



The Parachute Regimental Association Aldershot Branch Newsletter

02/2011

Charity Number 1125551

Feb 2011

Monthly Meeting

The next Monthly Meeting will take place on **Friday 11th February 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.

Bar Opening Times

The bar will be open at the following times during the month of February: Friday 11 Jan 2000hrs – 2359hrs. The bar will be closed on Friday 25 February due to the Support Company, 10 Para reunion. Please check your year planner for opening times. 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. Don't forget there is a PRA bell on the side of the gate.

New Members

There were no new member last month.

Burns Supper

Due to poor response the Burns Supper had to be cancelled which resulted in the Branch having to pay cancellation fees. Please help and assist the Branch with future events by booking early and supporting the functions.

The British Airborne Forces Club

The British Airborne Forces Club was formed many years ago under the name of the F.O.C. Club (Fraternal Old Comrades). They have recently changed their name to the British Airborne Forces Club to reflect the heritage and ethos of the club. The money raised helps to run the club and the events. Along with charity work they run two main events a year. The first is the Pen Y Fan weekend in Brecon. This year's event is being held on Saturday 14 May. Many members arrive on the Friday evening and book into Dering Lines for the weekend. Please note that you can only stay in Dering Lines if you are a member of the club. The cost for the weekend accommodation is £10 but you need to bring your own sleeping bag. After the days walk they are hosted in the evening by the Brecon Rugby Club. It is a superb weekend and the numbers are increasing every year. The second event is the P Company 10 Miler that was featured in last month's newsletter. This event is held at the end of November. Once again this event is growing every year with this year's increase adding another 50 people. Next year they hope to have more than 200 on the march. Unfortunately the club is only open to people with access to the internet. I have received an article from the British Airborne Forces Club which you can read on pages 2 and 3.

Stuart



The British Airborne Forces Club
The Annual P Company 10 Miler
and Pen Y Fan Weekend



The P Company 10 mile tab is one of the many tests of Selection that all potential Soldiers for The Parachute Regiment must pass before going on to Parachute Training at RAF Brize Norton.

No Pass.....No entry to that exclusive Club, The Airborne Brotherhood, of The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces.

For almost 50 years, these P Company tests, took part on the Aldershot Training Areas under the supervision of the P Company Staff, based in Browning Barracks. With the move to Colchester of the Parachute Brigade, Aldershot Training area ceased to be used. However, those by now famous name places, ingrained in every Airborne Soldier's memory are still there.

Names and Landmarks, such as; Hungry Hill, Sunny Hill, The Royal Pavilion, Long Bottom, The Concrete Road, Caesars Camp Ranges, Flag Staff Hill, Beacon Hill, The Bats Hogsty, Jubilee Firs, Long Valley, Phelan's Fancy, Miles Hill, Eelmoor Bridge, The Engineer's Bridge, Rushmoor Arena, and not forgetting The Trainasium and Assault Course in Rushmoor Bottom.

In 2006, a small group of Ex Airborne Soldiers from all units within the Parachute Brigade and other Airborne units began having get together's in Aldershot and after a very successful similar type of meeting in Brecon, an organisation was formed. An Internet website was constructed and we became the first British Airborne Club Online.

This organisation was totally independent of other Airborne Associations and Reunion Clubs and is answerable only to its members. A Committee was formed with the Clubs Constitution and the organisation was known as The Fraternal Old Comrades. It was voted in by the membership, that there would be two annual meetings. One in Brecon every May where members would meet up on the top of Pen Y Fan, where a short service of remembrance would take place followed by a Cross laying ceremony at the bottom of the hill. This is now known locally as the Field of Crosses. In the evening, there would be an informal party in the town. The second would be held in Aldershot in November. Members would meet at the Trafalgar Inn, an Airborne Pub and from there everybody would walk along the Old P Company Routes mentioned above. The route was worked out by two of our members, one of whom held the appointment of P Company Sergeant Major and takes in a full 10 miles. It is Stressed, that this is at walking pace, so that members can appreciate the scenery and reminisce about the blood, sweat and tears.

The finish is at the Aldershot Military Cemetery, where a short ceremony of remembrance is conducted. Flowers are laid on all Airborne Graves and the

Falklands Memorial and a toast to their memory is made. In the evening, there is an informal party in the town.

The Club is now undergoing a name change to; 'The British Airborne Forces Club' this is to reflect more of what we actually are. The Airborne Forces Club remains Independent as voted in and now part of the constitution. Membership is open to anyone who has been a member of any British Airborne Unit, Passed P Company and completed BPC. We do not have Affiliated members and every member has equal rights. Membership fees are £10 per year, payable in May.

In addition to the above, we also allow membership to those who can show a direct link to Airborne Forces, at the discretion of the Committee.

All members have a say in the running of the club and the Committee is answerable to those members. Membership fees are used firstly, to maintain the Club's Website and to provide funds to run our annual meets in Brecon and Aldershot. Any surplus is held in the Club's Bank and can be used as directed by the members of the Club. A monthly statement of accounts is posted online by the Treasurer. Members can propose any Airborne Cause that may materialise. A Vote will be taken and if 'carried' that Cause will benefit from the vote.

If you are a serving or retired member of The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces and like the idea of an internet based Club, with secure 'Airborne Only' pages, accessible only to members and the opportunity to attend both the Fandance and P Company 10 Miler then click on

www.exairborneforces.co.uk

You will need to register and become a member, before being granted access to the 'Airborne Only' pages.

All members do go through a vetting system and this can take a few days. We do ask that you be patient while this takes place and can assure you that once in, you will be amongst genuine Airborne People.