

How do you encapsulate Jim's life in to a few minutes? He was a loyal son, a caring boyfriend, a great support to many friends as well as a popular, caring and inspirational officer. Jim was ambitious, lively and sociable as well as being philosophical.

In Jim's time with the military he remained ambitious and keen to do a job that really made a difference. From an early stage in his military career he was ambitious to pass the Commando Course, something he did with the style and determination that we expected of a man of his calibre. He was a man who did not like the idea of a desk job, he loved being out on the ground working with people and experiencing different ways of life and cultures. Jim firmly believed that life was not a rehearsal and that every day should be lived to the full, as such Jim always challenged himself and made the most of situations – he tried to learn to play the guitar on the journey out to Iraq in 2003 and more recently was trying to read the bible from cover to cover.

Jim began his military life at Sandhurst in 2001. He stood out from the crowd as someone who was firstly not very much at home on the drill square, his unfortunate lack of co-ordination and his height certainly attracted the unwanted attention of our drill instructor on more than one occasion, but primarily he was someone who loved leading from the front and he inspired others to follow. Prior to the many competitive events at Sandhurst our Platoon would gather in the corridor to listen to Highland Cathedral to motivate us, Jim was always the first one to show his obvious determination and commitment by developing a tear in his eye. Despite Jim's obvious strength and tough outer exterior there was a man underneath who was determined and yet hugely compassionate.

Jim was infamous for making the most of any situation, on sea and on land. If he did not like something he would do his utmost to attempt to change it, I believe the best example of this was when Jim found himself sailing out to Iraq on board HMS Ark Royal, he decided that he would like to have a few beers one night and was later found in the Admiral's Cabin in the early hours of the morning, the following morning Jim had his very own chartered naval helicopter transferring him on to HMS Ocean, apparently surroundings he found much more acceptable. Jim was infamous throughout the Commando Brigade as a result of this escapade, and as only Jim could, he turned the episode around to his benefit and did a first rate job in Iraq.

Where ever Jim went good stories would follow not be too far behind. Many of the stories that relate to Jim tell of drunken escapades. Jim was renowned for his adventurous sense of fun. On many occasions I have witnessed and heard countless stories of Jim making a impact at parties, either dressed as; Spiderman, a Pirate or as a fat Elvis or he was known to crash private parties held by the rich and famous, every night out with Jim was an roller coaster and adventure. He was a man his friends loved to be around, thriving off his energy and obvious zest for life.

I regret that Jim will never get to fulfil his life's ambition of wrestling with a bear, or get to finish his memoirs; if they exist they would be a very entertaining read. I also regret that more people will never get to know such a great man.

Jim died doing a job he loved; he was a gallant and brave man and died a true hero. To have known Jim was an absolute honour. Jim we salute your courage and your life cut so tragically short.