



Douglas Stewart Baikie, aka "Dougie" or "DSB", died suddenly in Aberdeen on 6 Feb 2000, aged 54. Born in Edinburgh, he enlisted in R Sigs in 1961 when he left school. That year he joined the Army Apprentices College at Harrogate, where he trained as a Tg Op. In 1963 he volunteered for Airborne Forces. He passed 'P' Coy and Parachute training at RAF Abingdon and was posted to 216 Sig Sqn (Para Bde Gp). At that time, although just 5ft 6ins tall, he was sturdy in build, extremely fit, and possessed a healthy Scots aggression to accompany his wiry red hair.

In 1964 the uprising in Cyprus saw 16 Para Bde Gp, supported by 216 Sig Sqn, in the front line between Greek and Turkish armed factions. Dougie served throughout the operational tour, for which he was awarded the UNFICYP medal. In 1965 he joined 1 PARA on a tour of Bahrain and the Persian Gulf, during which the sun turned his fair complexion extremely red. For this Op Tour he was awarded a GSM (1962) with clasp S Arabia.

He married Joyce in 1966 and they had 2 sons. Jamie was born in 1974, and Duncan in 1978. Tragically, Duncan died in 1991, aged 13, when a valve in his heart failed.

In 1968 Dougie was awarded the Dennis Cup, a 216 Sqn trophy, for the Best All-round Soldier in the Sqn. Throughout the late 1960's and early 1970's he was a regular member of the Army Cross-Country Squad, as well as representing Sqn and Bde at Distance Running. When Dougie led-off and set the pace for Sqn road runs, the Toms knew that much pain was coming their way! He also had a very good reputation as a Radio Detachment Commander during those years.

In 1971, newly promoted Sgt, he served with 16 Para Bde HQ & Sig Sqn in Lurgan, on a tour in the Province. At the end of this Op Tour he was awarded an N Ireland clasp for his GSM. In 1974, he was promoted SSgt, and in late 1975 to WO2 (SSM). He carried out his duties as SSM with relish, continuing to lead-off on Sqn road runs. He worked and partied, hard.

Disbandment of the Para Bde in 1977 meant that Dougie was the final SSM of 216 Para Sig Sqn, before it too became history. So, after 15 years wearing a Red Beret, he had to leave the Paras on posting to Germany. He served in 21 Sig Regt at RAF Wildenrath, and later at 22 Sig Regt in Lippstadt. However, soldiering outside the Para Bde was something that Dougie did not enjoy, at all. These latter years, until he left the Army in 1981, in no way matched the high standards he had achieved in Para Sigs.

Post 1981, Dougie disappeared from OCA view, although the rumour mill had him as a Radio Op on a North Sea Oil Rig. In 1996, I was on the ramp at Sumburgh Heliport in 1996, loading oilmen going offshore onto Sikorsky 61's. By pure coincidence, on the final chalk that day, the last man up the steps was none other than Dougie. Dwarfed in a survival suit, he looked smaller (and wider) than I remembered - the years had taken a toll. He wore small NHS glasses that glinted above a full ginger beard, streaked with grey. Yet during our brief meeting I could see and hear that his patter had not changed, and he was still a stroppey wee Jock. We spoke that night at some length over his radio telephone link. Some weeks later I met up with him for a beer in Aberdeen, whereupon he spoke with considerable feeling about the state of the Oil Industry, his particular job, and the failings of Civvy Street in general, as he saw it. He was most forceful when we touched upon his years with 216 - the finest, happiest days of his life. I can hear him yet, thumping the table and proclaiming, "Never, never, craphat, always ex-Para!" After a few hours of swinging the lamps, we parted, and sadly I never saw him again. Four years later, I got the news of his death from Mick Granitza, who saw it in the Press & Journal. Dougie's ex-wife, Joyce, also called with the news. They had separated in the 1990's, but kept in touch.

Comrades, who knew Dougie from his time in 216, will doubtless be saddened to hear of his passing. The Sqn was ably represented by Mick, who drove down from Elgin. Mick also had enough AB initiative to take a Red Beret with him, to dress the casket. This kindly act was much appreciated by Jamie Baikie, who said he saw it as a fitting and final tribute to his father. His 216 comrades send their sincere condolences to Joyce and Jamie.

Farewell and RIP, DSB.

(Composed by RAH)