



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 May 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. Return to Normality
- B. WW2 Veteran Register
- C. Veteran Support to Funerals
- D. Affiliation Fees 2021
- E. Insurance Renewal
- F. Farewill – Free Will Writing Service for Members
- G. Welfare Process
- H. Regimental Charity Donation
- I. Northern Ireland Historical Enquiries Update
- J. Para Café – Bolton
- K. Guards Para Association Memorial

### Events

- L. 4 PARA Reunion
- M. Diary Dates

### A. Return to Normality

As the success of the vaccination programme in the UK continues, we are all looking forward to returning to some form of normality. The Prime Ministers 'Road Map' is on target and we are gradually able to meet up with family and friends. Branch meetings will shortly begin again on a regular basis and we are hopeful that commemorations will be permitted in greater numbers.

In the meantime, I encourage you all to take one step at a time and abide by the rules as they ease slowly but surely.

### 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 Julia: [admin@prahq.com](mailto:admin@prahq.com)

Please have the following information if possible:

Full Name

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 214015

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Service Number  
Unit Served  
Operations (Normandy, Arnhem, Ardennes, Rhine Crossing, Mote Casino etc.)

This project will continue with other Operations being collated. This will include Palestine, Malaya, Suez, NI, Falkland, Sierra Leone, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. 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. 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, RDIFFT, 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.

### **E. Insurance Renewal**

The annual insurance policy is being renewed this month. All Branches are reminded that they require this insurance to carry out any collection or small event in their area. Supermarkets and stations will insist on you providing the Third Party insurance document prior to any collections taking place.

**The certificate of insurance will not be issued to any Branch that has not paid the Affiliation Fee for 2021.**

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## **F. Farewill – Free Will Writing Service for Members**

Are you Ready for Anything? Have you prepared your Will?

As many as one in five people in the UK die without making a Will; many mistakenly think they do not own enough property or cash to need one. But making a Will is the only way to ensure that whatever you own is distributed according to your wishes.

You may already have a Will in place through a solicitor. If you don't, then SUPPORT OUR PARAS has a special offer for members of The Parachute Regimental Association: the opportunity to create a Will for FREE.

We have partnered with Farewill, the UK's largest Will-writing firm and National Will Writing Firm of the Year 2019 and 2020. They offer a simple online service where you can write your Will in under 30 minutes. When complete, you will be sent a hard copy for signing and witnessing in the usual way. Simply visit [www.farewill.com/prs](http://www.farewill.com/prs) to get started. Alternatively, you can book an appointment to do it over the phone with an advisor at <https://farewill.com/paras-phone>

If you need any help during the process, Farewill's specialist team of paralegals are available over the phone or live chat 7 days a week, 9am-7pm.

As a member of the Airborne brotherhood, we hope you share our vision of supporting our Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces family. Whether they are just coming to battalion, have been on multiple tours, or left service many years ago, we are here for our soldiers, veterans, widows and families in need or distress. There is no obligation to leave a gift to our charity in your Will. However, if you can, your bequest will have a major impact on the lives of others.

The Trustees of the Charity have examined the Farewill service and recommend it. For more information, please visit [www.supportourparas.org/legacies](http://www.supportourparas.org/legacies)

## **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: 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.

In April Support Our Paras had 21 cases and issued grants (to date) of £9515. The highest category this month was for Employment/Training support, ongoing support to Afghan Veteran with transport to physio sessions, household goods, mental health support and help with rent deposit and hardship.

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## **H. Regimental Charity Donations**

The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces Charity (Support Our Paras) is slowly returning to normal and a number of fundraising events are now planned. There have been a number of great fundraising events organised by individuals and groups to support our charity, which is outstanding. Your continued support to the Regimental Charities is vital to the direct support of Airborne Veterans and their families, now and in the future.

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

**Support to Soldiers A & C in the McCann Case.** The trial of Soldiers A & C started on 26 April 21 at Laganside Court, Belfast and will last 4-6 weeks. This is the first NI legacy criminal case to come to a full trial. The case concerns the death of Joe McCann, who was shot dead in Belfast on 15 April 1972.

The RUC decided not to prosecute at the time, but after a review of the case by the Historical Enquiries Team (HET) in 2013, the decision was reviewed. In 2014 the Attorney-General for NI referred the case to the PPS for consideration of a prosecution. A decision to prosecute was taken in December 2016 and a charge of murder was brought to be heard in a Crown Court in 2018.

Legal support is funded by the MoD and A&C will be represented in court by a highly regarded legal team led by two prominent QCs. The case will be heard by Mr Justice O'Hara sitting without a jury. At a preliminary hearing on 19 April 21, Mr Justice O'Hara directed that anonymity would be extended for A & C during the trial but, in the interests of transparency, they would not be screened whilst in court.

COVID restrictions have prevented attendance in court by a regimental representative, attendance is limited to legal teams and court administrators. RHQ will attend virtually via sightlink, a confidential court video platform. 38X will provide 'real life' support (accommodation, transport and security). They have also kindly agreed to provide pastoral and welfare support during the trial on behalf of the Regiment.

We would like to express our gratitude to all our veterans, who worked so hard on Operation BANNER to restore and maintain law and order with great courage and professionalism in very difficult circumstances. We would like to reaffirm our commitment to provide support to all veterans involved in the NI legacy process.

Court proceedings can be extremely stressful. If you, or anyone that you know are suffering as the result of the legacy process, please don't hesitate to get in touch with the RHQ Legacy Officer, email [paul.rodgers694@mod.gov.uk](mailto:paul.rodgers694@mod.gov.uk) or with the Regimental Welfare Officer, Laura McPhilemy who can be contacted at [how@supportourparas.org](mailto:how@supportourparas.org) or on 07702190685.

## **J. Para Café - Bolton**

In January we reported that the Para Café in Bolton had commissioned artist Kazer to paint a huge mural depicting a scene at Arnhem in 1944.

The new commemoration wall at the Para Café is now complete and was officially unveiled by the Lady Mayor, Linda Thomas and her husband Len, Wilf Oldham MBE and Christian Wakeford MP for Bury South. Also present were several members of Bolton PRA.

The new mural includes Laurens granddad, Albert Campbell, who fought in the battle of Arnhem and featured in the film 'A Bridge Too Far'. It was established by Lauren in memory of, and tribute to, her granddad.

The owners of the café, Lauren and Danny, are great supporters of the Bolton branch and have raised nearly £800 towards supporting veterans in Bolton.

The breakfast club at the café is held every Saturday morning from 10:00 till late. Despite the title, a number of beers are also on tap, which attracts a good few of the members. Since opening, the café has now linked up with the RAF Association to hold meetings and hold joint events with the Bolton Branch.

This transition from the original outline to the final version is amazing.

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From This



To This

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Arnhem Veteran Wilf Oldham, Border Regiment



Wilf Oldham signing the mural at the Para Café

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## K. Guards Para Association Memorial

Work continues on the Guards Para Association (GPA) Memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA). GPA Chairman Jim Heycock, was at the NMA in Stafford on the 22 April 21 to recce and see the Installation of the GPA memorial Plinth. This is the base for the 'Guardisman of the Sky Statue' reported last month. The unveiling and service of dedication and Commemoration has yet to be decided and more details will be available later.

The actual statue was installed by the construction team on Monday 26th of April 2021 and hopefully we will see some photographs of that in next months' newsletter.



The Plinth Proudly in place at the NMA



Septem Juncta in Uno (*Seven Joined in One*)

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## Events

### L. 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.

### M. 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.

26 June 21 Armed Forces Day <https://www.armedforcesday.org.uk/blog/>

12 Sep 21 Somerby, Operation Market Garden Parade and Service Sunday  
For more details, please contact [derekpeters@ntlworld.com](mailto:derekpeters@ntlworld.com)

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

*Paul Raison*

The first two attachments are Pegasus Journal articles that were late or omitted in error by the Editor of the Pegasus Journal Yearbook 2020.

Attachments:

1. West Berks Branch
2. Aldershot Branch
3. Airborne Riders – Ride of Respect

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