



The Parachute Regimental Association

Aldershot Branch

Newsletter



09/2012

Charity Number 1125551

Sep 2012

Monthly Meeting

The next Monthly Meeting will take place on **Friday 7th September 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 5th October 2012.

Bar Opening Times

The bar will be open at the following times during September, Friday 7th Sep 2000hrs – 2359hrs, Friday 14th Sep 2000hrs – 2359hrs and Friday 28th Sep 2000hrs – 2359hrs. The bar will be closed on Friday 21st September due to all of the bar staff and secretary attending the 68th Arnhem Anniversary. 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

As there was no monthly meeting in August there were no new members last month.

Airborne March Arnhem

This was the 66th Airborne March and will be remembered by all those who have attended for many years, as it was the 30 year that Branch member Tony Trown has organised the trip. Once again this year we had over 300 Cadets and 100 members and friends attending. On the first trip only 25 Cadets and 25 Adults attended. Since then Tony has taken over 10,000 Cadets, members of the Branch and friends on what has become a very memorable visit. The cost for the first trip was £47 which has only risen to £130. I think that the Chancellor of the Exchequer should ring him up for some tips. The weather on the Airborne tour was not great but it did not dampen the enthusiasm of those who attended. Once again we are indebted to Branch member Bob Hilton for being our tour guide. His explanation of what happened during the battle is second to none and enthralled those listening. The Cadets assembled on the parade square at 0800hrs on the Saturday morning for the inspection before boarding the coaches. After the inspection Tony read out six letters of support and good wishes that he had received. The first was from the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Dame Mary Fagan. This was followed with a letter from Lt General Jacko Page, who is the Colonel Commandant of the Parachute Regiment. He also gave the Aldershot Branch his best wishes for supporting the march. The third letter was from Brigadier Mike Wharmby on behalf of the President of the Army Cadet Force Association. His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales also sent a letter of greetings and best wishes on the march. As Colonel Commandant of the Army Cadet Force and Air Commodore of the Air Training Corps His Royal Highness Prince Phillip sent his best wishes and greetings. The final letter was from Her Majesty the Queen. Tony told to the assembled Cadets that a lot of people back in the United Kingdom were aware that they were there representing the country and not to let them down. At this point they all seemed to grow in height. I am pleased to say that none of them let us down and they were all a credit to the country. Unfortunately, after 30 years of hard work and organisation Tony has decided that this will be his last year. He was a young man when he started and he is no longer that young man. At the end of the parade he was presented with an engraved bottle of Brandy from Hampshire and Isle of Wight Army Cadet Force. This was very apt as he was Officer Commanding, A Company ACF when he started the trip. He was also presented with an engraved Pegasus statue from all those present. At the same time his wife Shelagh received a large bouquet of flowers. I am pleased to say that she also received a bouquet from Powel Vos

who is the Chief of Police and Chairman of the March Committee. Tony was also followed on the airborne tour and march by the local broadcasting company, Omroep Gelderland who wanted to record his achievements for broadcast on local television. After the presentations they all boarded the coaches and headed for Oosterbeek. The atmosphere and excitement gradually mounted until they called us forward. It was a great honour when the march committee informed us that the Cadets would be leading the Parade. When they approached the saluting dais the crowds erupted with cheers and applause. Jean Paul Gobben, who is the Mayor of Renkum explained in Dutch to all those present, about Tony's hard work and efforts. As each Cadet unit passed the saluting dais, the announcer informed the crowd the name and unit of those passing. A loud cheer went out each time. The weather was superb and everyone completed the march and returned in good spirits. I have been informed that 33,689 people from 15 countries took part on the march. The Chairman, Peter Richens would like to thank Tony for organising the Airborne March Trip for the past 30 years. Over this time hundreds of Branch members have attended. See page 4 for photos.

Mrs K Johnstone

Mrs K Johnstone is requesting information about a family member. She is trying to find confirmation that a family member is an ex-member of the Parachute Regiment. His name is Kenneth James Stewart Johnston and he was born in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland on the 13th November (1954 we think). There is also a chance that he served in the Irish Rangers for a while as well, this would have been around 30 years ago, give or take a year or so. None of this information is concrete, it is purely through snippets they have picked up through contacting different areas of the family. They are trying to form a military family history and this area is one of the blank bits. They would be grateful if anyone out there can confirm or deny if this family member did serve with the Parachute Regiment. They would like to hear from anyone who may remember him or know of his whereabouts.

Trish Taggart

Trish is taking part in a record attempt of the most tandem skydives in one day. She is joining Martin Cookham's Angels as part of the Pegasus Elite Team and raising money for all British service men who have been injured in Afghanistan. The event is organised by The Pilgrim Bandits, a registered charity and is called "JUMP FOR THE FALLEN" in memory of those who have lost their lives. Each sky diver represents a British soldier who lost his life in Afghan. If any member would like to sponsor Trish please contact her.

Falkland Islands 30th Anniversary Port

A set of Croft Vintage Port in specially engraved bottles has been commissioned to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of the Falkland Islands Conflict and to remember fallen and injured comrades. Only 2 PARA ones are displayed below, but the same for 3 PARA is available. The engraved design comprises the PARA Battalion above the outline of the Falkland Islands, with superimposed regimental cap badge and a commemoration below for both bottles. The second bottle however, has a Roll of Honour flanking the main design. In 2 PARA's case, it lists those Paratroopers who fell at Goose Green and Wireless Ridge; for 3 PARA, it will list theirs.



Each bottle of Port is Vintage, so continues to mature within the bottle and comes in its individual wooden case. Prices are as follows:

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|-------------|------------------------|-----|--------------|
| a. Bottle 1 | Without Roll of Honour | £25 | £30 with VAT |
| b. Bottle 2 | With Roll of Honour | £35 | £42 with VAT |

It will be possible to save on P+P as we can collect from Ballantynes Scotland (for those who can collect their bottles from Colchester or arrange ongoing transport from there). The aim is to save you money on this and maybe you are prepared to pay an additional £1 instead, which will be donated to the Parachute Regiment Charity. All proceeds will be forwarded straight to RHQ and the Regimental Accountant. Payments will therefore be made into a separate account in my name so that I can ensure safe payment to Ballantynes and that any donations are separated into Regimental funds (copies of bank statements can be provided upon request, to ensure transparency).

For those who wish to have their orders posted directly to them, the additional charge is a flat rate of £8.99, with VAT = £10. Up to ten bottles.

Orders via the QM(T) 2 PARA.

**Whitehall Cenotaph
Remembrance Parade
11 November 2012**

The former Colonel Commandant of the Parachute Regiment, Major General J D Shaw CBE, has kindly consented to lead this year's Parade. The Royal British Legion has allocated the airborne contingent 174 tickets. Once issued by the RBL these tickets will be available by e-mailing Sandy at PRA HQ. Members can also contact the secretary who will order tickets for Branch members. Please be aware these tickets are for members of the PRA and can only be used by such. It has been noted in previous years that a number of family members, including children, have appeared in the ranks of the airborne contingent. Although in the spirit of remembrance family members are most welcome, on this occasion they are not permitted to take part in the march but may spectate from the pavement lining the marching route.

Stuart

66th Airborne March, Oosterbeek, Arnhem



Bob at the 10 Para crossroads, it was at this spot that in 24 hours, over 1,000 of the 1,500 troops were killed or captured



Bob explains what happened to the recce squadron during the battle and why they are all buried together



Tony reads out the letters he received to the Cadets



Tony with his engraved bottle of brandy and Pegasus Statue



The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Army Cadets march past the saluting dais



Lots of youngsters take part in the march