency Decoration upon the following officer:

R.A.M.C.

Colonel W. H. Kerr, T.D.

The King has been graciously pleased to confer the award of “3 Clasps” to the Territorial Efficiency Decoration upon the following officers:

R.A.M.C.

Col. J. F. Fraser, T.D., M.B.

Maj. G. D. Thompson, T.D.

The King has been graciously pleased to confer the award of the “1st Clasp” to the Territorial Efficiency Decoration upon the following officer: