

James Mills Adam

Military medicine researcher, adventurer, and general practitioner

James Mills Adam (b 1920; q Glasgow 1945), died from a chest infection on 20 December 2012.

After James (“Jim”) Adam was accepted to study medicine at Glasgow University, a family friend, a surgeon, advised him to join the officer training corps. Not only would he receive “cheap mutton pie,” but, after serving five years in the army, he would receive a £5000 grant to establish his medical practice.

After earning his degrees in medicine, surgery, and science in 1945, Adam duly enlisted in the Royal Army Medical Corps. But he would never need the grant to set up his private practice. Rising to the rank of colonel and specialising in physiology, he served in the army for 31 years in a variety of capacities, but focusing on research in military medicine.

His most important research projects entailed travelling around the world, investigating the effect of climate extremes on soldiers, but he also studied soldiers’ nutrition, hot and cold injury, and battlefield resuscitation. One of his many journeys was as a participant in the Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition (photo), during which he stood on the South Pole on 10 January 1958 and met the great explorers Vivian Fuchs and Edmund Hillary.

“Jim was a type A personality, and globe trotting and going to exotic locations fit into that mould,” says John Masterton, a close friend in the 1950s who also worked with Adam at the Medical Research Council’s division of human physiology at the National Institute for Medical Research, Hampstead Laboratories, London.

As a medical researcher, Adam approached his work with “enthusiasm,” using a “rational physiological approach” to study troops working in tropical conditions, Masterton says. He notes that Adam also contributed to the “evolution of vacuum packing and drying of food and the development of army clothing.”

Iain Levack, a retired consultant anaesthetist, first met Adam in the early 1970s when Adam was commander of the Royal Herbert Hospital on Shooter’s Hill in London. Levack says that a large portion of Adam’s work could not be published as “open literature” because of UK Ministry of Defence policy and other military restrictions.

In addition to his published papers,^{1 2} which were still being cited decades later, Adam contributed to important military pamphlets, handbooks, and other guides.



Adam (sitting at piano) with other members of the 1958 Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition

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“Much of his work was under-recognised, both outside and even within the armed forces,” says Levack.

James Mills Adam was born on 31 May 1920 in the Ayrshire coastal town of Ardrossan. His father was a head teacher, and young James was a good student. At the age of 16 he had already passed his Scottish higher leaving certificate and, determined to study medicine, he boldly applied to Glasgow University, but was turned down for being too young. After attending a course in pathological methods, with an emphasis on physiology, he applied again and was accepted.

Adam’s first army posting was to Germany, but he was summoned back to the UK in 1947 by the War Office to study the inadequate jungle clothing used by soldiers in Asia during the second world war. In subsequent years he travelled to dozens of locations around the world, including Singapore with the Royal Naval Tropical Research Unit, Korea to investigate cold injury and frostbite, and Kuwait and Bahrain to study the effect of heat on soldiers in tanks and armoured vehicles. He lectured at US military research facilities and in Japan, Hong Kong, and elsewhere.

In 1966 he earned his doctorate in medicine from the University of London and his book *A Traveller’s Guide to Health* was published, later winning a Royal Geographical Society award.³ In 1968 he was awarded the military OBE by the Queen.

After retiring as colonel from the army in 1976, Adam joined the newly founded Insti-

tute of Environmental and Offshore Medicine at Aberdeen University. Nelson Norman, who helped establish the institute and had met Adam on the Antarctica expedition, says that Adam’s contributions included developing training courses needed to provide medical support for the North Sea offshore oil and gas industry.

Adam was also involved in accidental hypothermia research and in the establishment of a laboratory used for fieldwork in support of industrial, community, equipment, and military research, says Nelson, now president of the Institute of Remote Healthcare in Aberdeen. “The basic educational and research and development concepts contributed to by James Adam did much to ensure the development of this important new area of medicine.”

Adam retired in 1982, after a heart attack, and “moved as far as possible from the cold of Aberdeen to Sandwich,” says his son, Ian Adam, now retired as the radiation safety officer at the Institute of Cancer Research. But he adds of his father: “He wasn’t quite ready for the idle life yet, so he spent about eight years as a locum and night-time GP. Even in my limited way, I have bumped into several people who were treated by him as he did these rounds and who clearly remembered him with fondness.”

In addition to his son, Adam leaves his second wife, Lucie Adam, whom he married in 1965; a daughter; and three grandchildren.

Ned Stafford, freelance journalist, Hamburg

ns@europen.de

References are in the version on bmj.com.

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John Emile Cosnett

Physician and neurologist (b 1925; q University of the Witwatersrand 1949; MD, FRCP), d 28 November 2012.

After 20 years as head of the medicine department at Edendale Hospital in Pietermaritzburg, John Emile Cosnett decided to concentrate on his major interest—clinical neurology. He was appointed as associate professor of neurology in Durban and worked there until his retirement in 1990. During these years he published numerous articles on diverse medical topics (including the various maladies described in the writings of Charles Dickens) and completed his MD dissertation on neurological disease in Zulu people. After retiring, John and his wife, Wendy, moved to Northern Ireland to live near to their medical practitioner son and his family. He leaves Wendy and a son.

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James Timothy Dowson



Former general practitioner Ellesmere Port (b 1941; q Liverpool 1966), died from prostate cancer on 7 June 2012.

James Timothy Dowson ("Tim") successfully completed his medical training, although he had had his leg amputated above the knee at the age of 8 years because of chronic osteomyelitis. After house jobs and senior house officer posts in various specialties he joined the Group Practice Surgery in Whitby, Ellesmere Port. Despite his mobility problems, he did his full share of surgery and on-call duties. A skilful pianist and organ player, he supported many amateur theatre productions after retiring in 1996. He will be greatly missed by his wide circle of friends, as shown by the large attendance at his funeral and the Facebook page created in his memory. **Nicholas R Clitherow, Allan Fowler**

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Gabriel Laszlo



Former consultant respiratory physician Bristol Royal Infirmary (b 1936; q Peterhouse, Cambridge, and St Mary's Medical School 1961; MD, FRCP), died from Parkinson's disease on 16 May 2012.

An astute and accomplished clinician, researcher, and teacher, Gabriel Laszlo worked on perception of asthma, coded peak flow meters, standardisation of lung function tests, exercise physiology, and non-invasive measurement of cardiac output. His 1994 monograph *Pulmonary function—a guide for clinicians* remains one of the most readable physiology texts. Even in retirement he contributed further educational publications. One of his patients was a television producer, who was so impressed by Gabriel that he made a documentary programme about him. A gifted musician, Gabriel played cello in the Bristol Concert Orchestra for many years and also built and played his own harpsichord. He leaves his wife, Olwen, a retired GP; two sons; and five grandchildren.

Martin Hetzel

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Nathaniel Minton



Former consultant psychiatrist St Peter's Hospital, Chertsey, Surrey (b 1935; q Cambridge and West London Medical School 1959; FRCPsych), died from complications of myeloid dysplasia on 25 November 2012.

Before going through conventional psychiatric training in London and Newcastle Nathaniel Minton ("Than")

had trained in analytical psychology in Zurich with CG Jung's deputy, Jolande Jacobi. His interest in psychotherapy lasted throughout his career. His influential legacies include the organisation of a series of international conferences on conflict resolution and educational videos on art therapy and sleep disorders. While studying natural sciences at Trinity College, Cambridge, he formed a close and lifelong friendship with the poet Ted Hughes. Than leaves his wife, Helen; a daughter; and a son, who became his carer during his protracted and difficult final illness.

Alan Kerr

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Brian V Payne



Former consultant geriatrician Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital (b 1945; q Cambridge and Middlesex Hospital, London, 1970; MA, FRCP), died from a metastatic brain tumour on 11 August 2012.

Brian V Payne was appointed consultant geriatrician in Norwich in 1978. His two main areas of professional interest were movement disorders and fractured neck of femur, for which he put together a team to open a dedicated ward unit to manage elderly patients, from admission to discharge. His retirement in 2001 was overshadowed by a diagnosis of caecal cancer, but he lived as normal a life as possible, travelling to Australia and within Europe. Reading poetry and the works of Rudyard Kipling gave him much solace as he was treated for spread of his cancer. He leaves his wife, Margaret; three children; and a grandson.

Margaret Payne, N Alan Green

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Alan John Rowe

Former general practitioner (b 1926; q King's College Hospital and Charing Cross Hospital, London, 1950; FRCGP, OBE), d 30 April 2012.

Alan John Rowe was a family doctor for over 30 years in rural Suffolk, where he lived throughout most of his life. Acknowledged by the BMA (he was a vice president) and honoured by the Queen, Alan Rowe was committed to medicine in the rest of the world, editing the *World Medical Journal* for the last nearly 20 years of his life. Known and respected throughout Europe, he received honours from at least 10 other countries. Although he devoted so much of his life to Europe, he nevertheless demonstrated an equal commitment to making music in his own country and was a distinguished organist and conductor. He leaves his wife, Joy, and his family.

Frank Wells

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David Ryland

General practitioner Todmorden, Yorkshire (b 1944; q Guy's Hospital, London, 1967; MRCP, FRCGP), died from metastatic cholangiocarcinoma on 24 July 2012.



After research posts at the Brompton Hospital, which gave him a lifelong interest in respiratory disease, David Ryland joined a respiratory research general practice in Kingston upon Thames. He became a GP trainer, which he continued when he moved to Todmorden. He combined general practice with medical education by being a GP and nurse practitioner trainer, CME tutor, and GP mentor; by chairing the local medical education group; and by giving input to various health authority committees. Outside work, his main hobby was reading. On retiring he started a degree in Portuguese. Predeceased by his first wife, Georgina, he leaves his second wife, Fiona, and two children.

Fiona Ryland

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