



A CHRISTENING GIFT

From my Godfather, Major General
John Mackenzie Matheson OBE
(1912-2003)

My Godfather, John Mackenzie Matheson was a friend of my father, who, at the time when I was christened in 1946, was also a Major in the Royal Army Medical Corps in Edinburgh. He went on to become a Major General and serve as Honorary Surgeon to the Queen from 1969-1971

by Ted Flack, PhD, JP

A Christening gift from my Godfather John Mackenzie Matheson

When I was confirmed in the Church of England at All Saints Church Paramatta on 18 July 1962, just after my 16th birthday, my father Dr H.E.D. "Douglas" Flack drew my attention to my Christening at St Margaret's Chapel, Edinburgh Castle on 27th July 1946.

He explained that as an officer posted to Headquarters Scottish Command in 1946, he was entitled to use St Margaret's Chapel (Citadel Chapel) Edinburgh Castle for family ceremonies such as christenings and weddings.

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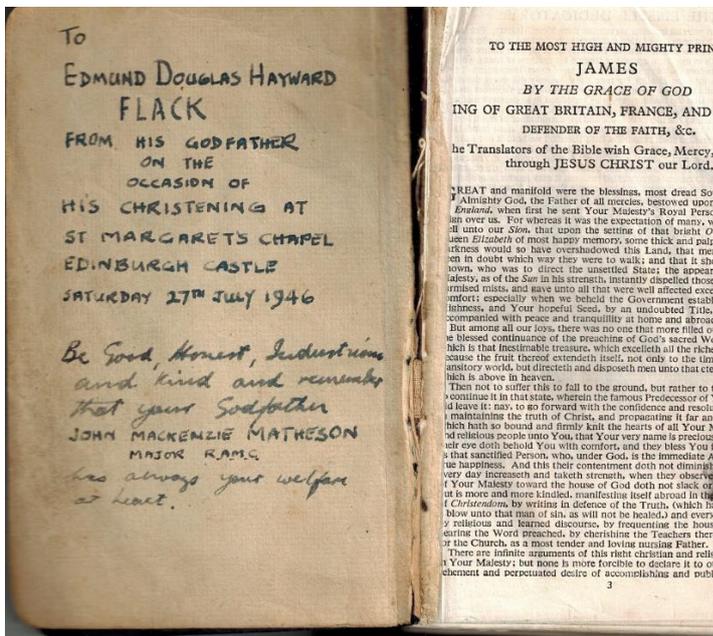
Baptism Solemnized in the Citadel Chapel of St. Margaret, in Edinburgh. in the Year 1946

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	Barbara	31 Dughorn Loan, Colinton, Edinburgh 13.	Army Officer.	Rev. L.B. Simpson, c.f.
No. 512							

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

By me,  *James* c.f.





To
Edmund Douglas Hayward Flack From his godfather on the occasion of his christening at St Margarets Chapel Edinburgh Castle Saturday 27th July 1946.

Be Good, Honest, Industrious, and kind and remember that your Godfather John Mackenzie Matheson Major RAMC has always your welfare at heart.

Several years later, I noticed the note on the inside cover of my Christening bible. The name didn't mean anything to me, my father simply stating that he was a colleague and family friend at the time. He explained that different army postings meant that there had been little contact after that.

DIOCESE OF SYDNEY



Edmund Douglas Hayward Flack
CONFIRMED
BY
Bishop M.L. Loane.

in All Saints' Church
on 18th July 1962

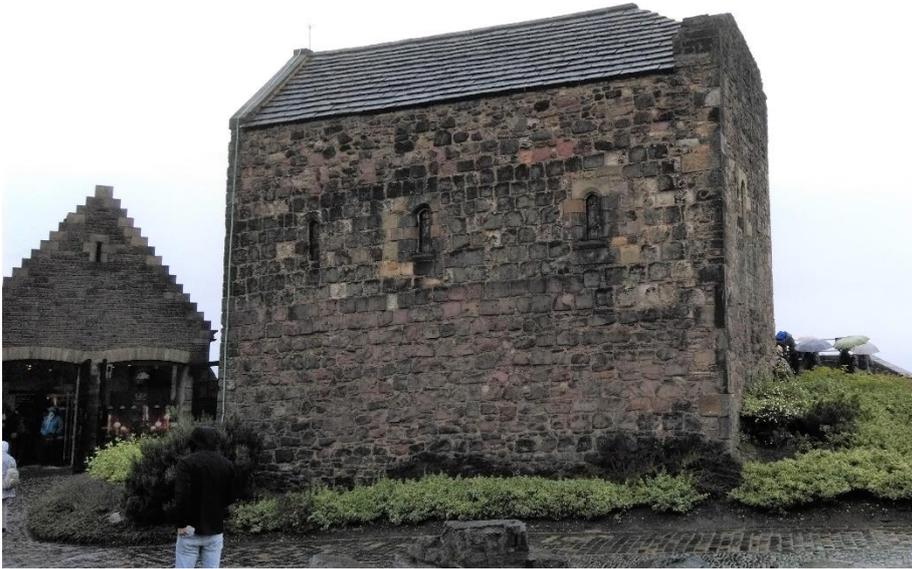
I HAVE this day, of my own accord, in the presence of God and His Church, promised to be Christ's servant. May God the Holy Spirit help me to keep my promise.

Signed

DEFEND, O Lord, Thy child with Thy heavenly grace, that I may continue Thine for ever, and daily increase in Thy Holy Spirit more and more, until I come to Thine everlasting kingdom. Amen.



Barbara Flack holding Edmund, Army Chaplain L.B. Impson and Major Douglas Flack with Bunty Flack outside St Margarets Chapel Edinburgh Castle on the occasion of Edmund's Christening on 27th July 1946.





The Alter in St Margarets Chapel, Edinburgh Castle



Edmund D.H. Flack revisits St Margarets Chapel in 2018

By 2018, my Christening bible was in poor condition and so I arranged for a professional bookbinder to renovate it and it is now a well-care-for part of my family history.

The following obituary is copied from the British Medical Journal published on 19th February 2004

Matheson, John Mackenzie (1912 - 2003)

Identifier:

RCS: E000100

Full Name:

Matheson, John Mackenzie

Date of Birth:

6 August 1912

Place of Birth:

Gibraltar

Date of Death:

9 November 2003

Occupation:

General surgeon

Titles/Qualifications:

OBE 1950

TD

MRCS and FRCS 1962

MB ChB Edinburgh 1936

MD 1945

MRCP 1939

LRCP 1962

FRCP 1972

FRCS Edinburgh 1946

Details:

John Matheson was a former professor of military surgery at the Royal Army Medical College, Millbank, London. He was born in Gibraltar on 6 August 1912, the son of John Matheson, the then manager of the Eastern Telegraph station, and Nina. The family later moved on to Malta and then to Port Said. John was educated at the Lycée Francaise and then at George Watson's College in Scotland, where he had some problems using English, being more fluent in Arabic and French. He had an outstanding academic career and managed to finance much of his education through bursaries and scholarships. He studied medicine at Edinburgh University, where he was captain of athletics, and qualified in 1936. He then did research into the treatment of tuberculosis.

He had joined the Territorial Army at university, so that, at the beginning of the second world war, he was quickly mobilised into the 23 Scottish General Hospital. On the first day at the new hospital, at the newly requisitioned Peebles Hydro, he met Agnes, known as 'Nan', the nursing sister who became his wife three years later. He saw service in Palestine, the Middle East and North Africa, where he was largely responsible for the organisation of medical services in the Tunisian campaign, before and after El Alamein, for which he was mentioned in despatches. He stayed with the 8th Army as they advanced into Italy.

After the war, he remained in the RAMC and gained his FRCS as a clinical tutor in the surgical professorial unit in Edinburgh. For the next 36 years he served as a surgical consultant all over the world. From 1948 to 1950, he was medical liaison officer to the surgeon general of the US Army and chief of the surgical section at the

Walter Reed Hospital, Washington. For this work he was awarded an OBE. From 1952 to 1953, he was in Canada and Austria. He then spent three years in Egypt in the Suez Canal zone. From 1961 to 1964, he was in Cyprus, and then spent a year, from 1967 to 1968, in Singapore, Hong Kong and Nepal. He also consulted in hospitals throughout the UK. His final posting in the Army was as commandant of the Army Medical College at Millbank and professor of military surgery. He was an honorary surgeon to the Queen from 1969 to 1971. During his time in the Army he was largely responsible for introducing central sterile supply into medical services and made important contributions to the surgical management of gunshot wounds.

On his retirement, he became postgraduate dean of medicine at Edinburgh University, a job he enjoyed for nearly 10 years. He was President of the Military Surgeons' Society, the RAMC Association, honorary colonel of 205 Scottish General Hospital, and Chairman of the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary Samaritans' committee and Scottish committee member of the Ex-Services Mental Welfare Society.

He was a senior elder of the kirk of Greyfriars. His wife, Nan, predeceased him in 1995, but he continued to be active, taking classes in cookery, computing and Gaelic. He had an infectious sense of humour, and his genuine compassion and unflinching optimism made him a much-admired colleague. He died on 9 November 2003. One daughter survives him.

Royal College of Surgeons of England

Sources:

BMJ 2004 328 467, with portrait

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Publication Date:

19 October 2005

Collection:

Plarr's Lives of the Fellows