# Mazra'ih: A Footnote

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not seen anything of the beauty and wonder of nature. It was a few months later at Mazra'ih that the young teenage pilgrim from Iran, Taraz'u'llah Samandari, came into the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. Many years later, Samandari was raised to the rank of Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi.

In 1931, when Angus McNeill retired, the McNeills were able to lease Mazra'ih, and make a proper restoration of the entire house, being careful not to touch the downstairs room of Bahá'u'lláh, believing as they did that His feet had trod in that sacred place. They left this room untouched, in the condition they believed it was when Bahá'u'lláh occupied it.

During the time the McNeills lived at Mazra'ih, Shoghi Effendi visited them many times. It was also during this period that Queen Marie came to Haifa port but was prevented from going ashore to visit Shoghi Effendi and the Greatest Holy Leaf, and to visit the Holy Shrines, but she was also prevented from her anticipated reunion with Lilian McNeill.

As long as the McNeills lived at Mazra'ih, Angus McNeill was reportedly very much loved by the local Arabs, for whom he cared very much. He often looked after their welfare and he helped them with their animals, since he was knowledgeable in the breeding of animals and their well-being. He was himself an experienced cavalry officer. Actually, he was put in charge of the Arab Stud there.

Lilian McNeill died on 16 August 1949, and is buried in a cemetery in Haifa.[2] Her grave was discovered by some World Centre staff members in the early 1990s, and the Universal House of Justice, in close collaboration with her family, was able to mark her resting place with a beautiful and fitting grave stone.

Brigadier General Angus McNeill died in Cyprus in June 1950, nearly one year after Lilian's passing, and was buried on 21 June 1950 in Wayne's Keep, the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery now located in the buffer zone, under the control of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP).

In 1994, following a contact with the British High Commission, I was able to discover the location of the grave of Brigadier General Angus McNeill, and shortly afterward was allowed to pay my respects and offer prayers at the graveside.

On that occasion, I was invited by a British UN soldier, WO2 M. A. Davies, acting also on behalf of the British High Commission, who arranged a special visit to the cemetery. I was presented with a memorial booklet, which included a map, a drawing of the location of the resting place of Brigadier General McNeill, along with a photograph of his headstone, and a copy of the relevant page of the official military cemetery register. After the visit to the grave, I was invited to have tea with WO Davies. (The grave of Brigadier General McNeill is located at plot 16, row B-6, Wayne's Keep Cemetery, in the United Nations Buffer Zone in Nicosia.

In November of 1998, I had the privilege and bounty to visit the grave with Counsellor Hartmut Grossmann who was in Cyprus as the Representative of the

Universal House of Justice to present the Executive Committees to the National Spiritual Assembly of Cyprus. Counsellor Grossmann was present in south Nicosia on the occasion of the annual Remembrance Day ceremony observed by the British UN soldiers, and the Cyprus British community, the only time during the year when visitors not associated with the United Nations are allowed to visit the cemetery to pay their respects and honor their departed military members.

In 1999 again on the occasion of Remembrance Day, on 14 November, it was a privilege to be able to visit the grave, for the third time, with Alan G. Bell, a Bahá'í travel teacher from England, and former private secretary to the world famous Bahá'í potter Bernard Leach.

Since Remembrance Day is celebrated annually on the second weekend (usually) in November, it is possible for friends to gain the necessary information from the British High Commission or the British Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, to make their own arrangements to attend.

Notes:

1 See World Order magazine, 'Treasured Memories' by Lilian McNeill, January 1939, vol 4, no 10, pp 383-5.

2 See In Memoriam Lilian Vaughn McNeill, The Baha'i World, Vol XIX p 779.

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