

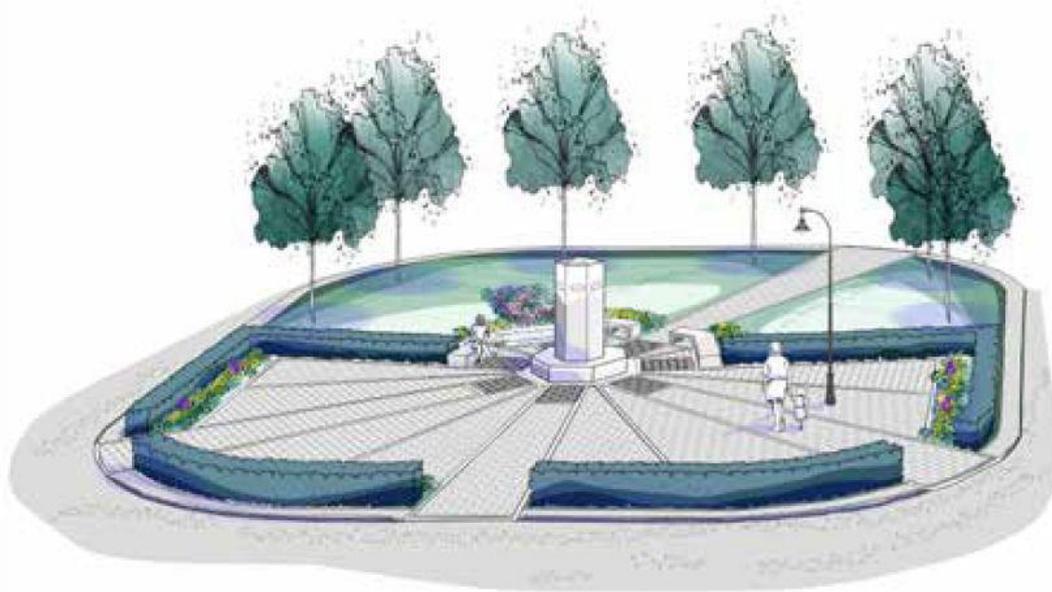


## **ALDERSHOT BRANCH PRA NEW OFFICERS MESS MEMORIAL**

On Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1972 the IRA planted a bomb and blew up the 16<sup>th</sup> Parachute Brigade Officers Mess in Aldershot. Captain Gerard Weston MBE, a Roman Catholic Priest and army padre, the gardener and five ladies who worked in the Officers Mess were killed. After a short time the site was cleared, trees were planted and a small memorial was placed where the mess stood.

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the bombing will take place on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February next year. Last year it was decided that a new memorial should replace the original memorial. The Aldershot Branch was tasked to come up with the design and the Chairman, Iain Rodgers, suggested that the memorial should be seven sided as seven people died. Stuart McLaren who is the Branch Secretary produced the plans. The land is now owned by Graingers, who are building all of new houses on the old military land.

Graingers have been very accommodating and have produced a plan that shows not only the new memorial but the landscaping as well. The final result is a fitting tribute to all those who died. What is even more pleasing is that Graingers will be paying for the new memorial and the landscaping.



Unfortunately, the only downside is that houses are still being built and the area is still a building site. Graingers will be brick paving the first part of the new garden. With cement lorries in the area they could not guarantee that the brick paving would not get damaged. With this in mind only the new memorial will be in place for next year. Once the houses are built the gardens will be finished.

The new memorial will be 3 metres wide and 3 metres tall in blue/grey granite. The names of those who were killed will be on the sides at the top of the pillar. The lamppost has shrapnel holes and will be repositioned as shown. A granite lectern will be placed next to the lamppost and the original plaque will be placed on the front of the lectern. A plaque explaining what happened will be on the side. Richard Stacey and Tommy Simpson will be placing five airborne benches in the gardens. The benches will be



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named Normandy, Arnhem, Bruneval, Rhine and Montgomery Barracks after the five barracks that were on the site.

Due to the location being a building site and also for safety, there will be limited numbers allowed to attend so this event will be ticketed. If you would like to attend and wish to apply for tickets please contact the secretary on the contact details below.

*Stuart McLaren*

Stuart McLaren

Secretary

Aldershot Branch

Parachute Regimental Association

2 Montreal Court, Cargate Avenue, Aldershot, Hants. GU11 3EY

01252 656586

[s.mclaren@ntlworld.com](mailto:s.mclaren@ntlworld.com)