



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 December 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 25<sup>th</sup> of each month to the Secretary at [secretary@prahq.com](mailto:secretary@prahq.com)

### Topics:

- A. RHQ Christmas Message
- B. Support to Vulnerable Members
- C. Christmas Hampers
- D. PRA Diaries 2021
- E. Pegasus Journal Subscriptions
- F. Pegasus Journal Articles – Notice from the Editor
- G. Welfare Process
- H. RHQ PRA – Christmas Break
- I. Regimental Charity Donation
- J. Charity Registration – COBSEO
- K. Support to Funerals

### Events

- L. Diary Dates

### A. RHQ Christmas Message

This has been a very difficult year for many and we continue to live in a very unusual time. We have all lost friends, family and colleagues since the start of the COVID pandemic and we continue to live with the restrictions that are imposed upon us. The Branches of the Association have coped admirably with these conditions and I commend you all for caring for those less fortunate and able as yourselves. There have been some great initiatives put into place by various groups to cope with the present situation, which will continue for the foreseeable future. Well done to all those that are involved in whatever form, your support to the vulnerable and elderly is greatly appreciated.

Many commemorations were cancelled this year, starting with the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ardennes and Rhine Crossing in March. It followed that both Normandy and Arnhem would be reduced to a very small and local scale. The Association has been involved at a local level, up and down the Country as well as abroad, which has been heart-warming. Branches have organised and delivered events in line with the COVID restrictions in their area, in order to preserve the memory of past 'Airborne' Operations.

There has been some good news this year. We have a number of Branches that have been revitalised through additional support from our veterans. New Branches continue to be formed and I am very pleased to announce that there will be a new Branch forming in Scotland in the New Year. The Grampian Branch of The Parachute Regimental Association will cover Aberdeen and the wider area. Welcome to all their members. The Association continues to go from strength to strength.

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 214015

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Moving into the New Year, we have a difficult time ahead. The new vaccine will eventually come but things will take some time to get back to normal. We are still planning a number of key events, starting with the Ardennes and Rhine Crossing, Normandy 76, Regimental Day at the National Memorial Arboretum, Tatton Park 80<sup>th</sup>, Presentation of Colours and Arnhem 76. If you are planning or involved in organising any events for 2021 please pass the details to the Secretary at the earliest opportunity so that they can be placed on the events list on the website.

RHQ PRA 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.

On behalf of Julia and myself, I would like to wish all our members and their families a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

## **B. Support to Vulnerable Members**

As we come out of Lockdown 2 and the country goes through a series of changes in regards to levels of protection in certain areas, 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 and thank you to all that have helped in any way.

Please remember that the Welfare team are here to help so please do not hesitate to get in touch with them if required on:

Laura McPhilemy, Head of Welfare. Email: [HoW@supportourparas.org](mailto:HoW@supportourparas.org) Tel: 07702 190685

or

Lisa Stapleton, Welfare Cell Manager. Email: [wm@supportourparas.org](mailto:wm@supportourparas.org) Tel: 07340 347136

Please follow the rules in your local area and apply caution when outside your house or visiting public places. If you are in any doubt, please stay at home.

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

## **C. Christmas Hampers 2020 – Last Call**

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.

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 the spouses of our veterans 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](mailto: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.**

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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](#) Thank you very much to all the Branches that have donated to this fund already. Your support to the PRAFC and the veterans and their families that receive the hampers is greatly appreciated by all.

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

#### D. 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  
Liverpool  
L33 1EQ  
Tel: 0151 547 4776  
Email: [michaelwhurst@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:michaelwhurst@yahoo.co.uk)

The following information must be included in your order:

PRA Branch  
No of Diaries required  
Address for delivery

#### E. 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:

- 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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:pjm@supportourparas.org).

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

#### **F Pegasus Journal Articles – Notice from the Editor**

The Pegasus Journal is looking for short articles and photos of activity in the regions during 2020 to include in the Pegasus Journal - Publishing in Feb 2021. While COVID has had an impact on events, there may be events and stories that are worthy of inclusion in this, the first edition of the new journal.

If you have anything to contribute, for instance, 120 words and a few photos from your phone or camera, (please add a caption to explain the photos) then I would very much like to see them.

If I could have your submissions by the end of the first week in December, then it will stand a good chance of being published in this annual journal of the Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces.

Any questions, please drop me a line to: [armypictureeditor@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:armypictureeditor@yahoo.co.uk)

Kind regards and thanks, (working from home)

Richard Watt

SO2 Communications | RHQ Parachute Regiment | Merville Barracks | Colchester | CO2 7UT | Tel. 07836 515306

#### **G. 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. Email: [HoW@supportourparas.org](mailto:HoW@supportourparas.org) Tel: 07702 190685

or

Lisa Stapleton, Welfare Cell Manager. Email: [wm@supportourparas.org](mailto:wm@supportourparas.org) Tel: 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](mailto:info@ssafa.org.uk) or the RBL 0808 802 8080 [info@britishlegion.org.uk](mailto: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 November the PRAFC made 20 grants of £11027.68. Grants that have been made include the following: hardship, mobility, funerals, employment & training and mental health support

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## **H. RHQ PRA – Christmas Break**

The RHQ PRA team will take a break at various times over the Christmas period starting on Friday 18 December 20. Messages will continue to be read throughout Christmas and New Year but they will only be answered if urgent. In emergency, please use the mobile number below

Paul Raison (Veterans Officer) [secretary@prahq.com](mailto:secretary@prahq.com)

Mobile: 07393 393811

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

## **I. 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 great 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 and their families, now and in the future.

## **J. COBSEO Charity Survey**

The Parachute Regimental Association recently completed the COBSEO Charity Survey, which assesses the way in which any charity operates. This was completed as a condition of the Branches joining as Associate members.

I am pleased to say that the feedback from COBSEO has been very positive. This was there summary comment:

*'The additional clarification in the comments boxes is very helpful, and the return as a whole represents an organisation whose governance is in good shape'.*

## **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/>

## **K. Support to Funerals**

During this difficult period, we have lost a number of veterans, many of whom are well known and respected members of our Association. In addition to this we have also been made aware of a large number of veterans who were not actively involved in the Association or were not even members.

In all cases and despite the restrictions in place, the Association has provided representation in some form at all the funerals that we have been notified of. I cannot express how grateful the families are of this support and we have received countless letters and emails, thanking the members for their support at such difficult times.

Often with very little notice the Branch Secretaries have mustered a small number of members and represented the Regimental Association. I would personally like to thank everyone who has helped support such events.

## **Events**

### **L. Diary Dates**

Event information for 2021 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 us have them so that we can update the events list.

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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.

Details of all these events and others are available on the Web Page at  
[www.theparachuteregimentalassociation.com](http://www.theparachuteregimentalassociation.com)

*Paul Raison*

#### **Attachments:**

Christmas Hamper Letter  
Christmas Hamper Proforma  
Veterans Railcard Application

#### **Attached Notes:**

1. Veterans Railcard
2. PRA Diaries

#### **1. 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

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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.

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Michael Hurst  
9 Jedburgh Drive  
Melling Mount  
Liverpool  
L33 1EQ  
Tel: 0151 547 4776  
Email: [michaelwhurst@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:michaelwhurst@yahoo.co.uk)

The following information must be included in your order:

PRA Branch  
No of Diaries required  
Address for delivery



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