

## Remembering a Pillar of Our EW Community: John Clifford, AOC UK Chapter President

John Clifford OBE, retired RAF Wing Commander and Association of Old Crows (AOC) UK Chapter president, passed away May 6. John will be sorely missed by all who had the privilege to know him, and his contributions to the electronic warfare (EW) community will be felt for years to come.

John worked tirelessly to advance our community's conversation surrounding EW strategy and operations at every stage of his career, from the RAF to the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD), and later as an EW consultant and active leader within the AOC. In 2006, John was awarded an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for his EW work, and in 2013, he wrote the UK MOD's EW Policy, which is still used to this day.



**John receives his Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) medal from Queen Elizabeth II in 2006.**

John graduated from the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology in 1972 with a BSc (with honors) and achieved an MSc (with distinction) in Computer Aided Engineering from Nottingham Trent University. He was also a Chartered Engineer (CEng) and Chartered IT Professional (CITP) with the British Computer Society, The Chartered Institute for IT, a professional society for those working in engineering and IT.

In the late 1970s, John became the first and only Navigator EW Instructor on the RAF V-Force and was recognized as a leader in advancing EW training and practices. John graduated from the Aerosystems course at RAF College Cranwell in 1981 before serving as Senior Avionics Specialist at No. 6 Flying Training School at RAF Finningley, where he was responsible for all RAF Navigator EW training. John was

later promoted to Deputy Squadron Commander of Radar Research Squadron at Royal Aircraft Establishment (RAE) Bedford before leading EW systems and flight tests for the Tornado GR1 and GR4 at Tornado Management Agency in Munich.

After graduating from the Joint Service Defence College in 1992, John continued to specialize in EW, becoming the Wing Commander of the Joint Warfare Staff at Royal Marines Poole (RM Poole) Naval base.

From 1996 to 2008, John was recognized as an EW expert within the UK MOD, serving as the lead desk officer in joint and air EW for five successive operational tours with the MOD. In this role, he truly became a pioneer in EW, helping to stand up the UK's first Information Warfare/Operations (IW/IO) directorate, which included EW and cyber, and leading the way in EW operations and training, policy, doctrine, and strategy with NATO and the UK MOD.

After retiring from the RAF in 2008, John worked from 2009 to the time of his passing both as a consultant with ESP (Engineering Support Personnel), Inc. and as the director of his own international defense consultancy company, JMC Defense Ltd, providing EW and EM Domain operations consultancy services to the UK MOD, the US Army and NATO. In 2013, John simultaneously worked on the UK

Electromagnetic Environment (EME) Review while helping to write the UK MOD's current joint EW Policy.



**John at an AOC UK Chapter awards ceremony. John served as chapter president beginning in 2009.**

John first joined the AOC in 1996 as a UK Chapter Air member and senior military officer, and he went on to serve as the UK Chapter president from 2009 to the time of his passing. During his tenure, John worked to increase chapter membership and engage new, young members. Through his efforts, the UK Chapter has successfully partnered with 20 UK universities in the EM Special Interest Group (EMSIG) and EMSIG Focus Group, participating in lecture series and enhancing STEM outreach efforts. Under John's stewardship, the UK Chapter was awarded Chapter of the Year in the large chapter category for eight years straight.

John also served as the AOC Global Conferences and Global Operations Director beginning in 2011, organizing and speaking at conferences in Europe and Southeast Asia, including DSEI (Defence and Security Equipment International) in London. John's

background in directing conferences served him well in this role with AOC, drawing from years of experience organizing conferences all over the world during his time in the RAF and as an EW consultant. In recognition of his commitment to EW, John received two AOC awards – the International Achievement Award in 2002 and the Board of Directors Award in 2018.

John is survived by his wife, Jane, their four children, and their grandchildren, including the newest member of the family, Bella Jane, born in March of this year.

John's legacy in the EW community will continue to be honored by his friends across the globe, and he is ever revered by his fellow AOC presidents:

"John was a pillar in the EW community and played a significant role in the common transatlantic work of protecting our soldiers from harm's way through EW measures. He also gave a helping hand to many European chapters to achieve influence in the AOC."

"He will be remembered by his many friends from all over the world in the AOC family. His passion for our organization and his unstinting enthusiasm for the UK chapter and the wider AOC community will not be forgotten." – Contributed by the AOC UK Chapter and edited by *H. Swedeen* and *J. Knowles*