Sir Harold Stevens ICS of Bengal

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My friend Ian Stein lives and writes from the small, picturesque, cathedral town of Dunblane, Scotland. He is aware of my keen academic interest and search for biographical information and vintage photographs of Britons who had once served in the British Raj in India as members of the prestigious Indian Civil Service (ICS), of the Bengal cadre. Of special interest to me are those British ICS officers who had spent a substantial part of their service career in the then East Bengal during the Raj and later even in East Pakistan having opted to serve in Pakistan after the partition of the subcontinent. A typical case in point would be Stephen Benedict Hatch-Barnwell, ICS. The University Press limited (UPL), Dhaka, published his memoirs, "The Last Guardian-Memoirs of Hatch-Barnwell- ICS of Bengal" in 2011. It was the first book by a British ICS officer of the Bengal cadre, ever to be published from Bangladesh. Although I had initiated its publication by bringing the unedited manuscript from London from Stephen's son Philip, a friend of mine, chosen UPL as the publisher and coordinated the publication, it was actually the untiring efforts of Mr. Khalid Shams, a distinguished former civil servant, who not only meticulously proof-read and edited the manuscript, but had painstakingly put it all together into a book form prior to its publication. Take it from me, If not for his selfless dedication the book would not have made it to the press. Back to Ian Stein again.

Ian belongs to a family of an "old India hand". His maternal grandfather, Sir Harold Samuel Eaton Stevens, KCIE, CSI, CIE, MC, had served in British India as an ICS officer, Bengal cadre. Sir Harold was born in Bareilly, now in Uttar Pradesh, India, on 29 November, 1892, and baptized there on 6 March, 1893. He was the son of Harry George Raikes Stevens and Amy Sarah (nee Eaton). Harry was a Regimental Schoolmaster in the Ist Hampshire Regiment and had also served in Mauritius and Nova Scotia, Canada.

Sir Harold was sent to George Heriot's School, Edinburgh, Scotland, in 1906. In 1910 he held the rank of a lieutenant in the school's Officer Cadet Corps. He left school in 1910, and joined the Edinburgh University to study Arts and Science. But he did not complete his degree. For he volunteered in the British Army at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 and was awarded his commission in August, 1914, as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 12th Battalion, The Royal Scots. He served in the The Royal Scots throughout the Great War, rising to the rank of major. He won a Military Cross (MC) in 1916 for 'conspicuous gallantry ', and the French decorations of: 'Croix-de-Guerre with Palme' in 1918 for 'showing great valour, courage and initiative', and was also appointed to the 'Chevalier Legion D'Honneur in 1918 for 'good work on the field of battle.' He was wounded twice, once in the battle of Loos in 1915 and again prior to the battle of Somme in 1916, both in France. He resigned his army commission in 1920 and joined the Bengal cadre of the Indian Civil



Portrait of Sir Harold,Calcutta, 1935.