



The Parachute Regimental Association Aldershot Branch Newsletter



05/2015

Charity Number 1125551

May 2015

Monthly Meeting

The next monthly meeting will take place in the **Conservative Club** at **2000hrs on Friday 8th May 2015**. The meeting after this will be held on Friday 5th June 2015.

Phyllis Guscott

Our deepest sympathy goes to Bob Guscott, whose wife Phyllis peacefully passed away on 8th April 2015 aged 88 years. She will be sadly missed by family and friends. The funeral will be held on Monday 27th April 2015 at Aldershot Crematorium. Service 1215 hours. Family flowers only please, donations if desired to Phyllis Tuckwell.

Philip (Elvis) Priestly



It is with sadness that I have to inform you of the death of Philip (Elvis) Priestly. Elvis was not a member of the Aldershot Branch but he was well known and had lived in the area since leaving the Regiment in the mid 90's. Elvis had served in 3 Para and 22 SAS during his army career. He died in Frimley Park Hospital on Friday 10th April 2015 aged 59 years. His funeral will take place at 1500 hours on Tuesday 5th May 2015 at the Royal Garrison Church, Farnborough Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 1QA and after the service the wake will be held in the Trafalgar Inn, 1 Short Street, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 1HA. All are welcome.

New Members

There were four new members who joined at last month's meeting and they are Andy Warner ex 1 Para, John (Radar) Robb ex 2 Para, John (Pinkie) Pinkerton ex 1 Para and guest member Sabine Hardy. Welcome to the Branch.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting took place before the monthly meeting on Friday 10th April. There were 33 members present and 9 apologies for absence were received. George Pullin had indicated prior to the meeting that he was standing down as Welfare member. Roger Barefoot informed the Branch that he was willing to stand as Welfare member. Voting slips were handed out and the incumbent committee left the room whilst the results were counted.

Upon returning to the room the Chairman, Iain Rodgers informed the members that the following members have been elected to serve in the following positions till April 2016.

President: David Taylor, **Vice President:** Mike McRitchie, **Chairman:** Iain Rodgers, **Vice Chairman:** Richie Gillett, **Secretary:** Stuart McLaren, **Treasurer:** David Rashbrook, **Welfare member:** Roger Barefoot, **Entertainments member:** Julie Dinsey, **Property member:** Dennis Devey.

Please note that annual subscriptions of £15 are now due. Please ensure that subscriptions are paid by 30 June. After this date all those who have not paid will not receive the newsletter. Please make cheques payable to "**Aldershot Branch PRA**".

Veterans Travel - Commemorations 2015

Veterans need to be aware of the existence of a grant/subsidy of £250 from the Airborne Forces Security Fund intended to offset the cost of travel when attending the official Commemoration services of Normandy, South of France (Op Dragoon) and Arnhem. This grant has in the past been administered via Tours International, the RHQ PARA preferred provider of organised Battlefield Tours. Please note, the visiting of graves by veterans outside the dates and times of the commemorations mentioned does not fall within the remit of the grant.

The grant/subsidy of £250 (and it must be stressed that this is an offer from a charitable body; therefore must not be seen as an entitlement) is available to:

The Veteran - £250

His Widow - £250

The Veteran + his wife - £500

Veteran + his carer - £500
His Widow + her carer -£500
The Veteran + his wife + his carer - £750

Those wishing to apply for the grant/subsidy may obtain an application form from the Airborne Forces Security Fund (ABFSF) by calling 01206 817078 or by writing to: ABFSF, RHQ PARA, Merville Barracks, Colchester, Essex CO2 7UT. Please make note of the need to provide copies of associated travel documents which authenticate that travel arrangements to the commemorations have been made. These documents will need to be submitted to the Controller of the ABFSF by the Veteran along with the completed application form.

70th VE Day Celebration

The ration books are selling well for this event. All ration books will be handed to you as you enter the dance hall in the Conservative Club. The ration book gives you access to the buffet. This is our first event in our new home and thanks to all those attending I am sure that it will be a huge success.

RAF Duxford Visit

A trip to RAF Duxford has been arranged on Saturday 16th May. The primary reason for the visit is to present Henry Ellwood with a framed Branch photograph and to thank him personally for the wonderful donation that he made to the Branch. Henry moved from Farnham to Chedgrave, Lodden, Norfolk to be near his daughter just over a year ago. A minibus has been booked and will leave the Princes Hall, Aldershot at 8am and return to Aldershot at 7pm. With eight hangers full of items there are lots to see at RAF Duxford, including the Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces museum. If you travel by yourself the cost of entry is £22.50 per person, this does not include the cost of transport. The cost for Branch members and partner is £10 per person and £20 for non members. As we are only running a minibus places are limited so please book early. Please contact the secretary to book a place on the minibus.

Trip to the National Arboretum



The Branch is running a trip to the National Arboretum for the National Regimental Memorial Day and the National PRA Annual General Meeting and to visit the memorials and gardens. This trip will take place on Saturday 20th June leaving the Princes Hall at 7.30am and returning at 7pm. If we can get enough bookings we will run a coach. The cost of a coach is £645 so we will need to fill the 33 seat coach. A meal is available after the AGM and the cost of a meal ticket is £5 per person and the meal will be served in the marquee. A new bronze Parachute Regiment badge will be installed on the Airborne Memorial before our visit. The present badge is engraved into the stone and can only be seen from close range. There is a motor train that travels around all of the gardens and wheelchairs can also be booked for those who can only walk short distances. Please advise the secretary if you require a wheelchair so that he can book you one. It takes about 2½ hours to travel to Staffordshire and we will take a comfort stop half way in both directions. As soon as we have the booking we will decide if we hire a coach or minibus so please book early to allow us to plan the visit. Booking taken by the secretary.

Armed Forces Day Guildford on the 27th June

We have received the following information from Peter Richens, the Regional Secretary regarding Armed Forces Day.

Peter is starting to get information regarding Armed Forces Day Guildford on the 27th June; as this is a very high profile event and also a high profile for the PRA would you please encourage your member to attend.

The event will be a memorable day. The Regiment will be represented by the Regimental Band, The Recruiting Team and The Red Devils Free Fall Team.

Guildford BC is planning an exciting line-up of family-focussed activities for about 60,000 people, with free entry to everything. We will announce more acts and details nearer the time; below is a taste of things to come.

Following a special 9.30am service in Guildford Cathedral there will be a grand military parade at 11.30am, starting from the bottom of Guildford High Street to Stoke Park. Hundreds of personnel from the Royal Navy, Army and the Royal Air Force will join cadets and veterans on parade.

No tickets are required to watch the parade or enter the Stoke Park event.

The spectacular show at Stoke Park will have stalls and static displays from about 10.30am, with music and entertainment until 7.30pm when the event closes.

The live action in Stoke Park starts at 1.30pm. Military highlights include:

- The Royal Signals White Helmets Motorcycle Display Team
- The Parachute Regiment's Free Fall Team
- The Royal Navy 'Raiders' Parachute Display Team
- The Royal Air Force Queen's Colour Squadron
- The Band of the Royal Marines
- Massed Bands
- Apache and Merlin Helicopters
- An Infantry Combat Battle Display

Live entertainment during the event comes from:

- West End Kidz
- Rock Choir
- Tenor; Thomas Hobbs
- Guildford College Performing Arts
- Firefly live music and poetry
- Choir Magic provide a local flavour for the show

As with all these events security will be tight. Should any member wish to march on the parade I have to send in a proforma with details. This proforma has to be returned by Saturday 9th May. If you would like to march please contact the secretary.

**Mount
Longdon
Weekend
12-14 June
2015**

The British Airborne Forces Club has arranged a weekend in Bewdley and culminates in a visit to the National Arboretum to commemorate the assault of Mount Longdon in the Falklands. The details are below:

Order of events:

Date: Time: Location:

June 12 From 1500 RV at The Talbot Pub in Bewdley

June 13 1100 RV at the National Memorial Arboretum

1145 Service begins

1200 Service Ends

1230 Return to Bewdley

1500 The Talbot is open until Late

June 14 Dispersal

About this event:

This event is open to all those, from any AB unit, who would like to attend. This is the first event of what is hoped will become a regular meet on your calendar.

The event is hosted by Mark (Polo) Wheway ex- 3 Para, who owns The Talbot. We have held a number of RV's in Bewdley, it's a great place and easy to get to from all areas of the UK.

There's plenty of accommodation in and around Bewdley to cater for all budgets.

**Field
Marshal
Montgomery**

Field Marshal Montgomery died on 24 March 1976 at the age of 88 in Alton, Hampshire. He had lived nearby in the village of Binsted and is buried in the Holy Cross Churchyard, Binsted. On the 24 March this year, five members of the Branch went to the Holy Cross Churchyard and laid an Airborne Wreath on the 39th Anniversary of his death. The Holy Cross Church dates back to the 1300's and holds Field Marshal Montgomery's Banner. The Banner depicts the Field Marshal's Arms. We are hoping to make this an annual event. See photos on page 6.

**The Iraq,
Afghanistan,
Sierra Leone
and
Macedonia
Memorial**

Richard (Stace) Stacey served in 3 Para and 2 Para and was Mentioned in Dispatches during his 16 years in the Regiment. He was blown up whilst serving in Northern Ireland in 1989 and suffered severe head injuries. A week before he was injured three friends were killed. As the years passed he became determined to ensure that the names of those who gave their lives would not be forgotten. In January 2010 he started the OP Banner (Northern Ireland) Memorial Fund. His aim was to have a lasting memorial to all those who died in the Northern Ireland conflict placed in the Military Cemetery. Stace approached the Colonel in charge of the Military Cemetery and came up against a brick wall. The Colonel couldn't understand why Stace should want to put a memorial in the cemetery. Stace then contacted Tommy Simpson and asked for help and assistance with the formalities. Tommy took over the negotiations with the Colonel and Stace set about raising the funds by selling T-shirts and passing round the charity bucket at functions.

Stace then contacted Albert Owens MBE, who lives in Northern Ireland. Albert is ex 1 Para and Red Devils and the stonemason who was to engrave the stone lives nearby. A team was now formed. A memorial to Mick Matthews, ex 1 Para, who was KIA in Cullyhana, South Armagh was the first memorial that the team placed in the cemetery. It took 2 years to obtain permission to have the Op Banner Memorial placed in the cemetery. The Op Banner Memorial is the same design as the Falklands Memorial stone. Once again Stace organised a working party and they started work on the footings and brickwork a week before the stone was sent over from Northern Ireland.

Albert was in control of the engraving of the Stone, which was produced in Belfast and paid for out of the funds. Tommy Simpson by now had taken over the treasurer role. One problem they encountered was getting the stone transported from Belfast to the Military Cemetery. The Army Air Corps came to their rescue. They were travelling from Belfast to RAF Odiham and they made a detour via the Military Cemetery. The stone was laid onto the brickwork and was covered until the unveiling on ABF weekend, Saturday 7th July 2012. Unfortunately, there was no involvement from the Parachute Regiment HQ in Colchester. On the day there was a huge turnout of members from the British Airborne Forces Club, Branches of the Parachute Regimental Associations along with Branch Standards and ex members of the Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces.

The team then purchased a bench and named it the "2 Para Goose Green" bench. This bench joined the Northern Ireland bench which had already been placed in the cemetery. Stace then decided that when he is informed of any ex Parachute Regiment member or Airborne Forces member who has died since 2012, the fund will pay for a brass plaque to be placed on one the benches.

Much to Tommy Simpson's dismay, Stace then came up with another bright idea. He decided to rename his fund "Remember the Fallen Fund". His aim was to raise another £10,000 so that a new memorial could be placed in the cemetery in between the Falklands and Northern Ireland memorials. This new memorial will have the names of all of the Airborne soldiers who lost their lives in Iraq, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Macedonia.

Money has been raised by Stace and others by taking part in the Ice Bucket challenge, selling wrist bands and T-shirts and donations. They have also received a donation of £1,000 from the Parachute Regiment Lodge. One person who has raised the huge amount of £2,500 in the past six months is Rich Greasley. Rich is ex 63 Para Sqn, 5

Airborne Brigade. He has designed T-shirts, sweatshirts, Polo shirts and other merchandise. Well done Rich. A 60's theme night was held in the Traf that raised money with a raffle. Phil Morris, ex 2 Para of Pegasus Printing and Embroidery has given a generous donation.

After the success of the Northern Ireland memorial, Stace contacted the Parachute Regiment RHQ and permission has been granted by the Regimental Colonel for the new memorial. Permission was then asked from the Colonel in charge of the Military Cemetery and I am pleased to inform you that this has been granted.

The new Memorial stone will be unveiled on Saturday 4th July 2015. The timings and further information will appear in the next newsletter. The team are hoping to have participation from the serving units who lost men during the conflicts, a Pipe and Drums Band, members of the British Airborne Forces Club, Branches of the Parachute Regimental Associations along with Branch Standards and ex members of the Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces.

Stace would like to put on record his sincere thanks to Tommy Simpson and Albert Owens for their help and support over the past five years. He would also like to thank everyone who has supported the fund, donated and assisted in raising money.

On behalf of everyone who reads this report the Chairman, Iain Rodgers would like to thank Stace for the foresight and determination in seeing his dream come to fruition. See photos on page 6

Branch Mugs

Gill Rashbrook is starting up the Branch PRI Shop. A new item that Gill has designed is the Branch mug. When you take it out of the box it is a very dark brown colour, but when you fill the mug with hot water it changes. The Parachute Regiment Badge appears on the front with an airborne soldier parachuting on the back. The mugs are specially made for us and cost £15 each. If you would like a mug or mugs please contact the secretary. Please see below for pictures.



Mug when cold



Front and back of Mug after filling with hot water



Branch Ties

We have purchased twenty Branch Ties at a cost of £15 each. A picture showing the motif is below. If any member would like to purchase a tie please contact the secretary.



BBQ

Due to the loss of our own bar at Malta Barracks the committee has decided to sell the Branch BBQ. The BBQ was purchased in 2006 at a cost of £700. The BBQ will be auctioned at the next monthly meeting on Friday 8th May, so if you wish to bid please be there.

Stuart

The 39th Anniversary of the Death of Field Marshal Montgomery



Stuart McLaren, Peter Richens,
Don MacNaughton and Woody Woodford
and the photographer was Stuart Soane



Field Marshal Montgomery's Banner,
the Banner used to hang in
Westminster Cathedral

The Op Banner and the new Iraq, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone and Macedonia Memorial



Nev Martin, ex 2 Para working on the brickwork



Tommy Simpson, Stace, Andy Warner,
Frank O'Sullivan and Nev Martin

Falklands Memorial



**New
Memorial**

The new Memorial will be placed in between the
Op Banner Memorial and the Falklands Memorial



The Northern Ireland Bench



The 2 Para Bench



The unveiling of the Op Banner memorial in 2012