



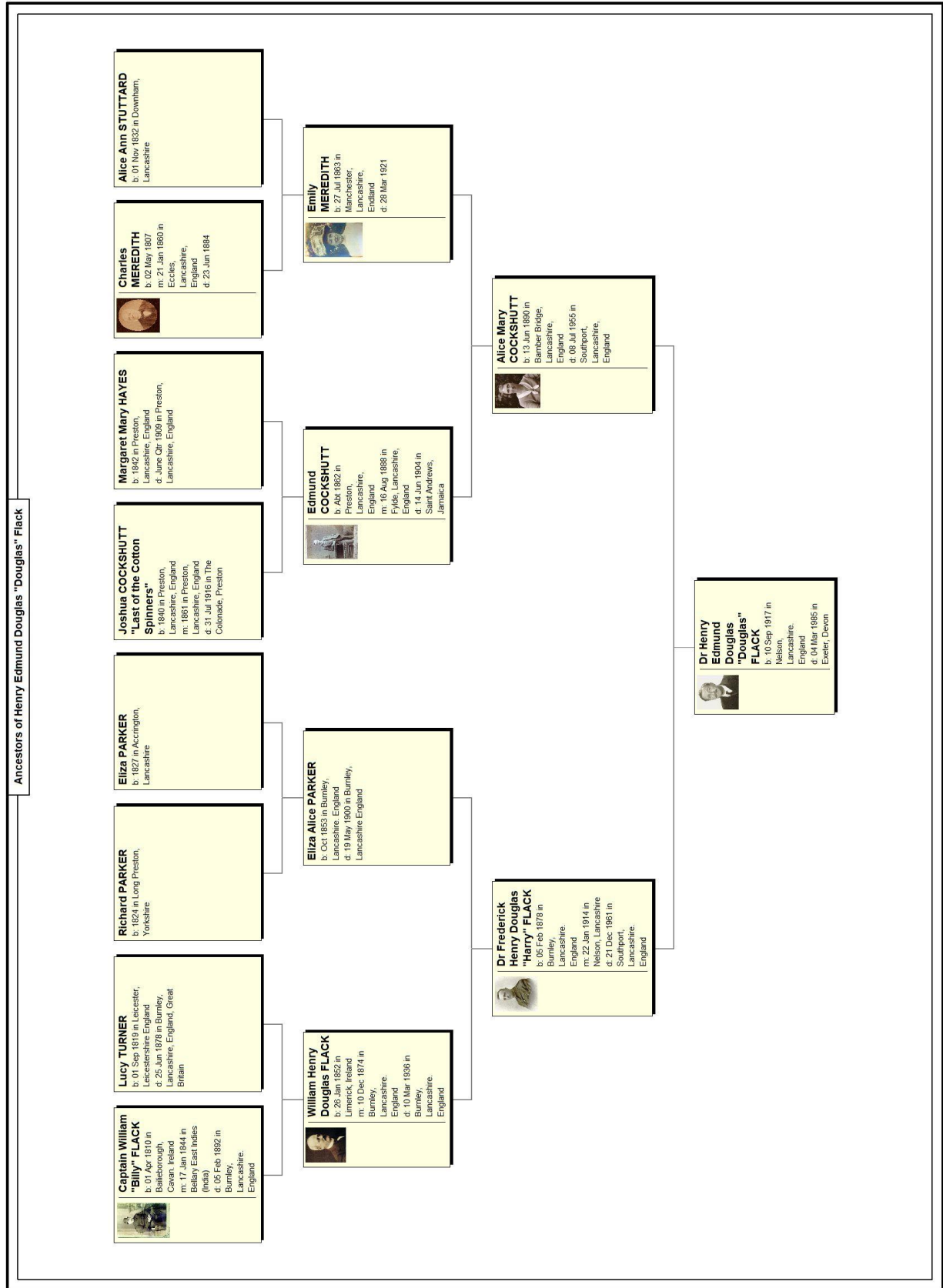
Lt. Colonel “Douglas” H.E.D. Flack. MB, ChB. MID (RAMC)

A life of service and
compassion

By Dr “Ted” E.D.H. Flack



Dr Henry Edmund Douglas Flack's Pedigree



Doctor Douglas Flack's Story

On 10th September 2017, Lieutenant Colonel, Doctor Henry Edmund Douglas Flack, (known as "Douglas") Royal Army Medical Corps (Rtd), MB., ChB. would have been 100 years old. This is story.

Henry Edmund Douglas Flack was born on 10 September 1917 in Nelson, Lancashire and his birth was registered in the Burnley District Registry Office (Ref. December Quarter, Volume 8e, Page 253).

It is likely that Henry Edmund Douglas Flack was baptised at St Mary's Church Nelson in 1917.

Douglas Flack's parents were Dr Frederick Henry Flack, known as "Harry", who was born on 5 February 1878 in Burnley, Lancashire and Alice Mary Flack, nee Cockshutt, born 13 June 1890 at Bamber Bridge, Lancashire. They were married on 22 January 1914 in Nelson, Lancashire.



Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser
- Friday 23 January 1914



The 1911 Census records show that Dr Frederick Henry Flack was living at 56 Railway Street, Nelson, close to the Railway Station near the centre of Nelson and this is his medical practice address in the British medical Directory in 1907.

Fit—Fla] THE MEDICAL REGISTER FOR 1907. 601			
Name.	Address.	Date and Place of Registration.	Qualifications.
FLACK, Frederick Henry ...	56, Railway street, Nelson.	1900, Aug. 2 E.	M.B., Bac. Surg. 1900, Vict. Univ.

Bearing in mind that Douglas was born in September 1917 during World War 1 and it is known that Dr Harry was serving in the Royal Army Medical Corps at the time, it is possible that the birth took place in Harry's absence and that Alice, his mother, was supported by her adopted Roberts family during her pregnancy. The available service records indicate that Temporary Lieutenant Frederick H Flack was promoted Temporary Captain on 2nd July 1918 and demobilised on 21 February 1919.

During the First World War, Nelson was one of the many North East Lancashire towns which had developed during the 19th century based on the cotton industry but these industries had been significantly diverted by government to industries that supported the war effort. Many women of the town were now employed in the factories as a large proportion of the male workers had joined or been drafted into the Army.

Nelson was severely affected by the "Spanish Flu" epidemic in 1919 and it seems possible that Dr Harry was demobilised from the Army in order to respond to this civilian medical crisis. Douglas's Uncle and Harry's brother, Dr Bertram Flack, died in the epidemic, aged just 37, on 16 June 1919 in Blackburn in Lancashire.

Douglas's brother Bertram Anthony Flack, known as "Tony" was born on 3rd February 1924 in Nelson, his birth registered in Burnley Registry Office in the March Quarter 1924 (Reference: Volume 8e, Page 353)Mar 1924.

So this was the town into which Douglas was born.



By May 1926, HED Flack, aged 9, was attending Terra Nova Preparatory School in Birkdale, Lancashire as a boarder. It is not known why Terra Nova was chosen as Douglas's boarding school but it is known that the Cockshutt family (Douglas's mother's family) had some associations with families of the Southport – Birkdale area who may have had connections with the school. The Cockshutts and Merediths were well known in the Southport district.

The school records show that when he enrolled he was living at 54 Railway Street Nelson but before he left the school in July 1931, his school record shows that he was living at 40 Blundell Drive Southport.

Extract from Douglas Flack's Terra Nova School record.

H. P. D. Flack 8-8 May 1926. 453
 Dr Flack. 54 Railway St. Nelson. Monitor.
 40 Blundell Drive XI XV
 Left July 1931. 2pm.



Douglas Flack at Terra Nova Prep School c.1926 (Top Row on Left End)

Douglas was an outstanding student at Terra Nova. His school record records that he was a Monitor and a member of the both the First Eleven Cricket and First Fifteen Rugby teams.

In May 1931, Douglas, aged 14, would have sat what was known as the "Common Entrance Exam" and was accepted the following September 1931 as a boarder in Epsom College.

It is not known when Douglas's family – Harry, Alice and Tony, moved to live in Southport, but it appears that sometime between May 1926 and July 1931 the family moved to 40 Blundell Drive, Southport, not far from Terra Nova located in Birkdale. At the time of his father's death in 1936, Dr Harry Flack, Douglas's father, had retired after practicing medicine in Nelson for more than 35 years, having been registered to practice in 1900. William HD Flack, Douglas's grandfather had retired from the Bank in 1922 and was living at "Brookside" near Burnley where he died. Brookside had been left to Douglas's father, Harry, in his Will and the remaining assets (today's equivalent of half a million pounds) invested and placed in trust to provide an income for life for Douglas's aunts Mabel and Lucy. It appears that Brookside had then been sold, allowing Harry to retire with his family to 40 Blundell Drive Southport.

FLACK William Henry Douglas of Brookside Burnley died 10 March 1936 Probate London 9 April to Lucy Flack and Mabel Flack spinsters. Effects £8036 12s. 3d.



A modern map of West Lancashire, showing the locations of Nelson and Southport.



Flack Family group photograph, taken in 1932 at Brookside, Nelson.

Top row, Left to Right: Douglas Flack, Gordon Johnson, Dr Harry Flack
Seated, Alice Flack, Mabel Flack, William Henry Flack, Clarice Johnson, Lucy Flack
Bertram Anthony Flack.

Enquiries with the local Burnley History Society indicate that “Brookside” was a large duplex house at the top of Pasturegate Road (off Coal Clough Lane). One local historian shared the following comment:

I worked there many years ago. Originally Brookside and Willowbank were built so the siblings could live next to each other. After that Willowbank was a Dr's surgery but I'm not sure about Brookside. It was later bought out by Mrs Walker and the two homes became one. It was a very beautiful house had back stairs from the kitchen leading to servants' quarters.

The building is now the Willowbank Nursing Home, Pasturegate, Burnley BB11 4DE



40 Blundell Drive Southport as it is today



Southport Terra Nova School buildings in 1995. (School moved during WW2 to Goosetree, Cheshire.)

During his school holidays from Terra Nova, Douglas is known to have spent time with his Aunties Mabel and Lucy, seeing the sights in London, and several summer holidays with his family in the Isle of Man.



Douglas with his father (left) and family friend at Port Erin c.1926

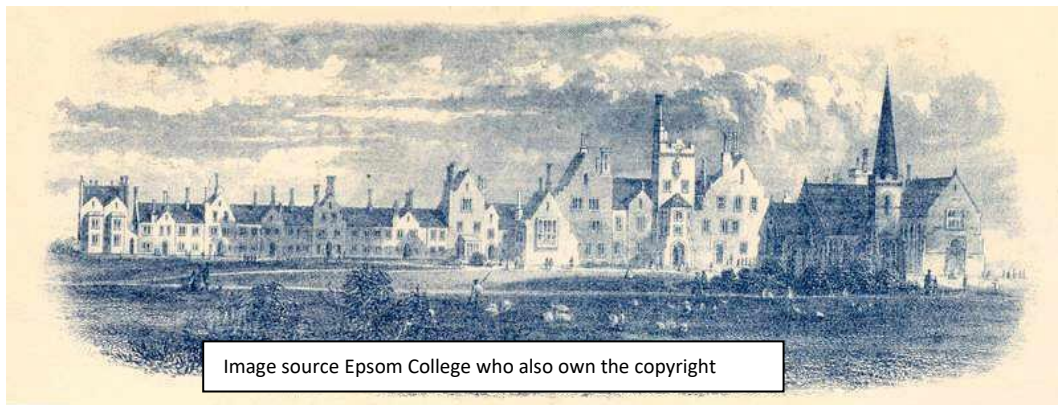


Douglas Flack with his mother and brother Tony at Port Erin c.1930

Douglas Flack was enrolled as a boarder in Epsom College in September 1931, shortly after his 14th birthday. Epsom College, more formally known as the Royal Medical Foundation of Epsom College, was well-known for teaching young men who were destined to become doctors.



Photo of Douglas Flack in his Terra Nova School Uniform c.1930

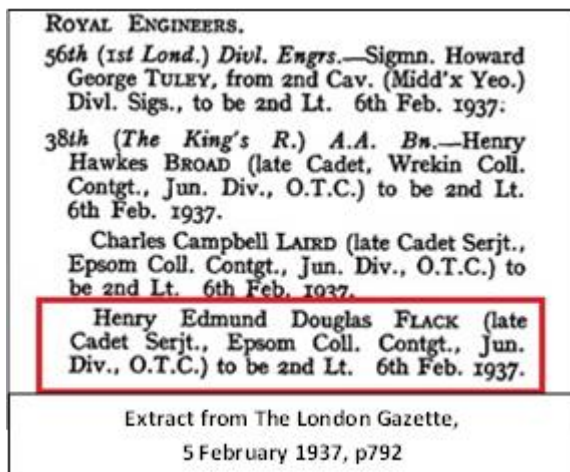


Perhaps Douglas's father chose Epsom College, despite it being more than 200 miles from Burnley and Southport, because they wanted to encourage the young man to follow in his father's medical footsteps.

Many Old Epsomians joined up to take part in the First World War and more than 150 lost their lives. In 1920 a memorial plaque commemorating those who had died was unveiled. The College Chapel was also extended to include a War Memorial Chapel, completed in 1925, the College's 70th anniversary of opening.

1,300 old boys served during the Second World War, 402 of them as medical officers. 68 Old Epsomians were awarded medals, but unfortunately 120 were killed.

Douglas was an outstanding student at Epsom. He was repeatedly top-of-the-class in his studies, was selected in the 1st Eleven Cricket Team (as a fast bowler) and rapidly promoted to Cadet Sergeant in the College Cadet Corps. He left Epsom in June 1936, having attained entry to the Medical School at Liverpool University.



Cedar House.
The main Medical School Building of Liverpool University

In a letter written on his birthday on 10th September 1944 from hospital in India, Douglas provides an insight into his courtship of his wife to be, Barbara Hayward,

"Do you remember my 18th Birthday – 1936 about 3 months after Gordon Porter's well remembered party? I was just back from the Black Forrest. I spent it with you, Barby darling, like my 19th & 20th and then do you remember my 21st just before the Munich Crisis in Formby? Then 22nd at Childwell in Sep '39 and then 23rd just after coming back from Llambodrog & my 24th at the Northern Hospital and now I have had my 25th, 26th and 27th away from you. I wonder what of my 28th?"

On 6 January 1937, whilst still in his first year of Medical School, Lt Henry Edmund Douglas Flack was commissioned into 38th (The King's Regiment) Anti-Aircraft Battalion (AA), Royal Engineers (Territorial Army (TA)).

I CERTIFY that I have seen Henry Edmund Douglas Flack
and can recommend him as a suitable candidate for appointment to a commission in the 6th (Rifle)
Bn The King's Regiment in the rank of 2nd Lieutenant
38th. (THE KING'S REGIMENT)
Station Liverpool ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTALION R.E. T.A. Major Lewis Colonel
Date 4th Dec 1936 Commanding 6th (Rifle) Bn The King's Regt

* Where the distance of the place of residence of the candidate from the headquarters of the unit is such as to make this procedure impracticable, the Officer Commanding the unit will arrange for the candidate to be seen by the Officer Commanding a unit of the same Arm stationed near the candidate's place of residence, and will attach the certificate of that Officer Commanding when received.

† In the case of a university candidate for appointment to a commission on the General List, Territorial Army, for the purpose of undergoing attachment to a regular unit with a view to subsequent nomination for appointment to a commission in the Regular Army, the application should be forwarded by the University authorities direct to the War Office.

‡ Insert unit or branch of service.

The TA's AA units were mobilised on 23 September 1938 during the Munich Crisis, with units manning their emergency positions within 24 hours, even though many did not yet have their full complement of men or equipment. The emergency lasted three weeks, and they were stood down on 13 October. In February 1939 the existing AA defences came under the control of a new Anti-Aircraft Command. In June a partial mobilisation of TA units was begun in a process known as 'couverture', whereby each AA unit did a month's tour of duty in rotation to man selected AA and searchlight positions. On 24 August, ahead of the declaration of war, AA Command was fully mobilised at its war stations.

In later life, Douglas spoke of being deployed with his searchlight unit to the Dover area for a short time during the Munich Crisis whilst he was still a student.



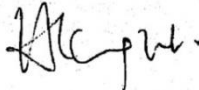
Lt Douglas Flack, Royal Engineers 1940. (Top Left)

Douglas completed his medical internship as a Casualty Officer at David Lewis Northern Hospital, Liverpool between January and April 1941.

Douglas qualified MB ChB (The initials stand for Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (the 'Ch' is from the Latin for surgery) from Liverpool University in July 1941 and his Army commission was transferred to the Royal Army Medical Corps (TA) on 15 July 1941.



Great Northern Hospital, Liverpool

 UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL	
SAS/AC/42048	Student Administration and Support
9 March 2010	Foundation Building 765 Brownlow Hill Liverpool L69 7ZX
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN	
This is to certify that	
<u>Henry Edmund Douglas FLACK</u>	
was a registered student of this University, on an undergraduate course of study, in the Faculty of Medicine, on a course of study leading to the degrees of MBChB.	
Having satisfied attendance requirements and having passed the relevant examinations, he was formally admitted to the degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery on 5 July 1941.	
	
Heather Knight Director - Student Admin & Support	

ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS. General List. 2nd Lt. (War Subs. Lt.) H. E. D. Flack, M.B. (70214), from R.A. (T.A.), to be Lt. 15th July 1941.
Extract from The London Gazette, 26 August 1941 p.4948

Douglas was a keen sportsman, playing both cricket and rugby at school and later during his university years. At one time, he played 1st Grade Cricket as a fast bowler for Liverpool University and was a

regular player for a Birkdale Cricket Team. His rugby career did not reach the standards achieved in cricket but he was a well-regarded player for Southport Rugby Club.

He continued serving as a House Surgeon at Great Northern Hospital from July to December 1941, whilst serving part-time in the Territorial Army's Royal Army Medical Corps

The further upgrading of his commission to War Substantive in 26 August 1941 was no doubt a part of the arrangements for his anticipated deployment overseas. The newly qualified Dr Douglas Flack then attended a post-graduate course in Tropical medicine. There is no record of a formal qualification in Tropical Medicine at either Liverpool or London Universities, although his military records indicate that he attended a Tropical Medical Course at Liverpool University (at the time a world-leading University in that field) between 17 January and 2 February 1942, no doubt arranged by the War Department for medical officers to be posted to the tropics.

Shortly after completing his Tropical Medicine Course in Liverpool, on 12 February 1942, Henry Edmund Douglas Flack married Barbara Hayward at the Leeds Registry Office (Ref: RO March Quarter 1942 Leeds District Vol.9b page 752).

The newly married couple were not together long however since on 26th March 1942, Lt HED Flack left England bound for Kenya in order to join a Field



Engagement Party photo

Ambulance attached to the 11th (East Africa) Division.

It had been felt by the British authorities that African soldiers would be well suited to jungle warfare and so the Division was to be assembled from both British and existing colonial units for training in Kenya for possible future engagement in East Africa against the Italians or the defence of the India/Burma border against the Japanese.

Douglas travelled by train to Southampton to join a troop ship for the long voyage across the Atlantic and down to South Africa. Details of the voyage are censored in Douglas's letters home but it appears that the convoy arrived safely in Durban on 23 March 1942.

After a short stay in the Imperial Forces Transit Camp, Durban, the Brigade then began their four and a half thousand km deployment to Nairobi, Kenya. It is not clear how the elements of the Brigade made the journey, although some travelled on with the convoy by sea and others by road through what are now South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Tanzania. Lt Flack's military record shows that he travelled on to Nairobi by coastal steamer on 27 April 1942 to join 1st (Tanganyika) Field Ambulance in an area in the bush to the west of the Kenyan capital.

The first Douglas' wife, Barbara, heard from him after his departure was an aerogram letters dated 26 and 28 June 1942 addressed to "Dinbren Hall, Llangollen, North Wales" in which he writes "... we moved

two weeks ago into the bush... Living here is like living in perpetual spring weather of the best kind and in someone's rose garden. I live in a "banda" or palm-leaf hut which is really quite comfortable in this climate."

So began a 9 month stay in Kenya and Tanganyika as Lt Flack's 1st (T) Field Ambulance, EAF and the rest of his Brigade trained for the battles ahead.

The political and military environment in East Africa in May 1942 was a volatile. The Italian guerrilla war in Ethiopia was continuing with the remnants of Italian troops fighting Ethiopian guerrillas in what was a short-lived attempt to incorporate Ethiopia as part of Italian East Africa. The liberation of Madagascar from the control of the Vichy French had only just been accomplished with British troops aided by South African soldiers, landing on the strategic island on 4 May 1942 to preclude its seizure by the Japanese. German submarines were active in the Straits of Madagascar and there were concerns about the neutrality of the Portuguese colony, Mozambique.

On 16 March 1943, the newly promoted Captain Flack was transferred as the Medical Officer to 1st East African Scouts Battalion for a secret operation into neutral Mozambique in which was planned to assassinate the German Consul in Beira, Portuguese East Africa. Little is known of the unsuccessful raid, but Douglas said that the intention was to try to stop the use of the port of Beira to refuel German submarines operating in the Straits of Madagascar. It appears that a secret base camp with a Medical Officer was set up in the bush on the border of Tanganyika and Mozambique and a small raiding party then moved into Beira in search of the Consul, but without success. The operation was abandoned and the Scouts then returned to Kenya through Tanganyika.

On 12th June 1943, Captain Flack and the rest of the East African Scouts Bn embarked for jungle training in Ceylon, arriving in Columbo eight days later. In August 1943 the South East Asia Command was formed under Lord Louis Mountbatten and in October that year General William Slim was appointed as Commander of the Fourteenth Army. Captain Douglas Flack subsequently embarked for India, probably on 6 January 1944. The East African Scouts had been absorbed into the 11th (East Africa) Infantry Division, part of the XV Corps of the 14th Army, which was to take part in the Allied advances into Burma to counter Japanese advances towards the boarder with India. In early 1944, the Japanese responded with all-out offensives, intending to destroy the Allies in their base areas.

The first Japanese move was a subsidiary attack in Arakan where XV Corps was advancing slowly south. The main Japanese offensive was launched on the central front in Assam. In March 1944, the Japanese launched an offensive across the Chindwin River, cutting the Imphal-Kohima Road.

There followed the ferocious battles of the 'Admin Box', Kohima (with its famous tennis court) and Imphal, at the end of which the defeated Japanese forces withdrew. A vital factor in the Allied victory was the success of the resupply of cut-off units by aircraft.

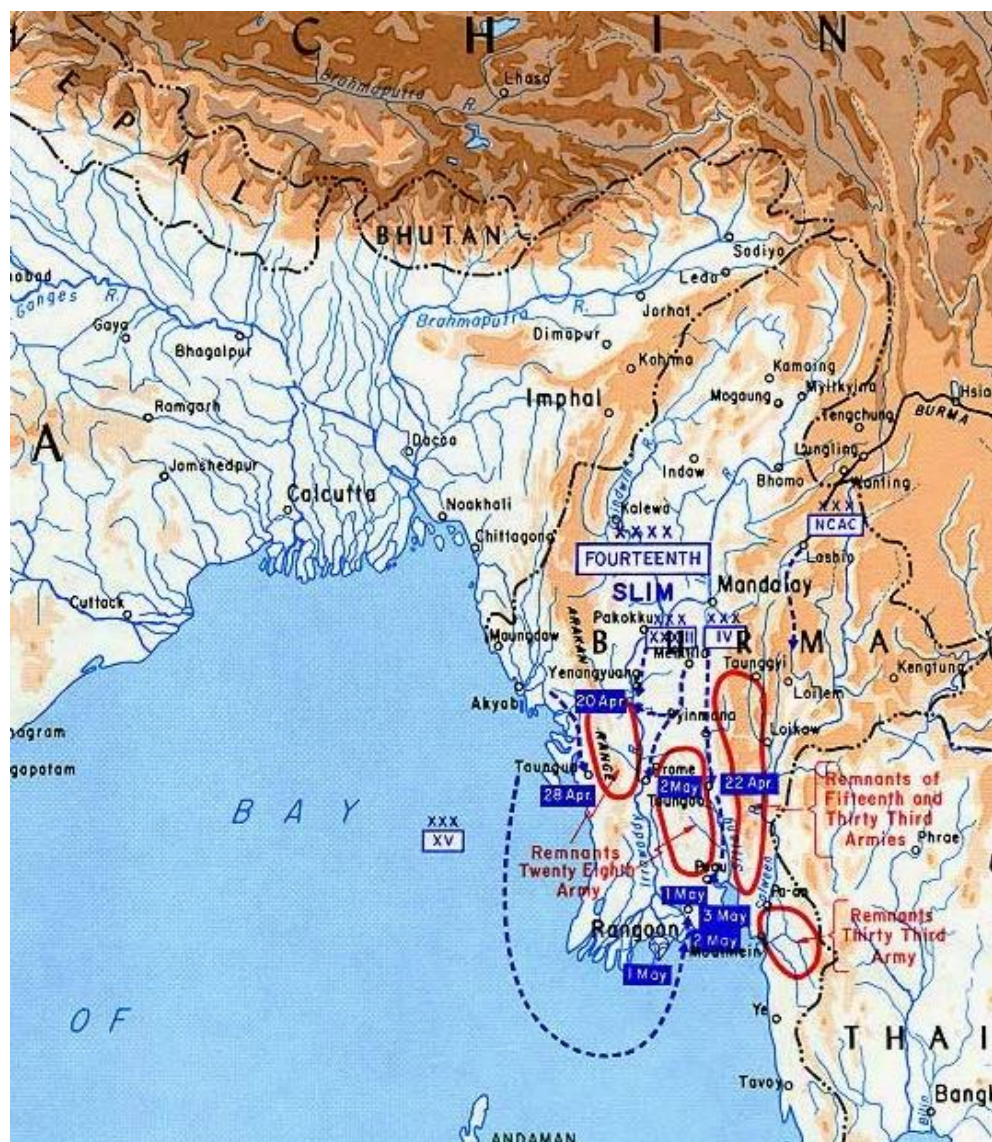


Battle of Pagoda Hill April 1944



Battle of Kohima Memorial

Further Chindit columns operated deep behind enemy lines during 1944 and at the beginning of 1945 the Fourteenth Army launched a successful offensive down the Arakan Coast, followed by a major advance deep into central Burma.



The End of the Burma Campaign April-May 1945

It is not clear from Capt Flack's Army record just where and in which units he served during the first half of 1944.

His Army record simply states that he was posted to 6 Field Ambulance on 11 July 1944. From the little he said about his Burma service it appears that he served in a field ambulance somewhere in the vicinity of Kohima during the fiercest battles of the Japanese invasion. He did mention with deep emotion the Battle of Pagoda Hill which took place in early April 1944 and there seems little doubt that he would have been involved in looking after the many hundreds of wounded following the withdrawal of the Japanese in May of that year. He was later awarded Mentioned in Despatches (MiD) for his gallant or meritorious action in the face of the enemy whilst tending to the wounded at the Battle of Pagoda Hill.

His letters home cease from 6 February 1944 during these fierce battles and do not resume until 10 September 1944 by which time the Japanese are in retreat. They resume when he writes from Hospital "somewhere in India". It is not clear from his military record just what the nature of his injuries/sickness were, but he referred to being wounded in the Battle of Pagoda Hill and indicated that this resulted in scarring to his left cheek.

A November 1944 letter home is addressed from Poona, on the west coast of India, approximately 1,600 miles distant from Kohima, where his Field Ambulance Unit appears then to have been located. It seems likely that the very significant numbers of wounded from the Battle for Kohima had been distributed to hospitals across India.



Kings African Regiment Field Hospital 1944



Sassoon Hospital, Poona

On 13 February 1945, Captain Flack was promoted Temporary Major and posted to Advanced Headquarters Allied Land Forces South East Asia (ALF SEA), Lord Louis Mountbatten's new command, based in Kandy, Ceylon. On 24 July 1945, Major Flack's military records show that he relinquished his post in ALF SEA and was appointed Deputy Assistant Director of Army Medical Services (DADMS) and departed for England on 28 July 1945.

Upon arrival in the UK he transited No.1 Depot, Royal Army Medical Corps in Southampton, enjoyed the leave owing to him probably in Southport and from 30 September 1945 reported for his new posting as DADMS in HQ Scottish Command, Edinburgh.

During his leave Douglas would have been reunited with his wife Barbara in Southport in late August 1945, just in time for his daughter, Barbara's (known as "Bunty") third birthday in September. He had

left on war service before Bunty's birth more than three years before and this would have been the first time he had seen his daughter.

Douglas, Barbara and little Bunty were allocated officer's married quarters at 31 Dreghorn Loan, Collinton, near Dreghorn Barracks, just to the west of Edinburgh and Major Flack would have travelled each day to Headquarters Scottish Command located in Edinburgh Castle.



Dreghorn Barracks, Edinburgh today



31 Dreghorn Loan, Collinton today

Major Flack's Army records indicate that he was given special responsibility for the medical services for the 2nd Polish Repatriation Group.

Following the defeat of France, during June and July, 1940, the Polish government in exile, some 20,000 Polish servicemen and some 3,000 Polish civilian refugees were evacuated to Britain. General Sikorski received the support of Churchill to reform the Polish Army, Air Force and Navy units in the United Kingdom and the Near East.

The Polish First Army Corps was organised in Scotland. When the war in Europe ended in May, 1945, the Corps comprised the First Armoured Division, the First Independent Paratroop Brigade, the Fourth Infantry Division (incomplete), the Sixteenth Independent Armoured Brigade (also incomplete) and administrative and training centres. Major Flack's responsibility was to ensure that the Polish servicemen and women received appropriate medical services.



One of the rehabilitation hospitals Major Flack was responsible for was located at Kirkconnel Hall, located on the edge of the country village of Ecclefechan in Dumfriesshires. Douglas and Barbara enjoyed happy memories of romantic stays in the medical staff quarters adjacent to the Hall and told the story of "Fair Helen of Kirkconnel Lea", a traditional story about the location.

Interestingly, Kirkconnel Hall was home to Dr Archibald Arnott (1772-1855), Napoleon's physician in the late 18th Century.

In July 1946, Edmund Douglas Hayward Flack, Douglas and Barbara's only son was born in a private hospital at 35 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh, premises now used by the Bonhom Hotel. On 27 July 1946, Edmund was christened at St

Margaret's Chapel Edinburgh Castle. (Officers posted to Headquarters Scottish Command were entitled to use the Citadel Chapel for their family baptisms and weddings.)

Page 4

Baptism Solemnized in the Citadel Chapel of St. Margaret, in Edinburgh.						in the Year 1946	
Date of Birth	When Baptized	Child's Christian Name	Parents' Name and Nationality		Abode	Quality, Trade, or Profession	By whom the Ceremony was performed
			Christian	Surname			
1946 10 th July	1946 27 th July	Edmund Douglas Hayward	Henry Edmund Douglas	Flack	31 Dargorn Loan, Colinton, Edinburgh 13.	Army Officer.	Ros. L.B. Simpson c.f.
No. 512			Barbara				

The above is a true Copy of the Baptism Register aforesaid, extracted this thirtieth Day of July the Year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and forty-six

By me, Robert A. B. Simpson  c.f.



Just a month after Edmund's christening, on 10 August 1946, Major Flack attended the three-month-long Royal Army Medical Corps' 41st Senior Officers Course. This would have been held at the RAMC's headquarters at Milbank, near the Tate Gallery today, in London. Douglas passed the course "With Distinction" and on 10 January 1947 was appointed to a Permanent Commission retaining his seniority.

It appears that either prior to or immediately following this course, Douglas enrolled in a Diploma in Psychiatric Medicine for his service record records his "DPM" qualification from 1947 and the word "Bristol" and "Hon. Fellow in Psychiatry, Crichton Royal" January 1947-January 1948. The record states "Classified as a Specialist Psychiatrist" from 28 January 1948.

In the period immediately after the war, the Crichton Royal Psychiatric Hospital in Dumfries was widely regarded as Europe's most advanced mental hospital. Prior to the introduction of National Health, the Crichton was a private hospital although a number of patients were admitted free. Innovation included the adoption of a detailed history-taking technique and a wide range of social and educational activities provided the initial focus for treatment. The Department of Clinical Research was first active under Professor Mayer-Gross. Britain's first EEG department opened at the Crichton in 1948.

Dr Flack often referred to "Willie" Mayer-Gross as one of the strong influences in his approach to psychiatry.

It was while Douglas was studying and caring for army psychiatric patients at the Crichton Royal, Dumfries that Barbara gave birth to their second daughter, Sarah Margaret in September 1947.

On 6 February 1948, Major Flack's service record records his posting to the HQ Western Command for duty as the specialist Psychiatrist attached to the London Pool responsible for D Block Royal Victoria Hospital Netley. He was promoted Temporary Lieutenant Colonel on 1 October 1948, aged just 31 year of age.

The Royal Victoria Hospital or Netley Hospital was a large military hospital in Netley, near Southampton, Hampshire, England. Queen Victoria laid the foundation stone on 19 May 1856, which stated that the hospital was intended for the "reception of the sick and invalid soldiers of her Army". At the rear of the site, D Block (Victoria House) and E Block (Albert House) formed the psychiatric hospital. D Block was opened in 1870 as the army's first purpose-built military asylum. The main hospital buildings were demolished in 1966.



RV Hospital Netley as it was in 1955

On 1st April 1949, Lt Col. Flack is appointed Command Psychiatrist HQ Western Command and posted to Military Hospital Chester. This is the first time that Douglas has been able to enjoy a relatively normal family life living with his wife Barbara and his three children Bunty, Edmund and Sarah in Southport. Douglas and Barbara move into Kirkstall Road, Southport, within a five minute walk of both of their parents' homes in Blundell Drive.

However, the opportunity for Douglas and Barbara to enjoy family life together was severely impacted when Barbara Flack was diagnosed with Stevens-Johnson Syndrome (SJS). This is a rare life-threatening condition affecting the skin in which cell death causes the epidermis to separate from the dermis. Although the majority of cases are idiopathic, the main class of known causes is medications, followed by infections and (rarely) cancers.



Douglas later spoke about his wife's illness, explaining that she lost her hair and finger nails and had to be kept out of sunlight for several months. Fortunately, Barbara recovered after a long period of illness.

Alice Flack, Douglas's mother, Sarah and Barbara enjoying afternoon tea in Granny Flack's garden (about 1949).

Lt Col. Flack's life in Southport did not last long, for on 3 November 1950 he was posted as Command Psychiatrist, Middle Eastern Command based in British Military Headquarters, Fayid, Egypt. The records indicate that the family departed by BOAC Stratocruiser aircraft from Stanstead Airport on 13 November 1950.



It is not clear from the military records why Lt Col Flack was posted to Moascar, a suburb of Ismailia, when he is recorded as being posted to Fayid, at the time, the location of General Headquarters Middle East Land Forces (GHQ MELF) in the Canal Zone some 50 km south of Ismailia. It seems likely that the hospital in which he was to do most of his work was located in Ismailia. The family moved into senior officers' quarters in suburban Moascar.

The map on the following page explains the locations referred to during Lt Col. Flack's postings in Egypt.

The family lived in Moascar until January 1952 when rioting broke out across Egypt in what many Egyptians call the second revolution (the first being the Egyptian Revolution of 1919). Riots broke out in Cairo, the rioters attacking foreign interests and businesses. The Egyptian "mob" burned Cairo targeting British interests, airline offices, hotels, cinemas, bars and department stores (such as Shepheard's Hotel, BOAC offices, and the British Turf Club) in particular. Unruly mobs also roamed the streets of Ismailia endangering British families. Later that year in July 1952, Abdul Nasser took power in a coup and King Farouk abdicated. These disturbances caused the Army to move all families, including the Flack family, to the safety of the Canal Zone, controlled by the British Army.

The married quarters in Fayid were relatively primitive compared to living conditions in and around Ismailia.

Married Families Quarters, Kensington Village, Fayid



Typical married quarters, Fayid 1952



Barbara, Sarah, Edmund and Bunty, Fayid



The view from the backyard in Fayid

Instead of the local Catholic Covent School in Ismailia, Bunty and Edmund now attended primary school operated by the Army.

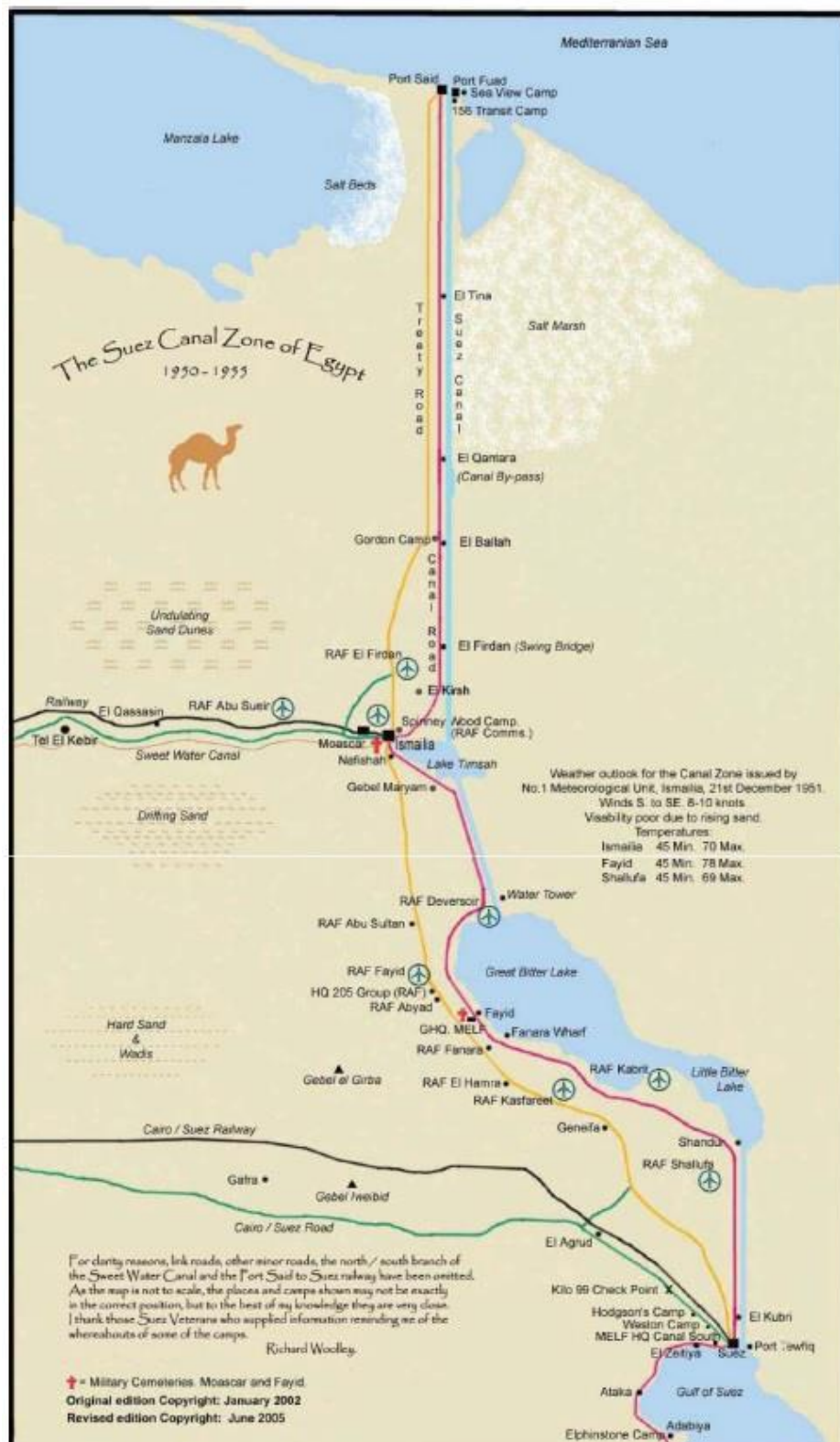
Although Kensington Village was located in the desert and not a very attractive place to live, it was secure and patrolled at night by British army patrols. There were plenty of opportunities for Douglas and the family to get away from the camp to the many recreation facilities along the Suez Canal Zone, including the British Army Yacht Club and the “French Club” on the Great Bitter Lake and further North at Lake Timsa.



During his posting to Egypt, Lt Col. Flack also visited British Army patients in Cyprus, Saudi Arabia and Adan.

In June 1953, the family attended the Armed Forces Coronation Parade at RAF Fanara.

Although now too old to play first class cricket or rugby, Douglas found time to referee Army rugby and an occasional game of social cricket.



Continuing disturbances in Egypt and attacks on British military families in the Canal Zone during the latter half of 1953, prompted the Army to evacuate all service families from Egypt to Cyprus. Subsequently a treaty was signed with Britain on 19 October 1954 for the evacuation of British troops from Egypt, to be completed over the following 20 months. Two years later, on 18 June 1956, Nasser raised the Egyptian flag over the Canal Zone, announcing the complete evacuation of British troops.

In Cyprus, Lt Col Flack continued duty as Adviser in Psychiatry Middle East Command but was now based in Nicosia, Cyprus's capital, travelling frequently between British Army bases in Cyprus and Egypt while the family lived in rented accommodation in Famagusta. The family was made very welcome by a local Greek family and life near the seaside with swimming and fishing was a welcome change from the tensions in Egypt.



Barbara Flack (on the right) with host family and children in Cyprus August 1953

On February 1954, Lt Col. Douglas Flack, Barbara and the tree children left Cyprus for the UK following Douglas's posting to Cambridge Military Hospital as Command Psychiatrist Southern Command. Married quarters were provided for the family briefly in Camberley and then at Frezenberg House, Beaumont Barracks Aldershot.



Frezenberg House, shortly before it was demolished in the early 1970s. The family lived in the left end of the building.

Sarah and Edmund in the garden at the rear of Frezenberg House



Helen May, Douglas and Barbara's fourth child, was born in January 1957.



Edmund, Helen and Bunty at Frezenberg House about June 1957

During the mid 1950's the British armed services were significantly down-sized and the prospects for promotion for (Temporary) Lt Col HED Flack were significantly reduced. Douglas's long-term friend, Lt Col. John Matheson, RAMC had been recently promoted Full Colonel and Director of Army Psychiatry filling the appointment to which he would have aspired, essentially limiting his prospects for continuing service in the RAMC. Lt Col. Flack's military record shows that his official date of retirement from the British Army is dated 19 May 1958.



Lt.Col.H.E.D.Flack's in Mess Dress 1957

P/Army No. 70214 N° 835028																					
Surname FLACK																					
Christian or Fore Name(s) HENRY EDWARD DOUGLAS	Rk. LT. COL.																				
Signature of Holder <i>[Signature]</i>	Sex M																				
Signature of Issuer <i>[Signature]</i>																					
Rk. of Issuer MAJOR	Date of Issue 28/1/1956																				
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2">Personal Description</th> <th colspan="2">Changes of Rank</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Height</th> <th>Colour</th> <th>New Rank</th> <th>Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>6 ft. 1 ins.</td> <td>LT. Blue</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Date of Birth 10/1/9/1897</td> <td>Colour of hair LT. Brown</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Other visible distinguishing marks SCAR, LT. ANGLE OF MOUTH</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Personal Description		Changes of Rank		Height	Colour	New Rank	Date	6 ft. 1 ins.	LT. Blue			Date of Birth 10/1/9/1897	Colour of hair LT. Brown			Other visible distinguishing marks SCAR, LT. ANGLE OF MOUTH			
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Lt.Col. H.E.D. Flack's ID Card issued April 1956

So ended Doctor Douglas Flack's 21 years continuous service in the British Army. He had served five years in the Territorial Army and 16 years in the Regular Army's Royal Army Medical Corps, seven of which had been overseas. He had been awarded a "Mentioned in dispatches" for his service in Burma during the war, reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel at aged just 31 and had been highly regarded for his humane and compassionate psychiatric practice by his military colleagues.



Lt Col. H.E.D.Flack's service medals and award

The 1939-45 Star; The Burma Star; The Victory Medal with Oak Leaf device of the "Mention in Despatches".

The family story suggests that Douglas had discussed retirement from the Army with the family during the 1957-58 Christmas – New Year holidays and had begun making applications for suitable civilian positions from early in 1958. The family tradition was that he was keen on the idea of finding a suitable appointment in either Australia or New Zealand. In early 1958, his application for the position of Senior Psychiatrist with the New South Wales Department of Health was accepted and planning for a new life in Australia began immediately.



Lt. Col. H.E.D. Flack, M.B., ChB., M.I.D. Royal Army Medical Corps. (Retired 19 May 1958)

Cricket and Rugby continued to capture his attention with trips to County cricket games and the occasional trip to Twickenham to watch the international rugby.



Bunty, Sarah, Barbara Flack and Edmund at the cricket in Camberley, about 1955.

A new life in Australia



The Flack family departed Tilbury Dock, London on 21st May 1958 and after a 3 weeks and 3 days voyage arrived in Fremantle, Perth on 13th June 1958 via the Suez Canal. The Oronsay then sailed on around southern Australia, arriving in Sydney 5 days later on 26th May 1958.

SS "Oronsay berthed in Sydney Harbour

Page 3

P.M. 1B.
First Schedule

OUT-GOING PASSENGERS

FIRST CLASS.

Name of Ship: S.S. "ORONSAY" _____

Date of Departure 21st May 1958 _____

Owner or Agent ORIENT LINE _____

Where Bound AUSTRALIA _____

NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS OF BRITISH COMMONWEALTH AND IRISH REPUBLICAN PASSENGERS EMBARKED AT THE PORT OF London (Tilbury)

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)		(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Passenger Number	Name of Passenger (Surname first)	Class of Ticket	Port at which Passenger has embarked in land	Sex (M or F)	Adults of 12 years and over	Children between 1 and 12 years	Married or Single (Indicate in the column to right)	Address in the United Kingdom	(Occupation), (Profession, calling, or kind of work done other than industry in which engaged)	Country of which a citizen or person entitled to passport (If citizen of U.K. and Colonies state also country of origin of passport)	Country of last permanent residence ^a (Residence for more than 12 months)	Country of intended future permanent residence ^b
RP 3252	DOHERTY	Mr. J. H.	1st Sydney	M	11/2/27		M	a/o Bank of N.S.W., Berkeley St. London W.1.	Secretary	Australia	Australia	Australia
	FERGUSON	Mrs. F. H.	"	F	11/2/26		M	same as above	Housewife	"	"	"
14999	FLACK	Mr. G. L.	" Sydney	M	10/3/17		M	Friesenberg House, Aldershot, Hants.	Medical Practitioner	England	England	Australia
	FLACK	Mrs. R.	"	F	27/12/15		M	"	Housewife	"	"	"
	FLACK	Miss R. A.	"	F	22/3/42		S	"	Daughter	"	"	"
	FLACK	Master R. D. ST	"	M	10/7/46		S	"	Son	"	"	"
	FLACK	Miss G. H.	"	F	11/3/47		S	"	Daughter	"	"	"
	FLACK	Miss H. H.	"	F	30/1/57		S	"	Daughter	"	"	"
8	FOURBERG	Mrs. V. T.	" Sydney	F	23/7/24		S	a/o Bank of N.S.W., Berkeley St. London W.1.	Housewife	Australia	Australia	Australia

Dr Gordon Fraser of the NSW Health Department met Dr Douglas Flack and the family off the ship and drove the family to Callan Park Mental Hospital in Rozelle where short term accommodation had been arranged. The family subsequently travelled by train to Goulburn in country New South Wales, where Dr Flack was to become Deputy Superintendent of Kenmore Mental Hospital.

The Deputy Superintendent's residence was on the right in this modern photo.

Kenmore Hospital was located about 5km north of central Goulburn, and 200 Km South West of Sydney. The hospital was set in an agricultural environment with extensive gardens and playing fields with views of the Great Dividing Range.

A regular school bus took the Flack children into Goulburn.





In 1960, Dr Flack was appointed Deputy Medical Superintendent of Parramatta Mental Hospital, in North Parramatta and the family moved to accommodation close by in Fennell Street, North Parramatta.

**The Flack family home in North Parramatta
(modern photograph)**



**Douglas Flack with daughters
Bunty, Helen and Sarah in
Parramatta c.1961**



Barbara Flack with (R-L) Bunty, Helen and Sarah



Sarah Flack with Helen and pet "Willie"

The following year, in 1961, Dr Douglas Flack took up a new appointment as Deputy Medical Superintendent at Lidcombe State Hospital and Home in the inner western suburbs of Sydney. The family moved to a residence in the hospital grounds off Joseph Street, Lidcombe.

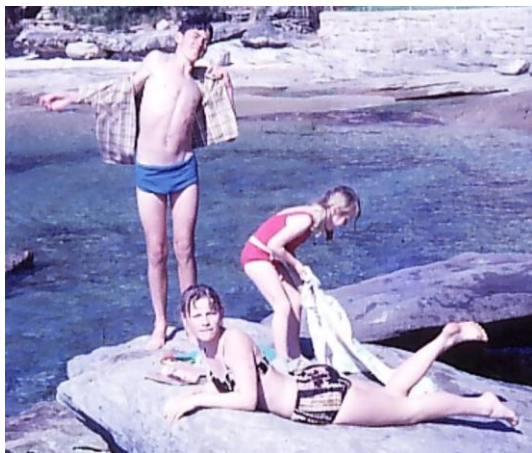
Douglas's father, Dr Frederick Henry Douglas Flack (1878-1961) died in Southport in December 1961, his mother, Alice Mary Flack (1890-1955) had died in Southport in 1955.



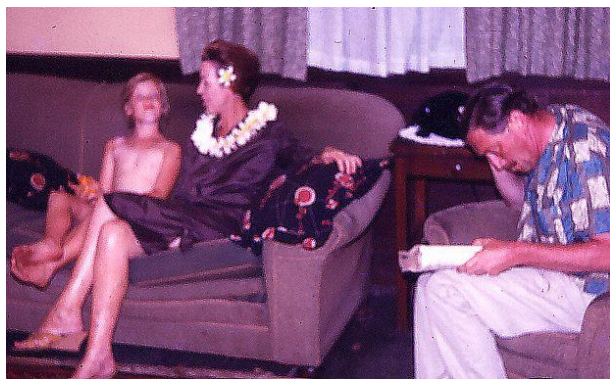
During the Douglas's time at Lidcombe, the family enjoyed many happy holidays at Bundeena, a holiday village on Port Hacking, and south of Sydney. Dr Flack and his family enjoyed a 26 foot cabin motor cruiser which was moored in Burraneer Bay, near Cronulla, also south of Sydney.



Douglas Flack with friends at Bundeena c.1962



Sarah and Helen Flack with a friend at Bundeena c.1963



Douglas, Barbara and Helen Flack at Bundeena c.1962



In 1965, Douglas and Barbara decided to return to the United Kingdom. Their eldest daughter Barbara (known as "Bunty") was already living in London, Edmund, their son was living in Melbourne and Sarah was engaged to be married to John Ball who lived in Sydney. This must have been a difficult decision. Although Douglas's parents had died some years ago, Barbara's parents were still alive, although getting quite elderly, and there must have been a strong desire to be with family in the UK at that time.

Before they left Australia however, they were present at the wedding of their daughter Sarah's wedding to John William Ball (1944 -) which took place at the Sydney Registry Office on 11 October 1965.



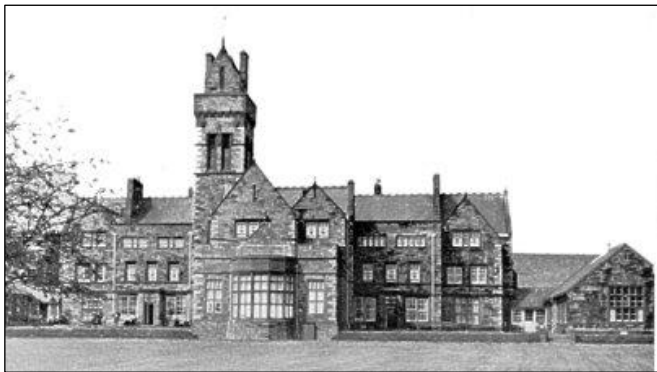
Wedding of John and Sarah Ball (nee Flack), 11 Oct 1965 at Sydney

From right to left, Douglas Flack, Pearl Ball, George Ball, Deidre Ball, Barbara Flack, Sarah Ball, Helen Flack and John Ball.

Going “home” to the United Kingdom

By mid-1965, Douglas and Barbara Flack had decided to return to the UK. Eldest daughter Barbara, aged 22, was living just outside London, their son Edmund, aged 19, was working and studying in Melbourne, their daughter Sarah, aged 18 was determined to stay in Australia to be with her boyfriend, student dentist John Ball and youngest daughter Helen, aged 8, was return to the UK with them. They decided to stay for Sarah and John’s wedding which took place at the Sydney Registry Office on 11 October 1965 but left shortly after for London by ship.

Upon arrival in the UK, Douglas and his family moved to the Isle of Man where Dr Flack took up a short-term position as Consultant Psychiatrist to Ballamona Hospital just outside Douglas. The family lived for a year in Strang, near the hospital.



Ballamona Hospital, Strang, Isle of Man (now demolished).



In mid-1966, the family was on the move again when Douglas took up a position as Consultant Psychiatrist at Old Manor Hospital, Salisbury. The family was provided with accommodation in the hospital grounds.

During this engagement, Dr Flack also conducted a private practice in Wimpole Street, London.



In early 1967, Dr Flack held the position of Consultant Psychiatrist at Holloway Sanatorium otherwise known as Virginia Water Psychiatric Hospital.

Douglas, Barbara and Helen, now aged 10, lived at Great Grove Farm, Ottershaw, SE of Virginia Water, Surrey. It was during this period that eldest daughter, Barbara (known as “Bunty”) married Bruce Paramor on 3 June 1967 in Virginia Water.

Holloway Sanatorium, located in 22 acres (9 ha) of aesthetically landscaped grounds near Virginia Water, Surrey, England, about 22 miles (35 km) south-west of Charing Cross, was officially opened by the Prince and Princess of Wales (later King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra) in 1885. The management of the Sanatorium passed to the NHS on 5 July 1948 which continued its hospital use with a catchment area including Weybridge, Walton, Chertsey, Egham and Virginia Water until closed in 1980.

Shortly after his sister's wedding, Edmund Flack (known as "Ted") (born 1946), visited the family from Australia. He was due to be called up for National Service on 12 July 1967 and had travelled to see the family before entering the service.



The family then moved again to The Larches, a house in the grounds of Exe Vale Hospital (Digby Branch), where Dr Flack took up the position of staff Psychiatrist in 1968.



Exe Vale Hospital (Digby Branch) Digby was located on the eastern edge of the city of Exeter in Devon, England.



Douglas and Barbara with Helen, Mark Paramor, Vicky Flack and Bunty Paramor (nee Flack) taken in c.1976

Digby Hospital, opened on 29 September 1886, was absorbed into the National Health Service when it was founded in July 1948. It became part of the Devon Mental Hospital Group, and eventually it became the Exe Vale Hospital with Exminster and Wonford House. It closed in 1987.

From 1972-73, Barbara Flack began to experience declining health and she was eventually diagnosed with cancer. During this period Barbara visited daughter Bunty who had returned to Western Australia with husband Bruce Paramor and their son, Mark. It was also a time during which Douglas was suffering

from depression and bouts of alcoholism which required repeated admissions to Osborn House on the Isle of White – then a Convalescent home for retired British Army Officers.

Both Bunty and Helen assisted their father in looking after their mother during the last months of Barbara's life.

Douglas' youngest daughter, Helen, was married to police officer, Michael Roach in 1979 and shortly after, on 22 November 1979, Barbara Flack, nee Hayward passed away and was buried at St Swithun's Church, Woodbury, Devon.

After his wife's death, Douglas Flack retired and left The Larches in Exe Vale Hospital to live with Helen and Michael Roach who were by then living in Wellington. He took several trips to Australia to visit Bunty, Edmund and Sarah and enjoyed being grandfather to Bunty (known as "Bee") Roach following her birth to Helen and Mike in 1984.



Family reunion in 1982 held at Wesley College Sydney University. Those present from Left to Right were:

Tiffany Flack, Michael Roach, Katherine Ball, Sarah Ball, Elizabeth Ball, Helen Roach, Dr Douglas Flack, Edmund Flack, Carole Flack, Hope Flack, Barbara Paramor, Mark Paramor, Alex Ball, John Ball, Andrew Ball

Whilst attending a Burma Veterans Reunion in Exeter on 4th March 1985, Henry Edmund Douglas Flack died as a result of a fall, aged 68.



Douglas was buried with his wife Barbara in Woodbury Cemetery, near Exeter.

Comment.

In the 1950s and 60's the quality of government services for the psychiatrically ill were poor. In Britain, significant reform was taking place during that period, but in Australia such services were still based on extensive use of locked asylums and sedative drugs. Dr Douglas Flack was always compassionate

towards those he treated and was often critical of the lack of research and innovation in the field. He was an avid reader and never stopped learning about the latest developments in his speciality.

His life story would not be complete without some reference to the damaging effect on his life of his war-time service and his subsequent over-indulgence of alcohol, but this must be balanced by noting that he at no time allowed it to get in the way of the kind and compassionate love for his family and dedicated service to the patients he served both in his distinguished Army career and later in government health services.

So ended a life of outstanding service and compassion. Colleagues on the staff at Digby Hospital remember Douglas with great fondness and admiration. They mention his great medical knowledge and sensible approach to treatment – but also his charm and wonderfully polite gentlemanly way of dealing with everyone – even the maddest of patients. One woman who was a senior charge nurse at Digby for many years said that the staff would always say – not to ask other Doctors if they had any questions or needed help - as they never gave them full answers - - just ask Dr Flack.

Application Number 1784139-1



QBDY 202431

CERTIFIED COPY OF AN ENTRY

DEATH		Entry No. 107
Registration district <u>Taunton Deane</u> Administrative area		
Sub-district <u>Wellsington</u> County of <u>Somerset</u>		
1. Date and place of death <u>Fourth March 1985</u> <u>Blue Mantle Hotel, Wellsington.</u>		
2. Name and surname <u>Honny Edmund FLACK</u>	3. Sex <u>Male</u>	4. Maiden surname of women who have married
5. Date and place of birth <u>10th September 1917</u> <u>Nelson, Somerset</u>		
6. Occupation and usual address <u>Retired Doctor (retired)</u> <u>The Rofers, 18, Wellasley Park</u> <u>Wellsington, Somerset</u>		
7. (a) Name and address of informant <u>Certificate received from H.R. Rose, Coroner for West Somerset</u> <u>Enquest held 20th March 1985</u>		
8. Cause of death <u>Ia. Multiple injuries including fractured skull and thoracic vertebra.</u> <u>II. Hiatus hernia - with evidence of reflux.</u> <u>Accidental.</u>		
9. I certify that the particulars given by me above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief		
10. Date of registration <u>Twenty second March 1985</u>	11. Signature of Registrar <u>K.J. Walsby</u> Deputy Registrar	

Clasical errors in spaces 5 and 6 corrected on 18th April 1985 by me K.J. Walsby Deputy Registrar in the presence of G.S.A. Hens Deputy Superintendent Registrar.
In N° 107 in spreadsheet 'Honny Edmund FLACK' read 'Honny Edmund Douglas FLACK' corrected on 16th May 1985 by me Kenneth John Walsby, Deputy Registrar, on the authority of a certificate from the coroner.

CERTIFIED to be a true copy of an entry in the certified copy of a register of Births, Still-births or Deaths in the District above mentioned. Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, under the Seal of the said Office on 13th November 2009

*If the Certificate is given from the original Register, the words "the certified copy of" are struck out.

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WARNING: A CERTIFICATE IS NOT EVIDENCE OF IDENTITY.

075 027108 24554 6609 3845956 023271



DAN

Descendants of Henry Edmund Douglas "Douglas" Flack

