



**The Parachute Regimental Association  
Aldershot Branch  
Newsletter**



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<b>04/2018</b>	<b>Charity Number 1125551</b>	<b>April 2018</b>
<b><u>Monthly Meeting and Annual General Meeting</u></b>	The <b>April Meeting and AGM</b> will be held at <b>8pm</b> on <b>Friday 13th April 2018</b> in the Conservative Club, Aldershot. The meeting will commence with the AGM followed by the monthly meeting. This is the most important meeting of the year so please make every effort to attend. The committee for the next year will be elected at the AGM. The meeting after this will be the May meeting which will be held on Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> May.	
<b><u>Branch Photo</u></b>	We would like to take a Branch Photo after the meeting. Would all members please wear a blazer for this meeting. All other meetings are casual.	
<b><u>Branch Subscriptions</u></b>	Please note that Branch subscriptions are now due. The subs are £15 a year. You can pay your subs by Standing Order. Should you wish to pay this way please contact me and I will send you the form that you will need to fill in and return to your bank. You can cancel the Standing Order at any time. Members are given 3 months to pay their subs and if we have not received them after this time you will cease to receive the newsletter. Cheques should be made payable to <b>“Aldershot Branch PRA”</b> .	
<b><u>Branch Newsletter</u></b>	The cost of second class stamps is going up to 58p. I still send out nearly 40 copies of the newsletter by Royal Mail. If you are receiving the newsletter by mail and you have an email address that I could send it to, can you let me know. The cost of the stamps for a year is just under £300.	
<b><u>Welfare Member</u></b>	If you are not well, or you know of another member who is ill, can you let me know so that I can inform the Welfare member, Chris Rogers.	
<b><u>Officers Mess Bombing 46<sup>th</sup> Anniversary</u></b>	<p>The 46<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the bombing of the Officers Mess in Aldershot took place on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February. Although the area is now a building site we were given access to the memorial which is placed where the Officers Mess stood. The numbers attending this year was slightly less than last year at 30 people. Branch member Ian Marshal and Geoff Butler attended again this year. They were both junior soldiers and were too young to be sent to Northern Ireland so had to stay behind. Senior Officers were having a meeting in the Mess and they had been tasked with helping out behind the scenes. They were on their way to the Mess when the bomb went off.</p> <p>After the laying of wreaths, Geoff gave a talk on what they saw and also on what is known about who was responsible for the atrocity. At the end of the talk a question and answer session followed. A fitting tribute to the 7 people who lost their lives on that sad day. See page 6 for photos.</p>	
<b><u>1, 2 and 3 Para Reunions</u></b>	In spite of the bad weather many members of the Branch attended the 1, 2 and 3 Para reunions in Blackpool. If any member who attended can give me a write up and some photos I would be pleased to add them to the next newsletter.	

**Support Company,  
10 Para Reunion**

This year reunion was held in the Union Jack Club in London on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> March. The numbers were better than last year and 42 people attended. The person who travelled the furthest was Dick Murray who lives in Wales. One nice touch was the single table set out with a single seating and the name plate on the front read "**Absent Friends**".

**Aldershot Branch  
Tabbers Walking  
Group**

Please bring waterproofs in a small back pack and a change of shoes/trainers at the end of the walk as we don't want to walk into the pub with muddy boots. This also helps when getting into the car for the ride home. The group will be meeting in the Garrison Church Car Park from 9am - 9.15am next to the Wellington Statue. It is proposed that we car share to save taking empty cars. Peter Richens has now organised the following walks for March. The walks are 5/7 miles and we are now getting a regular 10 – 13 walkers.

The next three walks will take place on **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> April, Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> April and Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> May.**

If you would like to attend any of the walks please turn up on the day or if you require further information please contact the Secretary.

**Walking Group trip  
to Dorset**

**BRANCH WALKING GROUP – DORSET TRIP 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018.**

I mentioned in last month's newsletter about our three day walking trip to Dorset. The response has been very good but we still have places should any member wish to come and join us.

The accommodation is self-catering: Bunk style accommodation with spectacular views from the top of Portland Bill. Free tea/coffee, fully equipped kitchen, private car parking, communal room with 42" TV, bedding is provided and Free WiFi (log-in: portlandbunkhouse2014). The accommodation cost and evening meal on the Wednesday is **£46 per person.**

**The Parachute  
Regiment &  
Airborne Forces  
Aldershot  
Memorial**

I have received the information below and what Stace and Tommy have done so far is fantastic. What they are intending to do is even more amazing.

**The Parachute Regiment & Airborne Forces  
Aldershot Memorial**

Richard Stacey & Tommy Simpson

Gentlemen;

We are an internet based, group of Parachute Regiment Veterans who have been active since 2010, in remembering members of the Parachute Regiment & Airborne Forces who have died, on & off duty, by producing various types of memorials.

We have a Facebook Page;

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1971688963054688/>

We run & organise a small private fund called;  
The Parachute Regiment & Airborne Forces Memorial Fund.

It is supplied with funds, by personal private donations from many individuals who support our activities. The main method of collection is by donations into a collection bucket in the Trafalgar Inn Aldershot.

For supporters who live abroad or cannot visit the Trafalgar Inn, donations can be paid direct into a purpose built bank account. Details are on the FB page above.

One of our biggest supporters & contributors is the Pegasus Appreciation Group, run by Rich Greasley & Lee Crichton.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/673398406141639/>

We hold & take part in some important Airborne gatherings throughout the year, where the funds are boosted by visitors & members alike.

**Namely;**

We run our own 'Airborne Forces Day Aldershot' every year, on or about the first Saturday in July. This is held at the Trafalgar Inn, Short Street Aldershot.

We organise & run an Annual 'P Company 10 Miler' usually the last weekend of November in conjunction with;

The British Airborne Forces Club;

<http://www.bafo.org.uk/>

This is a gentle walk over the old training area & camp.

It starts & finishes at the Trafalgar Inn.

The aim being a day out, visiting the old training area & the camps.

The walk takes in the Army training area in Aldershot, from Long Bottom to Caesars Camp hill, along Long Valley & to the Engineers Bridge by the Army Golf Club, where the Walkers are fed & watered by the Staff of the Trafalgar Inn.

After lunch, we move on through the Military Camp, past Malta & Browning Barracks & on to the Aldershot Military Cemetery, where a service of remembrance is held.

The names of those who have died during the past year are read out, followed by wreath & flower laying.

Finally ending with a toast in Port to 'Absent Friends' by the Chairman of the BAFC.

We usually have about 300 at the Cemetery. Plus 500 or more in the evening in the Trafalgar Inn.

We also have a presence at the British Airborne Forces Club, annual 'Fandance' held in May in Brecon. Another day out with a walk up to the top of Pen Y Fan & a great night out in the Rugby Club Brecon.

To date, we have been instrumental in producing & commissioning;

1. The Op Banner Memorial.

[https://www.facebook.com/tommy.simpson.18/posts/10215648229501176?comment\\_id=10215648274982313&notif\\_id=1521553516877046&notif\\_t=feed\\_comment&ref=notif](https://www.facebook.com/tommy.simpson.18/posts/10215648229501176?comment_id=10215648274982313&notif_id=1521553516877046&notif_t=feed_comment&ref=notif)

2. The Afghan/Iraq/Sierra Leone & Macedonia memorial.

[https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10215648287102616&set=a.10213057548295765.1073741842.1304772264&type=3&theater&notif\\_t=feedback\\_reaction\\_generic&notif\\_id=1521553988929640](https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10215648287102616&set=a.10213057548295765.1073741842.1304772264&type=3&theater&notif_t=feedback_reaction_generic&notif_id=1521553988929640)

Both of these marble memorials are in the Aldershot Military Cemetery.

3. We also have numerous benches in this Cemetery & produce brass name plaques to commemorate the many Airborne Soldiers who have recently passed on.

[https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10215648353384273&set=a.10213057548295765.1073741842.1304772264&type=3&theater&notif\\_t=feedback\\_reaction\\_generic&notif\\_id=1521554695132294](https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10215648353384273&set=a.10213057548295765.1073741842.1304772264&type=3&theater&notif_t=feedback_reaction_generic&notif_id=1521554695132294)

[https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10215648404545552&set=a.10213057548295765.1073741842.1304772264&type=3&theater&notif\\_t=feedback\\_reaction\\_generic&notif\\_id=1521555204241917](https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10215648404545552&set=a.10213057548295765.1073741842.1304772264&type=3&theater&notif_t=feedback_reaction_generic&notif_id=1521555204241917)

4. We also have memorials in the Palace Barracks Memorial Gardens.

5. We are involved in protecting the 16 Para Bde Officers Mess Bomb Memorial on the site of Montgomery Lines.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/56851354676/>

We have a new Proposal.

### **The Proposal;**

Aldershot, the home of the British Army, was also the home base of The Parachute Regiment & Airborne Forces from 1950 until 2000.

Now that the whole unit has moved on to new accommodation in Colchester & all the Barracks in Montgomery Lines have finally been demolished,

We find that although there are a few small memorials to individual units or barracks, there are none in recognition of the Service by the Regiment & attached Arms, in the home of the British Army.

Therefore we would like to commission & install a worthy memorial, to reflect the service of the Regiment & attached Arms with the town of Aldershot during those years.

The memorial will be a life-sized Bronze Statue of an Airborne Soldier, ready to jump. Similar to the bronze presentation statues that we all know so well.

The Sculptor/Artist will be Amy Goodman, who has been approached & agreed to take on this commission. Amy produced the 'Pegasus' statue,

which is now in Merville Barracks Colchester. She has also produced numerous other bronze statues & will do an excellent job!  
<http://www.amygoodman.co.uk/Notable-Commissions.html>

The Location of this statue which will sit on a plinth, made of Mount Longdon granite, will be in the grounds of the Garrison Church.

The granite has already been sourced by the Pegasus Appreciation Group & is on its way from the Falklands.

The exact location of the memorial is, as agreed with the Padre' Major Steve Franklin RChD.

The total cost of this memorial will be paid for by The Parachute Regiment & Airborne Forces Memorial Fund.

The inscription on the plinth will read

***In commemoration of 50 years partnership with Aldershot.***

Or words to that effect. 'Suggestions are welcome' with the theme being;

***'The Regiment & Aldershot'.***

The date of unveiling is Airborne Forces Day Aldershot **Saturday 6th July 2019.**

The unveiling ceremony to be conducted by Aldershot PRA with backup from the British Airborne Forces Club.

The Regiment is requested to have a presence, as dictated by operational availability.

To date, we have the agreement & support of Major Steve Franklin RChD, The Garrison Church Padre.

He, in turn, has received permission for the installation, from the Archdeacon of the Army.

We have had an audience with,  
The Commander Home Command, Lt Gen James Ian Bashall CBE.  
& The Commander Aldershot Garrison, Lt Col Nigel Macgregor.  
They have both been supportive of our proposition.

We now put this proposal out to  
The Parachute Regiment,  
The PRA HQ in Colchester,  
Aldershot Branch PRA  
& the British Airborne Forces Club.

Your comments & suggestions are requested.  
Will look forward to your input.

Richard Stacey & Tommy Simpson  
The Parachute Regiment Memorial Group

The statue will cost £47,000 and so far Stace and Tommy have raised £19,000. Stace will be taking part in a sponsored walk later on this year. The walk will be on Offa's Dyke on the English/Welsh border and is a total of 177 miles.

There is also a bicycle ride from Normandy in France to Arnhem. This will take place in September next year and they aim to finish in Arnhem on the 75<sup>th</sup> Commemoration weekend.

As you can see a lot of fundraising has to take place before July next year so that the statue can be placed in the Royal Military church. If any member would like to donate towards the fund please contact me.

*Stuart*

## Officers Mess Bombing 46<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



The people assemble for the start of the service



Stace lays flowers for those who died



Don MacNaughton lays the Branch wreath



Branch Standard Bearer Spud Murphy salutes the Memorial



The Last Post is played



The talk by Geoff Butler after the service