



The Parachute Regimental Association Aldershot Branch Newsletter



08/2014

Charity Number 1125551

Aug 2014

Monthly Meeting

There is no monthly meeting in August due to holidays. The next monthly meeting will take place at **2000hrs on Friday 29th August**. This is a week early due to the Arnhem weekend. The venue for the meeting will be sent out to the members during the first two weeks of August. The meeting after this will be the monthly meeting held on **Friday 3rd October 2014**. Please be patient while we sort out a venue for our meetings.

Branch Subscriptions

This is another reminder that Branch subscriptions are now due in May and need to be paid by the end of July. The subscriptions have been held at £15 for the year. Please make cheques payable to "**Aldershot Branch PRA**" and post them to the secretary at the address below.

Len Pheby

It is with sadness that I have to inform you of the death of Branch member Len Pheby. I received a phone call from Len's daughter who informed me that her father who was 89, died on Wednesday 3rd July. Len only joined the Branch in December 2008 after a friend passed on our details. Len took great pleasure in informing me that he lived in Pegasus Court, Egham. Len's army service included serving in the REME HQ 1st Airborne Corps, UK-India Com'd 44-45, REME Brit Com Base, Kure, Japan 46-47 and he was awarded the Burma Star. Our thoughts and prayers to go to Len's family at this sad time.

Cpl Stewart McLaughlin

Unfortunately I received the following information after I had sent out the last newsletter. I was able to email the information to those with email access that a march and petition for Cpl Stewart McLaughlin to be awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions during the Falklands war had been organised. The original citation was written by Lt Gen, Sir Hew Pike and handed in at the time and has been lost by the MOD. A march was organised on Friday 4th July to march from Whitehall Place, along Whitehall to Downing Street. The petition was handed into 10 Downing Street by Cpl McLaughlin's family. Over 300 ex members of the Parachute Regiment and family and friends took part in the march. There were also six ex members of the Royal Marines who came to support the cause. Members of the Aldershot Branch attended along with the Branch Standard. The parade was led by Cpl McLaughlin's family and Lt Gen, Sir Hew Pike. After halting opposite Downing Street the family handed in the citation and petition to 10 Downing Street. Lt Gen, Sir Hew Pike then addressed those present. The last Post was then played followed by Reveille. See page 3 for photos.

Regimental Day at the National Arboretum

The Regimental Day and PRA Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday 21st June at the National Arboretum, Staffordshire. The minibus left early on the Saturday morning and we were very pleased to see the sun was shining brightly. The attendance was greater than last year and it has been confirmed that the Regimental Day will be held every year at the National Arboretum. See page 4 for photos.

70th Anniversary Summer Ball

Although the numbers were lower than previous years the 40 members and guest thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The venue was superb and this year we were in the Albert Room. The meal at summer time is normally a fixed meal, but the function manager is very pleased with the

Aldershot Branch so we were allowed to select choices from menu. The Christmas Ball will be held in Potters International Hotel on Saturday 13th December, so please make a note in your diaries. See page 5 for photos.

Victoria Branch, Melbourne

I have received a DVD from Dick Murphy showing the Anzac Day Parade in Melbourne. A report about the Parade was in last month's newsletter. I will show the DVD at the next meeting.

Airborne Forces Weekend In the Traf

Another Airborne Forces weekend was enjoyed by all those who turned up. Once again the Traf was busy as people started to arrive on the Thursday evening. The numbers steadily grew until it the full signs nearly went up on Saturday evening. There was no trouble throughout the weekend and the Traf is the only pub in Aldershot who don't need bouncers. See page 5 for photos.

The Forces TV Channel



A new and unique television channel all about the armed forces launched on Tuesday 10th June. It's called 'Forces TV' and will be broadcast free to air on Sky satellite, Virgin Media and Freesat.

The new factual channel focuses on the work of the armed forces and the world of defence. It is produced by SSSVC, the independent charity that runs the British Forces Broadcasting Service (BFBS) for UK military personnel and their families.

Forces TV's output consists of news, live events, features and documentaries about every aspect of the armed forces including operations, equipment, training, welfare, sport, charity fundraising and forces family life. Both Sky and the BBC are supporting the channel and providing it with content.

The channel's primary target audience is the UK 'forces community' which is estimated at more than 12m individuals – serving personnel, their families and friends, reservists, cadets, veterans and their dependants, and those who work alongside the forces and raise money for their charities. The channel is also aimed at the general public too.

Forces TV will broadcast round the clock from SSSVC's studios at Chalfont in Buckinghamshire. Early programmes include a documentary series with 3 Para, an exclusive production of the play 'The Two Worlds of Charlie F' about soldiers injured in battle and a special series behind the scenes at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea.

Forces TV will be available on:

- Sky satellite channel 299
- Virgin Media channel 244
- Freesat channel 652

Malta Barracks

The Committee is still looking for alternative accommodation to allow us to store all of the artifacts and equipment we have acquired over the years. The final closure and hand over of Malta Barracks for disposal is imminent. If any member has items they have loaned the Branch and would like them returned please contact the secretary.

Stuart

March for Corporal Stewart McLaughlin



**Capt (Ret'd) John Weeks BEM
addresses those present**



The Parade formed up before they march off



Cpl McLaughlin's Family lead the Parade



The Parade halts opposite Downing Street



Lt Gen, Sir Hew Pike addresses the Parade



The Last Post followed by Reveille

Regimental Day at the National Arboretum



The PRA members stand to sing a hymn



The Branch Standards and the Parachute Regiment Band



The service conducted by the Reverend Paul Abram MVO MA



The Guard is on parade for wreath laying ceremony



General Sir Geoffrey Howlett KBE MC (left)
Lt Gen J D Page CB CBE (right)



The Branch members who attended
(Mike McRitchie is missing)

Summer Ball



Ready for the meal



The Chairman, Iain Rodgers welcomes the members and guests



Having fun on the dance floor



It must be High Ho Silver Lining

Airborne Forces weekend in the Traf



There was more room outside the Traf



This car driver is not getting through