



The Parachute Regimental Association Aldershot Branch Newsletter



03/2014

Charity Number 1125551

Mar 2014

Monthly Meeting

The next monthly meeting will take place on **Friday 7th March 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 11th April 2014**. Will all members ensure that they close the gate after entering and leaving the Barracks.

Bar Opening Times

The bar will be open in March on Friday 7th from 2000hrs – 2359hrs, Friday 14th from 2000hrs – 2359hrs, Friday 21st from 2000hrs – 2359hrs and Friday 28th from 2000hrs – 2359hrs. A free Pool Table, Bar nibbles, and a good atmosphere await you. Please note that Tea & coffee is available for those who have to drive or would like an alternative drink.

New Members

There are no New Members this month.

Annual General Meeting

It was agreed at the February monthly meeting that the Annual General Meeting will now take place on Friday 2nd May. Will you please amend your year planner to reflect this change. The Annual General Meeting will take place before the monthly meeting in May. This meeting is the most important meeting of the year so please try and attend. As in previous years all committee members are up for re-election. If any member would like to apply for a position on the committee please contact the Treasurer, Dave Rashbrook. The committee positions are: Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Welfare Member, Bar Member, Entertainments Member and Property member.

70th Anniversary Summer Ball

Update to follow.

Support Company 10 Para Reunion

About 40 people attended this weekend, and it was a great success as usual. The meal on Saturday evening was very enjoyable, as was the company in the bar afterwards. Pat Newman said that we must not let numbers fall as the reunion would not be able to happen with below 40 people attending. He suggested opening it up to the Regiment on a first come first served basis. It is a great value weekend and details are available on request. Photo's on Page 8.

Nile Wilson



I sent out an article last year regarding Nile Wilson who took up gymnastics at a very young age. I have received a message from Nile's grandfather JJ Wilson who is the ex RSM of 2 Para.

Many of you have followed Nile's progress over the last few years and more recently in 2013, please see the Yorkshire Post article below.

“After bagging 32 medals of which 18 were gold, Pudsey’s Nile Wilson knows that 2013 will take some topping.

Yet a place at the Commonwealth Games – and a huge step towards Rio 2016 – would be the icing on the cake for the 17-year-old’s 2014.

Nile, who turns 18 next Friday, is one of Great Britain’s brightest young all-around

gymnastics stars – if not the brightest.

And proof in the pudding came through a memorable 2013 in which he was crowned British and English champion at junior level. Defending both of those titles is immediately on Nile's 2014 agenda with both competitions taking place in March. As he will be 18 by then, those tournaments plus May's Junior Europeans will be the high bar and parallel bar specialist's last appearances at junior level. Instead, the step to the senior ranks beckons but it is one that Nile is relishing with the teenager hoping it will be at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in July and August where he announces himself on the stage that matters most."

I have sent the very best wishes of the Aldershot Branch to JJ to pass on to his grandson.

Battle of the Bulge
by Iain Rodgers

BATTLE OF THE BULGE – A TOMS REPORT 3rd to 5th January 2014



A 2nd commemorative parachute drop was organized by Pathfinder Parachute Group Europe to jump into Bure – Ardennes to honour those members of the Parachute Regiment and the Belgian SAS who fought in the battle of the Bulge during WW11. Following the jump by the Pathfinder members a C130 was to drop a full load of Belgian Paratroopers on an adjacent DZ. An Airborne TAB was also arranged over a distance of approximately 8 kilometers, stopping off at several memorials en route following the drops.

(An interesting note)

During WW11 the town of Bure lay within the American sector and officially no British troops were present?

Iain Rodgers, Brian Mulvey both PRA members left Aldershot and then travelled over on the Dover to Calais ferry on Friday morning arriving in Bure mid afternoon. The weather seemed to be favorable as was the forecast.

The accommodation for the 30 plus jumpers was again the local

football/sports hall (with a bar) after settling in and completing the required admin it was time to hit the bar and renew acquaintances of the parachute group, most were Para trained from their respective countries, mainly British, French and Belgian.

Saturday morning took us to the local schools gymnasium to draw and fit our parachutes, and for a few of us to have a kick about with an old football someone found.

The evening of Saturday 4th took us to the local village hall where the Belgians had put on a meal for the jumpers. The guests of honour were two members of the Parachute Regiment who actually fought in Bure during the Battle of the Bulge and they were John (Jock) Hutton 13th Battalion- B Company scout section and Herbert (Bert) Marsh 12th Battalion – Mortars. Following a memorable evening it was off to bed again.



Jock and Bert receiving memorial plaques



Some of the members of the Pathfinder group along with Bert Marsh (seated) and Jock Hutton (sitting on the floor next to me)

Well, morning arrived and we collected our parachutes and boarded the coach for the hour drive to Spa airport.

Arriving at Spa we gathered together in the airside lounge to be told that the plane had not yet left its home airport of Teuge in Holland and would be arriving an hour late. (A lot can happen in an hour?)



Some of the jumpers at Spa airport



Brian Mulvey and myself waiting for the aircraft to arrive

Fit parachutes.....

Eventually the plane did arrive and the first stick boarded for the 15 minute flight to the DZ and low and behold over the DZ was low cloud where an hour before it was clear skies, the plane circled and circled but could not find any sort of gap in the cloud at all. The ground crew radioed to say they could hear the engines but there was no sight of us, so back to Spa airport.

On arrival at Spa –

Remove parachutes

Someone asked if we could not jump on the DZ why not jump at the airport? As it is also a free fall jump site. A request duly went to the airport jumps co-ordinator who gave us permission.

Fit parachutes

And form up ready to board the plane.

We were now told that the cloud that had prevented us from dropping onto the DZ was now over Spa airport.

Remove parachutes and get on the coach

At least this year we actually got a flight in the aircraft, whereas last year we never left the ground. Hopefully next year it will be 3rd time lucky.

Next Jump February 21 to 23 Operation Biting – Brunaval, France

“Red On”

A Tribute to Stuart (Ginger) Meade

Hundreds turn out to pay tribute to a former Paratrooper –

SOME 200 former and serving soldiers turned out to pay their respects to a man who dedicated much of his life to their regiment.

The Parachute Regiment soldiers (Paras) lined up outside Croydon Crematorium on Friday to honour former Para Stuart “Ginger” Meade, who died on February 1 after a long illness.

Mr Meade had served the Regiment for more than forty years, first as a serving soldier, then as secretary since its forming of the Croydon branch of the Parachute Regimental Association (PRA). More recently he was also Regional Secretary for London.

PRA branch president Colonel John Power last week paid tribute to the

65-year-old, with whom he served 42 years ago.

He said: "Ginger would invariably be the first to visit any ill or injured comrades, however far away, and had led the way in raising substantial amounts for Regimental Charities.

"In short, Ginger devoted his life to the Parachute Regiment and the Association that he loved and that he had contributed so much to over the years, continuing to lead from the front and to display the courageous and exemplary qualities in his personal life for which the Regiment is renowned.

"His many friends are full of admiration for the brave and forthright manner in which he has coped with his illness, whilst maintaining a robust military sense of humour."

Colonel Power also delivered the eulogy at the funeral, attended by 150 to 200 friends and family members alongside the Paras.

He said afterwards: "He was selfless and courageous to the end, and well known and liked throughout the PRA (which has branches throughout the UK and abroad), as evidenced by the numbers at his funeral, some of whom travelled from abroad."

Mr Meade leaves behind his wife, Maureen, two sons, Andrew and Stephen, and one grandson, Henry, also known as "Little Ginger."

As reported by the Croydon Advertiser.

Julie Dinsey

Support Company 10 Para Reunion



Where am I Sitting?



Menu Time....What to choose.....



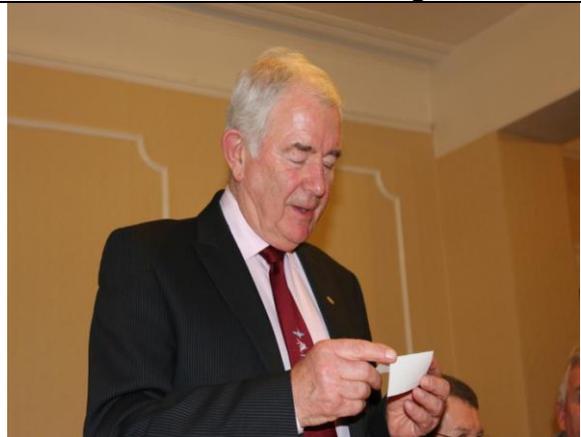
Cheers Snowy!



Tex & Ted Posing!!!



Speech Time....



What are they plotting....?



Relax & Catch up time