

# Surgeon Captain John Bertram 1933 - 2026

## Obituary on behalf of the Combined Services Orthopaedic Society



It is with great sadness that the Combined Services Orthopaedic Society note the passing of the last of its original members.

Surgeon Captain John Bertram, QHS, BS MB, MChOrth, FRCS, was born in 1933, educated at Epsom College, and The Middlesex.

Joining the Royal Navy in 1958 for national service, he stayed on and trained in London from 1962-67.

On completion, he was posted to the RNH Plymouth and saw sea time on HMS Ark Royal, Victorious and Eagle.

He spent most of his orthopaedic career in Plymouth being promoted to Surgeon Commander in 1968 and Surgeon Captain in 1981.

Finally, he moved to the RNH Haslar as Professor of Military Surgery finally retiring in July 1990 as a Queen's Honorary Surgeon.

'Bertie' was a man of few words but immense presence. He was always to be found in an immaculate white coat walking 'Nelsonian' fashion, one hand in pocket.

He was an early adopter of the 'AO School' with one of the early sets in the UK being in RNH Stonehouse.

He was a great exponent of clinical skills and drilled into his trainees that listening to the patient and the history, often led to the diagnosis before a hand was laid on them. A lesson many of us never forgot.

He was a great source of support and encouragement to junior trainees and way ahead of his time in non-technical skills, meticulous in all aspect of his practice. However, woe betide the trainee who got the paperwork wrong or cut his sutures too long!

In retirement he returned to Plymouth where he continued his love of music, nature, and his family.

However, he kept up with his orthopaedic 'family' and many of us have received a note or call on an achievement in the profession - that was the mark of the man.

He will be greatly missed but fondly remembered. ■



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British Orthopaedic  
Association

In these challenging times, research into Trauma and Orthopaedics has never been more important.

Once you have considered your immediate family and friends, please consider leaving a gift to Joint Action. Musculoskeletal problems impact all sectors of society from children to the elderly.

Your donations will support the development of UK clinical trials in Trauma and Orthopaedics. Leaving a gift in your Will is a great way for you to make a difference in the future, without it financially affecting you now.

Contact us at  
[jointaction@boa.ac.uk](mailto:jointaction@boa.ac.uk)