



## The Parachute Regimental Association Aldershot Branch Newsletter

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07/2008

July 2008

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### Monthly Meeting

The monthly meeting will be held on **Friday 11th July at 2000hrs in Malta Barracks**. Please note that the date has been moved from **4<sup>th</sup> July to 11<sup>th</sup> July**. This is due to the Malta Barracks Officers Cocktail Party. The bar will be **closed** on this evening.

### 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.

### Ted Dent

As mentioned in last months newsletter, Ted Dent passed away in the Phyliss Tuckwell Hospice with his family by his side. Ted was born in Norwich in 1919 and was one of eight brothers and sisters. By the age of 17 he was keen to join the armed forces so he enlisted in the Grenadier Guards. He saw action at Dunkirk and eventually rose to the rank of Sergeant. A representative visited his barracks at Windsor and asked for volunteers to go to Ringway in Cheshire. They were offering more money and Ted decided to go, the extra money being an attraction. None of the volunteers new what they were going to be asked what to do and so it was that Ted along with others found himself being instructed by the RAF on the ways of parachuting. Ted became an Instructor himself also doing experimental jumps and trying out various types of parachutes. Therefore it was a natural progression that Ted joined the Parachute Regiment when it was formed. He served for nearly 25 years seeing action in North Africa, Palestine, Sicily, Italy, Egypt, Burma, Singapore, Cyprus and anywhere else the army chose to send him. Having retired from the Airborne he joined the Ministry of Defence Police based at Farnborough and served in excess of another 20 years. He was an ardent supporter and founder member of the Aldershot Branch and was at one time the Branch Chairman. He will be sadly missed.

### Peter and Sylvia Gaylor

Peter and Sylvia Gaylor would like to invite the members of the Branch to join with them in celebrating their Golden Wedding Anniversary after the monthly meeting on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> July. Nibbles and celebratory drinks will be provided. The Committee and members would like to congratulate Peter and Sylvia upon reaching this wonderful milestone.

### Southsea Spectacular

A 26 seat coach has been booked and will leave from the Princes Hall, Aldershot promptly at 1000hrs on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> July. Please ensure that those who have booked places on the coach leave plenty of time to park in the Warburg car park and don't forget to pay. Due to the increase in petrol the cost this year is £12 per person. Please send cheques payable to "**Aldershot Branch PRA**" to the secretary. There are a few spare seats available on a first come first served basis.

### Summer BBQ

The Summer BBQ will be held in Malta Barracks on Sunday August 24<sup>th</sup>. Further details will appear in the next newsletter. meeting.

### Summer Ball

The Branch intends to hold a late Summer Ball on Friday 19th September in the Clubhouse at Malta Barracks. We are awaiting final confirmation from Malta Barracks that the date is acceptable. The delay in organising the Summer Ball is due to the possible rebuild of the kitchens. More details will appear in the next newsletter.

### ABF Weekend

I am sure that all members are aware that in the past the first weekend in July was always Airborne Forces weekend. The Trafalgar Pub in Short Street is holding a mini Airborne Forces weekend over the weekend 4 -6 July. They have been informed that many ex Airborne members will be returning. If you are passing pop in and you may be surprised who you meet. You will also see the refurbishment of the pub.

### Branch Records

Many thanks to all those who sent back the proforma. I am still short of a few records so if you haven't sent your records in please do so soonest. Thank you for your assistance.

### Pathfinder Parachute Group

I have received the following information from Roy Mobsby and I am sure that the members will find it most interesting.

My name is Roy Mobsby and I represent the Pathfinder Parachute group UK. <http://www.pathfindergroupuk.com/>  
We are a large group of former Paratroopers many from foreign Airborne units who specialise in jumping round military parachutes for fun. Predominantly British Para lead, we have been in existence for over 15 years, parachuting around the world on foreign Airborne course to earn the host countries wings. For the last few years we have jumped at Arnhem and Normandy as part of the opening events. Jumping from a DC3 in WW2 uniform and using green military round parachutes on static line the way we were taught at our respective jump schools. Many of you have seen us jump but were not aware of who we were. We jump and in true Airborne tradition, roll our chutes up and go to the pub leaving the talking to the VIPs to others. Dennis Melia recently joined us and described us as the best kept Airborne secret in existence.

The reason why I am writing to you at this time is to make you aware of a few things that are happening. Some you will be aware of and others you may not.

We have been reliably informed that next years Arnhem and Normandy drops will be the last officially sanctioned events of their kind. We however disagree with that and have persuaded the Arnhem committee to allow us to continue jumping there at our own expense for the next five years, which I am glad to say they have agreed too.

We usually hire a DC3 for the jumps but there have been problems produced by Brussels and the CAA, which may prevent us from continuing in our present form. The DC3 aircraft now have to be fitted out with the same emergency equipment as a passenger carrying aircraft. This has already grounded some DC3's although this is being fought at the moment. As Parachutist we never came under the passenger carrying rules but now as of last weekend we have been informed that American registered DC3 can only carry 12 jumpers. This along with the huge hike in fuel has made it almost impossible to carry on jumping the DC3 without a large sponsors help, which unfortunately we do not have. At this present rate they will have been totally priced out of the market by the end of 2009.

Realising we may be coming to the end of an era in more ways than one we have decided that between now and the end of 2009 we are going to do all we can to make this memorable for our veterans, former Airborne soldiers and the general population as a whole.

We have arranged a "Drop and Poppy Appeal" which we hope will raise a considerable amount of cash for the Royal British Legions Poppy Appeal and the Airborne Assault Duxford museum appeal, which is of course very dear to our hearts. Instead of buying a Poppy you will be able to sponsor one to be dropped onto either the Normandy or Arnhem DZ. This will also be available on line for our ex pats overseas. <http://poppydrop.pathfindergroupuk.com/>

The next project is to give as many former Airborne soldiers and Military parachutist the chance to jump the DC3 before it becomes too expensive to operate. To do this we have arranged to bring in the last flying LI-2. This is the last flying Russian copy of the DC3 still airworthy and we will have it on the ground at the Dutch National Parachute centre Teuge between the dates of September 13th to the 19th before we use it for the Arnhem anniversary weekend events. This aircraft is unfortunately in civilian colours but despite this will be available for fly past during that period booked through us. In order to give as many people the chance to jump this aircraft for what may be the last time we will be running four x 1 jump courses for former Paratrooper and Parachutist who can prove their qualifications. This is not for first time jumpers. Our idea is to refresher train you in the morning and jump in the early afternoon weather permitting from the LI-2. This will cause minimum disruption for those of your members who will have a full

weeks program already planned. We may even be able to refresher train some of you in the UK before you travel over keeping your jumping time to a minimum. The first of these courses will be held on Monday the 15th of September.

At the same time we will be running a 5 jump basic Dutch military B wing course for those who may want to do more Parachuting. This course will jump from a light aircraft but not the DC3. The dates for this course will be 14th of September through to the 19th. The Dutch military B wing brevet will be awarded for the successful completion of this course and it is open to all comers, civilians included and especially first time jumpers. You will be using the American army MC-1C round canopy for this course and all jumps will be static line.

Places are limited and we will go on a first come first served basis. A donation to the appeals will be made from all courses and parachute events carried out by us between now and the end of Sep 2009. We are trying to raise enough money to have two jump aircraft at Arnhem this year and if we are able to get sponsors we may be able to continue this display for a few more years. We live in hope. Please pass this information to your members and feel free to visit our web site.

I am available to answer questions on 02380-899369.

Thank you for your time.

Roy Mobsby (Former 5 Abn Bde)

Jump/Operations Co-ordinator

Pathfinder Parachute Group UK

<http://www.pathfindergroupuk.com/>

### **Email Addresses**

We would prefer to send out the newsletter by email so if any member has an email address and has not passed it to the secretary we would appreciate it if they did so. This saves on printing, postage, time and effort and of course on our carbon footprint. Many thanks to those members who have supplied their email address, but I am sure there must be others.

*Stuart*



It is with great sadness that we have to inform you of the death of Branch member Donnie Blacklock. Donnie died in the Royal Surrey Hospital in Guildford on Tuesday 24th June with his family at his side. His funeral will be held on Thursday 3rd July at 1500hrs in the Royal Garrison Church in Aldershot followed by burial at the Aldershot Military Cemetery. This will be followed by the wake in the Conservative Club. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Margaret and all of the family at this sad time.