



The Parachute Regimental Association Aldershot Branch Newsletter



07/2013

Charity Number 1125551

JULY 2013

Monthly Meeting

The Monthly Meeting will take place on **Friday 28th June at 2000hrs in Malta Barracks**. This meeting is one week early due to the bar being closed due to the Airborne Forces weekend being held in Aldershot. 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. There is no monthly meeting held in August as many of the members are on holiday during this month. The meeting after this will be the monthly meeting held on **Friday 30th August 2013**. Please note that this is a week early due to the Airborne Tour to Arnhem. Will all members ensure that they close the gate after entering and leaving the Barracks.

Bar Opening Times

The bar will only be open in July on Friday 12th from 2000hrs – 2359hrs and Friday 19th from 2000hrs – 2359hrs. The bar will be closed on Friday 5th July due to the ABF weekend and Friday 26th July due to the Summer Ball being held on the Saturday. A free Pool Table, Bar nibbles, Television 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.

Summer Ball

Please assist the committee by applying early for tickets and notifying us who you would like to sit with. As mentioned in last month's newsletter the Summer Ball takes place on Saturday 27th July at Potters International Hotel. The menu for the Summer Ball is a fixed menu and there is a vegetarian option. For the third year running the cost is held at £30 per ticket. Cheques are to be made payable to **"Aldershot Branch PRA"**. See the flyer for the menu choice.

Pompey Para's Parade

Pompey Para's Parade 2013 Sunday June 30th Starts at 10am

The parade will take place in front of the Royal Marines Museum facing the garden of remembrance, honouring those Marines who gave their lives in the Falklands Campaign, where of course many of the Regiment also made the ultimate sacrifice. It is hoped that they have enough veterans to be able to have two guards, lead by the Standards of all of the Branches represented.



Parking - coaches will drop off at the Royal Marines Museum car park. The Mobility Car park is situated next to the Royal Marines Association Club House. Bookings must be made in advance. Parking fee payable on entrance to car park.

Aldershot Branch Golf Day

The Aldershot Branch golf day will be held at Pine Ridge Golf Club on Friday 30th August 2013. All golfing members are encouraged to attend and bring along some guests who will be warmly welcomed. John Mellon has kindly agreed to organise this event. If any member wishes to take up golf, Jim Scott is selling a complete set of golf clubs.

Details of the golf clubs sale is at the end of the newsletter. John has a lot

of organising to do so please help him by contacting him if you wish to take part. See flyer for details.

Grimsby & Cleethorpes P.R.A.

The inaugural Cleethorpes Air Show took place last year and tens of thousands attended. This year's event takes place over the weekend of 27th & 28th July. On behalf of The Grimsby & Cleethorpes P.R.A. we extend a warm welcome to you all, to this Free event. On show will be a selection of the finest privately owned vintage display aircraft as well as amazing and exhilarating displays from the Royal Air Force teams including the Red Arrows and the Parachute Regiments very own Red Devils.

This year, we are focusing on commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the Dam buster Raid, next year we would like to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of Operation Market Garden and, to this end, moving forward we would like to seek the support of not only inviting both serving members of the Parachute Regiment but also Members of the Parachute Regiment Association and their families to attend this year's event by having a visible display by courtesy of a 'Sea of Maroon'. Our Branch is very fortunate to have our own H.Q. above The Royal Navy Association, with its own bar overlooking the River Humber, where the event will take place. Clearly here is a real opportunity to make this event as Maroon as possible. See page 7 for details.

Operation Tonga 2013 – a Toms Report

Members of the Aldershot Branch, Brian Mulvey and Iain Rodgers accompanied by air dispatch members Ian Coleman and Pat Dodge travelled over to France on Thursday evening 6 June by way of Portsmouth and Le Havre with members of the Pathfinder Parachute Group to commemorate the events of the 5-7th June 1944 and to parachute onto the DZ (k) at Sannerville which was used by the British 6th Airborne Division. After arriving early morning Friday 7 June at the first RV - Pegasus Bridge, a few beers later, someone said "wouldn't it be a good idea to swim the canal" so in we went and after swimming it twice "as you do" it was back to the bar for more liquid refreshment before heading off to the second RV – Sannerville village hall where we were to billet for the week-end. On arriving at Sannerville and settling in, we then drew and fitted our chutes followed by more liquid refreshments accompanied by rat packs-yum, yum. The rest of the evening was spent renewing acquaintances of Paratroopers from all over Europe.

Saturday morning we all rose, dressed and collected our chutes, then headed off in the transport to Caen Airport in preparation for our parachute descents. The jump ship was a Cessna Caravan 208 with four lifts and 10 jumpers per lift. Our little group (Mulvey, Rodgers and Coleman) parachuted on the second lift, and then became part of the DZ crew for the following lifts, the sun was shining all day but the wind was gusting at times and it was the usual lottery as to having a hard landing or a soft one, for once I had a landing like a feather into the field of crops. Following the successful drops with no injuries to report, it was back to Sannerville village hall for more liquid refreshment and a slap up barbeque and telling more war stories.

The chairman, Iain Rodgers helped cook the barbeque and notice Tex Huston taking it easy and accompanied by a plateful of scoff and several

bottles of wine –good old Tex. The following day it was a leisurely drive back to the ferry and then back to Blighty, arriving at Portsmouth at 2130. So another mini adventure over. An explanation of Operation Tonga can be read on page 3. See page 4 for photos.

ABF Weekend

The annual ABF weekend takes place in the Trafalgar Inn, Short Street, Aldershot, over the weekend 5-7 July. The numbers returning have been growing every year and now that we have the new Travelodge Hotel nearby, this number should increase. If you are free on Friday evening or Saturday come along. You will be sure to meet friends of old.

Hog Roast

The Branch will be holding a Hog Roast on Saturday 24th August in Malta Barracks. The bar will be open from 3pm and carving will commence at 6pm. The last Hog Roast we held was a huge success so come along for another great evening. The cost is £8 per person. Please contact the secretary for tickets. See page 3 for further information.

With Sadness

It is with great sadness that we have to inform you of the death of Henry Ellwood's wife, Dorothy after 65 years of marriage. Dorothy died in hospital after suffering with illness during the past year. Our thoughts and prayers go to Henry at this sad time.

Stuart

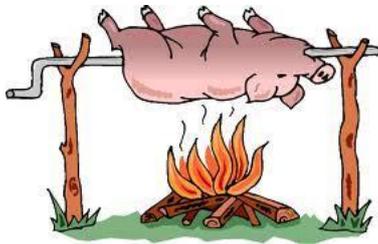
OPERATION TONGA

Operation Tonga was the codename given to the airborne operation undertaken by the British 6th Airborne Division between 5 June and 7 June 1944 as a part of Operation Overlord and the Normandy Landings during the Second World War. The paratroopers and glider-borne airborne troops of the division landed on the eastern flank of the invasion area, near to the city of Caen, tasked with a number of objectives. The division was to capture two strategically important bridges over the Caen Canal and Orne River which were to be used by Allied ground forces to advance once the sea borne landings had taken place, destroy several other bridges to deny their use to the Germans and secure several important villages. The division was also assigned the task of assaulting and destroying the Merville Gun Battery, an artillery battery that Allied intelligence believed housed a number of heavy artillery pieces, which could bombard Sword Beach and possibly inflict heavy casualties on the Allied troops landing on it. Having achieved these objectives, the division was then to create and secure a bridgehead focused around the captured bridges until they linked up with advancing Allied ground forces.

The 8th Parachute Battalion was tasked with destroying two bridges near Bures and a third by Troarn, was dropped at the same time as 9th Parachute Battalion and was also widely scattered with a number of its paratroopers landing in the operational area of 5th Parachute Brigade. When the commanding officer of the battalion arrived at the battalion rendezvous point at 01:20 he found only thirty paratroopers and a small group of sappers with a Jeep and trailer. By 03:30 this number had increased to just over 140 paratroopers, but there were still no other signs of the sappers who would be required to demolish the bridges. The commanding officer therefore decided to send a small force to demolish the bridges at Bures and lead the rest of the battalion to a crossroad north of Troarn where it would await more reinforcements before it attacked Troarn

itself. However, the small force sent to Bures discovered that the two bridges had already been demolished by a group of sappers who had reached the bridges a few hours earlier, and so rejoined the battalion at the crossroads, which had increased in numbers after another fifty men, had arrived. A reconnaissance party was sent into Troarn to ascertain the status of the bridge there, alongside a party of sappers, which came under fire from a house near the bridge. After a brief fire-fight the paratroopers captured a number of Germans from the 21st Panzer Division and then made their way to the bridge, which they discovered had been demolished already. Once the sappers had widened the length of bridge demolished using their explosives, the party retreated back to the battalion at the crossroad. Having achieved its objective, the battalion then moved north and took up positions near Le Mesnail to widen the airborne bridgehead formed by the division.

HOG ROAST Saturday 24th August 2013



Come along and join us on hopefully a warm and sunny day. You can almost smell the meat cooking now. The taste of the crackling as it crunches in your mouth. It will make a fine end to the long summer days.

Side salad with all of the trimmings will also be provided along with music and a friendly atmosphere. This is the first function we have held at Malta Barracks for some time so please come along and support your Branch.



The cost is £8 per head and the bar will be open from 3pm onwards. The hog will be carved from 6pm. This also a chance for all those going to Arnhem to have a get together before they go.



OPERATION TONGA PHOTOS



Can anyone read French?



I see no Paratroopers



Alert and ready to go? Waiting for the remainder of the lifts to come in



This was a joint presentation by Iain Rodgers, the Chairman of the Aldershot Branch and the President of the UNP to a former member of the French Foreign Legion, he was presented with La Médaille de la Fidélité Française (loyalty medal)



ALDRESHOT BRANCH GOLF DAY



Golf Day 2013

The branch golf day will be held at Pine Ridge Golf Club on Friday 30th August 2013. All golfing members are encouraged to attend and bring along some guests who will be warmly welcomed.

The day will consist of 18 holes STROKE PLAY followed by a two course meal then presentations. Wives/Girlfriends are invited to attend the dinner.



The cost will be £32.50 for golf and dinner plus £11 for any additional meals for wives/girlfriends.

Itinerary

1130 – 1200 book in (cash please, collect cards, playing order)
1200 – 1205 short briefing
1224 – 1700 1st Tee five slots
1800 – onward 2 course meal followed by presentations.



Prizes

There will be winner and runner awards for both members and guests. Also longest drive and closest to pin. Plus other prizes.

Booking

You can reserve a place by contacting John.

Additional Information

Buggies can be booked by individuals at a cost of £24 by calling the golf club.
Pine Ridge Golf Club
Old Bisley Road
Frimley
GU16 9NX

The day has always been a great success so come along and join in the fun with your friends and family. See you in the clubhouse.

John Mellon

PLEASE BOOK ASAP SO THAT JOHN HAS AN IDEA OF NUMBERS ATTENDING





CRISTAL

Cleethorpes AIR SHOW

North East Lincolnshires largest aviation event.



Lower Kingsway and Central Promenade, Cleethorpes

Saturday and Sunday

27 July 28 July

For full details and information please see our website or follow us on Twitter and Facebook

www.cleethorpesairshow.co.uk



Scan this QR Code



All aircraft participation is subject to weather, serviceability and operational commitments.
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