

Patron: Lord Cobbold DL
Ivry, Lady Freyberg

MICHAEL DAVID NEVILL COBBOLD CBE DL

January 2021

A natural born leader of men

David Cobbold (1919-1994) #557 on the web family tree is deservedly one of the most revered members of our family. His considerable successes as a lawyer and a politician are well summarised in his obituary from The Times which we reproduce below, but that is not the reason for this piece.

The Trust has just received, literally hot off the press, a copy of his "Memoirs of an Infantry Officer". Through his letters to family members, we now have a fascinating account of the prime of his life between the ages of 23 and 26 and an insight into the war as it was waged in Egypt, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Italy, India and Burma. Cobbold family historians will love it for its frank expressions of a young man's mind and historians will love it for his humble involvement in some highly significant events.

The letters were transcribed by David's grandmother, Hester (1865-1957) #290, edited by his son Chris #654 and typeset and published by his granddaughter, Sarah #4073. A few copies have been reserved for family and friends and are available by emailing Chris's wife, Jeannie #655 on jeanniecobbold@gmail.com They cost £10 including postage and the cheque should be payable to Chris & Jeannie Cobbold and sent to 42D Eastern Avenue, Reading, Berks RG1 5RY

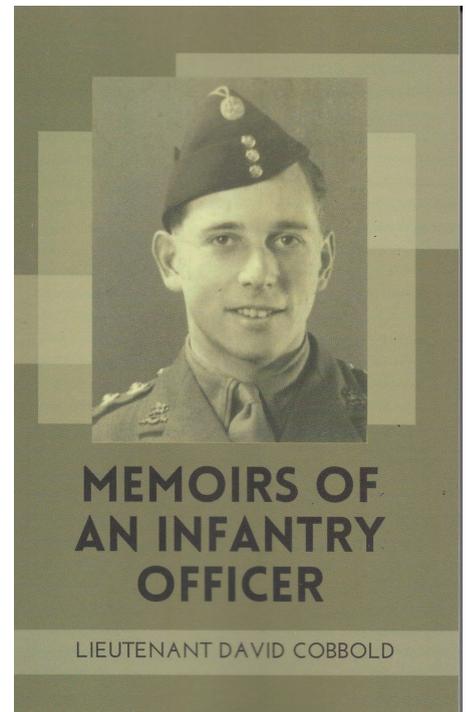
A gap in our record of his life has been handsomely filled.

OBITUARY THE TIMES 25th March 1994

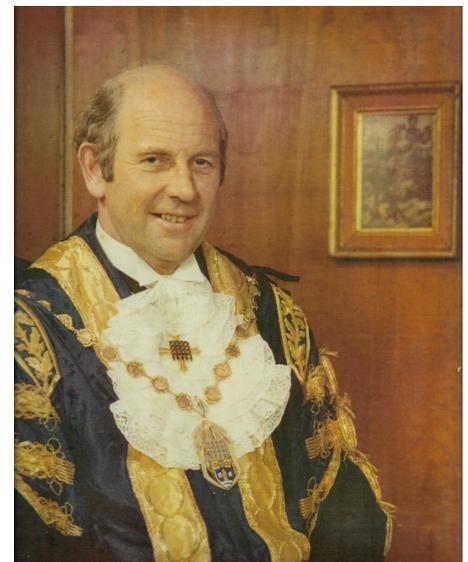
DAVID COBBOLD combined his career as a solicitor with 37 years' service on Westminster City Council, including eight years as leader before handing over in 1983 to Dame Shirley Porter. He was closely involved in the amalgamation in 1964 of the boroughs of Westminster, St Marylebone and Paddington in order to create the present City of Westminster.

Among other ground-breaking achievements, he was responsible for the introduction in the 1950s of the first parking meters and traffic wardens to combat the growing problems of car parking in central London.

Michael David Nevill Cobbold, a descendant of the Suffolk brewing family, was educated at Charterhouse, where he followed five previous generations of his family. He was a grandson of W.N.Cobbold, one of the pioneers of The Football Association, who captained the England soccer XI in the 1880s. He himself was a keen games player and qualified for Junior Wimbledon.



David Cobbolds Memoirs



David Cobbold in the ceremonial dress of the Lord Mayor of the City of Westminster

In 1938 he went up to New College, Oxford, but on the outbreak of the Second World War he joined the 2nd Battalion The Buffs (East Kent) and served in North Africa and the Middle East. His interest in politics may have been whetted during the 1943 Tehran Conference, where he was involved in the security for Churchill's visit and dealt with senior representatives of the other Allies. He subsequently served in Burma, where in 1945 he was severely wounded in a mortar attack which left him with a permanent leg injury.

On his return to this country he joined his godfather's Holborn firm of Stileman Neate & Topping and was admitted a solicitor in 1949. In the same year his long association with the City of Westminster began when he was elected councillor for the Victoria Ward. He went on to hold virtually every available office - alderman, Deputy High Steward, Mayor of Westminster, Lord Mayor of the City of Westminster and leader of the council twice, 1964-65 and 1976-83.

He played a leading part in the London Borough Grants Committee, following the abolition of the GLC, and sat on a host of other committees, including the London Boroughs' Association, the Advisory Committee on Local Government Audit and the Royal Parks Constabulary Committee. He was a trustee of the St Mary-le-Strand Charity and, at the request of the Bishop of London, he chaired the London Area Social Responsibility Committee.

At the same time he carried on with his professional calling as an energetic solicitor - with the result that for many years he followed two full-time occupations. In 1983 he arranged the amalgamation of Stileman Neate & Topping with the city firm of Beachcrofts (subsequently Beachcroft Stanleys), becoming a consultant, although his workload continued unabated for many years.

He was appointed CBE in 1983. He married in 1949 Ann Rosemary Trevor, who survives him along with two of his three sons and a daughter.