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Directors of Veterinary Services in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan: Harry Bone (Acting Director June-September 1924), 5 December 1919-5 December 1926

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Abstract

Harry Bone was born in South Shields in northeast England where his father was a harbour pilot. He stayed with his parents until he was at least 19 years old. In 1901 he was an architect's pupil but did not do that for long as he graduated from the Royal Veterinary College in London and was admitted as a Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MRCVS) on 21 December 1906. He was commissioned into the Army Veterinary Corps as a Lieutenant on 13 February 1907. Bone served in the Army Veterinary Service/ Army Veterinary Department at various stations in South Africa from 1908 to 1913. He was promoted to Captain on 23 May 1912. Bone served in Norwich in eastern England during 1914 but landed in France on 18 August 1914, shortly after the outbreak of World War I. He served in the Veterinary Service and on the Staff of Field Marshall Haig, was Mentioned in Despatches at least three times, was awarded the Military Cross and received the 1914 Star with Clasp, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal with Oak Leave badge (for his Mentions in Despatches). In 1919 he was seconded to the Egyptian Army and served in Sudan from 5 December 1919 to 5 December 1926. From 1919 to 1924 he was Veterinary Inspector in various provinces combating such bovine diseases as rinderpest, contagious pleuro-pneumonia and trypanosomosis and African Horse Sickness. He was briefly Acting Director of Veterinary Services in 1924. When the British War Officer stopped seconding officers to the British Army he stayed on in Sudan as Principal Veterinary Officer in the Egyptian Army, serving with the Sudan Defence Force. He later served in India where he was Deputy Assistant Director of Veterinary Services, Northen Command, at Dera Ismail Khan in Waziristan. Lieutenant Colonel Harry Bone retired from the army on 24 May 1934 and died in Scotland in 1948.

Keywords

Royal Army Veterinary Corps; First World War; South Africa; India; Animal diseases

Introduction

During the early part of the nineteenth century, Sudan's Turkish/Egyptian rulers regarded the country as a source of slaves and gold and gradually annexed the whole area. Following 50 years of misrule a rebellion inspired by the fanatical religious leader, the Mahdi, culminated in defeat of the Egyptian forces at Khartoum in 1885 and the end of foreign rule. The Khalifa Abdullahi, who succeeded the Mahdi after the latter's death, reigned by tyranny, cruelty and oppression for the next 13 years. The country was then reconquered in 1898 by British and Egyptian troops under the command of General Herbert Kitchener. An Anglo-Egyptian Condominium was established the following year. Over the preceding year's famine, disease and internecine warfare had reduced the population from over 30 million to less than 2 million. There was a legacy of suspicion and hatred, little traditional tribal authority survived and the new (military) government's first task was to restore law and order and provide public services [1,2].

The fledgling veterinary service was primarily concerned with maintaining the health of the thousands of horses, donkeys, mules and camels that ensured government's mobility and communications. It soon became clear, however, that a market existed in Egypt for Sudan's livestock. The task of organising an export trade fell to the Principal Veterinary Officer and his staff. From the beginning, trade was continually interrupted by outbreaks of rinderpest which became widespread in 1905. Over time the animal health emphasis shifted from transport to production and trade. In the Condominium period from 1901 to 1956 twelve persons served as heads of the Sudan Veterinary Services. Harry Bone was the sixth to hold the office and the last Royal Army Veterinary Corps officer to do so.

Early life, 1882-1906

Harry Bone was born in northeast England on 10 January 1882 [3]. He was the son of John Bone, a harbour pilot by trade, and his wife Elizabeth Ann, formerly Purvis.

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Harry was baptized on 9 March in the year of his birth at West Street Chapel in South Shields [4]. In 1891 Harry (whose name on the census return was given as Henry) was living with his mother and father at Number 10 Lawe Cottages, Beacon Street in Westoe, South Shields, the youngest of four children in the household and described as a scholar [5]. At the same address in 1901 as in 1891 Harry was now the second of two children of his parents and had employment as an Architect's Pupil [6].

He was not, however, to be in such a mundane job for long. He must have given up that position soon after the 1901 census because he graduated from the Royal Veterinary College, London with Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (B Vet Med) and became a Member of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (MRCVS) on 21 December 1906 [7].

Army Veterinary Service: United Kingdom, South Africa and the First World War 1907-1919

Shortly after his graduation Harry Bone was commissioned, on 13 February 1907, as a Lieutenant in the Army Veterinary Department [8]:

> The Gentleman Harry Bone, to be Lieutenant in succession to Major John B. Savage, retired, on retired pay.

As was the case with most military vets Bone, was posted for some time at the huge Army installations at Aldershot [9]. Early in 1908, however, Lieutenant Bone was posted to South Africa where he served from 1 February 1908 to 7 February 1913 [10,11][1]. In 1909 he was serving at Standerton on the Vaal River [12] on the border of what were then the independent Boer Republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free state. A move soon followed to Bloemfontein [13,14], the former capital of the Orange Free State but in 1910 the capital of the Free State of the Republic of South Africa. He was again moved to a new location in 1911 when he was at Potshefstroom, to the southwest of Johannesburg. Bone appears in the British 1911 census in a section dedicated to Overseas Military personnel as Harry Bone, Lieutenant aged 29 located in the 10th and 11th Sections of the Army Veterinary Corps: he was actually in Potshefstroom [15]. A further move followed in 1912 to the town of Harrismith [16][2]. It was at this period, presumably because he had served the statutory five years service, that Bone was promoted to Captain [17]:

> ARMY VETERINARY SERVICE.
>
> *Army Veterinary Corps,* The undermentioned Lieutenants to be Captains: —
>
> Dated 23rd May, 1912 : —
>
> Harry Bone.

Bone returned to England and was stationed for a time in Norwich [18,19]. On the outbreak of World War I, however, he was very quickly posted to France where he arrived on 18 August 1914. He was very quickly in Action and was Mentioned in Despatches, along with thousands of other people of all services, by the Commander in Chief of the British Forces as early as November 1914 [20][3].

> *War Office,*
>
> *17th February,* 1915.
>
> The following despatch has been received by the Secretary of State for War from the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, British Forces
>
> in the Field: —
>
> 14th January, 1915.
>
> MY LORD,—
>
> In accordance with the last paragraph, of my Despatch of the 20th November, 1914, I have the honour to bring to notice names of those whom I recommend for gallant and distinguished service in the field.
>
> I have the honour to be,
>
> Your Lordship's most obedient Servant,
>
> J. D. P. FRENCH,
>
> Field-Marshal, Commanding-in-chief,
>
> The British Army in the Field.
>
> ARMY VETERINARY CORPS.
>
> Bone, Captain H.

Bone was transferred from the veterinary services to the staff in 1916 and received a temporary promotion to the rank of Major, with seniority dating to 23 May 1912. He was soon Mentioned in Despatches again, in November 1916 [23] and April 1917 [24], on both occasions by the then Commander in Chief, General and subsequently Field Marshall Douglas Haig:

> *War Office,*
>
> *2nd January,* 1917.
>
> The following despatch has been received by the Secretary of State for War from General Sir Douglas Haig, G.C.B., Commander-in-Chief of the British Armies in France: —
>
> *General Headquarters,*
>
> *13th November,* 1916.
>
> Sir,
>
> I have the honour to submit a list of names of those officers, ladies, non-commissioned officers and men, serving, or who have served, under my command, whose distinguished and gallant services and devotion to duty I consider deserving of special mention.
>
> I have the honour to be,
>
> Sir,
>
> Your obedient Servant,
>
> D. HAIG,
>
> General.
>
> Commander-in-Chief,
>
> The British Armies in France.
>
> ARMY VETERINARY CORPS
>
> Bone, Capt. H.

[1]Surprisingly he is not listed in a compilation of Veterinary Surgeons who served in South Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth century's [11].

[2]Harrismith in the Free State Province of South Africa is about midway between Johannesburg, some 300 km to the northwest, and Durban on the Indian Ocean coast to the southeast. The town is named for Sir Harry Smith, a 19th century British governor of the Cape Colony. The town of Ladysmith in present day KwaZulu-Natal and named after Sir Harry Smith's wife is about 80 km to the east. Harrismith was a major British military base in the Boer War of 1899-1902. Ladysmith was the scene of several battles, was besieged for almost four months before being relieved by a British column that included Winston Churchill who had already been captured by the Boers and then made a daring and much celebrated escape.

[3]Major Arthur Olver [21] and Captain Leonard Danels [22] who both served as Directors of Veterinary Services in Sudan are mentioned in the same despatch.

War Office,

15th May, 1917.

The following despatch has been received by the Secretary of State for War from Field-Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, G.C.B., Commander-in-Chief of the British Armies in France.

General Headquarters,

9th *April,* 1917.

Sir,—I have the honour to submit a list* of names of those officers, ladies, non-commissioned officers, and men, serving, or who have served, under my command, whose distinguished and gallant services and devotion to duty I consider deserving of special mention.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

D. HAIG,

Field-Marshal,

Commander-in-Chief, The British

Armies in France.

STAFF.

Bone, Capt. (temp. Maj.) H., A.V.C:

During 1917 the powers that be decided that a campaign medal, to be known as the 1914 or Mons Star, could be awarded to personnel of all ranks who had served in France or Flanders from the outbreak of war on 5 August 1914 to 30 November 1914. In addition those who had actually been under fire or within sound of the guns were eligible for a clasp to this medal. Bone's superior officers confirmed on 12 December 1917 that he was entitled to the medal and the clasp [25]. It was later confirmed that he would also receive the War Medal and the Allied Victory Medal, the latter with oak leaves "emblem" for being mentioned in despatches [Figure 1]. In the meantime he had been awarded a Military Cross in the King's Birthday Honours in June of 1918 [Figure 2] [26][4].

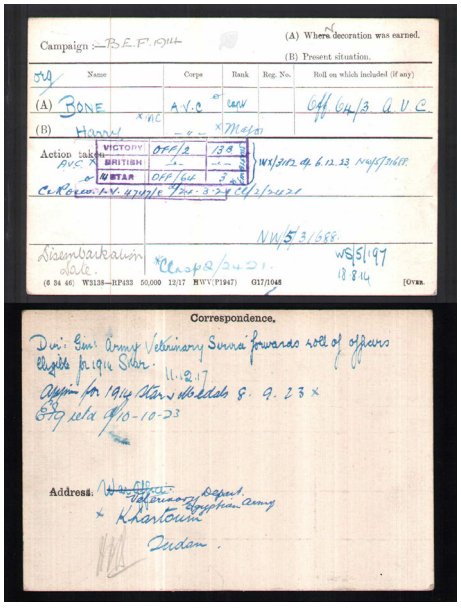


Figure 1: Medal Index Card for Harry Bone with annotations and authorizations for actions

Figure 2: Examples of Gallantry and Campaign medals awarded to Harry Bone, RAVC (Military Cross; 1914 Star with Clasp for actually being under enemy fire; War Medal; Allied Victory Medal with Oak Leaves for being Mentioned in Despatches)

Sudan 6 December 1919-5 December 1926

From being a Temporary Major in France and Flanders at the end of the war Harry Bone was promoted to substantive Major in the Reserve of Officers on 19 November 1919 Reserve of Officers [27]. The promotion was in all probability because of his imminent attachment to the Egyptian Army on 6 December 1919 and his posting to the Sudan Veterinary Service, which he joined on 17 December 1919, with the rank of Bimbashi [Table 1] [28][5].

Bone was first posted to Wad Medani some 140 km south of Khartoum. It is the capital of Al Gezira Province and the centre of an enormous cotton growing area that was nascent in 1920 and already beginning to become an important dry season livestock feed resource from cotton by-products. Rather quickly, however, in the context of the veterinary services Major Bone was promoted to Assistant Director, elevated in local rank to Kaimakan and resident in Khartoum. He was Acting Director of Veterinary Services for a short period in 1924, probably as a consequence of the British Army Council's decision to terminate the secondment of RAVC officers to the Sudan. Bone was, indeed the last serving military officer to be Director of Veterinary Services. Many officers resigned their commissions and remained in Sudan as pensionable civilian officials whereas others remained in the British Army but were seconded as Veterinary Inspectors to the Sudan Defence Force. Bone was one of these latter and served with the SDF from 17 January 1925 to 5 December 1926 when he left the Sudan [Table 1]. For part of this period, from 20 June 1926 to 6 December 1926, he was Principal Veterinary Officer of the Sudan Defence Force [29].

During Bone's time in Sudan the Veterinary Service had shifted from its original role as a medical service for military and transport animals and become a more recognizable "large animal" practice serving the health problems of cattle, sheep, goats and camels. Before Bone's arrival the veterinary services had been reorganized, in 1913, in to four sections. One was the Veterinary Survey Section

[4]No citations accompanied the award of a Military Cross in a King's New Year's or Birthday honours list: it could be that some of these awards were for a series of acts rather than a single piece of heroism.

[5]Bimbashi was an Egyptian Army rank equivalent to a British Major: officers seconded from Britain to Egypt were invariably given local ranks more senior than their British substantive ones. Kaimakan to which rank Bone was rapidly promoted was equivalent to a Lieutenant Colonel in the British Army and also entitled the holder to the courtesy title of Bey (Sir).

Date	Appointment	Rank and name	Location	Notes
17-December-1919				
1-April-1920	Veterinary Inspector	El Bimbashi H Bone MC	Wad Medani	
1-April-1923	Assistant Director	(Major) El Kaimakan H Bone Bey MC	Khartoum	
1-July-1923	Assistant Director	(Major) El Kaimakan H Bone Bey MC	Khartoum	Due from leave 5 August
1-April-1924	Assistant Director	(Major) El Kaimakan H Bone Bey MC	Khartoum	For leave
17-January-1925				Transfer to Sudan Defence Force
15-December-1926				Left Sudan

Table 1: Outline of the career of Harry Bone in Sudan , 1919-1926 [28]

(later the Research Section) because it had become obvious that if a healthy livestock industry were to be established, adequate research and laboratory facilities must be provided. It was a slow start, however, owing to the impossibility of obtaining a bacteriologist and the service was initially limited to routine diagnostic work. The appointment of a Veterinary Research Officer in 1922 meant that real research and finding preventative and curative measures for the major livestock diseases could be pursued in earnest. Attempts were also made to render livestock more productive. A dairy farm outside Khartoum imported a half-bred Shorthorn bull to cross on local cows. A quarter-bred Shorthorn sire was also used but was replaced in 1919 by a Damietta from Egypt. A quarter-bred Devon was introduced in 1921 but died the next year. The progeny of these exotic sires showed improvement over indigenous cattle. Merai rams were brought from Egypt for upgrading Sudanese sheep. A programme to breed jennets (a horse-donkey cross as opposed to the usual mule from a donkey-horse cross) was begun with a pony stallion from Cyprus. This programme was terminated in 1921 when it became obvious that the Sudanese preferred donkeys to hybrids. Government departments, officials and the Army were still, however, largely dependent on animals for transport (motor vehicles were not in general use until 1927) and there were efforts to improve native horses which were undersized and of bad conformation. Horse Shows were held to encourage and interest the people. Mortality, mostly from African horse sickness, was heavy among imported sires, especially in Kordofan, and in 1921 the first indigenous stallions were introduced there with some success [30-32].

After Sudan and later life 1926-1948

Following his departure from Sudan Major Harry Bone saw service in India. In 1929 he was Deputy Assistant Director of Veterinary Services of Northern Command based at Dera Ismail Khan in Waziristan District (now in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, Pakistan with seniority dated 14 March 1929). In 1933 Bone was based at Razmak in Waziristan now also in Pakistan [33]. Major Bone retired from the Army on 20 May 1934 [29,34]:

War Office,

22nd May, 1934.

REGULAR ARMY.

ROYAL ARMY VETERINARY CORPS.

Maj. H. Bone, M.C., retires on ret. pay.

20th May 1934.

He took advantage of his retirement to do some leisure travelling. On 7 December 1934 Harry Bone of 5 Higher York Street, Newcastle on Tyne [Figure 3] boarded the SS Ingoma of Harrison Line travelling First Class to Demerara in British Guiana [35]. He was to visit his brother, a Civil Servant in the then British Colony. He was there for about three months before returning with his brother him and his wife on the SS van Hensserlaker of Royal Netherlands Steamship Company which docked at Plymouth 19 March 1935. Harry's address was given as Glyn Mills, Kirkland House, Whitehall [36][6].

Figure 3: 5 Higher York Street, Newcastle on Tyne (third from right), the home of Harry Bone in 1934

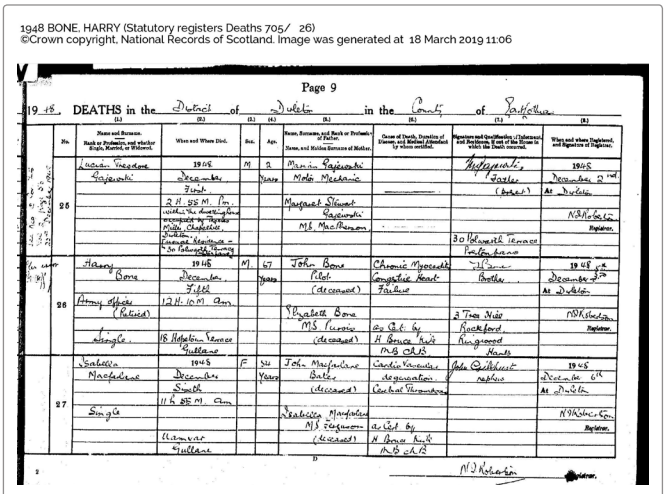
Retiring from the Army was not always straightforward. Retired officer Major Harry Bone in receipt of retired pay and on the Reserve of Officers was temporarily re-employed, first at Newcastle-on-Tyne and then at Aldershot with the rank of Acting Lieutenant Colonel with seniority dated 18 February 1936 [37].

Little is known of Harry Bone at any later date but he continued to live in the Newcastle area. In 1939 he was living, a Retired Army Officer, at 6 Gowan Terrace Newcastle-on-Tyne in the household of Douglas Cochrane, a Shipbroker, and his wife Florence along with Cochrane's nephew Rae and a female domestic servant [38]. Harry Bone's death occurred at 18 Hopetoun Terrace, Gullane, East Lothian [Figure 4] on 15 December 1948 [39]. The demise was due to chronic myocarditis and congestive heart failure. It is not known why he was at that address but it was probably only a temporary stay as the death was reported to the Registrar by Harry's brother who was living in Hampshire at the time [Figure 5]. Probate of Bone's effects valued at

[6]Glyn, Mills & Co was a private banking company with antecedents dating to 1753. The company built a prestigious new head office in Lombard Street in 1933 but with war looming the private partnership status and relatively small size made it unviable and in 1939 it was acquired by The Royal Bank of Scotland. In 1969 RBS was restructured and Glyn, Mills became a direct subsidiary of a new holding company, National & Commercial Banking Group and in 1970 merged with other RBS subsidiaries to form Williams & Glyn's Bank.

£2687 19s 3d was granted at Newcastle on 17 February at Newcastle-on-Tyne to Elizabeth Friend, a widow whose relationship to Bone has not been established [40].

Figure 4: 18 Hopetoun Terrace, Gullane, East Lothian (extreme left), and the site of Harry Bone's death in 1948



1948 BONE, HARRY (Statutory registers Deaths 705/ 26)
©Crown copyright. National Records of Scotland. Image was generated at 18 March 2019 11:06

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19 48. DEATHS in the District of Dalkeith in the County of Midlothian

No.	Name and Surname. Rank or Profession, and whether Single, Married, or Widowed.	When and Where Died.	Sex.	Age.	Name, Surname, and Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Cause of Death, Duration of Disease, and Medical Attendant.	Signature and Qualification of Informant. Name and Residence, if out of the House in which the Death occurred.	When and where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
26	Lucian Theodore Rajewski	1948 December First 2.11. 55 M. Pm.	M	2 Years	Marian Rajewski Metal Mechanic Margaret Stewart Rajewski M.S. MacPherson		Rajewski Father (present)	1948 December 27 At Dalkeith NSRobertson Registrar.
		Middy Chatterton Sudden Emanuel Neotheus = Do Naturally Causing					30 Polmonth Terrace Portobello	
28	Harry Bone Single.	1948 December Fifth 12.H. 10 M. am. 18 Hopetoun Terrace Gullane	M	47 Years	John Bone Pilot (deceased) Elizabeth Bone M.S. Tennis (deceased)	Chronic Myocarditis Congestive Heart Failure	Brother 2 Tron Nook Rockford Ringwood Hants	1948 December 5th At Dalkeith NSRobertson Registrar.
	Attorney Officer (Retired)							
27	Isabella Macfarlane Single	1948 December Sixth 11 H. 55 M. am. Mariner Gullane	F	54 Years	John Macfarlane Baker (deceased) Isabella Macfarlane M.S. Ferguson (deceased)	Cardio Vascular Degeneration Coronal Thrombosis	John Gulliland Publican	1948 December 6th At Dalkeith NSRobertson Registrar.

Figure 5: Copy of official death record of Harry Bone

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