



From the Secretary – Maj (Retd) PA Raison



THE PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

Patron: His Majesty King Charles III KG, KT, PC, GCB, AK, QSO, ADC

NEWSLETTER April 2023

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:

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- B. Welfare Process
- C. Regimental Commemoration Service – NMA
- D. Regimental Commemoration Dinner Weekend - 07-09 July 2023
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A. Op TELIC 1 Veterans Reception

The Minister for Veterans Affairs, Rt Hon Johnny Mercer MP, recently invited a small number of Op TELIC 1 (invasion of Iraq 2003) veterans to a roundtable/reception at the Cabinet Office on Tuesday 21 March. This was held to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the start of the Iraq conflict and to hear from some who took part, shining a light on the service and contribution of our Armed Forces personnel in this operation.



From left to right:
Chris (Freddie) Kruyer
Wayne Morgan
Rt Hon Johnny Mercer
Brian Reidy
Steve Napier

NUMBER 214015

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necessarily reflect the view of this office.

This has opened up new lines of communication with the ministers office, which can only be good news.

B. Welfare Process

It is very important that Branches use the regimental welfare Team for any cases that are reported to them. We have had several cases recently that have escalated into quite complex cases and members of the Branch have been unnecessarily burdened by the work this has produced. The Welfare Team are trained to deal with these cases and will be able to identify the most suitable course of action for an individual in need.

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 and Airborne Forces) Welfare Team for any queries.

Laura McPhilemy, Head of Welfare. Email: HoW@supportourparas.org Tel: 07702 190685 or

Lisa Stapleton, Welfare Manager. Email: 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 and their dependants.

If you require financial assistance please contact either SSAFA 0800 260 6767 or use this link to find your nearest Branch: <https://www.ssafa.org.uk/get-help/find-local-branch> 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.

C. Regimental Commemoration Service – NMA

The Regimental Commemoration Service will take place at 1215hrs at The National Memorial Arboretum on Saturday July 8, 2023. Please note that the venue has changed its opening times and you will not be able to enter the venue until 1000hrs.

Outline

The day will start with the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the PRA. This will start at 1030hrs and is open to all PRA members only. This will take place in Oak 3, Aspect building.

An outline of events is as follows:

0945hrs	Reception Open
1000hrs	Venue Opens
1030hrs	PRA AGM (One Hour)
1145hrs	Iraq Memorial Wreath Laying (20 th Anniversary)
1215hrs	Service Starts
1315hrs	PRA Parade
1345hrs	PRA Photograph
1400hrs	Red Devils Display
1430hrs	Reception Starts

Tickets

Tickets for the reception lunch are £9 per person and we are restricted to 300 people in the Aspect building where it will be held. Lunch will be in the form of a hot buffet.

Please make cheques payable to Support Our Paras and send to PRA Admin, RHQ PARA, Merville Barracks, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7UT. Alternatively electronic transfer payments should be made to: Support Our

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Paras. Sort Code 16-19-26 A/C No 17851063 (PLEASE REMEMBER TO INCLUDE YOUR SURNAME AND NMA as the payment reference)

If you require assistance, please email Julia on: admin@prahq.com or call 01206 817077.

Tickets will be available for collection at the reception desk when booking in. Tickets for the buffet will be sold on a first come, first served basis with the cut-off date Thu 29 June 2023. Only ticket holders will have entry into the Aspect building after the service using their wristbands. Those not wishing to purchase tickets, can use the NMA catering facilities in the main building or bring packed lunches.

Dress

PRA member's guests lounge suit or blazers beret and medals. Ladies as appropriate. Flat comfortable shoes are recommended due to the ground.

Standards

Standard Bearers to assemble to the rear of the Aspect building after the AGM.

Parking

Parking should now be booked in advance, by going to this link: [NMA Parking](#). Go to book tickets/Plan your visit, insert the date and pay online. Alternatively, you can book your parking by calling **01283 245100**. The cost to park all day is £4 per car/minibus (£6 if you pay on the day at reception. Blue badge holders will be able to use disabled spaces in the main car park. None badge holders can also use the main car with plenty of parking spaces, when full the overspill car park will be available to use.

Coaches/Minibuses can drop of at the designated points by the main entrance and the driver will be directed to parking areas.

D. Regimental Commemoration Dinner Weekend – 07/09 July 2023

I'm pleased to report that the Regimental Commemoration dinner weekend will be continuing in 2023 and will once again take place at the Royal Court Hotel Coventry (RCH). Roy Hatch has very kindly agreed to take this on after the retirement of John Carey. I would personally like to thank John for his hard work and support for many years for this and many other events.

Roy will be the main point of contact on behalf of RHQ Para and 23/144 PFAOCA. We look forward to seeing you all in July and of course those who will be joining us for the first time. If you are traveling any distance to attend the Commemoration at the NMA Alrewas, this is the ideal opportunity to make a weekend of the event and share time with old comrades from your past service time. Full details are available in the attached documents.

Please note that the daytime activities and commemoration will be controlled by RHQ Para (See Item F)

E. Veterans Funerals

Branches that are organising funerals should be aware that "A veteran (departed) is entitled to a trumpeter/bugler provided by public money if they have completed pensionable service or completed an operational tour (NI, Suez, Borneo, Iraq, Afghanistan etc) If this was not the case then they would be required to pay for the costs.

The army has a process so that trumpeters and buglers can be allocated appropriately. To apply for this service the branch should contact the Army Music Tasking authority at:

Email British Army band:

LONDIST-SSTAArmyBandsMailbox@mod.gov.uk

or

Trumpet Major, Kings Troop:

KingsTpRHA-TptMaj@mod.gov.uk

The following form shows what information is required when booking:
JSP 813:

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<https://www.army.mod.uk/umbraco/Surface/Download/Get/18388>"

F. Veterans Railcard/Seniors Railcard

The new veterans Railcard is 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

If you are over 60 you can apply for the Senior Railcard : <https://www.senior-railcard.co.uk/> card using Tesco Club Card points: [Tesco Points](#)

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). It'll be sent out free of charge by First Class post.

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 - £30

3 Year - £70

By Post

Alternatively, you will be able to download and complete the [application form](#) 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).

Please make cheques and postal orders payable to 'ATOC Ltd Railcard'

Allow 15 working days for your Railcard to be delivered.

G. Shropshire Branch Op VARSITY Lunch

On Sunday 26 March the Shropshire Branch attended a lunch at the Shropshire Golf Centre to commemorate and celebrate Op VARSITY, the Rhine Crossing operation.

Lead guest of honour was their own Branch 8 Para Op VARSITY veteran, 96 years young Danny Mason. As a surprise for him Len Trewin, also 8 Para, travelled up from the West Country to join them as well. Danny and Len are (as far as we know) the last two surviving members of the 8th Battalion and it was brilliant to see them both together. Danny's day had started much earlier as at 07:30hrs, he was interviewed by Radio Shropshire

They were very pleased to be joined by Lt Col Andrew Wareing for the event and he was more than happy to help present Danny and Len with commemorative bottles of port to mark the occasion. The Shropshire Branch wish Andrew well on his next posting and promotion and look forward to welcoming him back to the Midlands in the future.

Over sixty people attended the lunch, included some from the neighbouring Wolverhampton Branch, complete with Standard for the obligatory photograph. Members of the Worcester and Hereford branch were also planning to attend but sadly Covid intervened in that.

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As part of the day Adrian Davies, a Shropshire Branch member who is a very keen historian and airborne forces reenactor, had a display of relevant airborne clothing, equipment and weapons as well as background news footage of Op VARSITY. This was very much appreciated by all who attended.

Following on from his morning interview Danny gave a very good, witty and unusually for him very short speech to kick off proceedings and a very good day was had by all.



Branch members, Danny and Len with Lt Colonel Andy Wareing



Len Trewin and Danny Mason - 8 Para

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H. Applying for Military Records

Please note that RHQ PARA does not have the capability to check the eligibility of any Airborne Veteran unless they have previously joined the Association. As with applications to join the Association, it is up to the applicant to provide evidence of their Military Service. Anyone who is not in possession of their Military Records can apply to the Army Personnel Centre in Glasgow at:

Army Personnel Centre
Disclosures 2
Mail point 535
Kentigern House
65 Brown Street
Glasgow
G2 8EX

apc-sp-disclosures2@mod.uk

or apply online at: <https://www.gov.uk/get-copy-military-service-records>

Evidence of Military Service must include the details and date of your Parachute qualification.

Please note that this can be a very slow process as the records are hard (paper) copies and are stored off site.

I. Commando Speed March – Manchester and Bolton PRA

Members from the Manchester Branch PRA and Bolton Branch PRA recently participated in the annual Commando Speed March at Spean Bridge to help raise money for Support Our Paras. In addition to money already donated to the Commando speed march, they managed to raise £2380.21 with more money pledged. Well done to all that took part.



Manchester and Bolton Branch Team Members
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J. Affiliation Fees 2023

Thank you to all those that have forwarded their affiliation fees to Julia for 2023. 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 costs of many aspects of the service.

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 22).
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 2022.

K. Op VARSITY - Markshall

The 78th Anniversary of Operation Varsity saw the annual Commemoration Service at the Markshall Estate. Local PRA Branches attended, along with members of B Coy 3 Para and a contingent from the Army Air Corps in Wattisham. Amongst those who attended was Norfolk and Waveney branch member Philip Ward (9 Para) who parachuted in as part of the Rhine Crossings during Operation VARSITY in March 1945. Thank you to all members that came and supported the event.



Op VARSITY Commemoration - Markshall

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L. Regimental Charity Donations

The Parachute Regiment and Airborne Forces Charity (Support Our Paras) have a number of fundraising events 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.

Anyone looking to raise money for Support Our Paras should get in touch as soon as possible to see how the team can help you. Check out the website at: <https://supportourparas.org/>

M. Blue Light Card

Blue Light are offering a discount service for the emergency services, which includes HM Armed Forces Veterans, NHS and the social care sector, providing members with thousands of amazing discounts online and on the high street.

For just £4.99, members of the Blue Light community can register for 2-years access to more than 15,000 discounts from large national retailers to local businesses across categories such as holidays, cars, days out, fashion, gifts, insurance, phones, and many more.

The link for the website to register is: www.bluelightcard.co.uk

N. 2 Para Boxing - Semi Finals

2 Para fought the YORKS in the Semi Finals of the Army Boxing competition on Tuesday 28 March 23. The match that was held in Colchester Budd VC Gym produced another night of great fights. There were 9 bouts in the programme and 2 Para produced an outstanding 7-2 win. Well done to all the boxers and the training staff. Onward now to the final that will be held in Aldershot on 28 April Apr 23.



London Branch members with OC and CSM B Coy 3 Para

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O. Diary Dates

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

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

If you have any dates for 2023, please let me know at the earliest opportunity so that they can be added to the diary. Information for events can be sent to be included on the website forecast of events. Full details of events such as date, time, outline of event, cost etc. must be provided and updated accordingly.

Month	Date	Event/POC Details	Location
Apr	29	4 Para Reunion Les Ratcliffe:07711 853103	Leeds
May	6	Coronation of King Charles III	London
	13	Hardwick Hall	Chesterfield, S44 5QJ
	14	Friends of the Tenth	Borough on the Hill, Leicester
Jun	3-8	Normandy 79	Normandy, France
	24	Armed Forces Day	UK Wide
Jul	8	Regimental Commemoration Day	National Memorial Arboretum
	8	Regimental Commemoration Dinner	Royal Court Hotel
	15	ABF North - Eden Camp	Malton, YO17 6RT
Aug	3	Regimental Families Day	Colchester
Sep	9	Friends of the Tenth 'Sundown Service'	Borough on the Hill, Leicester
	10	Leicester PRA Arnhem Service and Parade	Somerby, Leicester
	15-17	Arnhem 79	Arnhem, Netherlands
Nov	12	Remembrance Day	Whitehall, London

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

Paul Raison

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