



From the Secretary – Maj (Retd) PA Raison



THE PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

Patron: HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES, KG, KT, PC, GCB, AK, QSO, ADC

REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS
THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT
MERVILLE BARRACKS
CIRCULAR ROAD SOUTH
COLCHESTER
ESSEX
CO2 7UT

TEL: 01206 817073

MIL: 94660 7073

Email: secretary@prahq.com

www.theparachuteregimentalassociation.com

1 October 2018

Regional and Branch Secretaries

Please see below the monthly news from RHQ PARA. If you have anything you would like to promote in this, please send submissions by the 25th of each month to the Secretary at secretary@prahq.com

Topics:

- A. Newsletter Format
- B. Arnhem 2018
- C. Dakota 626
- D. Important Information - Security at Commemorative Events
- E. Online Registration
- F. The Winning Ticket
- G. Executive Committee Meeting
- H. Remembrance Day Tickets 2018
- I. Regimental Charity Collections and Donations
- J. Dakota Rededication - Colchester

Events

- K. Pass Out Parades
- L. Future Commemoration Dates 2018/2019
- M. Diary Dates

A. Newsletter Format

The format of the newsletter is changing. Following a recent review, we are in the process of revamping the content and removing some of the repeated articles and information. This information will move to the Facebook and Website, making it easily accessible to the Branch Trustees. Those with limited or no access to the internet, should retain a hard copy key documents and information. Key points will still be highlighted in the newsletter as they are published, for example articles of interest from the Charity Commission. This will take time and if anyone has any further recommendations or ideas, please let me know at: secretary@prahq.com Submissions for the newsletter from Branches would be very welcome. If you have anything that you would like to report or advertise, please get them to us by the 25th of the month.

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B. Arnhem 2018

Arnhem 2018 was a great success, despite the weather. The weekend started with an internment at the Oosterbeek CWGC Cemetery. The service at the Airborne Plein, Arnhem on the Friday evening was a damp affair but was well attended. The weather was very good to us on the Saturday morning and the first Para drop was at 1000hrs. It was a great start to the day and the sky was full of canopies from the various nations. There followed a poignant service led by Padre 2 PARA and great words by Lt Col Andy Wareing, CO 4 PARA. The weather changed dramatically on the Saturday evening and this continued into Sunday. This did not dampen the spirits of those attending and it was another emotional period, as the children from UK and Dutch schools, laid flowers at the graves of the fallen. For those that are not aware, Lisa broke her ankle after a fall from a motorbike on the way back. She is bruised but recovering well at home and will be back to work shortly.



Frank Ashleigh and Laurie Weeden – Glider Pilot Regiment



The Reverend Jeff Cuttell conducts the service at the internment of SSgt John Michael 'Mike' Hall, whose last wish was to be buried alongside his co-pilot from Operation MARKET GARDEN

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Ginkel Heath -Multinational Parachuting at its best

C. Dakota 626

Dakota FZ626 was flown by Pilot Officer John (Len) Wilson, Flight Sergeant Herbert Osborne (Co-Pilot), Flight Sergeant Reginald French (Wireless Operator), Warrant Officer Les Gaydon (Navigator) and air despatchers Lance Corporal James Grace, Driver Richard Newth, Driver Vince Dillworth and Driver Wilfred Jenkinson. Wilson had flown several missions over Arnhem on the days before the 19th, dropping paratroopers.

FZ626 took off from RAF base Down Ampney at 12.35 pm, heading for supply dropzone 'V', on the northern outskirts of Arnhem. FZ626 joined a large group of aircraft. The force was composed of 63 Dakota's from 271 and 48 Sqn based at Down Ampney and 575 and 512 Sqn, based at Broadwell, squadrons leaving the respective airfields in that order. FZ626 carried 16 panniers, containing fuel and food.

The Germans turned out to be well informed about the position of the drop zone where FZ626 was heading. In the morning of the 19th a German Flak unit put up an air trap, consisting of four 20mm guns and at least one 88mm gun in the far east corner of the drop zone. In the afternoon the guns took down several Short Stirlings above 'V'. The formation of Dakota's of 271 Squadron, being the last group of aircraft to make the dropping run on 'V' in the late afternoon, were not aware of the experiences of their colleagues and consequently ran into the same Flak as encountered by the group of Stirlings above 'V' earlier that day.

Dakota FZ626 arrived at 'V' around 16.30 pm local time. FZ626 descended to 500 ft (150m) at a speed of 120 mph (190 km/h) to be able to safely drop its load. It got caught in the fire of the German guns, being the first Dakota of this run over 'V' and was fatally hit. Instead of turning the aircraft away from the gunfire, Len Wilson decided to fly the crippled aircraft directly towards the German guns. The aircraft came down right behind the positions of the 20mm Flak, crashing on a house and, as an eye witness recorded, hitting one of the German guns and cutting some birches in half.

The explosion of the aircraft and the fuel in the panniers caused huge disarray amongst the gun crews who were witnessed running from their positions in a state of panic. Together with Len Wilson and Herbert Osborne the crew members Reginald French, James Grace and Richard Newth were killed in the crash of their aircraft.

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Gaydon, Dillworth and Jenkinson cleared the burning aircraft in time by parachute and then taken prisoner by the Germans.



Dakota 626 Memorial

D. Important Information - Security at Commemorative Events

By comparison, the 2019 Commemorations will be enormous. Some of you may have seen the news that a number of people were arrested in Arnhem during this years Commemorative period for terrorist related activity. This highlights the need to be vigilant at all Commemorations and events. There is no room for complacency against this enemy. All observations and incidents must be reported to the security services.

E. Online Registration

The online registration is proving very popular and thank you to all those that have taken the time to submit their details. This is very easy to complete and will ensure that we have the correct information for all our members, as it is very clear that previous records are not accurate. Please click on the link and follow the prompts:

<https://mailchi.mp/4af31058726d/prarhq>

All new members will be required to complete the online registration.

F. The Winning Ticket - Limited Edition Classic 500 Pegasus

Royal Enfield partnered with Support Our Paras to offer everyone who entered a chance to win the sole remaining Classic 500 Pegasus – the new limited-edition motorcycle inspired by the RE/WD 125 Flying Flea, Royal Enfield's legendary World War Two motorcycle.

The winner of this fabulous prize was Mr Nick Hooper a former member of the REME.

G. Executive Committee Meeting

The Executive Committee (EC) will meet on Sat 13 October 18 in Colchester. Any Branch that would like a matter to be discussed at this meeting should go through their Regional Secretary and provide all the necessary research and background information. The EC meets bi-annually to discuss Association matters. These include

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membership, recruiting, discipline issues, Regimental events, media, finances, investments, fundraising and other matters of importance. Please get involved.

H. Remembrance Day Tickets 2018

Registration with the Royal British Legion, to march at the Cenotaph in 2018 is closed. Tickets will be sent out as soon as they are received from the RBL. Any questions should be directed to: admin@prahq.com :

I. Regimental Charity Collections and Donations

The Association Charity is extremely grateful for all donations received. All members actively involved in fundraising events and street collections for Branches, do a tremendous amount of work in this area. The Parachute Regimental Association, the smallest of the Charities, is constantly looking for ways of raising funds and rely directly on the support from the Branches. We work directly with the other Regimental Charities as a point of contact for Airborne Veterans seeking assistance. Your support to the Regimental Charities is vital to the direct support of Airborne Veterans now and in the future.

In September 2018 the welfare office at RHQ PARA dealt with 42 cases and granted £35808 to ex Airborne members and their families.

J. Dakota Rededication - Colchester

A rededication service was held at Merville Barracks, Colchester on Thursday 27 September 2018. The event was opened by Sgt Jim Kilbride, the custodian, who has worked tirelessly to get the aircraft to the standard it is now. This hard work was highlighted by Colonel Andy Jackson PARA, Deputy Commander of 16 Air Assault Brigade. The service was conducted by the senior Padre of 16 Air Assault Brigade and Padre 2 PARA. The aircraft was recently chosen to take part in the RAF 100 Commemorations at Horse Guard Parade. This involved the aircraft getting a complete respray, which it was greatly in need of and saved us a vast amount of money. The aircraft is 80% complete but there is still a lot to do. Funds are needed to continue the repairs and renovations that have been completed so far. If anyone would like to support this please send any donations to this HQ, please annotate them (Dakota Fund). Your support in keeping this piece of Airborne History alive is vital to its future.



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EVENTS

The events calendar on the website is being constantly updated. Here is a selection of forthcoming events:

K. Pass out Parades (POP)

The next Pass Out Parades are as follows:

800 Normandy Platoon	Friday 19 October 18
801 Tamera Platoon	Friday 16 November 18
802 Arnhem	Friday 14 December 18

The parades take place at Helles Barracks, Catterick. Please ensure that you make contact with ITC Catterick prior to attending as cancellations do occur with minimum notice given.

L. Commemoration Dates for 2019

Normandy

75th 2019 03-07 Jun

Arnhem

75th 2019 20-22 Sep

Accommodation for both events is now in short supply, please book early if you intend to travel.

M. Diary Dates

There are still a number of events in the calendar for this year and it would be great to see you all at those. If you have any dates for 2019 please let me know at the earliest opportunity so that they can be added to the diary. Details of events should be sent when available and updated accordingly.

12 Oct 18	Annual Officers Dinner	London
13 Oct 18	PRA Executive Committee Mtg	Colchester
8 Nov 18	RBL Field of Remembrance	Westminster Abbey
9 Nov 18	St Paul's/St Lawrence Jewry	St Paul's Cathedral/St Lawrence Jewry
11 Nov 18	Remembrance Day	Cenotaph, London/National

Details of all these events and others are available on the Web Page at
www.theparachuteregimentalassociation.com

Paul Raison

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PRA Pocket Diary 2019

The Liverpool Branch will be offering Parachute Regimental Association Diaries in the same style as previous years. This will be a Red flash on the front and back cover, with the Regimental Badge overlaying the Pegasus and Parachute Regimental Association printed in silver with the same organiser diary and notepad.

Unfortunately, last year they were left with a considerable number of diaries which were not sold, so the total number available will be 1000. Because of this, it will be necessary to increase the delivered price per diary to £3.20, including postage and packing. The minimum order to meet this price is 8 diaries, which provides the best weight to achieve the lowest postage rate for small orders.

Can each Branch Secretary that wishes to order diaries, please complete the information below? Please ensure that the PRA Branch and delivery address for the diaries is completed and a cheque covering the value of the number ordered is attached and sent to the correct address.

To enable the diaries to become 'self-funding' and not the Liverpool Branch paying in advance of delivery. Orders can be e-mailed direct to: michaelwhurst@yahoo.co.uk

Cheques should be made payable to PRA Liverpool sent to my address indicated above. The diaries are expected to be delivered in August, so if branches would wish to take some to Arnhem, in September, would you please note this on your application, so that priority can be given to these orders.

The information required for each order is as follows:

PRA Branch:

Delivery address:

Number of 2019 diaries @ £3.20 Required

Cheque for total amount payable to 'PRA Liverpool':

Orders are to be sent to:

Michael Hurst
9 Jedburgh Drive
Melling Mount
Liverpool
L33 1EQ

Tel: 0795 642 3679

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