

## MY INTRODUCTION TO ADEN VETERANS ASSOCIATION JEAN STUBLEY – JANUARY 2025

I joined the Aden Veterans Association many years ago, due to a chance meeting at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea.

I was a member of the Brockworth Branch of the RBL Women's Section. We were invited to join the Aden Veterans Association, Gloucestershire Branch to tour the Royal Hospital, Chelsea. By chance I was chatting to Chris Blick, then Secretary of your Branch.



I told him that my father, Bill Brammer, who served 22 years in the Household Cavalry, The Life Guards, was posted to Aden in 1957. My mother, brother and myself were all set to join him in Aden, MFO boxes packed. However, my father received a message that he was posted back to Knightsbridge Barracks, London, UK. It seems that a chap had won the football pools, bought himself out of the army and they brought my father back to take his place. I told Chris Blick this was the nearest I got to going to Aden. He said that was good enough and I have been an Associate member ever since.

As an aside. loyalty to your Regiment never fades. My dilemma when, aged 19, I married a Royal Horse Guard was that my father was a Life Guard. (both Household Cavalry). We got a mention in the Guards Magazine as me being a traitor!!



Incidentally, The Royal Hospital is a special place for me. After a very wet Trooping of the Colour in 2001, we dived into a crowded pub in Whitehall, to dry off and found ourselves seated with some Chelsea Pensioners. They invited us to return for a look round the Royal Hospital, which we did. When they mentioned a recent admission from the Household Cavalry. I said can you introduce him, as he probably knew my father (most did – for good reasons). When he came over and I asked the question, he looked at me and said

Jean? I said do I know you?? He said yes.... It's George, (well he was no longer a lanky beanpole!) He, his (then) wife and my (ex) husband used to meet up regularly as friends, but army life postings can take you in different directions.

We renewed our acquaintance and over 8 years, I was invited to some amazing functions, including the annual Founders Day. (George was the Mace Bearer – on Founders Day the Mace is lowered at a particular point on to a stand and George holds the top of it. He would wiggle his fingers to indicate a wave - in the middle of the Parade with Royalty in attendance!). They are definitely not just frail old men, they are gentlemen in the true sense of the word and full of humour.

George asked me to marry him several times, but I thought he lead a more interesting life as a Chelsea Pensioner! Then he was diagnosed with cancer. George still asked me to marry him, over the next two years, until it became his final wish. It was Christmas 2008 and George told the Chaplain our 'story' of meeting up after so many years. He agreed to marry us at the beautiful Royal Hospital Chapel. However the Chaplain was unable to get the required paperwork in time, because of the holiday period. The earliest we could marry was 7/1/2009, but sadly George died on 1/1/2009. The Pensioners I had got to know were very kind and for many years, I still received annual invitations to Founders Day. Wonderful memories and happy days!