

John De'Ath

We are sad to announce the passing of Air Commodore John Graham De'Ath (61 Entry) who died peacefully on 10th April 2023 aged 90.

Air Commodore Mike Allisstone writes:

“John and I both arrived at the RAF College on 12th September 1951. He was an Equipment (later Supply) cadet and went to the College's Equipment & Secretarial Wing, then domiciled at RAF Digby some five miles from Cranwell. Just over a year later I transferred to Digby myself on being withdrawn from flying training. John was among those who welcomed me and thus began a friendship which lasted some 70 years.

John distinguished himself at Cranwell, winning the Air Ministry prize for Equipment Studies and being awarded his full colours for athletics and cross-country running, which became a lifelong interest. He was promoted Under Officer in his final term at the RAF College. As a junior officer his devotion to duty was recognised with an MBE and, en route to Air rank, he commanded No 16 Maintenance Unit at RAF Stafford. His final appointment was Director of Supply Management 1 at the Ministry of Defence in Harrogate, where we served happily alongside each other.

On retiring from the RAF in 1986 he became Home Bursar of Jesus College Oxford where he met his second wife Sonia. Here he was able, until recently, to enjoy travelling, especially cruising and visiting foreign art galleries. He also built up a collection of fine wines. With help from her sister, Sonia nursed John devotedly in his declining years. He also leaves two step-

daughters and Gabrielle, a daughter by his first marriage. A good friend to many, he will be much missed.”
Brian Reader recalls:

“My best memory of him was his desire for an overseas posting following our leaving Cranwell. He said that he had been promised an overseas posting if he came top in the final exams which he duly did. Imagine the excitement as we scanned the lists on the notice boards just before graduation to see where we had been posted. John found he had got his posting to RAF Jurby on the Isle of Man; I think he was hoping that it would be the other side of the world – not just across the Irish Sea!”

