



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 March 2021

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. Delivery of the COVID-19 Vaccine
- B. WW2 Veteran Register
- C. Veteran Support to Funerals
- D. Support to Vulnerable Members
- E. Affiliation Fees 2021
- F. CENSUS 2021
- G. Winter Fuel Payment
- H. Welfare Process
- I. Regimental Charity Donation
- J. A Virtual Ball in memory of Pte Conrad Lewis and for Support our PARAs
- K. 4 Para Commanding Officers and Regimental Sergeant Majors
- L. Northern Ireland Historical Enquiries Update

### Events

- M. 4 PARA Reunion
- N. Diary Dates

### A. Delivery of the COVID-19 Vaccine

The NHS is currently offering the COVID-19 vaccine to people most at risk from coronavirus.

In England, the vaccine is being offered in some hospitals and pharmacies, at local vaccination centres run by GPs and at larger vaccination centres. More centres are opening all the time.

It's being given to:

- people aged 64 and over
- people who are at [high risk from coronavirus](#) (clinically extremely vulnerable)
- people who are at moderate risk from coronavirus (clinically vulnerable)
- people who live or work in care homes
- health and social care workers
- people who get Carer's Allowance – [find out more about Carer's Allowance on GOV.UK](#)

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The order in which people will be offered the vaccine is based on advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI).

[Read the latest JCVI advice on priority groups for the COVID-19 vaccination on GOV.UK](#)

**If you are in one of the earlier categories or at risk, would like to have the vaccine and have not received an appointment, please contact your doctor.**

#### **B. WW2 Veteran Register**

RHQ Para along with a number of other Veteran organisations are working together to ensure that we have all WW2 Airborne Veterans details. We would like all Branches and individuals to notify us of any WW2 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division Veterans in their area.

This will ensure that we have an accurate record of their service and contact details.

Please register by emailing Lisa at: [pjm@supportourparas.org](mailto:pjm@supportourparas.org)

Please have the following information if possible:

Full Name

Service Number

Unit Served

Operations (Normandy, Arnhem, Ardennes, Rhine Crossing, Mote Casino etc.)

Your support in this project would be greatly appreciated

#### **C. Veteran 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. We will continue to do what we can and give any Airborne Veteran the send-off that they deserve.

**I would like to add that in all such cases the safety and health of our members is paramount and no one should attend if the rules do not allow it or they are concerned about their own safety.**

#### **D. Support to Vulnerable Members**

With the UK's vaccine programme in full swing and as we start on the Prime Ministers Roadmap, 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.

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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.

#### **E. Affiliation Fees 2021**

Thank you to all those that have forwarded their affiliation fees to Julia for 2021. Branches that may be having some difficulty raising this sum are requested to make representation to their Regional Secretary. The annual Affiliation Fee remains at £50. This is despite the rising cost of replacing Branch Standards. A full review was completed last year and we now have substantially better cover than in previous years.

Payment can be made by cheque payable to: The Parachute Regimental Association or by BACS transfer to: Sort Code 16-19- 26, Acct No 19954846. Please ensure you use your Branch name as a payment reference so that we can track payments.

#### **Affiliation - A Reminder of the Benefits**

1. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) permission to use the Regimental Logo on Branch Standards and letterheads.
2. Full Public Liability Insurance and Branch Standard Insurance (new certificate issued in Apr 21).
3. Access to Regimental support for organised functions, i.e. The Band, RDFFT, Pony Mascot, associated Regimental assets (subject to availability).
4. Support from the National Executive Committee and RHQ PRA on constitutional and branch management and membership matters.
5. The ability to fundraise in support of the Branch, its members and branch activities.
6. Receive Monthly Branch Newsletters and other correspondence.

It is requested that all Affiliation Fees are paid NLT 31 March 2021.

#### **F. CENSUS 2021**

The National Census will take place shortly and they are looking to identify veterans who have served in the Regular and TA/Reserve Forces.

For Census 2021, the recommended question on armed forces community (veterans) are:  
Have you previously served in the UK Armed Forces?

Current serving members should only tick 'No'

Yes, previously served in Regular Armed Forces  
Yes, previously served in Reserve Armed Forces

Or No

The armed forces community (veterans) question will be asked to all respondents aged 16 years and over.

#### **G. Winter Fuel Payment**

Winter Fuel Payment is an annual tax-free payment to help with heating costs. Most payments are made between November and December and should have been received by 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

In the financial year April 2020 to March 2021 the payment is:

£200 if you're under 80  
£300 if you're over 80.

However, you'll usually get less if you live with other people who also qualify or if you live in a care home or nursing home and don't get one of the following benefits:

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- Pension Credit
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support.
- If you live in a care home or nursing home and receive any of these benefits then you're not entitled to any Winter Fuel Payment.

You may be eligible for Winter Fuel Payment if you meet all the following criteria:

- you were born on or before 5 October 1954 (to be eligible for the financial year April 2020 to March 2021 – the eligibility birth date changes every financial year).
- you lived in the UK throughout the qualifying week (for the financial year 2020–2021, this is 21–28 September 2020)

You usually get a Winter Fuel Payment automatically if you receive the State Pension or another benefit, such as Pension Credit (but not Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support or Universal Credit). If you qualify, but don't get paid automatically, you'll need to make a claim.

### **How can I claim Winter Fuel Payment?**

If this is the first year you can claim, or if you've never claimed before, call the Winter Fuel Payment helpline on 0800 731 0160. You'll need to know your National Insurance number and your bank or building society details.

### **Useful Numbers**

The Silver Line is the only free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people, open 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Need help? Call us ANYTIME on: 0800 4 70 80 90

### **H. 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: 01206 817103

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.

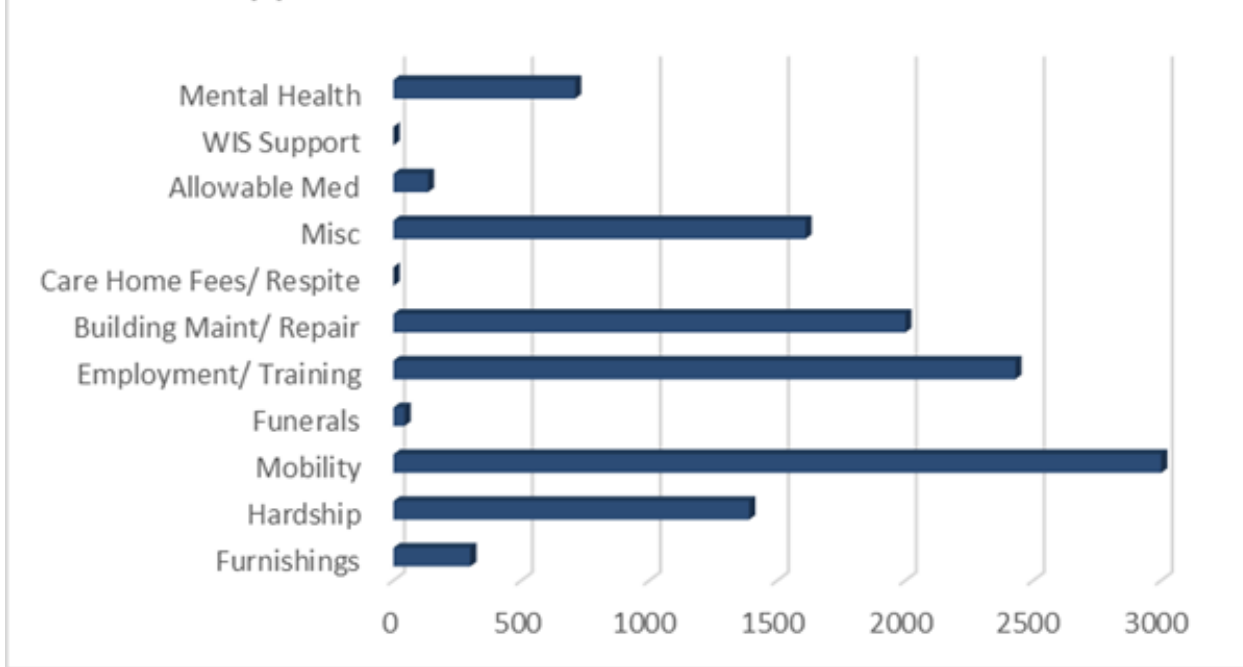
**In February Support Our Paras had 35 cases and issued grants totalling £11617.92.** With assistance toward mobility, employment and training and building maintenance and repair the top 3 categories for support during this month. The graph below shows the breakdown of spend across categories

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## Support Our Paras Welfare Grants Feb 2021



### 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. Broughton House Veteran Care Village

A message from the Chairman and Board Members at Broughton House.

We write as the Senior Naval and Senior Military officers for the North West of England but also as Chairman and Board members of Broughton House Veteran Care Village in Salford. As you will be well aware the COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on the residential and care home communities across the country and that this has been mirrored in the wider North West, in Greater Manchester and in Broughton House. Because of this impact and as a consequence of our new build we currently have some spare capacity (15 brand new rooms) and we would wish to seek your assistance in filling that spare capacity.

In short, we would be very pleased if you, as an AF Champion along with your team, could advertise our spare capacity and our 'for veterans' ethos with your colleagues in your authority and your local area such that suitable veterans are pointed in our direction. Whilst this is an offer for now, we'd also be grateful if you could likewise advertise Broughton House further as we look for '32' new residents (taking us to 64 overall) once the new wing is complete in early 2022. Please do feel free to share links to the attached brochure and video clip to enable your discussions. The link to the video can be found here [Broughton House](#) and the brochure is attached.

*Phil Waterhouse*

Commodore Phil Waterhouse ADC RN  
Naval Regional Commander  
Chairman of Broughton House

*Russ Miller*

Col R A Miller OBE  
Commander North West Region  
Trustee of Broughton House

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## **K. 4 Para Commanding Officers and Regimental Sergeant Majors**

**CAN YOU HELP?** WO1 (RSM) Scotty Evans the current RSM of 4 PARA is looking for serving and former members to assist with several projects he is working on. Scotty was a 'Tom' in 4 PARA at Rifle Street, Oldham 1996 - 1999.

He would like you to look through old photos from your days in 4 PARA to see if anyone has any photos of previous CO's and RSM's from when the Bn was reformed in 1967, through the 70's,80's and 90's. This will enable a framed pictorial history of COs and RSMs, which will be displayed in Bn HQ.

Photos can be sent direct to him by email to: [Scott.Evans188@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Scott.Evans188@mod.gov.uk)

Your support would be greatly appreciated

## **L. Northern Ireland Historical Enquiries Update**

### **NI Courts.**

The Northern Ireland court system has been further restricted by the imposition of the most recent 'lockdown' over the New Year period. Further delays to court proceedings are inevitable as all agencies involved return to 'working from home' limiting case preparation and delaying the start of legal proceedings. Only one Inquest has been completed since March 2020 and this was conducted at distance using Sight Link. This video platform enabled veterans to give their evidence securely on-line from their homes or an agreed safe location. It is planned to use this more widely until such time as restrictions are lifted, but lack of resources remains a limiting factor. Coroners are reflecting the reality of the situation with a recently delayed inquest being moved into the autumn when there is a greater likelihood of restrictions easing. It is possible that more cases will be delayed until later in the year.

### **Inquests.**

Ballymurphy Inquest (PARA, QUEENS). This legacy inquest was completed in March 20 and adjourned pending the handing down of the Coroner's findings. These are still pending with no time scale for a hearing yet given.

### **Criminal Cases**

Soldiers A&C (PARA). The Judge has adjourned the trial due to commence in January 2021. A revised timetable will now see the trial listed to start on 26 April 2021, however this has not yet been confirmed. A review will take place 12 Feb 21

### **Bloody Sunday (PARA).**

Soldier F is the only soldier to be charged with relation to events on 'Bloody Sunday'. He has been charged with 2 counts of murder and 5 counts of attempted murder. A date for his committal hearing has yet to be set. The PPS is still considering whether to bring charges of attempting to pervert the course of justice against veterans involved in the Saville Inquiry. A decision is pending. Madden and Finucane, solicitors representing some of the NOK, have submitted a Judicial Review against the decision not to prosecute against the five cyphered veterans involved in their clients' cases. This is to be expected and is their legal right.



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## Contact details

If you have been affected by the current NI investigations or you know someone who is, please contact Lt Col (Retd) Paul Rodgers NI Legacy Officer, currently working from home, and can be contacted on Skype 03001657109, Mobile 07967492254 or email: [paul.rodgers694@mod.gov.uk](mailto:paul.rodgers694@mod.gov.uk)

## Events

### M. 4 Para Reunion

In the best interests of their members and health and safety, it has been decided to cancel the 2021 annual meeting in Leeds in May.

This is sadly the second year in a row that they have cancelled the meeting due to COVID, however, it is believed that it is in the best interest to wait until 2022.

### N. Diary Dates

Event information for 2021 is available on the website so please take a look:

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

**It is likely that despite the plan to lift restrictions, many events will be cancelled this year.**

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.

24 March 21	Ardennes/Rhine Crossing	Online Virtual Service of Remembrance
26 June 21	Armed Forces Day	<a href="https://www.armedforcesday.org.uk/blog/">https://www.armedforcesday.org.uk/blog/</a>

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

*Paul Raison*

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