

Reference code: GB165-0789

Title: Thomas Wigan Collection

Name of creator: Wigan, Thomas Keble (1892-1957) Barrister-at-Law, Lincoln's Inn.

Dates of creation of material: 23 Aug 1920 – 1 Nov 1920

Level of description: Fonds

Extent: 1 file (6 items)

Biographical history: Wigan, Thomas Keble (1892-1957) Barrister-at-Law, Lincoln's Inn. Born 22 November 1892, second son of Charles and Cecilia Wigan. Educated at Radley College; Christ Church, Oxford. 1914-1919: Served with the 1/6th Battalion, Devonshire Regiment in India and Mesopotamia; promoted from Second Lieutenant to Lieutenant then Captain in 1916; mentioned in despatches twice. 1919-1921: Assistant Political Officer, Mesopotamia; July-October 1920: in the siege of Kufa. 1920: General Service Medal 1920, with clasp for Iraq. 1921-1923: Under Secretary to the High Commissioner of Iraq, Baghdad. 1925: Called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn, London. 1940: Served in Home Guard. 1941-1945: Served in the British Military Administration in Eritrea and Dodecanese (Royal Army Ordnance Corps), and then as a civilian judge in the High Court of Abyssinia under Emperor Haile Selassie. 1947: Justice of the Peace, Surrey. 1956: Bencher of Lincoln's Inn. Married, 1927, Katharine Ruth Sims Williams – 1 daughter, 1 son. Died 6 March 1957.

Scope and content: Six letters written by Thomas Wigan to his family during the siege of Kufa in Mesopotamia (Iraq) in 1920. The letters describe fighting during the siege including shelling, as well as documenting dwindling supplies, especially of tobacco and cigarettes, as well as food. The letters describe the difficulties of isolation, rumours and a lack news of the military situation, as well as airdrops of supplies. The last two letters include an account of the relief of the siege, as well as Thomas Wigan's views on the political and military situation in Iraq.

System of arrangement: Chronological

Access conditions: Open

Language of material: English

Conditions governing reproduction: No restrictions on copying or quotation other than statutory regulations and preservation concerns

Custodial history: In the possession of Thomas Wigan and then his family

Immediate source of acquisition: Received as a gift from Eila Davis on 3 May 2024

Related Units of Description:

In MEC Archive

- GB165-0058 Sir Iltud Clayton Collection: Box 1 File 3 Typescript description of the siege of Kufa in 1920 by Major Norbury.
- GB165-0341 Sir Percy Cox Collection: Correspondence, mainly incoming, covering Sir Percy Cox's career between 1895 and 1937.
- GB165-0229 Philby Collection: 1/3/2 Second service in Iraq including papers relating to the rebellion 1920-1921.

Finding aids: In Guide; Handlist

Archivist's note: Fonds and item level description created by Debbie Usher 9 May 2024.
Biographical history supplied by Phil Loder.

ITEM LEVEL DESCRIPTION OF THE THOMAS WIGAN COLLECTION

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|---|--|--------------|----------|
| 1 | <u>Letter to Dick Wigan (brother)</u>
Letter from Thomas Wigan to his brother Dick [Charles Richard Wigan] on the 35 th day of the siege. The letter includes a description of a gun battle, as well as commenting on the difficulty of their isolation. | 23 Aug 1920 | 2 sheets |
| 2 | <u>Letter to Cecilia Wigan (mother)</u>
Letter from Thomas Wigan to his mother [Cecila Wigan]. The letter describes a double bombardment, that they will shortly run out of tobacco and that ‘to help fill the time’ Thomas Wigan had decided to read ‘the bible through from beginning to end.’ | 29 Aug 1920 | 1 sheet |
| 3 | <u>Letter to Gwen Wigan (sister)</u>
Letter from Thomas Wigan to his sister Gwen [Gwendolen Wigan] on the 70 th day of the siege. The letter describes the military situation – ‘though we could probably force our way out without excessive casualties, we should not get ten miles before the enemy would be round us a like a swarm of angry bees.’ The letter describes dwindling food, but that they received one box from an airdrop, which had cigarettes and tobacco. | 27 Sept 1920 | 1 sheet |
| 4 | <u>Letter to Charles Wigan (father)</u>
Letter from Thomas Wigan to his father [Charles Wigan] on the 83 rd day of the siege. The letter describes dwindling food supplies and efforts to shoot pigeons and catch fish, but that they still had rice, barley and horse meat. | 10 Oct 1920 | 1 sheet |
| 5 | <u>Letter to Cecilia Wigan (mother)</u>
Letter from Thomas Wigan to his mother [Cecilia Wigan], which describes the breaking of the siege on the 17 th October 1920. | 22 Oct 1920 | 1 sheet |
| 6 | <u>Letter to Cecilia Wigan (mother)</u>
Letter from Thomas Wigan to his mother [Cecilia Wigan] in which Thomas Wigan describes the political and military situation in Iraq, as well as the arrival of mail and the retrieval of his luggage and his new accommodation. | 1 Nov 1920 | 4 sheets |