



The Parachute Regimental Association

Aldershot Branch

Newsletter



10/2013

Charity Number 1125551

OCT 2013

Monthly Meeting

The next monthly meeting will take place on **Friday 4th October 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 the monthly meeting held on **Friday 1st November 2013**. 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 October on Friday 4th from 2000hrs – 2359hrs, Friday 11th from 2000hrs – 2359hrs, Friday 18th from 2000hrs – 2359hrs and Friday 25th from 2000hrs – 2359hrs. 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.

Hog Roast

As the day approached and after the long hot summer we looked forward to sitting on the patio decking and taking in the smell of the hog roasting. Unfortunately the weather had other ideas and the rain fell most of the day. This didn't deter the sixty members, guests and children who attended. Tony Trown along with Stuart McLaren turned up at 9am to set up. Tony started cooking the hog at 9.30am and spent the rest of the day ensuring that it was cooked to perfection, and that included the crackling. The Dutch Barn was converted into a five aside football court for the children, which kept them happy. The children also brought along toys and games to play. The bar and music kept the adults happy until the cry went out that Tony was ready to carve the hog. Gill and Julie had prepared the salads and the meat was place alongside the plates for everyone to help themselves. There was a queue for second and third helpings as there was plenty of meat left. After the hog it didn't take long to demolish the puddings. When one of the youngsters was asked if she had enjoyed it she held up one thumb quickly followed by the other. Our thanks go to all those and especially Tony Trown who helped to make this another enjoyable event

Aldershot Branch Golf Day

John Mellon has sent in the following report. The branch golf day 2013 was held at Pine Ridge Golf Club. Six members and six guests played in what turned out to be quite a pleasant day. Due to our start being delayed the manager gave driving range tokens for everyone to use and fill time. Unfortunately several players used up their better shots on the range, and it turned out to be like any other range day done by all.....to coin a phrase from the past..... turning live rounds into empty cases! All awards were closely contested.....even the wooden spoon.

John Moffat and Glyn Grace won winner trophies Barry Hendry scooped three prizes, winning guest, longest drive and best scratch score. Lowest putt count was won by Tom Mellon and Ali Aitkin received the wooden spoon. All prize winners also received a bottle of wine. I would like to thank all who turned out and look forward to 2014. Cheers

Airborne March Oosterbeek

Last year Tony Trown informed all those who attended the march that he was standing down as the organiser. Tony has arranged for members of the Army Cadet Force, Air Training Corps, Aldershot Branch PRA and the old and bold to attend the march for the past 30 years. Most years he would take over 400 people. He told all those present that in future each organisation would have to arrange their own trip. Stuart McLaren took up the challenge on behalf of the Aldershot Branch and set about organising this year's trip. He gave the members the option of either staying in the Dreyeroord Hotel near the Oosterbeek railway station or the campsite. The campsite is located at the edge of the river Rhine near the Arnhem railway bridge that was destroyed during the battle. The cost of

the four day trip and staying in the hotel was set at £245 and staying at the campsite was £110. The itinerary from the previous years was adhered to which meant that the Airborne tour went ahead on the Friday followed by the march on the Saturday.

We arrived on Thursday afternoon and quickly put up the tentage which for the lads consisted of an 18' x 48' tent. Peter, the campsite owner let us connect to the electricity supply and three strip lights were hung from the roof. The electricity supply also ensured that we had a mobile phone charging point. After putting up the tentage they all sat outside Peter's cafe/bar for a few beers. It was at this time that someone suggested that they should swim the Rhine. In true Airborne fashion Iain Rodgers and Pete Learmonth stripped off and entered the water. It was not until they got to the other side that they realised how far it was. They were on their way back when a jet skier approached them and said "*Do you know there is a 180 euro fine for swimming the Rhine*". At this point they started swimming a bit faster and reached the bank safely. I have to inform you that one of them was naked, I will let you guess which one.

Tony very kindly agreed to be our guide for the Airborne tour and arrived at the campsite early on the Friday morning. We were getting ready to leave when Tony called everyone together. He then asked for Stuart to join him at the front. Tony explained to all that although he was the main organiser for the past 30 years he could not have done it without the help and support of Stuart. He presented Stuart with a superb statue of an Airborne Standard Bearer carrying the Standard.

Pouwel Vos who has been on the march organising committee for 47 years and has been Chairman for the last 15 years retired at this year's march. Pouwel has been a great friend to us for the last 30 years and has assisted in our planning and attendance. The March Committee gave this year's Army Cadets and Air Training Cadets the privilege of being the first military unit to set off behind the Police. When the Cadets arrived at the saluting dais they halted and advanced to face the dais. They were followed by the Aldershot Branch members. Pouwel was on the saluting dais and was invited to join the Cadets in front of the Hartenstein Museum. At this point Tony Trown read out many letters of thanks to Pouwel from all of our people that he has helped. The Aldershot Branch letter was written by our President David Taylor. The final letter that Tony read out was from Her Majesty, The Queen. Gasps were heard from the Dutch people in the stands as he read the letter. The order was then given to remove headdress and three hearty cheers filled the air. After replacing headdress all of those wearing berets including the Cadets saluted Pouwel. After a left turn the Nijmegen Pipe and Drum band marched off with the Cadets following. When the Aldershot Branch members passed Pouwel the order was given "**to the right salute**" and every member wearing a beret saluted him. Pouwel smiled and nodded as we passed. It was a fitting thank you to a loyal friend who has helped us for many years.

We all met up back in the stadium behind the Airborne Museum after the march. Just before 4pm Tony approached Stuart and told him to follow him and they went to the front of the Hartenstein Hotel to the saluting dais. After presentations to the Dutch people Stuart was called forward by Jean Paul Gebben who is the Mayor of Renkum. The local people were informed that Stuart has assisted Tony Trown in bringing 400 Army and Air Training Corps Cadets to Arnhem to participate in the Airborne March every year for the last 30 years. The Mayor stated that during the battle of Arnhem 10,000 troops were dropped and for the last 30 years over 10,000 Cadets have attended the march. That equates to one Cadet for every soldier at Arnhem. To a huge round of applause Stuart was then presented with the Airborne March Pin from the March Committee.

After the march Jack Hawkins and Sharon Elder made their way back to the campsite from the Schoonoord (Glass House) Pub. As they walked down the hill

they came across a group of local people having a street party. They were invited to join them and as they talked to the owner of a house he told them that he was four years old when the battle started. He pointed to the driveway between his house and the house next door and said that a Tiger tank was positioned between the houses. The Germans had taken out the lower part of the corner of his house so that the barrel of the tank could swing round and fire up and down the road and then return to hide between the houses. This tank was used to stop the Polish joining the British forces. The house next door had to be demolished due to the amount of damage but his house was repaired. He gave Jack and Sharon a copy of a photograph taken at the time which can be seen below along with a current photo.

Over 33,000 people took part in this year's march and the planning has started for next year. If any member would like to attend next year's march, bookings will be taken in January and the march takes place from 4 – 7 September 2014.



Weverstraat 173 and 171 Oosterbeek

During the Battle



Weverstraat 173 and 171 Oosterbeek

As it is today

The house at Weverstraat 171 was rebuilt after the war

Airborne Forever

Airborne Forever - The Life Story of an Arnhem Veteran.

Johnny Peters (b. 1923) was one of the tens of thousands of Allied servicemen who left hearth and home on or around 17 September 1944 to take part in Operation Market Garden, one of the biggest air landing operations of all time. Johnny fought not just for his life but also for the freedom - although this was to come too late for many of his comrades.

Apart from taking part in the Battle of Arnhem, Johnny participated in operations during the Second World War in North Africa and Italy (Operation Husky) and was involved in the liberation of Norway (Operation Doomsday). In this book he talks about his youth in Liverpool, the depression years of the 1930s and his strained family circumstances, his ambitions as a soldier and his often gripping and moving war experiences. Johnny is a "Red Beret" in heart and soul - neither reckless nor timid: "Nec temere, nec timide". But he was also a proud family man with boundless energy, a zest for life and a great, unflagging sense of humour.

Although the book discusses so much more than just his escapades and experiences during the Battle of Arnhem, what also comes through clearly is just how much impact this period had on the rest of his life. Johnny Peters is one of a dwindling band of Arnhem veterans, and since 1972 has been returning each year to commemorate fallen comrades

Film Extras

I have received the following information that a client is looking to recruit 700 lads to work as film extras for Hollywood Blockbuster movies and other projects. I am told the money is good and all you need to do is email the people below.

Our client is one of the UK's leading casting agencies providing supporting artists, walk-ons and stand-ins for the feature film, television and advertising industries. They have cast for many major world-wide films including Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides, Prince of Persia, The Duchess, Sweeney Todd and Casino Royale, as well as TV shows including The Hour, Being Human and Crimewatch. They also specialise in a wide range of commercials, music promos, virals, corporate videos, i-dents and stills photography.

If you are interested please register at www.cross-deck.co.uk and send your CV to helen@cross-deck.co.uk. Please quote 'Film Extra' as the subject title.

St Lawrence Jewry

The Airborne Forces Memorial Service is held on the Friday before Remembrance Sunday at St Lawrence Jewry next Guildhall. This year's service will take place on Friday 8th November. The service will start at 1130hrs. This event is open to the wider Regimental family and is not a ticket event. There will be a reception after the service at the Red Herring Pub, Wood Street where a light snack and refreshments will be provided. All those who have attended the service are encouraged to attend. Members of the Branch will be attending this year and will be leaving Aldershot railway station at 9.30am. If any member would like to join for the first time please contact the secretary if you require further information.

Cenotaph Parade London

Whitehall Cenotaph Remembrance Parade 10 November 2013. The Parachute Regimental Association is grateful to Colonel (Retired) Hugo Fletcher, former Deputy Commander of 16 Air Assault Brigade for agreeing to lead the airborne contingent past the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London this year. The Royal British Legion has once again allocated the Airborne contingent 174 tickets. These tickets are usually issued by the RBL in late September/early October.

If any member would like to apply for tickets please contact the secretary as soon as possible. Tickets will need to be applied for by 11th October. Please be aware these tickets are for **members of the PRA only**. It has been noted on previous parades a number of family members, including children, have appeared in the ranks of the Airborne Contingent. In the spirit of remembrance, family members are most welcome, however on this occasion they are not permitted to take part in the march and will be required to leave the parade and advised they may spectate from the pavement lining the marching route. Please do not attempt to flout these rules as asking members to leave the parade causes all sorts of unnecessary embarrassment.

Field of Remembrance Westminster Abbey

The service will take place at 11am in the Gardens of Westminster Abbey, Whitehall, London on Thursday 7 November 2013, and will be opened by a member of the Royal Family. Those expecting to attend are advised the area within the gardens is very restricted and only a finite number of people can physically stand behind the very small plot allocated to the PRA. Over 300 small memorial crosses are placed in the plot which is prepared by the National Secretary with the able assistance of members of the London Branch. Due to the increased popularity of this event, demand for entry tickets has risen dramatically; therefore the RBL has introduced a ticket entry system and restricted the number of tickets issued to participating organisations. A bid will be made by PRA HQ for tickets and branches should not expect to have large numbers of tickets allocated. Members of the PRA belonging to other veteran organisations may of course apply to that organisation for their own entrance ticket but will be expected to stand behind their respective plots.

Stuart

HOG ROAST



The Hog is cooked and ready for serving



Tony carving the Hog



The Hog is served



Dave chatting with Alec and Neil



The children enjoying themselves



A very Happy table



Relaxing after the meal



Surely, cigars don't smell that bad Steve

GOLF TOURNAMENT



L-R Steve Gerrard, Elliott Whittington, Jim Scott, Ali Aitkin, Paul Skidmore, John Moffat, Barry Hendry Glyn Grace, Tom Mellon, Pete Clare and John Mellon



The stories start after the meal



John Moffat with the Branch winner's trophy



Glyn Grace wins the Branch runner up trophy



Barry Hendry is presented with one of his trophies



Tom Mellon wins the lowest putt count



Ali Aitkin is happy to receive the wooden spoon



Why is there nobody about when it's John's turn at the bar

AIRBORNE MARCH



Iain and Pete swimming the Rhine



Tony presents Stuart with the statue



Tony explains what happened at Ginkelse Heide,
the barn was used as a first aid post



Branch members before the march



Tony reads out the letters of appreciation
to Pouwel Vos



The Aldershot Branch members
salute Pouwel Vos



A view on the march



Jean Paul Gebben presents Stuart
with the Airborne March Pin