

= Tillson Harrison =

Tillson Lever Harrison (January 7 , 1881 ? January 10 , 1947) was a Canadian physician , army officer and adventurer . Moving to New York and enlisting in the United States Army at an early age , he later returned to Canada to attend the University of Toronto before practising as a physician in a number of dangerous positions , such as the Chief of Medical Staff to Pancho Villa and the doctor for the Chinese Labour Corps , a workforce of over 200 @, @ 000 men . After World War I , he traveled throughout the Middle East , treating venereal disease and operating an X @-@ ray facility in Lod , Israel .

After attempting to elope with one of his Middle East hospital patients , Harrison was deported to Canada but managed to jump ship in Morocco and join the Free State Army . In the 1930s , he traveled through 15 countries and dependencies performing medical duties , and served as a ship 's doctor on a liner that crossed the Indian Ocean during World War II . From 1946 until his death , he assisted in the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) in China , saving many lives .

By the end of his life , Harrison could speak six languages , had participated in seven wars , and was married to four women at the same time . His daughter Rosalind said that the character Indiana Jones was based on him . According to Rosalind , film producers George Lucas and Steven Spielberg contacted her after her father 's death and conducted a series of interviews , during which she provided an account of his life .

= = Early life = =

Harrison was born on January 7 , 1881 , in Tillsonburg , Ontario , a town named for his great @-@ grandfather George . His grandfather , Edwin Delevan Tillson , was the builder of what is now the Annandale National Historic Site . As a child , Harrison was considered a troublemaker . On one occasion he locked his grandmother in her bedroom and on another became a local newspaper sensation after his attempt to travel to Cuba was discovered . In 1894 , he was enrolled at the Upper Canada College in Toronto , but left the next year . At the age of 14 , he ran away to join the 22nd Oxford Rifles militia , headquartered in Oxford County , but was returned home when it was discovered that he was underage . Soon after , he moved to New York to join the United States Army Engineers and serve as part of the peacekeeping force in the Philippines after the defeat of Spain in 1898 , and for a brief period to help put down the Boxer Rebellion in China . Mostly involved in the running of labor gangs building supply roads to remote areas , Harrison was involved in only one firefight . However , when his maternal grandfather , Edwin " E.D. " Tillson (whose company evolved into Quaker Oats) , discovered what the 20 @-@ year @-@ old was doing , he used his connections to influence General Adna Chaffee into issuing a general order for the recall of Harrison from the field . While serving with the US Army , Harrison contracted cholera and returned to Canada . Using the inheritance he had received from his recently deceased grandfather , Harrison began attending the University of Toronto medical school before marrying Sybil Wilkin , a lawyer 's daughter , in 1905 .

After his graduation from medical school in 1907 , Harrison gained employment with the Hudson 's Bay Company and began treating the Cree community of Alberta and acting as the local postmaster . Soon after , Harrison again moved his family to Washington , Idaho and finally Drewsey , Oregon , where he became a doctor , pharmacist , mayor , developer and rancher . In 1909 , Harrison fathered a daughter , Rosalind , with his wife Sybil . In 1912 , the Journal of the American Medical Association published an article written by Harrison , titled " Cesarean Section Under Difficulties " , which documented a caesarean section he performed in a remote ranch @-@ house lit by an oil lamp . Because of his restless nature , Harrison left his family in Oregon and traveled to London in 1913 to undergo postgraduate work in gynecology and obstetrics . When World War I began in 1914 , Harrison assisted in the war effort in Belgium . While there , he met a Turkish woman named Eva , and married her without divorcing his first wife . In 1915 , Harrison and his new wife traveled to El Paso , Texas , to settle down .

= = North American conflict and World War I = =

Shortly after arriving in Texas , Harrison took the dangerous job of Chief of Medical Staff to Mexican revolutionary general Pancho Villa . In one situation , Harrison was captured by Villa 's foe Venustiano Carranza , later the President of Mexico . The doctor was sentenced to death , but when Carranza became ill , Harrison was spared as he was the only qualified physician available . Harrison kept the general in a state of near @-@ recovery , enabling him to escape and deliver military information to US forces stationed along the border .

After a brief stay among the Mormon community of southern Utah , Harrison enlisted in the Canadian Army Medical Corps in 1917 and was stationed at a French hospital , where he tended to the needs of the Chinese Labour Corps . Quickly learning the language and customs of this group of some 200 @, @ 000 men , Harrison successfully treated many bilharzia , catarrh and tuberculosis cases , significantly reducing the number of sick members of the Corps during the winter of 1917 ? 18 .

= = Interwar period = =

After World War I , Harrison traveled the Middle East performing medical duties such as treating prostitutes afflicted with venereal disease in Constantinople and operating an X @-@ ray facility in Lod , Israel . Although still not legally divorced from his first two wives , Harrison married Filomena Abela , a Maltese woman at Alexandria in 1920 . However , the newlyweds could not find escape from the adventure that had followed Harrison all his life . Harrison and his new wife 's train was ambushed by a band of Syrians disillusioned with a group of politicians . The quick thinking of the recently thrice @-@ married physician prevented his new wife 's broken leg from developing into gangrene .

Still in charge of the Constantinople hospital , he attempted to elope with one of his patients , but was captured and tried for breach of conduct , as the female patient was in fact the wife of a Turkish officer . While being deported to Canada , Harrison escaped while his ship was docked in Morocco . Making his way to Ireland , Harrison posed as a Catholic and joined the Free State Army . After he was discovered , he quickly crossed to Wales to treat the coal miners there for silicosis . In 1923 Harrison married his fourth wife , Eva Olwen Bowen in Cardiff , still without divorcing his three previous wives , and set off with her on an adventure in the Caribbean . It is thought that Harrison deserted her sometime in the mid @-@ 1920s . During the 1930s Harrison worked in 15 countries and dependencies across Latin America and the Middle East . For one year , he served as the physician for a guerrilla army fighting the Japanese , who were then engaged in the Second Sino @-@ Japanese War with China . After 1938 , Harrison traveled to Shanghai using borrowed funds from a medical school classmate in Jamaica and from his own brother in Ontario , and set up a private medical practice , assisting the Chinese Red Cross wherever possible .

= = World War II and beyond = =

Between 1941 and 1946 , Harrison was the ship 's doctor on board the Demodocus , a steam liner ferrying supplies to Allied forces across the Indian Ocean . After the war , Harrison wanted to assist the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) , but had to falsify his records by subtracting seven years off his age to qualify for service . During this time , he served in China delivering much @-@ needed supplies to a country devastated by the long Second Sino @-@ Japanese War and once even saved the lives of 90 students by sheltering them from a Kuomintang officer . By donning an American army officer 's uniform , Harrison was able to convince the Kuomintang officer to not check a barge which held the students hidden inside .

On December 4 , 1946 , Harrison set out from Shanghai with approximately 50 tonnes of supplies . On this train journey , he was to be accompanied by a Russian UNRRA worker and Chinese welfare representatives . Due to repeated Kuomintang inspections , the train journey constantly suffered

from delays . The first such delay occurred at Nanjing and lasted four days ; the second such delay , at Xuzhou , was of equal duration . At one station , the medical supplies were unhooked from the train 's engine car and left on a bleak plain . The two UNRRA workers did not have clean water to drink and were forced to boil ditch water which was polluted with human waste . To add to the dire situation , Harrison 's blanket and shoes were stolen , and due to the cold , he began to suffer from frostbite . Two weeks after Harrison left Shanghai , his train was permitted to move again , but there were problems still ahead . At each one of the 20 stations en route to Kaifeng , the train was delayed for up to three hours . Upon arrival at Kaifeng , the journey had to be completed by truck and ox cart . After completing one delivery , he returned to Kaifeng to pick up a second load , but could not continue past the Zhangqiu branch of the receiving hospital . Harrison died of exposure on January 10 , 1947 , near Kaifeng in China , aged 66 .

By the end of his life , Tillson Harrison could speak no less than six different languages , had participated in seven wars and , although this was not discovered for several years after his death , was married to four women at the same time .

While he is virtually unknown in Canada , Harrison is widely honored in China . A statue in his likeness stands tall in Shanghai , his burial site at an Anglican compound in Kaifeng is home to the Dr. Tillson Harrison Memorial School , and the Harrison International Peace Hospital in Hengshui treats approximately 800 outpatients every day . The town of Tillsonburg , Ontario (named for Harrison 's great @-@ grandfather) maintains a lasting relationship with the hospital , which was renamed as such from the previous name of Handan International Peace Hospital in 1947 . In 1988 , the Prime Minister of Canada , Brian Mulroney , sent a commemorative letter to the Chinese ambassador to mark the centenary of Harrison 's birth . However at that time it was not made clear that Harrison had falsified his age when enlisting in the UNRRA , and the celebrations took place seven years after the actual centenary . The same year , Harrison 's remains were re @-@ interred in a large tomb in a public ceremony , which many Canadians were invited to attend .

According to Harrison 's daughter , Rosalind , several decades after her father 's death , film producers George Lucas and Steven Spielberg contacted her , and in a series of interviews , Rosalind provided an account of her father 's illustrious life . This , she claims , became the inspiration for the highly successful Indiana Jones film series . In recent times , Harrison was the subject of a five @-@ part CBC Radio Morningside dramatization of his life , written by Antanas Sileika .