



The Parachute Regimental Association Aldershot Branch Newsletter

04/2008

April 2008

Monthly Meeting

The **Annual General Meeting** and monthly meeting will be held on **Friday 4th April at 2000hrs in Malta Barracks.**

Bar Opening Times

The bar is open on Friday evenings **8pm till midnight** and Sunday afternoon from **3pm till 8pm**. Pool table 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.

Branch Ties

Branch ties are available for purchase from the Treasurer or Secretary at a price of £9.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will take place prior to the monthly meeting. Please make every effort to attend.

Charlie Cole

It is with sadness that I have to inform you of the death of Branch member Charlie Cole. Charlie has been a staunch member of the Aldershot Branch and was for many years our welfare member. Our thoughts and prayers go to his wife Edith and his family.

Pool Competition

Although the numbers who entered the pool competition last month was not great, all those who attended had a very enjoyable evening. Martin Seville won the competition and Nigel (Jonah) Jones won the game of killer. Twenty-seven pounds was raised for SSAFA during the evening. We would also like to thank Helen Jones for providing the buffet.

Auction Evening

The auction was held after last months monthly meeting. Thirteen items were put forward for auction prior to the **“The Old and Bold”** oil painting of the Hercules followed by the Dakota. The bidding was brisk and £168 was raised from the first thirteen items. The painting was then put up for auction and the bidding started at £50. The numbers bidding gradually dropped as the price went up. When the price reached £500 those members who remained in the bar joined us in the hall. Apart from the three members bidding all other members ensured that their hands were kept firmly in their pockets. The bidding went up in £50 bids with Fred Weaver, Mark Burrows and Lis Woods (on behalf of husband Shane) taking it in turns. When the bid by Lis Woods reached £1,000 a gasp was let out. This was followed by a further bid of £1,050 by Mark Burrows. Not to be outdone Lis put in a final offer of £1,100. The auctioneer called out **Going Once, Going Twice, Sold.** A round of applause broke the silence. It was a dramatic

evening enjoyed by all. Many thanks to those who purchased items especially Shane and Lis Woods. I am pleased to inform you that 10% of the money raised will be going to the Help for our Heroes fund. This fund is raising money for Selly Oak Hospital and Headley Court Rehabilitation Centre. Both units are assisting our injured troops.

Easter Parade

Unfortunately due to lack of support this event was cancelled.

Charity Event

As mentioned in last months newsletter a great day out is being organised at the former AATDC at Old Sarum Airfield, which is 4 miles north of Salisbury on Sunday 25th May 2008. Norman McKay has contacted me to ask for assistance. He said, ***"I am helping out with the security at SUPPORT OUR PARAS at Old Sarum on Sun 25 May. We have been hit with a demand for 50 stewards from the Health and Safety. Would any members of the Aldershot PRA consider volunteering? We also need 2 guys (or gals) who are interested in vintage cars to host the Bentley and Aston Martin Owner Drivers"***. Further information regarding the event can be seen on the website: -

www.vision-stream.co.uk/sopara/index.htm

If any members would like to assist this worthwhile cause please contact the secretary.

Peter Richens

Branch member Peter Richens has been given permission to use our premises on Friday 18th April. It is Peter's wife Judith's birthday and he will be celebrating the event during the evening. As this is our normal Branch evening members are welcome. We would like to wish Judith a very Happy Birthday.

Bob Darby

Branch member Bob Darby is hoping to take a party of officers from the Defence College at Shrivenham on a battlefield tour to El Gamil airfield in September. He is wondering if any of the Aldershot Branch members took part in Operation Musketeer as it was called, either with 3 PARA at the airfield or 2 PARA who landed later. If any member can assist Bob with some personal experiences please contact the secretary.

Peter Wilson

Branch member Peter Wilson is involved with friends at Twickenham in contacting ex members of the 8th, 9th and 8th/9th Battalions Parachute Regiment who served in Palestine and Germany. They hope to have a reunion in the near future. Please contact the secretary if you wish to contact Peter.

The Arnhem Doctor

I have received information from PRA Headquarters in Colchester that the Arnhem Doctor has just passed away. This information was sent to the HQ by Antony Georgi, a personal friend of the Arnhem Doctor and reads as follows: -.

From Antony Georgi:

"I regret that I have to report the death of Dr. Stuart Reginald Mawson on 20th February 2008.

Dr. Mawson trained at St Thomas' Hospital and volunteered for the Airborne forces. He was posted to the 11th Bn. The Parachute Regt as Medical Officer with the rank of Captain. He accompanied the 11th Bn. when they jumped on the second day of the Battle of Arnhem. He treated the wounded in the Schoonoord Pub (The Glass House), which is situated 100 metres south of the Hartenstein Hotel. He stayed with his wounded men and was captured by the Germans.

He wrote two books about his war service: -" Doctor at Arnhem" and "Doctor after Arnhem" (the second book is the more interesting as it gives an astonishing view of how life in Germany carried on as normal as possible as the regime crumbled).

After his discharge, he qualified as a FRCS and pioneered new techniques in Otology. He rose to become one of the senior administrators of Kings College Hospital. His sense of humour ruined his chance of a retirement gong. When Ted Heath was Prime Minister, Stuart was introduced to him. To break the ice, Stuart asked him if he had had any time to chase round the buoys. For a moment, the world stood still and Heath's aides looked aghast. Then Heath icily replied that he did not have much time to go sailing now that he had become Prime Minister. It is fair to assume that Stuart's card was marked as not suitable for a retirement honour. Stuart retired to Knodishall, a small village near Aldeburgh in Suffolk. I also retired to Knodishall. As we had both gone to the same school, Canford in Dorset, and as I had served as national service private with the 3rd Bn. The Parachute Regt, we became good friends. This is why I am contacting you in an effort to inform those who respect his wartime service, of his death"

I have read his first book and found it most interesting, especially as it deals with his time at the Schoonoord Pub. We visit the Schoonoord during our trip to Arnhem every September and I will certainly look at the Pub in a different light - secretary.

Territorial Army

As you may know 2008 has been designated as the year of the Territorial Army (TA100) a commemoration of 100 years since Lord Haldane reorganised the earlier reserve forces, militias and yeomanry into the now more familiar TA. As part of the programme of events, a garden party is being held at Buckingham Palace on 10th July, aimed at Past and Present members of the TA. A number of tickets have been offered to members of the UK Ops team, who may be accompanied by a guest of their choice, who may be close family or friends, but these must be over 18 years old.

The Garden Party event at Buckingham Palace on 10 July is from 1500-1800hrs. Please apply for tickets (no cost) to the secretary. Dress to be suits, photo ID required at door eg. Passport/Driving licence with photo. Applicants to have been members of TA. Other events that are being organised during the year are: -

a) A service at **St Paul's Cathedral** on Thursday 15th May at 1100hrs, followed by a march past (standards to be carried if possible) & then a reception in the city (several locations, details to follow). Dress - suits. Tickets - 1 for ex TA member & 1 for wife/girlfriend/friend! (ie 2 tickets per applicant). Marchers will be reunited with partner after the march past prior to attending reception. All at no cost!

b) A TA 100 pageant will take place on Horse Guards Parade 21st Jun 1500-1800hrs. Tickets are two per applicant - no cost; dress - suits.

If any member would like tickets for any of the above events please contact the secretary.

Branch Articles

If any member would like to include an article in the newsletter please contact the secretary.

Stuart