

The eulogy for Rodney is in three parts, the first part was written by Rodney, and covers his life up to when I was born in 1958.

The second part are my words up to around 1997 when Mum & Dad moved to Witchampton Village. Jenny Raymond will then say few words about his later years there.

So the 1st Part, in Rodney's words.

"I was born in a small village called Shadwell on the Norfolk/Suffolk borders, on 22nd August 1931.

At that time, my father was the assistant estate manager for a large estate owned by the wealthy Musker family. When old man Musker died the estate was split between his two sons. My father was promoted as estate manager for one of these estates – the Rushford Estate – and our family moved from Shadwell to Rushford.

I had a happy and idyllic childhood. I was allowed to roam all 1300 acres of the estate. I fished in the river, shot rabbits, rode on horses, carts and tractors, especially at harvest times.

I was always in trouble, I once fell off the roof of a farm building and broke my leg.

On another occasion I exploded a blank bullet by placing the exit end in an anvil and hammering the cap. Needless to say the brass case exploded into many pieces, one lodging in my hand which required surgery (I could easily have lost an eye but didn't).

I was 8 years old when war broke out in 1939 . Norfolk and Suffolk became lands of many British and (later) American airfields. Aircraft crashed nearby and needless to

say, I would be quickly on the scene collecting unexploded ordnance which, (given half a chance) I would try and set off. Flares were my favourite!!

An American 'Flying Fortress' crashed not half a mile from the family home. I was quickly there, stuffing ordnance into my pockets and shirt, only to be caught by a burley policeman who arrived and took possession of me and my explosives – I was eventually 'let go' with a good ticking off!

In or about 1942, I was sent to Framlingham College, then a small public school for boys, where I really enjoyed the Combined Cadet Force and the rifle shooting that went with it. I was a school prefect, played rugby, did well at cross-country running and eventually won my shooting colours. I would go away on summer CCF camps and rose to the dizzy rank of Cadet Sargeant.

In my latter years at Framingham, I became interested in the Royal Marines, attracted by the thought of being '*a soldier and sailor too*'.

So, I left school at 18 and joined the Marines with 1½ years of hard training which saw me top of my squad in seamanship and receiving a red 'diamond' on my sleeve, indicating that I was ear marked for early promotion.

My shooting ability didn't go unnoticed and I was selected for rigorous training at the Royal Marines Sniper School, passing out top of the course as a fully-fledged Royal Marine Commando Sniper!

After training in 1951, we were sent on a long sea passage to Japan and Korea which was then at war. I took part in raids behind enemy lines.

I must have done well as I was sent home to be trained as an Officer and commissioned as probationary 2nd Lieutenant Royal Marines. Officer training took 3

½ years and I had to do the arduous Commando Course all over again, even though I was already the proud wearer of the coveted 'Green Beret'.

My best ever service was in Cyprus in 1956/57 when Cypriot nationalists were fighting for the end of British rule. I was Commando Troop Subaltern with 'B' Troop 45 Commandos – arguably the best troop in the Commando Brigade at that time. We had success in thwarting raids, and capturing terrorists and their weapons. 'B' Troop was never ambushed in Cyprus (unlike some other troops) – some said because the word was out that 'B' Troop was **not** to be engaged in combat!

Prior to service in the Mediterranean and Cyprus, I had met Fay, then a student nurse at St Georges Hospital in London. I courted her for many happy months.

Fay joined the RAF and became a Nursing Sister with the rank of Flying Officer. She was selected to be a Casevac (a casualty evacuation nursing sister) travelling all over Europe and the Far East to bring home sick and wounded servicemen – usually by RAF Hastings aircraft. On one trip Fay landed at Nicosia airport in Cyprus during the afore mentioned troubles, where I was able to meet her and take her out. Next morning I returned to the Troodos mountains (still in my dinner jacket) to find my way blocked by my Commando unit who were searching a village.

At the end of my tour in Cyprus I returned to the UK and married Fay on the 21 December 1956, amidst thick fog. We honeymooned, skiing in Switzerland.

I was then posted to Royal Marines Poole where I volunteered for training as a Swimmer Canoeist with the SBS. This entailed a course in parachuting at RAF Abingdon. I completed 6 jumps, 2 from a balloon and 4 from a Hastings aircraft, but during the 5th jump (which was at night) I broke my ankle. There followed several

weeks in plaster, and I had to abandon the SBS course and be specialised in Landing Craft instead.

My first appointment after qualifying as a Landing Craft Officer was to HMS Ickford, a small Navigational Leader manned entirely by Royal Marines. I was the 1st Lieutenant and Navigating Officer.

It was while I was serving abroad on HMS Ickford that Michael was born. The ship had gone down the Rhine, and I received the news of Michael's arrival whilst the ship was visiting Bonn."

So now that I have arrived in the world I can pick up the story line!

Dad continued to serve in the Marines up until the mid-70's with postings to various locations.

The most significant was to Singapore in the mid-60's. We (now a family of 5) flew out on what was a very long flight, with many refuelling stops along the way. I can still recall that flight today.

We quickly settled into an idyllic expat life. At weekends and after school we would go to the local swimming clubs including the exclusive Tanglin Club on Sundays.

We mustn't forget that Dad was out there to do a job, which involved Dad being sent to British North Borneo where he joined his Commando Unit to patrol the virgin jungles along the border with Indonesia. Dad would write me detailed illustrated letters of life in the jungle and how they would learn from the indigenous people how to adapt to the environment and traverse the difficult terrain.

I remember it was a particularly difficult time for Mum and the other wives, with the constant worry that something could happen to their husbands. Needless to say Dad returned unscathed.

In the early 1970s Dad did a long stint on HMS Intrepid. At home in Corfe Mullen, we had a world map and we would track the ship as it made its way around the world to its intended destination of Sydney. The ship stopped over in Cape Town, and I later heard that Dad was so impressed with the place, he suggested to Mum that we should emigrate there.

Much to Dads disappointment, the ship never made it to Sydney, as it was diverted to what is now Bangladesh to provide humanitarian aid following a massive tropical Cyclone.

Dad was involved in the distribution of aid using the landing craft from the Intrepid – in fact we did have a photograph from a UK newspaper which appeared to show Dad directing the offloading of supplies from one of these vessels.

Dads final posting in the mid to late 70's was to the Commando Training Centre at Lympstone, where he undertook a Human Resources role.

Following Dads retirement from the Marines he embarked on new career as a Lawyer. This involved a considerable amount of studying and time away attending Guildford Law School. This was a tough time financially for the family, with only Dads military pension and Mums income from her night nursing to keep us going.

But Dad qualified, and started work as a solicitor and eventually become a Partner with Coleman and Loffett in Broadstone. He worked there until 1995 when the other

partners retired and the company was taken over. After this he worked as a locum at various locations.

It was around this time that Mum and Dad sold their property in Hinton Martell and moved to Witchampton village.

I'll now hand over to Jenny to say a few words from those later days of Dads life in the village.