



Major Richard Adam Hamilton, R Signals

Dick Hamilton was born in Edinburgh in 1946. As a boy he joined 61st (Musselburgh) Coy, The Boys' Brigade, where he made Sgt, and was awarded the Queen's Badge. In 1963, he joined the Army and enlisted in R Signals. He trained as a Radio Op at Catterick, from where he was posted to 5 Regt RA at Perham Down, Hants.

He then moved with 5 RA to Gutersloh, W Germany, where he was employed as a Command Post Signaller, Scout Car Driver/Op, and CO's Radio Op. He exercised with the Gunners throughout Germany and Europe. On attending obligatory R Sigs Military Proficiency Courses, he achieved Top Student at both Class III and II levels. He was promoted Cpl in 1966.

Dick volunteered for Airborne Forces in 1969. On successful completion of 'P' Coy (at the third attempt), and Basic Para, he joined 216 Para Sig Sqn in Aldershot. He became a Radio Det Comdr and exercised with most units of 16 Para Bde throughout the UK and overseas, in Bermuda, Cyprus, Germany, Ghana, Italy, Norway, Sardinia, Turkey, and Trucial Oman. In addition, Dick trained as a sub-unit Weapons Coach, achieved Best Student on an All Arms Drill Course, and re-qualified to Radio Telegraphist.

Over five years he logged 49 parachute descents, two of which were unforgettable - *"Ex Deep Furrow 1973, jumped with the 82nd (US) AB, alongside 2,500 Paras in the largest Airborne Assault since WW2"* - *"Ex Bold Guard 1974, night jump with 15 (SV) PARA, south of the Kiel Canal, a miss-drop that resulted in the drowning of six Paras"*. In addition, there were Op Tours in N Ireland with 1 PARA, 1969, and HQ 16 Para Bde, 1971. During the latter, he was nicknamed "Grumpy" - a label that remains to this day.

In 1972, Dick married Cpl June Morgan, WRAC Sigs; he was promoted Sgt later that year. In 1976, he was posted as SSgt to 1 Div Sig Regt in Verden, W Germany. As well as leading a Radio Troop, he found time to qualify as an All Arms Master Coach (Small Arms), and managed a winning team at the Div Skill-at-Arms. Promoted WO2 in 1977, he returned to Scotland as Sigs PSI for Tayforth UOTC (St Andrews, Dundee, & Stirling). In 1979, he was posted back to BAOR as SSM of 2 (Comhead/Radio) Sqn, 3 Armd Div Sig Regt in Soest. The tribulations of this tour, endured under two CO's, two RSM's, and three Sqn OC's, resulted in a well-deserved promotion to WO1, and in 1982 Dick was appointed RSM, 28 (BR) Sig Regt (NORTHAG), at St Tonis near Krefeld. He concluded his soldier's service with a final tour as RSM, NATO FSS (Shetland) in 1984.

In 1986, Dick was commissioned A/Capt (LE), and posted to 5 AB Bde Sig Sqn in Aldershot. Smoking his pipe, with "Biff" the Boxer by his side, he became a well-known figure around Montgomery Lines. As Families & Admin Officer he had no "jump-status", and at 41 he was the "old man" in a Sqn of young Paras. To keep face he felt he had to go to RAF Brize Norton for (another) Basic Para, where he was the oldest student on the course. On the 3rd jump, rusty parachute drills caused a whiplash injury, and led to several weeks in a neck-brace. On the eventual and qualifying 8th descent, he pulled the wrong lift-webs, and badly dislocated a shoulder. Nonetheless, "jump status" renewed, his elderly esteem was upheld. He regained fitness via surgery to his shoulder and painful physio-therapy at BMH Aldershot.

In 1989, after a busy tour under three Sqn OC's, he was posted to command 30 Cadet Trg Team, in N Wales. His travels there, in support of ACF, CCF, and HQ Wales Dist, saw him attend nine ACF summer camps, three CCF camps, and three Cambrian Patrols (oi/c covert agents). Promoted A/Major in 1992, he joined AAC Harrogate as OC General Trg Wing (Physical, Military, & Adventure Trg). However, Army-wide redundancies ended his career and he served out his time as OC HQ Sqn. Dick retired in 1994 as (Hon) Major, having completed over 30 years of Exemplary Service. He was a recipient of GSM (1962) with clasp N Ireland, and LS&GC.

In 'Civvy Street,' Dick and June returned to Shetland where, after a variety of jobs, Dick was CAA for Shetland ACF, 1997-2008. He was further employed as Admin Asst, and later Services Manager, by the British Red Cross, in Shetland, 2001-2011. Additionally, his voluntary work included posts as Red Cross ER First Aid Team Leader, Chairman & Caseworker for SSAFA-FH, and Hon Sec of a small R Sigs Assn.

In retirement, Dick and June maintained their large garden, and enjoyed walking holidays in Scotland, Spain, and Canada. In recent years, Dick was a regular contributor to ex-army publications and websites. He

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particularly enjoyed a 'dram' with friends and old comrades. He was a member of The RBL (Weston-on-the-Green), The RBLS (Lerwick), and the AB Sigs OCA.

Suddenly on the 1st August 2015 Dick collapsed and despite quick responses by fellow walkers and the Coastguard Helicopter Para medic, did not regain consciousness. At the funeral in Sandwick, his Red Beret dressed the coffin, which was draped with a Union Flag. An RBLS Standard and Piper attended the committal, together with family, friends, and old comrades from Airborne Signals.

He is survived by his wife, June, daughter, Sarah, and grandson, Adam James.

RIP, Dick Hamilton, "Airborne Grumpy".