

## Eulogy - Sam Rollings

*For those of you who don't know me my name is Bill Irwin and I have served with Sam and been a good friend for many years.*

*For all of us here today, Sam was taken too soon, but we shouldn't dwell on the loss of our good friend instead let's celebrate his great life and the remarkable things he achieved.*

*Sam joined the Royal Corps of Signals in 1951 and trained as a Radio Operator. He went on to join 264 Signals Squadron, a specialised unit providing communications and IT support for 22 SAS. He was trained in Special Forces skills prior to deploying to Malaya where he saw action in the jungle with the Malay Scouts. Quite an introduction to jungle warfare for one so young.*

*Rumour has it that he drank too much of the local brew one night and let one of the natives cover him in tattoos. They were often a talking point especially among younger soldiers.*

*In 1954 Sam decided to join the Parachute Bde and on completion of selection and further parachute training he joined 16 Independent Parachute Bde Gp Signals Sqn. He soon showed his potential and was promoted Corporal in this very elite unit.*

*My first meeting with Sam was in 1959. I was on my Pre-Para course and early one morning he came round the accommodation banging two dustbin lids together shouting "get out your beds. I will be back with the fire buckets next". I have to say those early days weren't for the faint hearted.*

*My second meeting with Sam was when we arrived back from parachuting training at Abingdon. Although we were only private soldiers he welcomed us to the Squadron, showed us around and put us at ease, and I have remained friends with him for 53 years.*

*In 1960 Sam was posted to a training establishment in Lincoln with promotion to Sgt. This type of soldiering didn't suit him and he fell foul of the system and was posted to 7 Armd Bde as a corporal. He couldn't settle and in 1962 managed to get back to 216 Para Signals Sqn. Within weeks he was back in the Sgt's mess but later that year he was demoted to Cpl.*

*In 1966 he was posted to 208 Signals Squadron, 28 Commonwealth Infantry Brigade, Malaysia where he enjoyed a great couple of years and although he made some very good friends he longed to return to the Para's and got his wish in 1968 when he returned once again as a Sgt. This time he held onto his stripes and got more recognition when promoted to Staff Sgt.*

*He got the job he always wanted, Comms troop S/Sgt; a very responsible position as he had to ensure comms, and discipline and admin were at the highest level. He was an excellent manager and I will just give a short example.*

*One of his soldiers was under performing and not himself. Sam asked what the problem was and the lad told him he was having trouble at home with his wife, she wanted to leave him. Sam took him to the Squadron office and within 10 minutes had a leave pass for 7 days, a return rail warrant and from his own pocket gave the lad £5.00 and sent him on his way. Sam did this of his own volition and shows how he cared for his lads.*

*Sam was also a rascal and practical joker; he once told me the story of taking some un-cooked meat home on the train given to him by one of his cook mates. He placed the holdall containing the meat in the over head luggage rack and blood started to drip through the holdall. He said the women sitting opposite looked like she had seen a ghost but he soon put her at ease with a simple explanation.*

*Sam always looked after his soldiers and put them first, sometimes to the detriment of his own career. He referred to them as my lads and he had respect for them which came back in abundance and he had a great unique bond with them all.*

*But all good things come to an end and in 1974 he was posted to the T.A. in London where he was promoted warrant officer class two and he remained there until his discharge in 1975 having completed 24 years service.*

*Sam was a soldiers' Soldier, a no nonsense man. What you see is what you got. Although he was a task master he was also understanding and very approachable. He was never happier than when he was teaching and passing on his vast experience and knowledge to others, especially younger members. He was known throughout the Corps for his professionalism in the field and his operating skills.*

*He was a dynamic, robust soldier who had the respect of Special Forces and airborne forces alike. He was a "one off" and I am proud to have been his friend as I am sure many of you here today are too. I have to stress, he was never demoted for incompetence it was more likely for something he said, he didn't suffer fools gladly and his personality sometimes clashed with his superiors. The fact he was promoted so many times shows how good he was. He was a great soldier and Airborne through and through.*

*From his loving family and friends and all the soldiers who had the privilege of serving with this remarkable little Yorkshire man – Sam Rest In Peace and in true Doncaster lingo – Al Si Thee*