



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 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 25th of each month to the Secretary at secretary@prahq.com

Topics:

- A. The Parachute Regimental Association Gala Dinner
- B. Farewell – Free Will Writing Service for Members
- C. Regimental Charity Donation
- D. 9 Para Memorial, Walbury Hill
- E. WW2 Veteran Register
- F. Hertford and District New Branch Standard
- G. Welfare Process
- H. Chelmsford Branch Armed Forces Day 2021
- I. Guards Para RHC Pensioners

Events

- J. Coventry/Northampton Branch Summer Event
- K. Diary Dates

A. The Parachute Regimental Association Gala Dinner

The PRA will hold a dinner over the weekend 15-17th October 2021. This will be held at The Royal Court Hotel Coventry, CV6 2EJ. The event is open to all Branches of the Association and will provide a great opportunity to get together with family and friends after a long period of not being able to do so.

There are one, two and three night packages available to those attending.

Friday: 15 Oct Single Occupancy Dinner, B&B. £70, double/twin occupancy £95

Saturday: 16 Oct Single Occupancy B&B £55, double/twin occupancy £70

Sunday: 17 Oct Single Occupancy Dinner, B&B £50 double/twin occupancy £60

You can book your accommodation from the 14th July 2021. If your plans change and you need to cancel, you can do so up to forty-eight hours before the event. The cost of the dinner is £35 per person and includes a three course meal with wine and entertainment.

Full details are available in the attached document, which has also been sent direct to Branch Secretary's.

The point of contact for this event is John Carey.

Tel: 07766724934.

Email: Jmc9365@msn.com

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 214015

RHQ Disclaimer.

The Office of the Secretary of The Parachute Regimental Association is required to publish a disclaimer concerning any article or idea passed to branches by way of this letter. This letter provides a conduit between the branches to allow ideas, articles and topics to be viewed and discussed by the branches. Although these ideas, articles and topics appear in this newsletter it does not necessarily reflect the view of this office.

B. 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 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

C. 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.

D. 9 Para Memorial, Walbury Hill

I write further to the piece in the June 2021 PRA Newsletter about the memorial on Walbury Hill, overlooking the spot where 9 Bn trained in great secrecy for the Merville Operation. It was happened upon on a walk by Major Huxford and his wife, who with great thought and kindness returned and spruced up the weathered stone with a pressure washer. The location is isolated so this would have been no mean feat.

It was very topical to West Berks PRA because we commissioned some extra work on it (a third plaque) almost two years ago. However, because of the dreaded Covid, this was only completed by the mason during the last couple of weeks. The memorial was established by West Berks PRA in the 1990s. Some 20 years later we came to realise that an intended third plaque, acknowledging our role, had been overlooked. (I guess it doesn't do to rush these things). Stone masons do not appear to come cheap and the quote for this third small plaque was £450. Our treasurer invariably experiences a sense of humour failure on receiving quotations of any size for anything. But when this was discussed at a monthly meeting, a very generous personal donation of £300 from our member Albert Borrett, an ex 3 Para Pte soldier, moved things on. (As an acknowledgement of Albert's generosity, I undertook not to tell his wife that he had started smoking again).

The memorial is sited in an agricultural field but close enough to a footpath enabling walkers to see what it is and read the plaques. But the landowner authority for its erection was granted on the firm understanding that there would be no services attracting crowds. We have always been respectful of this caveat. Our annual Normandy commemorations are at Harwell Stone where thousands of British and US airborne took off on June 6th. Our late Branch president, Frank Barnes was one of them. His Albemarle aircraft broke down whilst taxiing

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 214015

RHQ Disclaimer.

The Office of the Secretary of The Parachute Regimental Association is required to publish a disclaimer concerning any article or idea passed to branches by way of this letter. This letter provides a conduit between the branches to allow ideas, articles and topics to be viewed and discussed by the branches. Although these ideas, articles and topics appear in this newsletter it does not necessarily reflect the view of this office.

so all hurriedly disembarked and ran down the long line of aircraft awaiting take-off, and squeezed on wherever there was a space. Not a practice which would currently find favour at Heathrow or Gatwick, I suspect.

We are privileged to have an honorary member, Allan Mercado, who has become a veritable expert on the Merville operation through considerable research. (Allan is ex-RAF, but alright apart from that). His interest was triggered when, as a press photographer, he was sent out to Merville to take 50th anniversary photos. He realised a local connection on coming across a reference to Kintbury in one of the bunkers. This set the memorial idea off.

You might think this unlikely and apocryphal, but I am assured it to be true. When producers were discussing making a film about an airborne role in WW2, they could not agree on whether to feature Arnhem or Merville. It is said that the discussions deadlock was finally resolved by the toss of a coin at Claridge's Hotel in London.

Malcolm Rowlands
Secretary, West Berks PRA



E. 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 1st and 6th 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

Please have the following information if possible:

Full Name

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 214015

RHQ Disclaimer.

The Office of the Secretary of The Parachute Regimental Association is required to publish a disclaimer concerning any article or idea passed to branches by way of this letter. This letter provides a conduit between the branches to allow ideas, articles and topics to be viewed and discussed by the branches. Although these ideas, articles and topics appear in this newsletter it does not necessarily reflect the view of this office.

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

F. Hertford and District New Branch Standard

The Secretary of the Hertford and District Branch, Eric Burrige has very kindly sent us a photograph of their new Branch Standard. I think you will all agree it looks fantastic.



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 Tel: 07702 190685 or

Lisa Stapleton, Welfare Cell Manager. Email: wm@supportourparas.org Tel: 01206 817103

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

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 214015

RHQ Disclaimer.

The Office of the Secretary of The Parachute Regimental Association is required to publish a disclaimer concerning any article or idea passed to branches by way of this letter. This letter provides a conduit between the branches to allow ideas, articles and topics to be viewed and discussed by the branches. Although these ideas, articles and topics appear in this newsletter it does not necessarily reflect the view of this office.

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.

Welfare & Benevolence paid out in May 2021 was £16618.01 over 36 cases. Hardship was the highest category with assistance towards rent/priority debts/essential food and clothing. Other assistance ongoing transport costs for Afghan veteran to attend physio appointments, employment and training and mental health support.

H. Chelmsford Branch Armed Forces Day 2021

A reduced number of events were held across the country in support of Armed Forces Day this year due to the restrictions still in place.

Members of the Chelmsford Branch set up a stall in the shopping centre at high Chelmer to raise money for the Branch and to bring the Armed Forces to the attention of the public. Well done to all.



REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 214015

RHQ Disclaimer.

The Office of the Secretary of The Parachute Regimental Association is required to publish a disclaimer concerning any article or idea passed to branches by way of this letter. This letter provides a conduit between the branches to allow ideas, articles and topics to be viewed and discussed by the branches. Although these ideas, articles and topics appear in this newsletter it does not necessarily reflect the view of this office.

I. Guards Para RHC Pensioners

Guards Para Association (GPA) members Dave Coote and John West visited the National Arboretum Stafford in June. They took the time to visit the new GPA Memorial, which is located very near to the Parachute Regiment Memorial.



Events

J. Coventry/Northampton Branch Summer Event

The Coventry and Northampton branches of the Parachute Regimental Association invite members and friends of the association to join them at their second annual summer rendezvous. The event will take place on 14th August 2021, 12pm until late.

The inaugural event in August 2019 proved a huge success, the highlight of which was a Parachute Display by the [Jump Dogs](#): a team made up of ex-Red Devils members and other experienced sky divers.

Once again, this event will be held at the Old Leamingtonian's RFC in the heart of the West Midlands. The club are huge supporters of The Parachute Regiment and have kindly offered the entire club to us, plus camping and caravan facilities (including hook up).

The event will open at 12pm and will include live music, outdoor entertainment (weather dependent), the Parachute Regimental mascot, a military marching band, a raffle of FANTASTIC prizes, a three team mini rugby

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 214015

RHQ Disclaimer.

The Office of the Secretary of The Parachute Regimental Association is required to publish a disclaimer concerning any article or idea passed to branches by way of this letter. This letter provides a conduit between the branches to allow ideas, articles and topics to be viewed and discussed by the branches. Although these ideas, articles and topics appear in this newsletter it does not necessarily reflect the view of this office.

tournament featuring the Forces Barbarians RFC, Old Leamingtonians Nomads and a Parachute Regiment invitational side. Tickets are limited, so please ensure you get yours early!

There is secure parking on site and also a hotel a walkable distance away from the club. Families who intend to bring children will have a separate area if they wish to camp.

All proceeds from the event will be split between the organising PRA branches.

Link to buy tickets here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/manage/events/73178367467/details>

K. Diary Dates

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

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

If you have any dates for 2021 please let me know at the earliest opportunity so that they can be added to the diary. Information for events in 2022 can be sent to include on the website forecast of events. Full details of events should be sent when available and updated accordingly.

2-5 July 21	ABF Day	Aldershot
13 Jul 21	Presentation of Colours to 1, 2, 3 Para	Colchester By invite only
14 Aug 21	Coventry/Northants Branch Event	Old Leamingtonians Rugby Club
15 Aug 21	VJ/End of War Day	Bladen, Oxford
12 Sep 21	Op Market Garden Pde and Service	Somerby
For more details, please contact derekpeters@ntlworld.com		
17-19 Oct 21	PRA Dinner	Coventry

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

Paul Raison

Attachments:

1. The Parachute Regimental Association Gala Dinner

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 214015

RHQ Disclaimer.

The Office of the Secretary of The Parachute Regimental Association is required to publish a disclaimer concerning any article or idea passed to branches by way of this letter. This letter provides a conduit between the branches to allow ideas, articles and topics to be viewed and discussed by the branches. Although these ideas, articles and topics appear in this newsletter it does not necessarily reflect the view of this office.