

Dr Jeffrey Bradford, Director of Research, U K Defence Forum:

Others are better equipped to comment on the contributions Richard Holmes CBE made in the fields of the armed services, publishing and television. Speaking from personal experience I met Richard Holmes when on an induction tour as I embarked on my PhD at the Royal Military College of Science, Shrivenham. I was introduced to Richard, whom at the time shared an office with Keith Simpson (recent Special Advisor to Tom King at MoD at the time, now MP and an advisor to the Foreign Secretary). They sat me on a chair in front of their desks and fired a dozen questions at me. That evening I went home and on being asked as to how I found them spoke as I felt, "It is like the antiques roadshow on television - to say you have either one is a treasure, to have both is priceless".

During the following three years I knew Richard I was immensely impressed by his dedication to academic matters and to mentoring thinking on the evolution of British Military Doctrine through civilian and military tutees. Richard's character and manner was always thoughtful and engaging and although a decade since I completed my time in Shrivenham it seems like yesterday.

Robin Ashby, Director General, U K Defence Forum

A couple of years ago I attended a lecture by Richard Holmes on Afghanistan (including the code of the Pashtuns) in Parliament. MPs often don't attend their own meetings, let alone anyone else's. This was packed. Some who are now Defence Ministers arrived on time but had to stand in the aisles of a packed house to be entertained, informed and to have their thought centres tickled. He'll be a big miss.

Dr Peter Caddick-Adams, U K Defence Academy

Richard was one of my closest friends. I find the prospect of a Holmes-free world is utterly devastating. He'd successfully seen off cancer but with a knackered immune system (from chemotherapy), he was then snatched by pneumonia yesterday morning at 3am. I last saw him bright as a button and buoyant at the beginning of the week, so this is a cruel side-swipe over the otherwise joyous Royal Wedding weekend.

One of the finest tributes I've read so far is "I hope he has already been welcomed into the celestial Mess and is perched in an ethereal corner, clutching a fine, angelic vintage, embarking on his first discussion of strategy (of several million to come) with Oliver Cromwell, the Dukes of Marlborough and Wellington, Field Marshal Sir John French and Sir Winston Churchill, all subjects of his biographies. They couldn't ask for better company"

Jon Wort

A great shock. Richard was an inspirational individual who certainly brought military history to

life and was probably the catalyst for a generation of Battlefield historians/tour guides/enthusiasts.

Keith Simpson MP

I was fortunate enough to be serving as Adjutant of 1 WESSEX during his tenure as Commanding Officer 2 WESSEX and I shall retain nothing but good memories of an outstanding officer, scholar and all together a person who touched many people's lives. I knew Richard Holmes from when he and I were colleagues together in the Department of War Studies at Sandhurst and later as co-directors at the Cranfield Security Studies Institute. Richard was a first class military historian, the author of many books and articles, a superb lecturer whether it was to senior officers on the Higher Command and Staff Course or to the local branch of the Western Front Association. But he was very much an "applied academic" who was a very active member of the TA and as the senior TA officer had a crucial input in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review. He will be sadly missed by all his friends.

Dr Julian Lewis MP

Not only was he the archetypal scholar-soldier, Professor Holmes was a charismatic communicator of the first rank.

Julian Brazier MP

Richard Holmes was best known as one of the foremost military historians of the era. This remarkable man was also the first ever member of the Territorial Army to be the Director of Reserves and Cadets, a post hitherto held exclusively by members of the Regular Armed forces. On arriving in post at the same time as an incoming Labour government, one of his first tasks was to fight off powerful voices from within the Regular military and persuade ministers that a full Territorial Army should be retained, including combat units, rather reducing our reserves to a pool of specialists.

As an academic at Sandhurst and Shrivenham, he was an inspiration to a whole generation of rising officers, bringing the lessons of history alive in a fast-changing era.

See the BBC obituary www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk/13251220