

THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF GLASS SELLERS

NOTES OF INTEREST ON MEMBERS

Lieut.General Sir Hugh Cunningham KBE.

Hugh Patrick Cunningham was born on November 4th 1921 at Campbeltown on the Kintyre peninsula, the son of Sir Charles Banks Cunningham, a senior official in the Indian Police. He was educated at Charterhouse. In 1942 he was commissioned into the Royal Engineers.

On arrival in India by troopship, he learned that his much-loved older brother had been killed while flying with Bomber Command. On attachment to the Australian 7th Division, he saw action in New Guinea in a hard-fought jungle campaign against the Japanese. In the autumn of 1944 he also took part in the last phase of the 14th Army's campaign in Burma.

After the war, he spent three years instructing at the School of Military Engineering and then, in 1950, he joined the Military Mission to Greece, where he was involved in the planning of a defence line along the frontier with Communist controlled Bulgaria, a project which, as he correctly forecast, would never get much further.

He then spent two years in the Canal Zone in command of 16 Field Squadron RE followed by attendance at Staff College Camberley which led to a posting as instructor at the Tactics Wing of the School of Infantry.

He became a Freeman of the Glass Sellers on 9th December 1953, having been proposed by Gilbert Allen, who then went on to be a City Sheriff. Hugh was not able to proceed to the Livery due to his military commitments.

After instructing at RMA Sandhurst, he commanded 59 Field Squadron in the British Cameroons during the United Nations plebiscite set up to determine whether the territory should join Cameroon or Nigeria. In 1955 he married Jill Jeffrey, and they went on to have two sons and two daughters.

After two years as brigade major of 128 Infantry Brigade (TA) at Winchester, in 1963 he became Commander Royal Engineers 3 Division in Cyprus and Aden. In December that year there was a serious outbreak of communal violence in Cyprus, which resulted in island-wide strife. Also, in the mountainous Radfan area, near the border with Yemen, there was an escalation of incidents in which tribesmen were raiding the Dhala road connecting Aden to Yemen.

In January 1966 he was appointed to the Defence Planning Staff in the Ministry of Defence and that year he was awarded an OBE. His next move was to the Staff College as a colonel on the directing staff, but in 1967 he was promoted to brigadier and assumed command of 11 Engineer Brigade in the British Army of the Rhine.

In 1969 he became Commandant of Mons Officer Cadet School. He then undertook a year's course at the Canadian National Defence College at Kingston Ontario and, when he returned to England, took up his appointment as General Officer commanding South West District.

In 1974 he was appointed Assistant Chief of the General Staff (Operational Research) and, on 19th December that year he managed, at last, to join the Livery of the Glass Sellers. He was knighted in 1975 and the following year was appointed Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Operational

Research). These two key appointments had responsibility for overseeing contracts for the purchase of weapons and equipment. He held the latter position until his retirement as Lieutenant General in 1978.

Sir Hugh had joined the Court of the Glass Sellers on 20th September 1977, became Renter Warden in 1978, Prime Warden in 1979 and was Master for the year 1980/81. At the Annual Banquet at the Mansion House on 27th October 1981, with the Lord Mayor in attendance, the music was provided by The Light Orchestra of The Royal Engineers and the reply to the guests was given by Field Marshall Lord Carver.

Sir Hugh was also Colonel Commandant of the Royal Engineers from 1976 to 1981 and Lieutenant of the Tower of London from 1983 to 1986. He was a director of Fairey Holdings from 1975 to 1986, Fairey Engineering from 1981 to 1986, and various other companies in the defence industry and business consultancy.

Throughout his life, Sir Hugh had maintained close ties with his old school and became President of the Old Carthusian Society from 1982 to 1987. He was also Chairman of the Governors of Port Regis School from 1982 to 1994, and a Governor of Sutton's Hospital in Charterhouse from 1984 to 1996.

Sadly, his wife Jill died in 1992. That same year he became a Trustee of Clouds House, a leading drug and alcohol addiction treatment centre, which lasted until 2004. He married again in 1995 to Zoe Simpson.

In 2007 he was appointed Life President of Action on Addiction, which was an amalgamation of Clouds House with two other charities. His pastimes included golf, opera and bird-watching. Sir

Hugh died on September 12th 2019 at the age of 97, still a member of the Worshipful Company of Glass Sellers, and the Court stood to his memory.