

LT COL ROBERT LYNN STEVENS OBE (S51-55)

He was born in Malta into an Army family on 21 June 1937, before returning to the UK where he spent his early years. He joined his parents in N Rhodesia, and spent the next three years at school in S Rhodesia, while his parents were in Somalia and Tanganyika. He returned to the UK in early 1951, and started at the College along with his old brother **John Edward Comyns Stevens (S51-52)**.

When he left in 1955 he entered RMA Sandhurst and, following in his father's



footsteps, was commissioned into the Duke of Wellington's Regiment in Dec 1956. After attending the normal training courses for young infantry officers, he joined the 1st Battalion with postings to Kenya, UK and Germany. In 1967 the Battalion moved to Cyprus as part of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force (UNFICYP) and spent a 6 month tour maintaining the peace between the Greeks and the Turks. He was commanding a small detachment in the north of the Island during a period when, at times there were peaceful interludes which allowed some relaxation, but at other times the British contingent had to take action to prevent minor incidents between the two sides turning into an all-out civil

war.

Shortly afterwards he was selected to attend the Staff College at Camberley in 1969. His first Staff job in 1970 was MA to the Defence Attaché to South Korea. It was there that he met Jane, his future wife. In 1971 he was posted to Malta as Staff Officer responsible for the administration of the British troops in Malta – a task that should have been a very peaceful posting. However Mintoff was then demanding a drastic revision of Malta's Defence Agreement with Britain, involving the British paying a much larger rent for military facilities. The British government reacted coolly, and after fruitless negotiations, Mintoff called for the immediate withdrawal of all British troops from the island. He was suddenly faced with the prospect of planning for moving both troops and many British assets from the island at only a week's notice. By utter chance for his thesis at Sandhurst some 15 years earlier he had elected to study 'the evacuation of Malta'. So he recalled some of his ideas from this exercise. Moving the troops and their families was organised quickly with the RAF by air. But more difficult was the moving of many tons of stores from the island, but he solved this by making an arrangement whereby the British government would give free fuel to any ship that would carry stores from the island back to the UK. This worked well, and he was appointed MBE for his part in June 1972.



For the next two years he was a company commander with the 1st Battalion in Northern Ireland in the height of the troubles, and he was Mentioned in Despatches for his calm and resolute handling of his company. He was then selected for the course at the Joint Services Staff College at Latimer. During this time he married Jane Edwards and was able to settle down into a more normal family life after his tour in Londonderry. After his course he returned to Lisbon as a Staff Officer before promotion to Lt Col and taking command of 2nd Battalion Ulster Defence Regiment in South Armagh for two years.

In 1978 his next appointment was a secondment to the Foreign Office in Belize as Intelligence Coordinator, where he worked with the Governor at the time of the country moving towards independence. This posting gave him the opportunity to enjoy the tropical flora and fauna, which gave him great pleasure.

His next posting to the NATO planning wing in Mons in Belgium provided him with a stable base for three years from where they visited many places in Europe, while his family grew up. Moving on to Maastricht for the next job gave him an opportunity to develop a computer based system to interconnect vehicles. For this work he was appointed OBE in June 1987.



His final posting was to Bovington where he continued his work on developing protocols for the passage of tactical information between vehicles in the field. This work was eventually to form part of the user requirement for BOWMAN, the future generation of Army radios.

He retired to their home in Hampshire in 1992 and was soon involved in his village life as church warden, as well as doing consultancy work. He enjoyed managing projects such as propping up the south wall of the church and buying a new organ.

He his own man, often accompanied by a black Labrador, and wearing tweeds, rather than a tracksuit, for recreation. He was also musically adept with clarinet, harmonica and handsaw/stroked with a violin bow.

He died peacefully in his sleep whilst on holiday with his family in France on 28 May 2015. He had been suffering Transverse Myelitis since 2006. His Memorial Service at St Mary's Church, Mapledurwell in Hampshire on 18 June was attended by many local people and members of his regiment.

