

DRAKE-BROCKMAN Brig. Geoffrey M.C., M.I.E. Aust.

Educated at Guildford Grammar School 1897-1902. A.M.I.E. (Aust), Engineer for North West for WA. Recruited 10th Light Horse as private, commissioned Eng.Lieut at Gallipoli on 3/8/1915. He was wounded at Gallipoli, shrapnel in leg and neck. Served as OIC 9th Field Company Royal Engineers A.I.F. Awarded Military Cross.¹ The following is a copy of an article which appeared in *Engineers Australia*, January 27, 1978, titled "Pioneer President Dies at 92".

‘Geoffrey Drake-Brockman, president of the Institution Of Engineers, Australia in 1940, died in Perth on Dec 27. He was aged 92. Drake-Brockman who was also Chairman of the Perth (now Western Australian) Division in 1937, was the second and last surviving of four presidents to be elected from WA. He was one of three former WA Chairman to die last month.’

The *West Australian*, in a story headlined "Pioneer engineer dies", recalled that Drake-Brockman was the man who walked across the Nullarbor to survey the first railway route in 1907 and later supervised the construction of the Eyre Highway.

Drake-Brockman, a descendent of two pioneering families, was born at Guildford, near Perth, in 1885.² His father was the Surveyor General in Western Australia, Frederick Drake-Brockman. His mother, formerly Grace Bussell, became known as the "Grace Darling of Australia" when in 1876 at the age of 16, she and a stockman rescued people from the grounded ship *Georgette* off the colony's south-west coast.

Drake-Brockman joined the Public Works Department as a cadet engineer in 1903 and his early professional career was spent mainly on railway construction. In World War I he served with the engineers, first at Gallipoli and later in France where he won the Military Cross.

In 1921 he was appointed Commissioner for the north-west and lived in Broome until his appointment in 1926 as Engineer for the north-west in the PWD. He was responsible for several major projects, particularly in jetty construction.

Drake-Brockman rejoined the army as a Lieutenant-Colonel in September 1939 as was appointed CRE Western Command. In 1941 he was appointed Deputy Director of engineering services with the rank of Colonel and in 1943, promoted to Brigadier; he was appointed Director of fortifications and works.

After World War II he was appointed the PWD's Assistant Director of works. In 1949, at the age of 64, he resigned from the Department to become Chairman of the Transport Board of Western Australia - a position he held until 1952. He remained a member of the Board until 1958.

Drake-Brockman's wife, Henrietta, who died in 1968, was a well known authoress.

In 1960 Drake-Brockman also ventured into the literary field when his book *The Turning Wheel* was published. The book recounted his career as an engineer, soldier and administrator. Despite blindness, he worked on tape-recording a second autobiography during the last two years.

He is survived by his daughter, Julia, who is the wife of Sir John Moore, president of the Australian Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, and his son, Paris, who is an engineer with the Commonwealth Government.³

¹Who's Who in Australia, 1962

²Engineers Australia, January 27, 1978

³Engineers Australia, January 27, 1978