

AIR VICE-MARSHAL SIMON ROBERT CHARLES DOUGHERTY MBE
MSc MBBS FFOM FRCP DAvMed DObstRCOG FCMI FRAeS RAF
Retd (G60-67)



Simon Dougherty was born in Colchester. He attended Brandeston Hall from 1960 to 1962 and Framlingham College, Suffolk (Garrett House) from 1962 to 1967. He was a member of the choir and reached the rank of Staff Sergeant in the Army Section of the Combined Cadet Force; he did not excel on the sports fields. Although not a scholar, he was placed in the 'scholarship form' [Upper IVa] on entry to the College. On reflection, this may not have been the best option as he was almost always at the bottom of the class. However, he picked up 4 'O' Levels a year early and was allowed to enter the Lower VI at the age of 15. He gained 2 poor 'A' Level passes and one graded at 'O' at the age of 17. Subsequently, he stayed for a third year in the VI Form, when he was appointed a House Prefect, and on retaking his 'A' levels, he achieved better grades and gained a place to study medicine at The London Hospital Medical College, University of London.

He joined the Royal Air Force in 1969 as a Medical Cadet during his undergraduate training.

He qualified as a doctor in 1972 with MBBS (London) and completed mandatory house appointments in the NHS. His initial postings in the RAF in the 1970s were in Lincolnshire and at NATO Support Units in Holland and Germany as a General Medical Practitioner. After attending the Diploma in Aviation Medicine Course at the RAF Institute of Aviation Medicine, Farnborough, when he won the Stewart Memorial Prize, he was appointed Chief Instructor at the RAF Aviation Medicine Training Centre, RAF North Luffenham in Rutland and then, in 1982, as Senior Medical Officer at RAF Cottesmore, where the newly formed Trinational Tornado Training Establishment was located, also in Rutland. He was in post there during Operation Corporate - the Falklands War.

After completing training in Occupational Medicine, including a year's sabbatical at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine when he gained a MSc, he commenced a series of non-clinical appointments (with responsibilities for strategic planning, clinical policy, delivery, budgetary control, governance, and medical training) which would continue throughout the remainder of his career. These included posts at HQ RAF Support Command, Cambridgeshire, HQ RAF Germany at Rheindahlen (where he was in post during Operation Granby - the first Gulf War) and the RAF Institute of Health and Medical Training at RAF Halton, Buckinghamshire.

Concurrently, he was appointed to the academic appointments of Taylor Professor of Occupational Medicine (RAF) from 1990 to 1996 and RAF Consultant Adviser in Occupational Medicine from 1996 to 2002.

He attended the Joint Service Defence College at Greenwich from 1991 to 1992.

On promotion to group captain in 1994, he assumed command of the large Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Hospital Halton for a few months before being chosen to move to HQ Personnel & Training Command near Gloucester to implement the reorganisation of the RAF Medical Services, including the closure of the remaining RAF hospitals, under 'Options for Change' at the end of the 'Cold War'. From 1996 to 1999, he was posted to Cyprus where he commanded The Princess Mary's Hospital, RAF Akrotiri - a consultant-only manned hospital with 60 beds - and he concurrently served as the Command Medical Adviser to HQ British Forces Cyprus. Promoted to air commodore in 1999, he returned to HQ Personnel & Training Command as Director (Primary) Health Services (RAF) and then, in 2001, moved to be Director Medical Personnel, Policy and Plans (RAF). During 2001 and 2002, he was appointed Acting Director-General Medical Services (RAF) to cover a period of serious illness of the incumbent. In 2002, he moved to the Ministry of Defence in London as Director of Medical Policy in the tri-service Surgeon General's Department. He served in this appointment during the start of Operation Telic - the second Gulf War.

In September 2004, he was promoted to air-vice marshal and appointed as Director-General Medical Services (RAF), at that time the most senior appointment for a doctor in the Royal Air Force, working initially from HQ Personnel & Training Command in Gloucester before moving his directorate to HQ Air Command near High

Wycombe in 2006. He was in this post during much of Operation Herrick – the military operations in Afghanistan. He relinquished this appointment in July 2008 and retired in April 2009.

He served as an Honorary Physician to Her Majesty the Queen from 2002 to 2009.

He is a Freeman of the City of London, a Liveryman of the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries, and a Freeman of the Honorary Company of Air Pilots.

From 2009 to 2019, he continued to be closely linked to the Royal Air Force as Honorary Air Commodore of No 4626 (County of Wiltshire) Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force.

He was a Governor of Framlingham College from 2008 to 2022. He was a Trustee of the Headley Court Charity from 2010 to 2013 and a Trustee of the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund from 2012 to 2020. He was President of the Society of Old Framlinghamians from 2011 to 2013 and again from 2019 to 2021. He was a Governor of Royal Star and Garter Charity from 2004 to 2023 and a Trustee of The Royal Star and Garter Home Pension Fund from 2016 to 2023.

Locally, he served on Abberton and Langenhoe Parish Council from 2010 to 2024. He was Vice-Chair from 2012 to 2022 and Chair 2022 to 2024. He led the establishment of the Lion Corner Community Shop in Langenhoe in 2019 and was Chair of the Abberton and Langenhoe Community Benefit Society Management Committee from 2021 to 2023.

He was appointed an Officer Brother of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem in 1991. He was appointed a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire in 2020 in recognition of his voluntary service with the RAF Benevolent Fund supporting Royal Air Force Personnel and Veterans.

Simon has been married to Margaret for many years and they live near Colchester in an ancient house where his grandparents were living when he was born. They have 3 adult children – all of whom attended Framlingham College – and 7 grandchildren. His interests include alpine skiing, travelling, gardening, exploring local coastal waters afloat and grandparent duties.