



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 November 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. French Airborne Museum Project
- D. Christmas Hampers
- E. Royal British Legion – Remembrance Day CANCELLATION
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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. This will continue for the foreseeable future.

B. Support to Vulnerable Members

As the country goes through a series of changes in regards to levels of protection it is essential that the help and assistance provided to vulnerable members of the Association by Branches continues. So far this support has been outstanding but we must not become complacent.

Any veteran that finds themselves in difficulty should seek the support of their nearest Branch of the Association, who will be able to help or signpost you to the right organisation. Please remember that the Welfare team are here to help so please do not hesitate to get in touch with them if required.

Please follow the rules in your local area and apply caution when outside your house or visiting public places.

The wearing of masks on public transport and shops is now mandatory. The Pilgrim Bandits still have some available so if you or one of your members require PPE then please email Julia on: admin@prahq.com or contact your Regional Secretary.

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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>

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. French Airborne Museum Project-Can you help? Calling all those with official (ie serial- numbered) French PARA wings!

Col Patrick Champenois, ex French Airborne (and with UK PARA wings), is chairing a board of volunteers to completely renew the French Airborne museum at Pau. They have already agreed on a new concept which is comprised of four different parts: the men, parachuting, specific equipment, airborne operations and airborne history.



In addition, they aim to give the visitor a flavour of the Airborne spirit: the idea is to gather and display as many definitions of the *Airborne Spirit* as possible. To achieve this ambitious aim, Patrick is hoping to reach the approximate 700,000 who have qualified as French PARAs and get their views of *The Airborne Spirit* (on a half-page maximum). This should be supported by the author's Name, Wings number (found on the reverse) and rank and unit at the time of the award

Patrick has agreed that for those UK pers who have French wings, but who would prefer not to compose their half page, they could come under the general banner of the stirring paragraph, written by Field Marshal The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, which introduces the Parachute Regiment Charter.

So: Calling all those with official, numbered French PARA wings! Please, send your details as listed above ASAP to pcm.ch.49@gmail.com. If you are also able to give him your thoughts on what makes the *Airborne Spirit*, he would be most grateful. See Pau Museum website for more details: <http://museedesparachutistes.com/>

D. Christmas Hampers 2020

The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces Charity (PRAFC) has once again confirmed the provision of Christmas Hampers this year to the value of £85. They will be distributed to proven ex-Airborne soldiers and their dependents in need. They do not have to be members of the Parachute Regimental Association. The hamper comprises of 60 items delivered in a sturdy cardboard box anywhere in the UK with postage included in the price. In each box is a letter wishing the recipient 'Christmas Greeting from the Chairman, Trustees and staff of the PRAFC. Many of the recipients are widows or widowers living alone and the items have been chosen with the idea that several meals could be made up from the hamper contents.

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Each PRA branch is asked to give us the name of three recipients, however, this is not a hard and fast rule, so as not to exclude anyone in need. Regional Secretaries have the option to nominate an additional three worthy and eligible named recipients. The PRAFC also send hampers to our annuitants and those living in Stoll. In addition, we send cheques for £85 to those living in 'military' residential care on their behalf, for example, Scottish Veterans Homes, Queen Alexandra Hospital Home, Star and Garter Home and Erskine. We also send cheques to those living in non-military homes.

Our Chelsea Pensioners receive a cheque for £25 as this is the stated limit set by The Royal Hospital. However, in order to make up the £85 they also receive a slightly reduced hamper. Attached to this newsletter are the covering letter and the application form, which must be filled in completely regardless of the method of delivery and returned to Mrs Julia Weymouth on: admin@prahq.com or by post to: The Parachute Regimental Association, RHQ PARA, Merville Barracks, Circular Road South, Colchester, CO2 7UT **by Friday 4th December 2019.**

Support Our Paras is raising money to provide these hampers which cost the charity up to £32,000 per year. You can help by clicking on the link and donating: [SOP Hampers](#)

Click on the link to donate. All donations are greatly appreciated.

E. Royal British Legion – Remembrance Day CANCELLATION

We have now received notification from the RBL that the Remembrance Day Parade at the Cenotaph is Cancelled:

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic and in light of the risks posed, whilst the annual Service of Remembrance at The Cenotaph will still take place, neither veteran participation through the March Past nor public spectators will be possible this year. We recognise this will be deeply disappointing for all who were due to take part and it is not a step that has been taken lightly. This decision has been taken by the Government based on expert advice to protect the health and well-being of those who would have been travelling to and participating in the event.

Despite the changes this year, we are encouraging people across the nations to ensure Remembrance Sunday is still marked appropriately by taking part in remote and socially distanced Remembrance activity, whether that be watching the small but significant service at The Cenotaph on BBC One, attending a local Remembrance event or pausing for the Two Minute Silence in their home or on their doorsteps.

Please check local rules and arrangements in your area for Remembrance Day 2020

F. PRA Diaries 2021

Diaries for 2021 have been ordered and produced by the Liverpool Branch and are available now.

The style of the diary is the same as last two years (see 2019 photo) Black with 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.

The delivered price, per diary including postage and packing will be £3.70 with a minimum order to meet this price of 8 diaries. This figure allows the weight to achieve the best postage rate for small orders.

This is a limited batch of only 800 which will work on a "first come – first served" basis.

To order the diaries please send a cheque for the full amount made payable to 'PRA LIVERPOOL' to:

Michael Hurst
9 Jedburgh Drive
Melling Mount

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Liverpool
L33 1EQ
Tel: 0151 547 4776
Email: michaelwhurst@yahoo.co.uk

The following information must be included in your order:

PRA Branch
No of Diaries required
Address for delivery

G. Veterans Railcard

The new veterans Railcard is now available and is valid from 5 November 2020. To apply online click [HERE](#):

To apply:

Online

You can save yourself time by buying your Veterans Railcard online. The only things you'll need are:

- Evidence of your eligibility as a veteran
- A good quality digital passport-style photo ready to upload
- A debit or credit card

What happens next?

Digital Railcard: if you opt for a digital Railcard, they will send you a download code once your application has been approved (which can take up to 5 working days) and once you download the Railcard app and upload the card onto your phone, you can start using it straight away.

Physical Railcard: they aim to dispatch your Railcard within one working day of it being approved (which can take up to 5 working days), but it's probably best to allow up to five working days for your Railcard to arrive. It'll be sent out free of charge by First Class post, but if you prefer, you have the option to pay for Special Delivery. You'll need to have your Railcard with you to be able to get a discount on your rail ticket, so be sure to leave enough time before your journey for the Railcard to reach you.

Cost

1 Year - £21 until March 21, £30 from April 21

3 Year - £61 until March 21, £70 from April 21

By Post

Alternatively, you will be able to download and complete the [application form](#) (copy provided with this newsletter) and you can then post it with a copy of your evidence of eligibility, passport style photo of yourself and your named companion (if applicable) and payment to:

National Railcards
PO Box 10776
Ashby-de-la-Zouch
LE65 9FA

Please make cheques and postal orders payable to 'ATOC Ltd Railcard'

Allow 15 working days* for your Railcard to be delivered.

H. Pegasus Journal Subscriptions

Pegasus Journal has changed. It will now be an Annual Yearbook, starting from the first Quarter of 2021, at a cost of £10. If you wish to subscribe to the Journal, YOU MUST ACT NOW.

You were sent a letter and standing order form with a reference number. To guarantee your copy of the magazine:

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- YOU must send the Standing Order Form to your bank BEFORE 30 January 2021
- Print run will be limited. Unless you subscribe you may miss out
- Some single copies will be available to buy from The Airborne Shop www.airborneshop.com for £10 + extra P&P.

If you have not received a form or would like a new one or any information, please contact Lisa Waller at pjm@supportourparas.org or call 07534 881066.

If you received a refund you have **six months** from the date of the cheque to bank the refund. If you prefer to **donate the refund to Support our Paras** for its vital welfare work, this will be much appreciated. Simply destroy the cheque and let me know at pjm@supportourparas.org..

NB The email address has changed. Any emails to lisa@pegasusjournal.org should still be picked up but we urge you to use the new email address.

I. Wilf Oldham MBE Presentation

Veteran Wilf Oldham was finally presented with his MBE on 5 October 2020, awarded by Her Majesty the Queen in the New Year's Honours list.

After a number of attempts to present the award, Wilf Oldham and the Lord Lieutenant finally met at the Gallipoli Room at the Fusiliers Museum, Bury.

Guests were limited and so Susan Davies (Wilf's Daughter) was joined by the Secretary of the Bolton Branch, Graham Moss and members David Sharkey, Norman Ward and Frank Robinson.

Wilf arrived at the Fusiliers Museum in a limousine and was met by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant Karen Lee.

The museum staff were delighted that Wilf could attend and could not do enough for him and the rest of those present. The presentation then took place in the Gallipoli Room and was a day to remember for all. After the presentation Wilf Oldham MBE, could not stop saying thank you to all those that were there. When asked to be interviewed by the TV crew, the first thing he did was to put his maroon beret on.

This was followed by a small reception and a quick tour of the museum.

Several members of the public stood at the door and outside the museum, unable to attend due to restrictions.



Wilf with his daughter Susan after the presentation



Wilf salutes the Queen

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Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Manchester Karen Lee presents the MBE to Veteran Wilf Oldham

J. 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 or 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.

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.

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In October the PRAFC made 17 grants of £9471.50. Grants that have been made include the following: MHT, EPV, White Goods, rent and arrears.

RHQ PRA Team:

Paul Raison (Veterans Officer) secretary@prahq.com

Mobile: 07393 393811

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

K. 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.

L. Annual Charity Registration – COBSEO

It is a Branch requirement to register on an annual basis with the Charity Commission. We have recently done some work with The Confederation of Service Charities (COBSEO) in regards to providing Affiliate Membership to all Branches. One of the main requirements for this funding is that our Branches keep up to date with their annual reporting.

There are a number of Branches that have not supplied their annual reports to the Charity Commission and should do so at the earliest opportunity. This is a fairly straight forward process and can be completed online.

COBSEO Overview

Cobseo represents the whole Serving and Veterans Community – Some 6 million people and their dependants. Membership of Cobseo is open to Charities who promote and further the welfare and general interests of the Armed Forces Community, subject to fulfilling our membership criteria. For more information:

<https://www.cobseo.org.uk/about-us/>

Member benefits

- Develop policies for dealing with issues of common concern, particularly welfare
- Facilitate direct access to individual member charities, with appropriate expertise, in order to lead on our membership's behalf to present policies to government or equivalent
- The Chairman of Cobseo and members of the Executive Committee sit on various Government groups and committees to ensure the Armed Forces Community voice is heard and account is taken of their particular needs and concerns
- Regular communication from the Cobseo Office reviewing the activities of the Confederation, setting out subjects of interest and drawing members attention to key issues of the moment.
- Provide a Cobseo website in which there is a members' area that provides information and topics of interest and to which members are encouraged to contribute
- Training events, including Trustee Training
- Networking Opportunities

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- Cobseo Annual General Meeting – The AGM is an opportunity for the Cobseo Chairman to report on the past activities of the Confederation and to bring the members up to date on issues of common concern. It is also an opportunity for the membership to have direct access to the Executive, Government Ministers and Officials and to discuss issues they may have. A keynote speaker is often invited to address the meeting.
- Central Cobseo office that will try and answer any query or question you may have

M. PRA Account Annual Audit Report

Please find attached to this newsletter a copy of the 2019 Report & Accounts. All these documents are available online on the PRA website and can be accessed by clicking on the link: [PRA Accounts 2019](#)

You are reminded that the financial year runs January to December. The independent examination was undertaken by Bright Brown Ltd in Mid-March prior to the 'Lockdown' in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice, Financial Reporting Standard 102 which the Executive Committee agreed to use at their October 2015 meeting.

The accounts were presented to the Executive Committee Meeting held on Monday 28 September 2020.

The presentation was required as approval is sought from the Executive Committee at the AGM 2020 due to the April 2020 Executive Committee meeting being cancelled.

N. Diary Dates

The list below shows the events **that have yet to be cancelled or have had their details amended**. 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.

5 Nov 20	Field of Remembrance	Westminster Abbey	No public access permitted
6 Nov 20	St Lawrence Jewry	London	No access. Filmed Service Only
7 Nov 20	PARAS10	Colchester	Virtual Event Only
8 Nov 20	Remembrance Day	London	No Regimental or public attendance

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

Paul Raison

Attachments:

Christmas Hamper Letter
 Christmas Hamper Proforma
 Veterans Railcard Application
 PRA Annual Accounts

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