



## The Parachute Regimental Association Aldershot Branch Newsletter

04/2012

Charity Number 1125551

Apr 2012

### Monthly Meeting

The next Monthly Meeting and Annual General Meeting will take place on **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> 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 4<sup>th</sup> May 2012.

### Bar Opening Times

Please note that the bar will be closed on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> April due to this being Good Friday. The bar will be open at the following times during April, Friday 13<sup>th</sup> Apr 2000hrs – 2359hrs, Friday 20<sup>th</sup> Apr 2000hrs – 2359hrs and Friday 27<sup>th</sup> Apr 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

There was one new member last month, Mark Desborough ex 9 Para Sqn and 2 Para. I am also pleased to inform you that after moving house, Ian Dorling has asked to rejoin the Branch. Welcome to the Branch.

### Annual General Meeting

Please note that the Branch Annual General Meeting will take place on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2012. This will be followed by the April Monthly Meeting. Please try and attend the Annual General Meeting. All committee members have to either be elected or re-elected at the AGM. If any member would like to apply for a position on the committee please contact the secretary. Please note that the annual subscription of **£15** is payable after the Annual General Meeting. Please make your cheques payable to **"Aldershot Branch PRA"**. Cheques can be handed to the Treasurer at the meeting or sent to the Secretary at the address below.

### Golf Day

The Warren Park Golf Society Spring Competition, as mentioned in the last newsletter will be held on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April at Hurtmore Golf Club. The competition will commence at 1pm and will comprise of 18 holes Stableford, Longest Drive and Nearest the Pin. There are winning residents and guest prizes. The cost is £35 which includes your golf, two course dinner and the prizes. The closing date for entries is Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> April. If any member or guest would like to take part in the competition please contact Branch member Jim Scott or the secretary. Jim is looking forward to seeing you there.

### Airborne Memorial

The new Airborne Memorial will be unveiled at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> July at 1100hrs. If members and their ladies would like to attend and wish to travel by coach please contact the secretary. So far only four members have applied to travel on the coach, so if you are intending to attend please contact the secretary as soon as possible. We need to know that there will be enough members and guests to fill a coach before we contact the coach company. We are hoping to keep the cost to £15 per person.

## Bruneval Raid Operation Biting

Two members of the Branch, Iain Rodgers and Brian Mulvey, along with a friend Ian Coleman attended the Anniversary Drop by the Pathfinder Group Europe from Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> till Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> February. A report by Iain Rodgers is below.

### Bruneval Raid Operation Biting - Anniversary Parachute Drop by Pathfinder Parachute Group Europe - a Toms Report (Thursday 23 to Sunday 26 February 2012)

Brian Mulvey (ex 10 Para Support Company), Ian Coleman (ex 47 Air Dispatch) and myself (ex 1 Para) left Aldershot at 2000hrs and travelled over to France by ferry out of Portsmouth to Le Havre on the Thursday night ferry. We arrived early on Friday morning with ominous fog hanging in the air and after a short taxi ride arrived at the parachute centre where we were to be billeted. We were due to take off from this centre to take part in the 70<sup>th</sup> Bruneval raid anniversary drop which is on behalf of the veterans families, unfortunately none of the actual parachutist veterans from the raid are still alive.

Friday was spent drawing and fitting chutes, practicing exits and the obligatory 3 monthly dry draining (to stay in date). The remainder of the day and evening was re-acquainting old friendships as the members of Pathfinder Europe come from all over the world. Many a yarn said and many a beer was drunk that night.

On Saturday we all rose early in anticipation of the jump. Unfortunately, so had the fog, so in fine tradition we practiced some more exits and drills. In the evening we had a splendid barbeque, drank some more, along with more yarns and war stories and then finally fell into bed.

Sunday arrived and we were still fogged in, but this was also the day of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Parade. 2 Para sent over the OC of Bruneval Company and a SNCO to represent the serving soldiers, along with a bugler, after all this was the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The French people of Bruneval did the lads proud. Over 20 standards were on parade as a plaque to the two lads killed on the raid was presented and dedicated to them. This will be a permanent reminder on the wall of the town centre. Many French veterans also turned out on Parade as did members of the British Legion. I and several other former Paras from Pathfinder were in attendance, booted and suited to pay our respects. As the ceremony unfolded so did the fog, and soon after we were racing back to the airstrip to draw and fit again, only to find by the time we got there the fog had closed in again. So yet another trip to France was over and we were again beaten by the weather? "Oh bien, tel est la vie".

We packed up our gear and returned to Portsmouth eventually arriving back in Aldershot at 2300hrs.

Toms [Report](#) by Iain Rodgers



Iain, second from the left at the unveiling of the Plaque

**40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**  
**Aldershot Bombing**

The bombing of the 16<sup>th</sup> Parachute Brigade Officers Mess took place on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1972. Seven civilian staff were killed along with a Roman Catholic Padre and 18 people were wounded. A short service was arranged at the memorial in Pennefathers Road on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February at 1215hrs by the Airborne Forces Club to commemorate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. They were joined by some of the families who lost loved ones all those years ago. The photos below show those assembled a few members of the Aldershot Branch who were able to attend.



Tommy Simpson explains to those Present what happened on the day



The members and ladies after laying a wreath



The Memorial with the flowers and wreath

**Falklands**  
**30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

The Parachute Regiment & Airborne Forces Falkland Islands Conflict 1982 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event (PARA Falklands30) will take place over the weekend 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> June. The main event is on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> June. Full information was sent out last month. Please make a note of this date in your diary.