



The Parachute Regimental Association Aldershot Branch Newsletter

01/2012

Charity Number 1125551

Jan 2012

Monthly Meeting

The next Monthly Meeting will take place on **Friday 6th January at 2000hrs in Malta Barracks**. Please ensure that all PRA members park their vehicles on the edges of the parade square and leave their Aldershot Branch membership cards on the dashboard with their name visible. The meeting after this will be held on Friday 3rd February 2012.

Bar Opening Times

The bar will be open at the following times during January, Friday 6th Jan 2000hrs – 2359hrs, Friday 13th Jan 2000hrs – 2359hrs, Friday 20th Jan 2000hrs – 2359hrs and Friday 27th Jan 2000hrs – 2359hrs . A free Pool Table, Bar nibbles, Television for all sporting events and a good atmosphere await you. Please note that fresh ground coffee is available for those who have to drive or would like an alternative drink.

New Members

Apologies to George Sherwood ex 3 Para 1962-67 and Kim Tomlinson ex 10 Para 1981-87 who joined late last year. Welcome to the Branch.

P Company 10 Miler

The P Company 10 miler took place on Saturday 26 November in Aldershot. It was too late to include the article in the December newsletter. The Traf opened its doors very early on the Saturday morning for tea and coffee but most of the people I saw were drinking out of glasses. When I arrived at 0915hrs there were only a few people standing outside so I thought the turnout would not be as good as last year. Within half an hour it was standing room only in the pub and a very large crowd had gathered outside. It was nice to see that many members of the Aldershot Branch had turned up to join in. At 1000hrs Tommy Simpson, the Treasurer of the British Airborne Forces Club who organises the event, assembled the walkers and gave the safety brief. We then set off up Alexandra Road and then into Wellington Avenue past the Tesco Supermarket. At the end we turned left onto the Farnborough Road and crossed over to enter the training area at the track that leads to Sunny Hill. After crossing the open sandy area we proceeded along Long Bottom until we got to the bottom of Flagstaff Hill. A few puffs and pants later and we were on top of Flagstaff. We were allowed a ten minute stop at the top and most would say it was to appreciate the view, but in reality it was probably to get our breath back. It was downhill till we crossed the Bourley Road and passed Jubilee Hill to our right and Outriden Copse to our left. We then hit Eelmoor Plain and Long Valley and no it hasn't changed. When we got to Miles Hill it was a right turn and Eelmoor Hill was next. We crossed over the Fleet Road at the Driver Training Circuit and headed to the Claycart car park and the bridge over the canal. It was at the bridge that Tommy Simpson had arranged a stop point along with scoff. Once everyone had been fed and watered we proceeded along the canal towpath and passed under the Farnborough Road. We then made our way

onto the slip road next to Browning Barracks and turned left onto Alison's Road and past the entrance to the barracks. All those present were in good spirits as they crossed over the Queens Avenue junction and headed towards the Military Cemetery. Upon reaching the cemetery they all assembled at the Falklands plot. A very moving service was held and a wreath was placed on the Falklands Memorial. After the people then paid their respects to graves that had a personal meaning for them. All those present then made their way back to the Traf for a few beers and to catch up with old friends. Over 180 people attended the walk and those who couldn't make the walk joined us in the pub afterwards. If you haven't been able to attend the walk or for drinks afterwards, please try and attend next year. It is always the last Saturday in November. See page 3 for photos.

Christmas Ball

The Christmas Ball was held on Saturday 10th December and was a superb success. A full report will be given in the next newsletter.

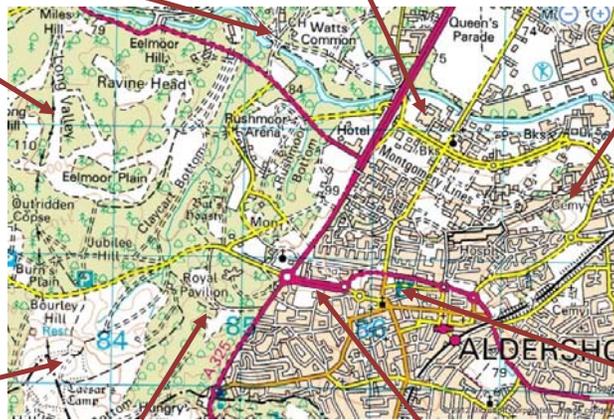
Deliver Us From Darkness

Branch member Ian Gardner has written and published his second book which is called ***"Deliver Us from Darkness"***. This is a sequel to his first book ***"Tonight we Die as Men"***. The book tells the continuing story of the 3rd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment during the invasion of Holland during the liberation of the Netherlands. A full report is can be read on pages 4-6.

Stuart

P COMPANY 10 MILER

LONG VALLEY CANAL BRIDGE BROWNING BARRACKS MILITARY CEMETERY



FLAGSTAFF HILL SUNNY HILL WELLINGTON AVENUE THE TRAF



TOMMY GIVES THE SAFETY BRIEF



A FEW MORE STEPS TO THE TOP



SCOFF AND A BREW WAS WELCOME



ON THE CANAL TOWARDS BROWNING BKS



THE SERVICE AT THE MILITARY CEMETERY



LAYING THE WREATH

The story of a heroic American parachute battalion during the liberation of the Netherlands in WW2

Written as the sequel to the internationally critically acclaimed 'Tonight We Die As Men' with astonishing attention to detail, 'Deliver Us From Darkness' tells the continuing story of the 3rd Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment during the invasion of Holland.

Deliver Us From Darkness

Ian Gardner, Foreword by Mario DiCarlo

ISBN: 978-1849087179, £20, Published by Osprey Publishing, 20th April 2012

Hardcover: 352 pages lavishly illustrated with over 200 hundred photographs (many previously unpublished) and six maps

The book can be purchased from all good book stores and is currently available for pre-order on Amazon.

"Military historians have said 'Market Garden' was a total disaster. Try telling that to the Dutch, for whom US & Allied paratroopers were liberators from German tyranny and occupation. Ian Gardner takes readers through the story battle by battle, magnificently, just as he did in his previous book on the battle of Normandy – Tonight We Die As Men."

Ed Shames, Veteran, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division

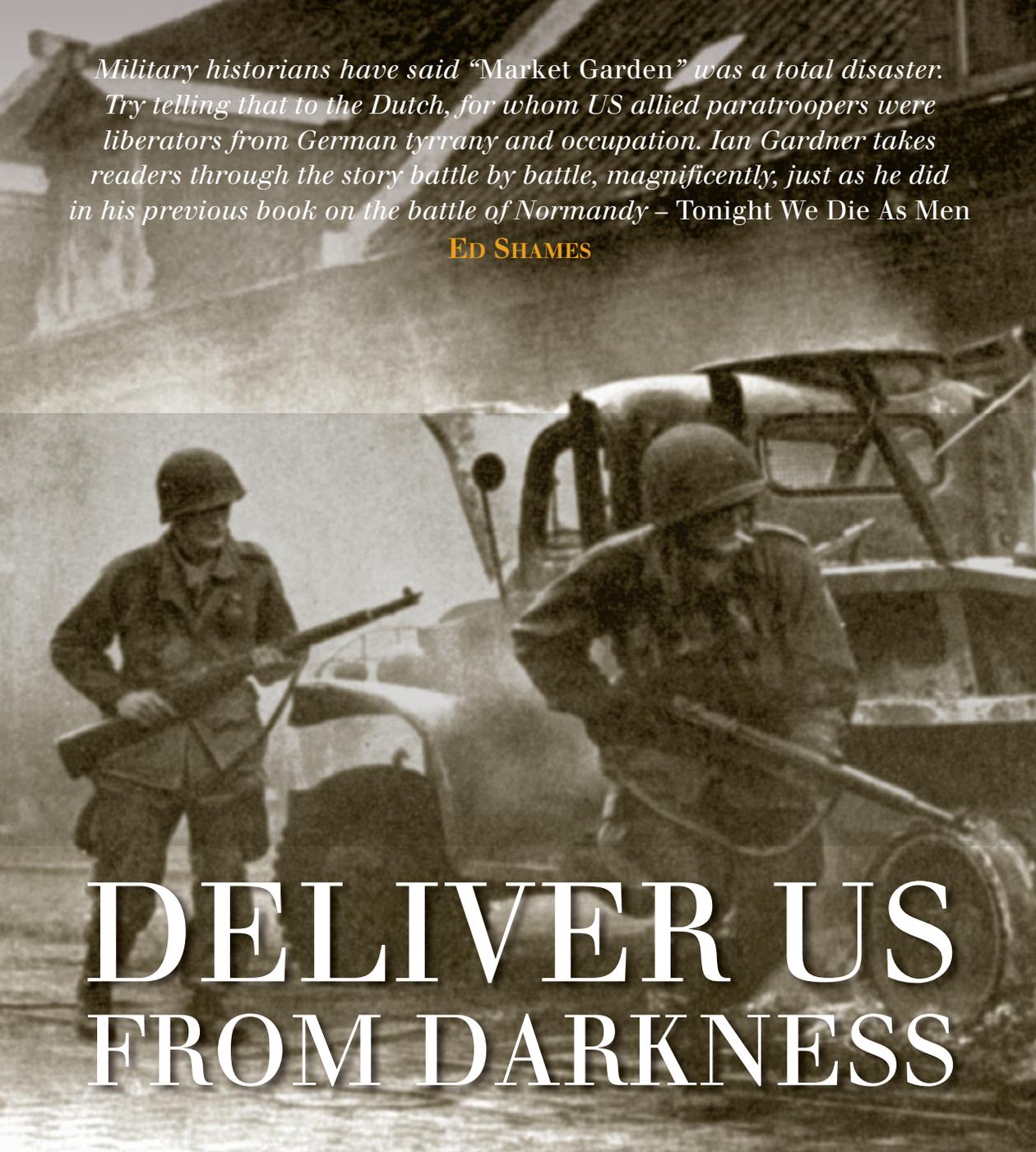
At short notice on Sept 17, 1944 the 101st Airborne Division parachuted into Holland as part of Operation Market Garden. The plan was to secure the main road that passed through the city of Eindhoven - facilitating the advance of General Sir Miles Dempsey's Second British Army towards Arnhem. The objective of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR) was to capture four crucial bridges over the river Dommel in southern Eindhoven. Third battalion led by Major Oliver Horton, spearheaded the advance on Sept 18, taking heavy casualties along the way at Vlokhoven and Woensel. Upon entering Eindhoven (the first Dutch city to be liberated) thousands of people spilled onto the streets to embrace the paratroopers. A few hours later when XXX Corps arrived the roads were so crowded that the tanks were unable to get through. The celebrations were short lived, when Eindhoven was bombed the following night by the Luftwaffe causing hundreds of civilian casualties. With the capture of Eindhoven the 101st Airborne thought that its mission in Holland was over. However, this was only the beginning of a bloody seventy-two day campaign that would see no quarter given by either side. Thousands of heavily armed enemy troops trapped behind allied lines were reorganised into temporary fighting groups and sent on the offensive. Supported by Tiger tanks and self propelled artillery the German army began an audacious series of counter attacks along the road to Nijmegen that became known as 'Hell's Highway'. Over the next two weeks the 506th PIR were constantly called upon to defend the transport hubs north of Eindhoven at Sint Oedenrode, Veghel and Uden. The destructive power of the enemy armour claimed many lives especially on Sept 25 at Koevering, when the third battalion suffered horrendous casualties.

By October the 506th were sent further north to take over from the British 214th Infantry Brigade near Arnhem. Surrounded by water 'The Island' was the name given by the allies to the Betuwe, an area of land northwest of Nijmegen between the Neder Rijn (Lower Rhine) and the river Waal. The 3rd Bn played a pivotal role when a major German attack was thwarted near the town of Opheusden on Oct 5, during which Oliver Horton, and many others were killed. The chaotic battle fought against the 363.Volksgrenadier-Division shook everybody to the core. But it was the beginning of a bitter struggle that would continue for two months. Heavy rain, flooding and constant shelling turned the area into a no-man's land that could only be patrolled at night. The men lived like animals in such squalid conditions that trench foot became a normal part of life. By the end of November, after sustaining appalling losses the enemy abandoned all hope of ever retaking 'the island'. Finally on Nov 27, the 101st were withdrawn from the line and sent to France to recuperate. The mission in Holland would be one that the men would never forget. Many felt that their lives had been misused and wasted, Normandy had been bad enough, but this time the members of 3/506 had been through hell...

Drawing on years of research and more than seventy extended interviews with veterans and civilians caught up in the fighting. Deliver Us From Darkness is a gripping account of the paratroopers of the 3rd Battalion 506 PIR, from the terror of jumping behind enemy lines to the desperate struggle to stay alive in the terrible conditions and finally the bitter fighting as the Third Reich fought desperately to turn back the tide of the Allied advance, meticulous research is combined with a gripping narrative to reveal the events that stretched the Battalion almost to its breaking point.

About the Author

Ian Gardner was born in South London. He served for five years in Support Company 10th Battalion the Parachute Regiment as a medic, before leaving the Territorial Army in 1993 due to a parachuting injury. Ian has always loved military history but it was several years after leaving 10 Para that his interest in WWII US Paratroopers really began. Inspired after a visit to Normandy in 2000 he decided to focus on the 3rd Battalion of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Currently a self-employed graphic designer, 'Deliver Us From Darkness', will be Ian's second historical work. He lives near Aldershot in Hampshire.



Military historians have said “Market Garden” was a total disaster. Try telling that to the Dutch, for whom US allied paratroopers were liberators from German tyranny and occupation. Ian Gardner takes readers through the story battle by battle, magnificently, just as he did in his previous book on the battle of Normandy – Tonight We Die As Men

ED SHAMES

DELIVER US FROM DARKNESS

**THE UNTOLD STORY OF THIRD BATTALION 506 PARACHUTE INFANTRY
REGIMENT DURING *MARKET GARDEN***

IAN GARDNER

FOREWORD BY MARIO DICARLO