

Jim and I met in Plymouth prior to undertaking our Commando training together and I had already served a few years, reaching the dizzy heights of Captain before Jim was commissioned. Yet on this course designed to test the limits of a soldier's physical and mental resolve, despite my seniority in rank, it was me who, more often than not, would turn to Jim for the moral support needed to push myself that little bit further. The fact that he gave such support so willingly, without question and without regard for his own needs, is testament to his unfaltering generosity, selflessness, loyalty and determination to succeed.

He was one of the few people who could truly cross any barrier of rank without compromising his own integrity and he managed this with a dignity that always engendered the greatest of mutual respect. He was without prejudice, his tolerance simply adding to his air of approachability and he cherished the men he worked with, the men he led and befriended with his engaging charisma. I know that Jim felt truly honoured to be part of Commando forces and, despite his immense pride in his achievements, he always conducted himself with humility, modesty and sincerity, marking him out as not only a great leader but also a great friend. It is fair to say that, with seemingly effortless success, he displayed all of the qualities of leadership described in textbooks and during lectures at Sandhurst, that many of us aspire to but are only truly realised by a few... Jim was one of them.

Jim will be remembered for many things but one that really stands out was his sense of humour and his ability to seek out mischief, such as the time when on his way to a fancy dress party dressed as Spiderman, he stopped off at an off-license to buy a few cans of beer, only to find the place in the process of being robbed. He and his other friends, also suitable attired, apprehended the shocked villains and handed them over to a confused looking member of the local police, who wasn't sure if what he was seeing was real or not.

He will also be remembered as the man who, on route to Iraq, sailing through the North Arabian Gulf on HMS Ark Royal and after a few cheeky drinks, decided to commando crawl into the Admiral's private cabin and take some of his prized toy soldiers "hostage". On being caught red handed by the Admiral himself and being asked "*who the hell he was*", Jim reluctantly dragged himself off the floor and introduced himself in a slur as "Captain" Philippon. The truly funny thing about this statement being that he was still only a humble Lieutenant! I for one will always be grateful for that indiscretion of his because it promptly led to him being unceremoniously removed from the Flag Ship and sent back to the sweaty depths of HMS Ocean on which I was embarked. Not surprisingly, this story spread throughout the Naval Task Force and went down in legendary history.