



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 July 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. RHQ News
- B. Support to Vulnerable Members
- C. Airborne Masks
- D. Pilgrim Bandits – PPE for Veterans
- E. Pegasus Journal
- F. Welfare Process
- G. Regimental Charity Donations
- H. Regimental Commemoration – The National Memorial Arboretum
- I. 80th Anniversary of Airborne Forces
- J. Colonel John Waddy OBE – 100th Birthday
- K. Covid-19 Fraud and Scams – **Important Information**
- L. Normandy 76th Anniversary – 6th June 2020
- M. Arnhem 2020 – Outline Brief

Events

- N. Diary Dates

A. RHQ News

RHQ PARA and the Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces Charity (PRAFC) staff continue to work remotely from home due to the restrictions in place. Julia is managing all membership applications and there will be the minimum of delay during this time.

B. Support to Vulnerable Members

The help and assistance to vulnerable members of the Association by Branches continues and has so far been outstanding. Additional support to only a small number of members has been required. Please remember that the Welfare team are here to help so please do not hesitate to get in touch with them if required.

Despite the change of rules in relation to social distancing, all members are advised to apply caution when outside their houses and visiting public places. The wearing of masks on public transport is now mandatory and if you or one of your members require PPE then please see Item D in this newsletter and contact your Regional Secretary.

If you have any veterans within your Branches, that may be vulnerable through age or illness and do not have family that can support them in isolation, help is available.

Government assistance is also available by registering at: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable>

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Register with this service if either:

- you have a medical condition which means you're classed as being clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus
- you've been told by your GP or hospital clinician that you're clinically extremely vulnerable and need to 'shield'

'Shielding' means not leaving your home and minimising contact with other members of your household.

You'll be able to ask for help if you need it - for example, with getting essential supplies or your basic care needs.

You can register yourself, or on behalf of someone else.

All Branches are asked to provide regular contact with those that do not engage in social media and a short phone calls could mean so much.

C. Airborne Masks

Face coverings are now mandatory on public transport. You can now get a variety of 'Airborne' Face Masks and Coverings from the Airborne Shop: <https://www.airborneshop.com/gifts/face-coverings> The photographs below show the masks, which is also available in plain maroon.



If you do not have access to the internet you can call the Airborne Shop on: 0115 819 2173. Quote your PRA membership number to receive a discount.

D. Pilgrim Bandits – PPE for Veterans

As detailed in the June Newsletter, the Pilgrim Bandits Charity announced recently that they were running Operation Maj Gen John Frost CD DSO MC, the event took place on Saturday 30 and Sunday 31 May.

All funds raised would be used to fund lifesaving PPE boxes that will be distributed to selected Parachute Regimental Association Branches, helping the old and vulnerable through this period.

Their mission, inspired by Operation Market Garden, was to cover the distance Major General John Frost CD DSO MC (then CO 2 Para) covered: from boarding his aircraft in the south of England, following his movements during the Battle of Arnhem, through to his eventual release from a POW camp in Germany in 1945.

They looked at completing 642 miles between them in just 24 hours. Each volunteer was aiming to raise £25 each. **The response was amazing and they managed to raise a fantastic £10,541.**

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This has resulted in them being able to supply all 11 Regions with PPE for distribution to their vulnerable members. The packs provided initially will contain 100 masks in packs of 5 and 200 pairs of gloves.

Regional Secretaries are kindly asked to respond to the email sent out by Julia and confirm that you are happy to receive the PPE and distribute it to your members on behalf of the Pilgrim Bandits Charity? If you would prefer this be sent direct to them, you must provide a breakdown of vulnerable veterans in your area as the packages will have to be broken down into very small amounts.

Our thanks to Matt Hellyer (Ex Para) of the Pilgrim Bandits Charity for his continued support.

E. Pegasus Journal

Pegasus Journal remains the leading British Army regimental magazine. However, production and postage costs have increased and writing articles three times a year is time-consuming for busy units at the spearhead of Defence. Production is funded by the Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces Charity (PRAFC), trading as Support Our Paras, and has run at a significant loss for a number of years. This clearly has an impact on potential Welfare and Benevolence needs of our beneficiaries, which the Charity must meet as the priority, especially at a time when COVID-19 has stopped much of our fundraising activity.

After careful consideration, the Regimental Council, in tandem with the Trustees of the Charity, has decided to follow the most common model for Regimental and Corps magazines across the Army and reduce publication to a single Pegasus Journal, distributed annually in the first quarter of each calendar year. This change is effective immediately. The next Pegasus Journal will therefore be the 2020 Yearbook, arriving in the first quarter of 2021. From next year, the annual Yearbook will cost £10.00 for UK subscribers, £15.00 in Europe and £18.00 for the Rest of the World, including delivery. Distribution to members of the Parachute Regiment battalions and Parachute Regiment personnel serving in the wider Army will continue as normal, although over time this will be switch to an online version, rather than hard copy. Pegasus will still find a way onto the important coffee tables across Defence and the Government to ensure that the unique and highly capable forces we man (in 16 Air Assault Brigade and the Special Forces Support Group) are never far from the minds of key decision makers. Those who have paid an advance subscription at the previous rate, and those with a credit balance on their account, are due a refund. Current subscribers should have received a letter or will receive one very soon explaining the refund mechanism and how to set up a new subscription. The new annual Yearbook will have a limited print run. The only way to guarantee your annual hard copy is to contact Lisa Waller, the Pegasus Journal Manager, on 07534 881066 or at lisa@pegasusjournal.org.uk and set up a Standing Order. Single copies will also be available from The Airborne Shop www.airborneshop.com. Finally, an Online digital version of the Journal is available for £7.50 at www.pegasusjournal.org.

Utrunque Paratus!

Major Adam Jowett
Regimental Secretary

F. Welfare Process

For serving personnel please contact your Unit Welfare Officer (UWO) in the first instance for any welfare support.

For veterans please contact the Support our Paras (the official charity of The Parachute Regiment) Welfare Team for any queries.

Laura McPhilemy-Head of Welfare rwo@parawelfare.org 07702 190685 and Sue Laidler-Welfare Cell Manager welfarecell@parawelfare.org 07340 347136

We are based within RHQ PARA in Merville Barracks, Colchester.

Support our Paras can assist any past or present member of The Parachute Regiment or wider Airborne Forces plus their families if eligible.

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If you require financial assistance please contact either SSAFA 0800 731 4880 info@ssafa.org.uk or the RBL 0808 802 8080 info@britishlegion.org.uk in the first instance. You will be allocated a caseworker who will complete a Form A request for assistance with you. This will then be sent to the Support our Paras Welfare Team for consideration. Successful grants are issued swiftly back to the caseworker for onward payment. Urgent grants can be made on the day if required.

This process is both confidential and transparent, providing an audit trail.

During the current climate of COVID-19 the Welfare Team are working remotely and continue to offer assistance.

In June we made grants of £16,020 to 23 recipients. We also sent out over 52 hampers/food parcels and 54 Heinz food packs.

RHQ PRA Team:

Paul Raison (Veterans Officer) secretary@prahq.com

Mobile: 07385 839647

Julia Weymouth (PRA Admin) admin@prahq.com

Tel: 01206817077

Please note: An answerphone service is available on 01206 817077 and messages can be left. However, it may be a few days before they can be picked up.

In all cases, if the query is really urgent please email

G. Regimental Charity Donations

The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces Charity (Support Our Paras) has suspended all charity fundraising events for the foreseeable future. There have been a number of fundraising events organised by individuals and groups to support our charity, which is great news. Your continued support to the Regimental Charities is vital to the direct support of Airborne Veterans now and in the future.

H. Regimental Commemoration – The National Memorial Arboretum

Due to the restrictions in place at the moment, this years' Service of Remembrance at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA) was filmed and broadcast on Facebook.

The service was led by Padre Jerry Sutton and the President of The Parachute Regimental Association, Lt General Sir John Lorimer, attended the service and laid a wreath. Mr John Carey (below right) laid a wreath on behalf of the veterans.



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I. 80th Anniversary of Airborne Forces

On Monday 22nd June, 16 Air Assault Brigade held a service to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the formation of Airborne Forces in Colchester. The memorial took place at the Dakota Gate Guard at Merville Barracks and highlighted the change in Airborne Forces through the years since its inception.

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The service was led by The Reverend Antony Wilson, Chaplain 4th Battalion The Parachute Regiment.



The Reverend Antony Wilson



Paras through the ages

Due to the restrictions in place the service was attended by a small group of serving soldiers and veterans. The Airborne Museum at Duxford provided the uniforms to portray the uniforms and equipment used by those used in 1942 through to the modern day.

The Standard from The East Anglia Branch was on parade and thanks to Micky Davies and Ron Hill for coming along on the day.



The Comd 16 AA Bde



The National Secretary



The Service



Ron Hill – East Anglia Branch

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Airborne Forces through the ages

J. Colonel John Waddy OBE – 100th Birthday

Colonel John Waddy OBE celebrated his 100th birthday on 17 June. Many Happy Returns from all serving and retired members of the Parachute Regiment. Colonel John made the news in both the UK and Netherlands.



Colonel John Waddy OBE



Lt Colonel (Retd) Gerrit Pijpers

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Members of the Parachute Regiment made a surprise visit to Colonel John to wish him many happy returns, the event included a bugler playing 'Happy Birthday', a visit from Pegasus V (the Parachute Regiment's Pony Mascot) and a chance to reminisce about the actual MP 40 machine gun that he liberated from the German Army during the War. He was also presented with a bottle of the Famous Grouse whisky, renamed, 'The Famous Para'.

K. Covid-19 Fraud and Scams

During these difficult times, it's important that you remain vigilant and guard against criminals using the publicity around coronavirus as a chance to target you with fraudulent emails, phone calls, texts messages or social media posts.

It's important not to let the criminals rush or panic you into making a decision that you later come to regret.

With fake news articles on the internet and in the press promoting remedies, cures and false advice around coronavirus, it's also important to only share articles from trustworthy sources. If you are in any doubt, then visit www.gov.uk/coronavirus or www.who.int/ for updates and information.

Criminals are experts at impersonating people, organisations and the police. They spend hours researching you for their scams, hoping you'll let your guard down for just a moment. Stop and think: it could protect you and your money.

General Advice

Emails and text messages

If you receive an email, text or WhatsApp message purporting to be from the government, HMRC, the World Health Organisation (WHO) or a coronavirus-related charity, then **take a moment to think** before you part with your money or information.

Never click on links or download attachments as criminals may infect your devices with malware or ask you to enter your personal or financial information into fake websites. In some cases, this can lead to your identity being stolen.

- Sam received an email from a government department, letting him know that he could claim financial help if he clicked on a link. When Sam clicked the link, he was directed to a fake website designed to look like that of the genuine organisation but which was actually collecting his personal and financial information. Sam failed to receive a payment and was also unaware that his computer was infected with malware as a result of clicking on the link.

Phone calls

If you receive a call offering you protective face masks, hand sanitiser, testing kits or medicine, be aware that they may not always be genuine. If you do receive a call, don't be afraid to **refuse, reject or ignore** their request. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

- Leon thought he was buying face masks and hand sanitisers that were sold out everywhere else. However, after completing his purchase, he failed to receive his order and his money was now in the hands of a criminal.

Social media posts

With world markets currently under immense pressure, the chance to move your money to new investments with unusually high returns may sound like too good an opportunity to miss. Proceed with caution and make sure you check the [Financial Conduct Authority's register for regulated firms](#), individuals and bodies. It could be fraud or a scam if you're being pressurised to act quickly. **If it sounds too good to be true it probably is.**

- Steve saw an advertisement from a stockbroking firm which claimed that due to coronavirus investments weren't making the profits that they could be. It said that moving his investment to this firm would guarantee high returns with little to no risk. Steve moved his investment and only realised he had been scammed when he was unable to contact the company on their normal number or via email in order to get his money back.

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A knock on the door

You should always exercise caution when accepting help from an individual or allowing them access to your home in any capacity. You should only accept assistance or take visits from people well-known to you, or who you know have been sent by a government body or reputable organisation. If you are in any doubt about someone's identity, you should take steps to verify it – by directly contacting the organisation they claim to be from using a number you know to be genuine.

There are no cures or vaccines for Covid-19 at this time and medical or health professionals will not come to your home unannounced and without prior notification.

If anyone attempts to force or coerce you into handing over funds – in person or otherwise – always contact the police.

- Linda was particularly worried about contracting the virus as she was vulnerable and lived alone. She received a knock on her door from someone claiming to be a health and safety worker advising that they needed to enter her home to complete an assessment and that she needed to pay for this upfront. Linda handed over the money, but no assessment was undertaken.

If you believe you've fallen for a scam, contact your bank immediately on a number you know to be correct, such as the one listed on a statement, their website or on the back of your debit or credit card.

L. Arnhem 2020 – Outline Brief

Please note that all events that are being held in Arnhem this year for the 76th Anniversary will be strictly controlled and are by invitation only. This includes:

The Airborne Plein (Arnhem)
Ginkel Heath
Driel
Oosterbeek

There will be no Parachuting at Ginkel Heath on the Saturday as the Exercise to support this will finish on Friday 18 September 20. There will be no stands or stalls.

Access to the Cemetery on Sunday 19 September will be restricted while a short service of Remembrance takes place. There will be no public access at this time.

An important message from the Arnhem Fellowship regarding the Arnhem 76th Commemorations this September - In brief - all Fellowship events have now been cancelled.

"The Committee has been recently discussing the current situation we are all facing no matter what country you are reading this in.

In the Netherlands whilst pubs, restaurants and cafes are open there is a 1.5 metre distance rule and large gatherings are forbidden. Whilst in the UK, as I write this, the country is lifting restrictions there is still a 15-day quarantine period from some countries. The threat of re-imposing restrictions if the coronavirus outbreak takes off again hangs over all of us.

A meeting was held recently by the Airborne Commemoration Foundation at which the Fellowship was represented. The main result from this meeting was advice to the veterans not to travel in September. Additionally, whilst the 'normal' ceremonies such as the bridge on the Friday and the cemetery on the Sunday are planned to go ahead; attendance will be as we understand by invitation only and the public advised not to attend even from a distance. As previously advised there will be a limited ceremony at Ginkel Heath again by invitation only.

We cannot guarantee that even if we made plans to go ahead with some limited Fellowship events that there will not be local or temporary lockdowns or travel bans/restrictions imposed in any European country over the

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coming months.

We believe that these events may be streamed online and will update the website with any links, when we are advised and also via a newsflash.

The Committee have therefore come to the difficult decision to CANCEL all Fellowship arrangements and events for the September commemoration.

However, on a positive note we hope to carry on 'as usual' in September 2021 at the 77th commemoration. The AGM on the Friday morning of the commemoration weekend and it is hoped that Allan Smith will lead a 75th anniversary of the premiere of Theirs is the Glory walk as the Fellowship walk on the Friday afternoon. We plan to support any veterans who are able to attend with the usual marquee at Ginkel Heath on the Saturday.

It is realised this will be disappointing news but given the uncertainty and to enable us to cancel what arrangements we had put in place without financial penalties we felt it best to take the course of action we have at this time.

M. Diary Dates

The list below shows the events **that have yet to be cancelled**. This will be updated on the website on a regular basis. Further event information is available on the website so please take a look:

<https://theparachuteregimentalassociation.com/events/>

All cancelled events have been removed but details will be retained for the 2021 event. Once details of these have been confirmed please let me know.

If you have any dates for 2021 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.

| | | |
|-----------|----------------------|--|
| 13 Sep 20 | Arnhem Service | Somerby |
| 17-20 Sep | Arnhem 76 | Netherlands Restricted events and access |
| 5 Nov 20 | Field of Remembrance | Westminster Abbey |
| 6 Nov 20 | St Lawrence Jewry | London |
| 7 Nov 20 | PARAS10 | Colchester |
| 8 Nov 20 | Remembrance Day | London |

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

Paul Raison

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