



**The Parachute Regimental Association
Aldershot Branch**



**3, The Lodge,
Kingswood Firs,
Grayshott, Hindhead,
Surrey GU26 6EU
United Kingdom
Registered Charity Number 1125551**

To all PRA Branches and Members,

**THE PARACHUTE REGIMENT & AIRBORNE FORCES MEMORIAL FUND –
UNVEILING THE AIRBORNE SOLDIER STATUE – 6 JULY 2019 – ALDERSHOT**

1. Introduction. I am writing on behalf of The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces Memorial Fund, which was initiated by Mr Tommy Simpson and Mr Richard Stacey, who would like to extend an invitation to you, for a March, an Unveiling Ceremony and a Service of Dedication for the Airborne Soldier Statue, to be held on Saturday 6 July 2019 at Princes Hall, Princes Way, Aldershot, Hants, GU11 1NX.

2. Aim. The aim of gathering on Saturday 6 July is to celebrate the 50 plus years that The Parachute Regiment and Airborne forces were stationed in the Garrison Town of Aldershot and the links that were forged with the townspeople and Rushmoor Borough Council.

Note 1. This event **is not** for those attending to make political or any other statements, through dress or banners etc, so let us keep it simple for the day please!

3. The Statue. “The Airborne Soldier” is a 6 foot tall bronze statue, which is mounted on a 4 foot cube of granite from Mount Longdon and has been commissioned as a memorial to those who have served with The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces in Aldershot Garrison from 1950 to 2000. The ceremony of dedication will take place in Princes Gardens, immediately opposite Princes Hall and provide a place of pilgrimage, particularly for those who have lost family members in foreign and inaccessible countries during post WW2 conflicts.

4. The Event. The 1st Battalion The Parachute Regiment is the lead unit for the Military component of this day of celebration. The day will start with a muster, less the 16 AA Bde contingent due to operational commitments, for past and present members of the Airborne Community at 1030hrs in Willems Avenue, under the direction of the Parade Sergeant Major. Programmes will be handed out by MPC Learners at the Muster, which will be followed by a March Past stepping off at 1130hrs sharp. The march takes the Falklands Route around the town of Aldershot and the Veterans Guard will be directly behind the Band of the Parachute Regiment; those wishing to use Buggies or be pushed in Wheelchairs will form up at the rear of this Guard. **AB Forces Riders.** Uniquely, bringing up the rear of the Parade will be a contingent of Motorcyclists from the ABF Riders.

Note 2. Dress Code. This is a high profile event and will spotlight The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces to the general public and will require matching turnout to reflect our high standards. For those marching on parade **without exception**, the dress is ABF Mufti:

Maroon Beret, Capbadge and Medals, Blazer and Dark Trousers, a Light Blue shirt and Airborne Tie of choice, plus Black polished shoes and Dark socks.

Note 3. Discipline. As expected by The Parachute Regiment and ABF Associations, the **highest standard of discipline** is to be observed throughout the day by all those attending.

5. **Entry to Princes Gardens.** Two Entry points (North and South) will be open from 0930hrs and a programme for the day will be available as Veterans and their partners/guests enter Princes Gardens, distributed by Learners from the Military Preparation College (MCP).

Note 4. As a security measure those attending are requested not to bring **back packs and bags** into Princes Gardens, but a security bag search will be in operation at the entry points.

6. **Unveiling Ceremony and Service of Dedication.** Prior to the Unveiling and Service of Dedication, Orders of Service will be handed out by Learners from the MCP to spectators in the gardens; all marchers will receive copies once they have formed up behind the seated VIPs. The Unveiling Ceremony commences with an address by Lieutenant General Sir John Lorimer KCB DSO MBE, Colonel Commandant The Parachute Regiment.

7. **Statue Unveiling.** After a pause, the unveiling ceremony of the Airborne Soldier Statue will take place. The Service will then continue, which includes the Act of Remembrance. After the Service has ended VIP guests will return to the Princes Hall for Lunch. During the afternoon and within the confines of Princes Gardens, there will be ample opportunity to enjoy a range of activities and stands; the superlative memento – a commemorative ‘Airborne Soldier’ Coin will be on sale – all proceeds to the memorial fund.

8. **Invitation.** This is an open invitation to all PRA and Airborne Forces members and attached to this letter, is the Order of March (files of 5 veterans) and an overview of the Aldershot area showing available parking for cars. Coaches will be directed to the Wellington Statue Car Park and adjacent roads. I would be grateful if the PRA Branch Secretaries would contact me and let me have some idea of numbers for the event ie will a Standard Bearer be attending? How many branch members will be coming and the total size of the party? How many branch members will be using a Buggy or Wheelchair? Will your party be travelling by coach?

Note 5. The event has **limited disabled parking capacity** in the Admin Area (Princes Gardens Main Car Park), and Branch Secretaries are requested to let me know numbers, as these will be allocated on a first come first served basis - by **email ASAP**. Two more quick points: this is a **No SMOKING** event and alcoholic drinks are not to be **brought** into the gardens, as they are available from the hospitality tent (‘Remember the Fallen’).

9. **Chairman’s Final Comments.** The Airborne Forces Day (unofficial) in Aldershot will also be held over the same weekend as the unveiling event. The Trafalgar Public House (Traf) will not be open on Saturday 6th July until **after** the unveiling ceremony (1315hrs approx). The Aldershot Conservative Club who host Aldershot Branch PRA meetings, will be open to non-members Friday, Saturday and Sunday - all are welcome. We sincerely hope that you decide to take this opportunity to reinforce your ties with the Regimental and Airborne Family and we look forward to seeing you all in July.

IAIN RODGERS

Chairman - Aldershot Branch Parachute Regimental Association

Chairman - Organising Committee – ‘The Airborne Soldier’

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Distribution: -

PRA HQ – For distribution via the monthly branches mail drop.
All PRA Branches.

Enclosures:

1. Map of Event Area and Order of March.
2. Car Parking Locality Map.