

For my Dad

It is not difficult to remember my father as a person who was a caring, generous and humble man whose concern was for helping others and putting other people's problems before his own. But today I would like to remember him as my dad. 69 years ago he held me as a baby and cuddled and soothed me. For the last week I have had the privilege of being beside him, holding his hand and returning the same affection and care that he gave to me and to my brothers, and to be with him as he left us.

He loved us all and his legacy of his interests from nature to music, mechanics, sense of humour and a code of decency and understanding of our fellow men have shaped our lives. But his real legacy and one that gave him and my mum never ending pride and joy was the six of us and our wives (more than 6), 18 grandchildren and somewhere around 25 great grandchildren. I am not sure what overwhelmed him most when he came to large gatherings of the family, it could have been seeing them all or just so much energy and noise.

Finally, I would like to give special thanks to Zandra who with her exceptional love and devotion made the last 5 years of dad's life the best that anyone could have. She made sure he was fed a healthy diet, always encouraged him to exercise and to get out and meet people and follow his interests. She would never take no for an answer even if he grumbled and resisted. As a result, we will always be indebted to her for making his last years some of his happiest.

I would also like to thank all of my family here and all over the world for their support, encouragement and love that made it so much easier to look after dad at home for the last week. Especially Annie who held it all together.

If I could give my Dad a 22 gun salute today, I would do it to remember him as one of the last of a generation of wartime men and women who fought against the Nazi regime. He was a naval engineer on the Destroyer The Lookout, which despite the numbers of naval engagements always came away without a scratch. She was known as the lucky Lookout and I should add, lucky us!

James

