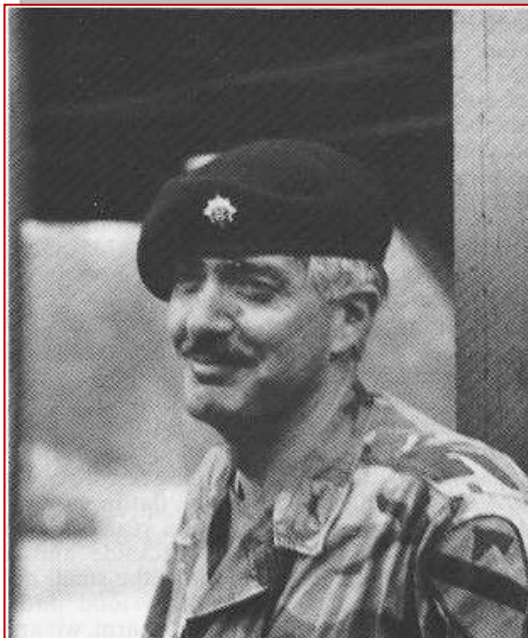




A LETTER TO THE REGIMENT FROM MAJ J RUFFINI, US ARMY

Let me begin this farewell note by apologising to those of you who might be expecting to read something witty and humourous in the text. At the end of a fortnight when I've had to say goodbye to my Squadron, farewell to the Corporal's Mess, and been dined out for the last time as a serving member of the Regiment by the Warrant Officer's and Sergeant's Mess and the Officer's Mess, I find it impossible to control emotions let alone drum up any Humour.

When Pat and I first arrived, we expected the exchange assignment to be enjoyable, educational, and different to anything we'd experienced previously. What we did not expect was the sense of family, belonging and fierce loyalty to the Regiment which we began to feel after only a few months with 4th/7th. We have made many good friends here. The Regiment gave us the best years of our lives, and for this we are very grateful.

There are some things which transcend cultures and national loyalties. For me it is the honour of having served in the profession of arms with this regiment. It is the emotional attachment to and fondness for my fellow soldiers and their families which has grown greater every day I've served. Some final thoughts which I would like to leave with you come not from an American or from a member of the US Army, but from a professional soldier who has been fortunate enough to serve with the very best here in 4th/7th.

Never take your Regiment or yourselves for granted it's easy to do when you're born and raised in the Regiment and spend a lifetime in its service. What you gentlemen share in 4th / 7th is something that is the envy of every professional soldier in every professional army in the world. You are truly comrades in arms. You are Regimental soldiers inside and out. You genuinely care for one another. Every task you perform is carried out with pride in your individual abilities, pride in you're accomplishments as a team, and pride in your regiment. You are a confident lot who know you are unbeatable. You ensure that this Regiment's pride and great accomplishments are made known to others. Yet you do it in a humble manner which shows respect for outsiders who deep down inside must envy you. The followers are as loyal as any leader could hope for. The leaders carry out their duties in a spirit of total cooperation and unity of effort which military textbooks cannot describe. There is a noticeable lack of antagonism and oneupmanship, of cut-throat dealings and backstabbing in our Regiment. I know. I've seen it in other units.

To the troopers of the 4th/7th, I thank you for all you have taught me and for showing me just how damn good soldiers can be. I respect the hell out of you men. This is the only unit I've ever served with that has an abundance of "command troopers" – soldiers who, when the going gets really tough, will do it right the first time. Not because an NCO is standing over them every minute, but because Yorkshire pride, cap badges, and three hundred and four years of time honoured tradition provide all the guidance and motivation necessary. You are the future senior ranks. In a decade's time, the continued greatness of the 4th/7th will depend on you.

From the Corporal's of this Regiment, I have learned more than I'll ever remember. You have one of the toughest jobs in any army. You make it work where "the rubber meets the road". This Regiment could not survive without the institutional knowledge, abilities, endurance and strength which you possess. You know that. Everyone in this Regiment knows that. Thanks for putting up with the Yank. Thanks for your loyalty. You guys are pros.

To the Warrant Officers and Sergeants you have shown me a level of professionalism which frankly I never thought existed. You enjoy authority and responsibility unknown to your American counterparts.

I quickly learned in my first few weeks with C Squadron that if a 4th/7th SNCO can't do it, then it just can't be done. The fact that so many of you supported me and defended even the most

unpopular of my Yank policies and idiosyncracies is deeply appreciated. Individually and as a whole, I owe you a great debt I can never repay. I will miss the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Mess. I always felt at home. I was always well looked after. I always enjoyed the hell out of myself when I was there. I have every intention of returning.

To the ladies of the Regiment, in the manner in which you support your husbands (and put up with them) is one of the great strengths of the 4th/7th. I hope I never take this fact for granted. You're a super bunch. Being a Regimental wife is the toughest job in the army. But you know that. Pat and I will miss you all.

To my fellow officers, I hope you always enjoy the priveledge of leading the best. Thanks for making me feel so much a part of what you will be able to share for many more years than I. Savour the moments. For as one who has come to love this Regiment as much as any of you. I can tell you that when you walk out of the Mess for the final time as a serving member, it literally tears your heart out.

Quis Separabit