Moreton Foley Gage was born on January 12, 1873 in New York, the sixth, and youngest, son of Lieutenant General the Honorable Edward Thomas Gage, C.B., and Ella Henrietta Maxse. Gage was the grandson of Henry Hall, the 4th Viscount Gage, the great-grandson of 5th Earl of Berkeley, and a descendent of William the Conqueror. As might be expected for a family with such distinguished lineage, the Gages were well connected in British society.

Gage graduated from the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and was commissioned as a 2nd lieutenant in the 7th (The Princess Royal's) Dragoon Guards on March 12, 1892. At the time the regiment was stationed at Muttra, in the Meerut district of India and generally living the comfortable life while employed in India during the Raj at it zenith. The regimental journal, *The Black Horse Gazette*, is full of articles describing various sporting and social events. Gage enjoyed these to the fullest; he joined the Muttra Gun Club, played cricket, was initiated into the local Masonic lodge, and participated in pig sticking. However, life in India was not without its troubles. Shortly after Gage's arrival. The regiment lost six men to disease in July 1892 and another seven by January 1893.

The 7th Dragoon Guards left India in February 1893 and, after a year long stint near Cairo, returned to England in October 1894. It was here that Gage distinguished himself as an equestrian. He won the Heads and Posts competition at the Royal Military Tournament in 1895 and placed second in the Riding and Jumping competition in 1896, demonstrating that he was one of the best horsemen in the British army. It was an impressive performance for a junior officer and yet Gage accomplished more. In 1896 he was appointed assistant adjutant in the 7th Dragoon Guards and awarded an instructor’s certificate in musketry. On April 15, 1896, he received his promotion to lieutenant.

Gage was seconded to the Foreign Office for service in Uganda on January 9, 1898. It was a somewhat unusual appointment for an officer who, up to this point in his career, seemed more interested in the manly pursuits associated with Victorian high society. However, central and east Africa were still somewhat of a mystery and many British officers jumped at the chance for a bit of adventure.

Much of the Sudanese army was in rebellion and for good reason. The troops had been continuously campaigning for a considerable period, treatment by the officers was harsh, pay was low and six-months in arrears and, as a final insult, they were ordered once more to active service but had been prohibited from taking their families with them, in violation of a common practice at the time. It was an ugly situation for the British, and a force consisting mainly of Indian soldiers, commanded by Major Cyril Godfrey Martyr, DSO, was sent to suppress the revolt.

In addition to several minor skirmishes there were a few larger battles including two at the forts near Mruli on the Nile. The first occurred on April 26, 1898 when an attacking force of 250 troops captured the rebels’ stronghold at Mruli and 37 British government troops were wounded in the engagement. Gage was wounded in the foot but it was not considered serious and he was able to continue the campaign. Gage also participated in the second assault on August 4 when the British-led force attacked 500 Sudanese mutineers at night, killing 27 of them.

Although the British-led forces engaged the rebels on numerous occasions, the primary adversary was the jungle itself. When Gage, in command of a company, was finally ordered to leave on September 9 and proceed up the Nile, his relief was tremendous:

> I cannot feel grateful enough that I have at last left those hateful countries, Uganda and Unyoro, behind me, I hope I never have to see them again, but to return to England via the Nile.

Gage’s lengthy account of his adventures in central Africa was published as a series of letters and articles in the 7th Dragoon Guards regimental journal, *The Black Horse Gazette*. Not only does this account describe the mundane dealings of campaigning in the heart of Africa but, as demonstrated by the above excerpt, they also provide insight into Gage’s impressions of his experiences. For his service in Uganda Gage received the East and Central Africa Medal with clasp, **UGANDA 1897-98**. Various editions of the *Army List* state that Gage was mentioned in despatches, but no record of this has been found in the *London Gazette*.

Gage had been ordered up the Nile (Figure 1) for a reason. A party of French soldiers, under the command of Captain Jean-Baptiste Marchard marched across...
western Africa and occupied a spot on the Nile at Fashoda on July 10, 1898. General Herbert Kitchener had secret orders that he had been instructed not to open until Khartoum was taken. With the defeat of the forces under the Mahdi at the Battle of Omdurman on September 2, 1898, Kitchener opened these orders to discover that he was to advance further up the Nile to stop the French. Kitchener arrived at Fashoda on September 19, and the two opponents treated each other courteously despite their adversarial roles. Eventually the French government realized that their forces were badly outnumbered and withdrew Marchard on November 11, 1898. This became known as the "Fashoda Incident."

Figure 1: Route of Gage’s travels through Uganda and the Upper Nile, 1898-1900.

While this was going on, a force under the command of Major (now Colonel) Martyr continued its advance down the Nile. In his account, Gage primarily writes about hunting, his experiences with the local population, and of difficulties encountered during the journey. Their progress was slow and it soon was apparent that they would not reach Fashoda in time. Instead, they were ordered to establish a base on the upper reaches of the Nile near Gondokoro and monitor the activities of other French contingents. Gondokoro is 750 miles up the Nile from Khartoum and even today is far from a major metropolitan area. When they finally established Fort Berkeley in January 1899 a further 10 miles up the river, it was an absolutely desolate location with no signs of civilization for hundreds of miles. Accompanying Colonel Martyr and Lieutenant Gage were Captain Tickell, 14th Hussars, and Lieutenant Hale, Royal Artillery. When Colonel Martyr was ordered home on February 1, command of the small garrison devolved to Captain Tickell. When Lieutenant Hale died of disease a few months later and Captain Tickell was forced home due to illness on June 27, 1899, Gage assumed command as the sole remaining British officer.

Monotony was the order of the day at Fort Berkeley and the garrison was delighted when it received any word from the outside world. With his term of engagement in the Foreign Office expired, Gage decided to leave the fort on September 9, 1899 and continue his journey down the Nile aboard the small Belgian steamer Karia. He was accompanied by Dr. Arthur Dawson Milne who had arrived at Fort Berkeley a few weeks after the post had been established. Along the way, the two encountered a party of about 30 Senegalese commanded by French Lieutenant de Tonquédéc at Gaba Shambe. This subordinate group had traveled separately from the main French force at Fashoda and arrived at Gaba Shambe on March 20, 1899. With the tensions of the previous year’s standoff at Fashoda over, Lieutenant Aymard de Quengo de Tonquédéc was an extremely courteous host and Gage genuinely regretted departing on September 20.

Navigating the infamous Sudd proved as difficult as ever (Figure 2). Arriving at the southern edge on September 30, they left the steamer behind and proceeded through the Sudd by steel whaleboat. Finding a passage through the Sudd was a constant challenge and it was not until January 19, 1900 that the adventurers finally emerged. By February 16, Gage and Milne were in Cairo. The
expedition down the Nile, and the navigation of the Sudd in particular, was considered a tour de force at the time and numerous contemporary books and journals commented on the journey. For example, in From the Cape to Cairo, Ewart Grogan, a celebrated adventurer in his day, writes:

I consider this successful attempt of Capt. Gage of the 7th Dragoon Guards, and Dr. Milne, as one of the most daring feats ever accomplished in the history of African travel.

After nearly two years in Uganda and the upper reaches of the Nile, Gage looked forward to an extended stay in England. However, events were moving quickly while he was away. He was promoted to captain on September 19, 1899 and the 7th Dragoon Guards had departed for the Boer War. Consequently, Gage arrived in England on March 9, 1900 but departed from Southampton three days later aboard the Moor to rejoin his regiment, reaching them on April 1 at De Aar, South Africa. Gage assumed the appointment of second-in-command of ‘A’ Squadron.

The 7th Dragoon Guards had landed at Cape Town on March 3, 1900 and had not yet seen any notable service by the time of Gage’s arrival. The regiment was attached to the 4th Cavalry Brigade and ordered to patrol the veldt. The regiment received its first battle casualties on April 7 and participated in its first significant battle on April 27 when it tried to cut off the retreat of 1200 Boers. Like so many of the tactics employed by the British during the early stages of the war, the attempt failed and the cavalry brigade was forced to retreat when the Boers reoccupied their position.

On May 7, the 7th Dragoon Guards were part of the force under Field Marshal Frederick Roberts that started the 250-mile advance to Pretoria. The regiment held the distinction of being the first British unit to enter the Transvaal on May 20. On May 29, Gage was made aide-de-camp to Major General John Dickson, C.B. (Figure 3), commanding the 4th Cavalry Brigade, an appointment Gage held until November 14. Dickson was an unpopular man, known by many as “the old beast,” and it must have been a difficult appointment for Gage. Roberts surrounded Johannesburg, which surrendered on May 31. After a brief rest, the British continued their advance to Pretoria, which quickly followed suit, surrendering on June 5.

Although there were hopes for an early end to the conflict, peace terms could not be reached and Roberts continued the campaign on June 11–12 at a rocky knob called Diamond Hill. Probing the Boer position, the 4th Cavalry Brigade was forced to extend its line and dismount, remaining under the blazing sun for two days. The dismounted troops were unable to advance or retreat in daylight as the Boers put up a heavy and accurate fire at the slightest movement. Eventually, the Boers eventually withdrew and the enemy’s position was captured. Even though the battle lasted two days, casualties on both sides were light. Diamond Hill was the last set-piece battle with the rest of the Boer War degenerating into guerilla warfare.

Gage served as assistant provost marshal to Major General James Babington from November 27, 1900 to May 19, 1901, before being appointed brigade major to his former brigade on May 20. The difficult and demanding General Dickson had retired two months before and this might have influenced Gage’s willingness to return to the 4th Cavalry Brigade’s staff (Figure 4). He remained brigade major until he returned to the 7th Dragoon Guards on September 29, 1901. The war was winding down but Gage would have at least one more chance for action.

The British system of blockhouses proved effective at corralling the Boers, and on December 8, 1901 the regiment encountered an enemy force of about 1,000. Fixing bayonets to their rifles to be used as lances, Captain Gage led his squadron in a charge. Even though the charging British were severely outnumbered, the Boers abandoned their position without putting up much resistance. One soldier from the 7th Dragoons was wounded.

For his Boer War service, Gage received the Queen’s South Africa medal with claps for CAPE COLONY,