



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

NEWSLETTER

1 January 2020

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. Another Busy Year
- B. Proof of Service
- C. Christmas Hampers 2019
- D. Regimental Charity Collections and Donations
- E. Applying for Army Records
- F. Regional Secretaries Vacancies
- G. MBE for Wilf Oldham
- H. Welfare Process
- I. Arnhem 75 Commemoration Coin
- J. The Watch List by Ian Flannery

Events

- K. Pass Out Parades
- L. Diary Dates

A.

On behalf of Julia and Myself I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year and welcome you to the first newsletter of 2020. The Association has a number of major commemorations taking place across the country. A larger than normal number of people have booked up for the 75th Anniversary of the Ardennes and Rhine Crossing already and places are available for anyone who may wish to attend. Funding for veterans is still available through the new Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces Charity (PRAFC). Please keep an eye on the Regimental Diary of events for details of all events.

B. Proof of Service

The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces is a popular 'Brand' that people like to be associated with. So much so, that in 2019 we encountered an increased number of characters who have cashed in on our reputation. Unfortunately, most of the cases we deal with occur when someone has died and often involve third parties (families). This is very upsetting for the families they leave behind who have to deal with the consequences of their actions.

This has called for a higher level of checks and confirmation of service that will continue. Alarming following one particular case it would appear that people already had their doubts but allowed it to continue for many years. There should be no embarrassment in asking individuals to provide proof of service as it may prevent alarming and distressful situations in the future.

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'Stolen Valour' will not be tolerated and all individuals will be checked to the best of our ability and as records and access allow. If any of your members have not registered with the PRA please do so to avoid any unnecessary anguish to your family in the future.

C. Christmas Hampers 2019

Christmas hampers were sent out to 378 veterans and their dependants this year. Our thanks go to the trustees of the Airborne Forces Security Fund and the continued support of the Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces Charity (PRAFC) who will now take this on.

D. Regimental Charity Collections and Donations

The Association Charity is extremely grateful for all donations received. All members actively involved in coordinating fundraising events and street collections for Branches do a tremendous amount of work in this area. The Parachute Regimental Association and the new Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces Charity (PRAFC) work directly with organisations such as SSAFA and the RBL, who are mainly there as a point of contact for Airborne Veterans seeking assistance and as such do not provide funding for individual requirements. Your support to the Regimental Charities is vital to the direct support of Airborne Veterans now and in the future.

E. Applying for Army Records

Please note that RHQ PARA does not have the capability to check the eligibility of any Airborne Veteran. As with applications to join the Association, it is up to the applicant to provide evidence of their Military Service. Anyone who is not in possession of their Military Records can apply to the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow at:

Army Personnel Centre
Disclosures 2
Mail point 535
Kentigern House
65 Brown Street
Glasgow
G2 8EX

apc-sp-disclosures2@mod.uk

or apply online at: <https://www.gov.uk/get-copy-military-service-records>

F. Regional Secretary Vacancy

Due to personal circumstances, a vacancy as Regional Secretary for the South East Region of The Parachute Regimental Association exists. The purpose of the Regional Management Committee is to manage the affairs of each Region. This is achieved by:

- 1) Holding regular Regional Management Committee meetings
- 2) Offering support and advice to branches on Constitutional and Charitable matters.
- 3) Coordinate and plan regional events.
- 4) Providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and information pertaining to the region.

Anyone who is interested in filling this position is kindly asked to notify the Secretary. All enquiries will be treated in the strictest confidence. The applicant must be a PRA member and ideally be actively involved with one of the Branches in this area. Once any nominations have been received the applicants will be passed to the Branches within the Region for discussion. For further details please contact the Secretary on: secretary@prahq.com or 01206 817073.

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G. MBE for Wilf Oldham

We are delighted to announce the award of MBE to veteran Wilf Oldham who is a member of the Bolton Branch. At 99, Second World War Airborne veteran Wilf Oldham was the oldest person to be recognised in the 2020 New Year Honours list.

Born in Salford, Wilf was made an MBE for services to commemorations and UK/Dutch relations in the Diplomatic Service and Overseas list.

He spoke of his pride and surprise at the honour.

"I must say I feel very proud that somebody's gone to this trouble."

"I was very surprised, of course, because it's the last thing I ever expected."



H. Welfare Process

The Regimental Welfare Team at RHQ is ready to help, at short notice anyone, who requires assistance. In December they made 23 grants totalling £16, 100.

The system is very simple and available to assist any member of the Parachute Regiment or Airborne Forces in need. The process is designed to ensure transparency and provide an audit trail for any assistance given, which is a lawful requirement.

The first part of the process **must be initiated by a SSAFA or RBL caseworker**. They will complete Form 'A' which is then submitted to the Regimental Welfare Team. They will then allocate funds from the Regimental Charities as required. The following numbers are very useful and should be used if you do not know your local SSAFA or RBL office number:

SSAFA Helpline: 0800 731 4880

RBL Helpline: 0808 802 8080

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Any individual or Branch that requires assistance from the Regimental Welfare Team can call them on: 01206 817102 (Laura) or 01206 817103 (Sue). All information shared is confidential. See the website for further details.

I. Arnhem 75 Commemoration Coin

OPERATION MARKET GARDEN – 75th Anniversary September 2019



This coin was commissioned by The Parachute Regimental Association (PRA) at RHQ PARA.

The cost is £10, with all proceeds going to the central fund of the PRA. Please note the top band on the image (in grey) will be engraved on the side of each coin (quite unique).

There are a small number of coins still available from RHQ PARA and anyone wishing to purchase one should email Julia on: admin@prahq.com or call on 01206 817077.

J. The Watch List by Ian Flannery

'One of our Branch secretaries, Ian Flannery of Teesside, has published a novel under the pen name of Joseph Mitcham.

'The Watch List' is a military techno-thriller that tells the story of Alex, a former Signals NCO, who steals the UK Terror Watch List and takes it to retired Special Forces Warrant Officer, Craig. Together they plan to take down some of the most dangerous potential terrorists across the country.

There are plenty of formidable characters in the book, mostly based on people that Ian met in his time at 1 PARA 1999-2001. Ian also saw Airborne service as Air Adjutant of 216 Para Sig Sqn after commissioning into the Signals.

'The Watch List' by Joseph Mitcham is available now from [Amazon in paperback \(£10\), Kindle \(£3.50\) and Kindle Unlimited \(Free\)](#). Ian would appreciate honest reviews from those who read it, and would appreciate any help that you can offer in promoting it, within Branches and on social media. [Joseph has a Facebook page](#) and can be found on Twitter handle @MitchamJoseph.'

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EVENTS

The events calendar on the website is being constantly updated. If you are organising an event in your area, please let us know so that we can promote the event on the website and Facebook page.

K. Pass out Parades (POP)

The scheduled Pass Out Parades for 2020 are as follows:

809 Oudna	Fri 14 Feb 20
810 Arnhem	Fri 17 Apr 20
811 Normandy	Fri 19 Jun 20
812 Breville	Fri 7 Aug 20
813 Bruneval	Fri 9 Oct 20

The parades take place at Helles Barracks, Catterick. The support that members of the Association give to our recruits is outstanding. Please ensure that you make contact with ITC Catterick CSM at: John.Willis443@mod.gov.uk prior to attending as cancellations do occur, due to non-formation or amalgamation.

L. Diary Dates

The diary is filling up now for 2020. Further event information is available on the website so please take a look: <https://theparachuteregimentalassociation.com/events/>

If you have any dates for 2020 please let me know at the earliest opportunity so that they can be added to the diary. Full details of events should be sent when available and updated accordingly.

6 - 8 Mar 20	2 PARA Reunion	Blackpool	POC: Dave Singletary
	david.singletary@ntlworld.com	Mob: 07940 576977	
12 - 16 Mar 20	1 PARA Reunion	Blackpool	POC: Arthur Mullander
	arthur1para@outlook.com	Mob: 07747 155261	
20 - 22 Mar 20	3 PARA Reunion	Blackpool	
	3parareunionclub.co.uk		
20-26 Mar 20	Ardennes/Rhine Crossing	France, Belgium, Germany	
20 - 23 Mar 20	Ardennes		
23 - 26 Mar 20	Rhine Crossing		
24 Mar 20	Op VARSITY Act of Remembrance	Marks Hall, Earls Colne	

The Service starts at 1050 hrs. Please allow time as it is some distance from the entrance. Lunch/refreshments will be available in the tea room afterwards.

9 May 20	4 PARA Reunion	Leeds
	POC: Les Ratcliffe, 07711 853103 or Dave Macaulay, 07731 824247	
16 May 20	PARAS 10	Colchester
20 Jun 20	PRA Annual General Meeting	National Memorial Arboretum
20 Jun 20	Regimental commemoration	

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Service

National Memorial Arboretum

11 Jul 20

80th Anniversary Commemoration Tatton Park

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

Paul Raison

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