



The Parachute Regimental Association Aldershot Branch Newsletter

02/2010

Charity Number 1125551

Feb 2010

Monthly Meeting

The next monthly meeting will take place on **Friday 5th February at 2000hrs in Malta Barracks**. Due to the severe weather the January meeting was cancelled so please make every effort to attend the first meeting of the new year.

Bar Opening Times

The bar is open on Friday evenings **8pm till midnight** and Sunday afternoon from **5pm till 8pm**. Pool table 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.

Branch Ties

Branch ties are available for purchase from the Treasurer or Secretary at a price of £10.

Help for Heroes Wristbands

Please note that we have a supply of Help for Heroes wristbands on sale behind the bar at a cost of £2 each.

New Members

There were no new members last month.

Burns Supper

Unfortunately for the first time the Chairman decided to cancel the Burns Supper, initially due to a poor response for tickets. As we approached the date the snow arrived and Malta Barracks car park was under twelve inches of snow. All training had been cancelled and the unused car park would have been an accident waiting to happen. After I sent out the information regarding the cancellation I was informed that sixteen members had intended to ask for tickets but had left it late. Please book early in future for all functions as this assists those people who organise events.

Airborne Items

Although the Airborne Forces shop is still open at Browning Barracks I have been informed by the RSM of 4PARA, WO1 Richard Turner that 4 Para now produce the Parachute Regiment Calendar every year and they sell a variety of airborne items. Members can either call or buy online at:

Web Site: www.airbornepri.com

Info: info@airbornepri.com

Telephone Number: 0115 9557373

Address:

AirbornePRI

Unit 5 Thornfield Industrial Estate

Hooton Street

Nottingham

NG3 2NJ

Airborne 70

The 70th Anniversary of The Formation of Airborne Forces Special Event 24th July 2010. Branches are advised that 16 Air Assault Brigade will be organising a special event to mark the 70th Anniversary of the formation of airborne forces. This event is planned to take place inside Merville Barracks on Saturday the 24th July 2010. Although this special event is in the early stages of planning it is to be a no cost ticketed event, (which will assist in controlling entry into Merville Barracks) and organised along the lines of a "Mini Colchester Festival" The event will provide the opportunity for members of the PRA to meet serving soldiers and to parade along with member units of the Brigade as well as the opportunity to parade branch Standards prior to the brigade deploying on operations later in the year. It would be of great benefit to the organising committee to gain the strength of feeling and possibly an idea of numbers and branches likely to attend and I would be grateful if branch secretaries could inform this office as soon as realistically possible of the number of branch members likely to attend so that I may take this information forward to the next planning meeting in March. I intend to suggest to the Executive Committee we hold the PRA Annual General Meeting prior to the event. The Colonel Commandant, Major General JD Shaw CBE wishes to address the AGM so please make a note of the date in your diaries.

The Dakota has Landed

The Dakota which stood for many years outside the Museum in Browning Barracks has made the journey to Colchester and now stands as a Gate Guardian at the entrance of Merville Barracks in the new colours of a Mk3. It will provide a great photographic opportunity for future visitors. The Dakota transport aircraft arrived on Wednesday 20th January on a convoy of lorries and was the aerial workhorse of the Second World War, used by the Parachute Regiment for drops on D-Day and Operation Market Garden.

Since the 1970s, the aircraft had been in Aldershot, where airborne forces were based until the formation of 16 Air Assault Brigade in Colchester in 1999, and the Army has been looking to move the aircraft ever since. Deputy brigade commander Colonel Hugo Fletcher said the Dakota "has finally come home". He said: "It is a potent symbol of our heritage, our current role as a high readiness force and our close relationship with the RAF." Over the past year, it has been refurbished at North Weald airfield, receiving the colours of the aircraft piloted by Flight Lieutenant David Lord when he won a posthumous Victoria Cross. On September 19, 1944, Flt Lt Lord was dropping supplies to troops in the Netherlands when his aircraft was hit. Despite the damage, he made sure he dropped all his supplies and ordered his crew to bail out before it crashed with him still at the controls. Sgt Tim Davies, of the RAF's Joint Aircraft Recovery and Transportation Squadron, is managing the Dakota's move and reassembly in Colchester. He said: "It's not a frequent job for us to deal with a historic aircraft like this and there's quite a lot of work needed. "The journey was very smooth, but that's because we had a police escort, did a survey to find the best route and cleared any signs that were in the way.

"It'll take two weeks to reassemble the airframe and then another two weeks to finish off the engines and rudders."



Steve Kettles

Branch member Steve Kettles and his wife Pam were in the Trafalgar pub along with other members one evening just before Christmas. Two members of the Branch have recently lost loved ones to cancer so Pam decided that she would like to raise some money for the Macmillan Nurses. She proposed that Steve would shave off his moustache that he has worn since the early 70's. Steve readily agreed and the Landlady Lorraine swiftly went upstairs to obtain the necessary equipment. After returning the ladies went to work and yes it did take two of them. It didn't take long and after nearly forty years Steve's top lip was bare. The pot was passed around the pub and I am very pleased to tell you that £198 was raised. This was not one of the pubs busiest evenings so to raise that amount of money was excellent. Well done Steve and Pam.



Stuart