



From the Secretary – Maj (Retd) PA Reason



# THE PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

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

## NEWSLETTER July 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 25<sup>th</sup> of each month to the Secretary at [secretary@prahq.com](mailto:secretary@prahq.com)

### Topics:

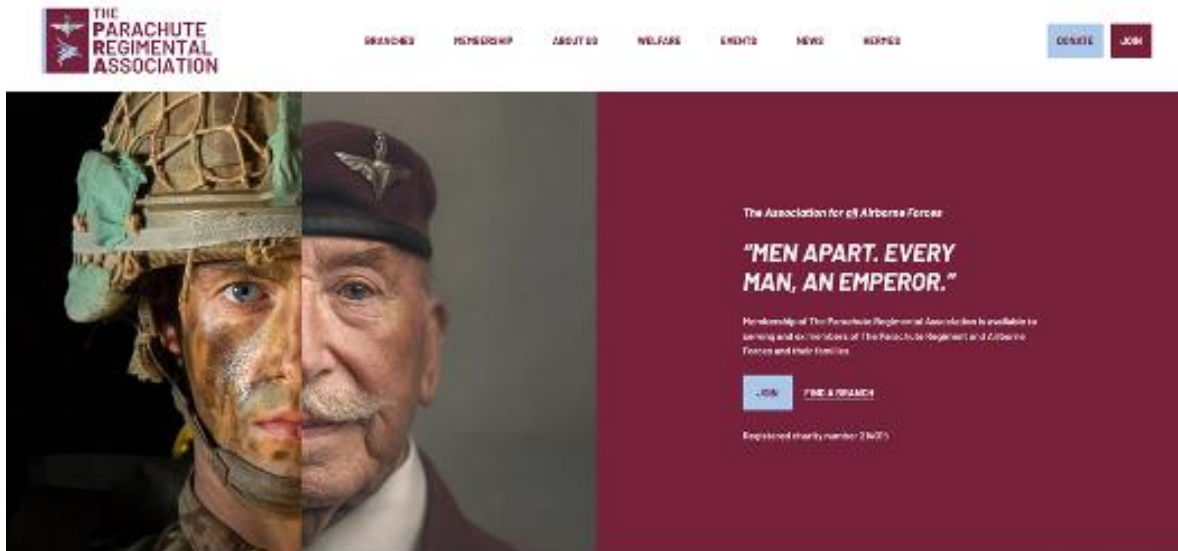
- A. New Website Launched
- B. Welfare Process
- C. A Cap Badge made for a King
- D. Regimental Commemoration Service – NMA
- E. 4 PARA CLUB Reunion 2023
- F. Friends of The Tenth Dedicate Marker Stone of 'An Arnhem Paratrooper
- G. Regimental Charity Donations
- H. Brig Ollie Kingsbury - Promotion to Major General
- I. Veterans TFL Oyster Card
- J. Regimental Families Day
- K. Michael Willets GC

### Events

- L. Diary Dates

#### A. New Website Launched

The PRA website has been undergoing a long overdue update and is now live. Please take a look at the new features and information it offers. The easier to use and more open layout should make it quicker to find what you need and keep you up to date with all association news and events. Any feedback would be welcome.



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The website features London Branch member Tom Schaffer (13 Para, Ardennes veteran) on the home page. The information provided on the website gives you the opportunity to plan your year ahead and identify events and commemorations that you may be able to support.

We are always looking for content for the website, so please get in touch if you have anything that you feel may be of interest to other Airborne members.

Planning an event? Please let us have the details and we will place them in the diary of events.

## **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, 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](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.

For any other issues and advice please contact the Support our Paras Welfare on:

Laura McPhilemy, Head of Welfare. Email: [HoW@supportourparas.org](mailto:HoW@supportourparas.org) Tel: 07702 190685 or

Lisa Stapleton, Welfare Manager. Email: [wm@supportourparas.org](mailto: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.

## **C. A Cap Badge made for a King**

SUPPORT OUR PARAS, on behalf of Regimental Headquarters of The Parachute Regiment, is excited to offer a limited edition run of the new King's Crown Parachute Regiment cap badge for sale. These badges will be crafted in solid silver and will be made from the same mould as the one The Parachute Regiment will present to the Regiment's Colonel in Chief, His Majesty King Charles III, to mark his coronation.

These superb cap badges are cast from an original issued WWII cap badge. Initially, just two were produced, with His Majesty's being the first one made and the second being auctioned to SUPPORT OUR PARAS. Now though, a further exclusive production run of just 80 badges has been authorised, one for each year of the Regiment's existence at the time of His Majesty The King's accession. They feature the King's crown between the Lion Rampant and the parachute and are all individually stamped with the unique King's Coronation Mark, which is only available until December 2024. Each cap comes with a certificate of authenticity signed by the Colonel Commandant, Lt Gen Andy Harrison DSO MBE.

Each cap badge of this exclusive, official second production run will be offered for sale at a price of £195\*. Due to the limited availability of these cap badges, and anticipating high demand, we will be opening a ballot for any interested party to apply for the chance to get their hands on one. Full details and applications will be available via [www.supportourparas.org](http://www.supportourparas.org) from 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023, the birth date of the United Kingdom's Airborne Forces.

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## Utrique Paratus!

\*All profits from the sale of these cap badges will go to SUPPORT OUR PARAS, to further support our Paratroopers and their families.



### D. 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 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary)
1215hrs	Service Starts
1228hrs	Flypast
1315hrs	PRA Parade
1345hrs	PRA Photograph
1400hrs	Red Devils Display
1430hrs	Reception Starts

Tickets for those that have ordered lunch will be available for collection at the reception desk when booking in. Only ticket holders will have entry into the Aspect building after the service using their wristbands. Those that have not purchased 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

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

### **Parking**

Parking should 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.

### **E. 4 PARA CLUB Reunion 2023**

This year's annual reunion was held at the Hilton City Hotel Leeds with 65 members plus guests attending. A regimental update was given followed by guest speaker Craig Allen formerly 4 PARA, 1 and 3 PARA. Followed by a hot lunch and networking.

Craig spent 23 years with the Regular Parachute Regiment serving in 1 & 3 Para and completing 2 tours as a PSI with 4 Para. He subsequently served for a further 17 years as a member of 4 Para mainly with 16 (Lincoln) Company and the current Scottish Company. Since leaving the Regular Army he has worked as a Freelance Photographer and Journalist and currently writes for a number of magazine titles such as Classic Land Rover, Classic Military Vehicles and Britain at War. He has also written several books on military subjects including the Parachute Regiment on campaign in Iraq & Afghanistan. Now retired from the military Craig lives in Edinburgh with his wife Cathy and is currently working on a book project exploring the Old Military Roads in the Scottish Highlands.

The talk covered Craigs experience as a frontline photographer in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan including working with the Media on campaign. It began with his early introduction to photography during school days followed by operational camera work on tours of the province and his eventual role as a Regimental Photographer. The subjects covered included the military embed system, working as a Media Escort, and the reality of frontline photography. He also touched on his role covering Regimental events and ended with a recent magazine feature linked to the conflict in Ukraine.

Next year's reunion will be held again in the Hilton City Hotel Saturday 27th April 2024.



4 Para Reunion Members on Parade

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## **F. Friends of The Tenth Dedicate Marker Stone of 'An Arnhem Paratrooper'**

A Service to Dedicate the Marker Stone of Victor Gregg (15<sup>th</sup> October 1919- 12<sup>th</sup> October 2021) 'An Arnhem Paratrooper' and the 'Last Man Standing' of the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion, The Parachute Regiment, has been held at the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion Memorial, Burrough on the Hill Leicestershire.

The Revd. Brian McAvoy conducted the Service, which also dedicated a Memorial Plaque to Private Jonny Young of 4<sup>th</sup> Battalion, the Parachute Regiment. The Service was well attended, by members of both Victor and Jonny's families, representatives of Parachute Regiment and members of The Friends of The Tenth (FOTT).

Rifleman Victor Gregg was the last surviving member of the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion the Parachute Regiment which left Somerby and Burrough-on-the-Hill Leicestershire in September 1944 to take part in the Battle of Arnhem known as Operation Market Garden. Victor was buried at the FOTT Memorial's Memorial Garden at Burrough-on-the-Hill in November 2021, and the Marker Stone unveiled during the Service was inscribed as per Victor's last wishes with 'An Arnhem Paratrooper' in memory of all the members of the 10<sup>th</sup> Battalion who deployed on Operation Market Garden. Victor's name has been inscribed on the reverse side of the Stone.

Following the Service FOTT Chairman Alec Wilson said: "I would like to thank you all for attending our Service to dedicate and unveil the marker stone of Victor Gregg. The FOTT was formed with the intention of creating a lasting memorial to all who paid the ultimate sacrifice at Arnhem. The dedication of Victor Gregg's Marker Stone together with the Memorial Plaque to Private Jonny Young, will be sentinels for their comrades who are remembered here, and a reminder of the cost of peace in both generations."

Following the Service Matt Hampson kindly hosted a reception at the 'Get Busy Living Centre' for all attendees.



## **G. 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/>

During May, £23394.91 was spent on Welfare through 34 cases with a breakdown of categories below. There were also 5 declines due to ineligibility.

HS - Hardship

BMR - Building Maint/Repair

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ET - Employment/Training  
ME - Allowable Med  
MI - Misc  
FN - Funerals

MHT - Mental Health Therapy  
FR - Furnishings  
MB - Mobility

## H. Brig Ollie Kingsbury - Promotion to Major General

Congratulations to Brig Ollie Kingsbury OBE on his promotion to Maj Gen and appointment as Deputy Commanding General-Manoeuvre V (US) Corps with effect August 2023.



The primary mission of the new forward headquarters in Poland will be to conduct operational planning, mission command and oversight of the rotational forces in Europe. It will also provide additional capability to support allies and partners in the region and help improve interoperability.

Brig Ollie was born in 1972, commanded 2 PARA and was later 82nd Airborne Division's Deputy to the Commanding General.

He is a regular attendee at regimental events and will be the senior officer attending the Regimental Commemoration day at the National Memorial Arboretum on 8 July.

## I. Veterans TFL Oyster Card

If you served in the armed forces, you could get free and discounted travel on London transport services with a Veterans Oyster photocard.

You can get a Veterans Oyster photocard if you:

- Receive ongoing payments under the [War Pensions Scheme](#) in your name. This includes widows, widowers and dependants.
- Receive Guaranteed Income Payment under the [Armed Forces Compensation Scheme](#) in your name. This includes widows, widowers and dependants.
- Ongoing payments are awarded to service personnel who've sustained a certain level of physical or psychological injury in the line of duty. If you received a one-off gratuity payment instead, you can't get a Veterans Oyster photocard.

You also can't get a Veterans Oyster photocard if you live in a [London borough](#) and are eligible for a [60+ London Oyster photocard](#) or [Freedom Pass](#).

How to apply?

You fill out an application form to apply for a Veterans Oyster photocard. Call [0343 222 1234](tel:0343 222 1234) ([call charges may apply](#)) to get your form.

Complete and return your form with:

- A photocopy of your Awards Notification or annual updating letter from Veterans UK or the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (dated in the last two years)
- A passport-sized full-face photo including your head and shoulders. Don't wear anything that covers your head unless worn for religious or medical reasons

More details are available here: [TFL Veterans Oyster Card](#)

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## **J. Regimental Families Day**

As part of The Parachute Regiment Families Day 2023, you are invited to a Regimental Briefing, given by the Regimental Lt Colonel, Liam Cradden MBE.

The briefing will take place in the Army Education Centre, adjacent to the Parade Square. Gates will open at 0900hrs and there will be signage to the briefing which starts at 0930hrs. The briefing will finish in time to enjoy the Red Devils freefall display onto the Parade Square at 1100hrs.

The Deputy Colonel Commandant will make an address and then move to the families day area where activities akin to a village fete will be held. There will also be stands showcasing the capabilities of 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team, as well as The Airborne Assault Museum with equipment and artefacts from the past.

A free BBQ is provided and also children's activities and a live band. Cash bars will be open.

Seating may be limited so please bring your own, such a folding chair or as a picnic blanket. This is an outdoor event, please bear this in mind if the weather is either hot or inclement.

If you would like to attend the briefing, please let Alice Holland know at [INFHQ-GDSPARA-PARA-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk](mailto:INFHQ-GDSPARA-PARA-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk). If you have not completed the proforma attached to this newsletter, please do so and return to Alice Holland so we can track your attendance. We politely ask that your return is with RHQ PARA by 13th July 2023.

Tickets and lunch vouchers will be issued at the gate which opens at 0900hrs on 3<sup>rd</sup> Aug. Please bring photographic ID for access to Merville barracks.

If you have any questions, please contact Rob Airey: [Robert.Airey100@mod.gov.uk](mailto:Robert.Airey100@mod.gov.uk) or on 0300 151 6097

## **K. Michael Willetts GC**

A service of remembrance took place on 25 May 2023 at St Mary of the Purification, Blidworth, Mansfield to remember Sgt Michael Willetts GC. The vicar, Rev Beryl Allsop led the service and has previously officiated on this remembrance.

The service was attended by Michael's sister Kathleen and her son Dean. Kathleen attends every year and was made very welcome by our members. The Vice Chairman JJ Wilson, a good friend of Michael was also there to represent RHQ PARA. Michael was buried at this Church, as it was where he got married.

The event was organised by the Nottingham and Newark branches, with other branch members and Standards there to support the day.



The Service of Remembrance

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Branch Standards on Parade



The Gravestone



The Memorial Bench

## L. Diary Dates

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

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

If you have any dates for 2023/2024, please let me know at the earliest opportunity so that they can be added to the diary and the website. Information for events should be sent to be included on the website forecast of events. Full details of events such as date, time, outline of event, cost and point of contact, must be provided and updated accordingly.

Month	Date	Event/POC Details	Location
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	Parachute Regiment Families Day	Colchester
	19	Northants Summer Party	Northampton
Sep	9	Friends of the Tenth 'Sundown Service'	Borough on the Hill, Leicester
	10	Leicester PRA Arnhem Service and Parade	Somerby, Leicester

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	15-17	Arnhem 79	Arnhem, Netherlands
Oct	7	WO & Sgts Mess Past and Present	RAF St Athan
Nov	10	St Lawrence Jewry	London
	12	Remembrance Day	Whitehall, London

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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# 3rd August 2023

Thursday - 1000 hrs - 1600 hrs



## The Parachute Regiment's Families Day Merville Barracks



Admission Free  
Gates Open at 1000hrs

Flypast (tbc) & Live Music  
Red Devils Display @ 1100hrs  
Heritage Displays  
Refreshments & Barbeque  
Children's Activities

Tickets - Serving contact your UWO  
Retired - Email

[INFHQ-GDSPARA-PARA-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk](mailto:INFHQ-GDSPARA-PARA-Mailbox@mod.gov.uk)  
Registration closes on 13th July 2023

Made possible thanks to funding from the Regimental Charity  
**SUPPORT OUR PARAS**

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