



THE
PARACHUTE
REGIMENTAL
ASSOCIATION



NEWSLETTER - March 2025

The Association for all
Airborne Forces

A Busy Month Ahead

March is a busy time of year, with all three battalions holding their reunions in Blackpool. The dates are below and there may still be time for anyone who would like to attend. Please see the website for contact details. The reunions are a great opportunity to reconnect with the people you served with and make new acquaintances. Why not get a group together and attend this year.

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What's On:

Month	Date	Event	Location
March	17	Gen Sir Mike Jackson Memorial (Invite Only)	RMAS
March	14-16	2 Para Reunion	Blackpool
March	20-24	1 Para Reunion	Blackpool
March	23-24	Op VARSITY	Rivenhall and Markshall
March	28	Pass Out Parade	ITC Catterick
March	28-30	3 Para Reunion	Blackpool
April	26	4 Para Reunion	Leeds
May	10	Hardwick Hall	Chesterfield
June	4-8	Normandy 81	France
June	14	Regtl Comm Day NMA	Alrewas
June	14	Regtl Comm Dinner	Coventry
July	19	ABF North	Eden Camp

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE SEE THE EVENTS PAGE

Prepare For Action

Shropshire Branch Op VARSITY Lunch

The Shropshire branch are holding an 80th anniversary Op VARSITY lunch on Sunday 23rd March 2025 at The Shropshire Golf Centre, Muxton Lodge, Muxton Ln, Telford TF2 8PQ. Their Guest of Honour will be 8 PARA veteran, Danny Mason who is 98 years young. Danny took part in Op VARSITY as part of the battalion.

If anyone would like to join them on the day, they would need your details by early March so they can add you to the list and order the food.

The cost for PRA members is £25.00 for the 2 or 3-course meal. Please email Peter Bedford: peterbedford906@gmail.com to register your interest or for further details.

The event last year drew in quite a crowd with 58 people sitting down to lunch as seen below.



Operation Varsity was the largest single airborne operation in history. On a single day, over 16,000 men were inserted by glider and parachute into western Germany. Around 8000 of those came from the British 6th Airborne Division, flying aboard 243 C47 aircraft and 440 gliders. A slightly larger number of American airborne troops arrived at the same time in what was to be the second test of the First Allied Airborne Army. But unlike Arnhem, British and American soldiers would be landing in the same general area split into two sectors. The Brits' major objectives were the village of Hamminkeln, the Diersfordt wood and the river Issel. With the nearby ground troops already advancing in amphibious vehicles, Varsity proved to be a complete success. It was the final airborne operation of the war in Europe, with the Germans opting for peace just over a month later.

The **3rd Parachute Brigade** dropped its men 9 minutes early at 0951 hours, March 24. Landing just outside the Diersfordt wood, they encountered heavy resistance from men firing from the trees. This caused an estimated 270 casualties. Nonetheless, the DZ was secured by 1100 and the primary objective of the Schnappenberg feature was captured by the 9th Parachute Battalion at 1445. Meanwhile, the 8th Parachute Battalion was ordered to move east and then clear the woods west of the Divisional HQ at Köpenhof farm. At about 1545 ground troops from the 44 (Lowland) Infantry Brigade joined up with the 3rd Parachute Brigade. By 1700 on the first day the 3rd Parachute Brigade had killed around 200 Germans and taken 700 prisoner, whilst they had lost 270 paratroopers dead, injured or missing. A significant number of men had been shot after getting their chutes caught in trees.

Read the full article here on ParaData: [Op VARSITY](#)

The Dover Bosses

Earlier this month we received an email from the Dover Bosses. A great new idea by the partners of the Dover branch members.

We are wives and partners of members of the Dover Branch of the Parachute Regiment Association and are in the early stages of forming a group to help us get to know each other a little better.

The idea is that when we have future functions, we will all be more comfortable mingling and having fun together, rather than sticking with the people we already knew.

*We have formed a WhatsApp group under the name **"The Bosses"** and recently had a lovely evening out together chatting and finding out more about one another over a nice meal and a few drinks. Another lady has joined the group since our outing, and we are looking forward to getting to know her properly at our next evening out, which we plan to arrange in a few weeks' time.*

We hope that as the word spreads, more of the wives and partners in our branch of the Association will discover the group and be encouraged to join us. Best wishes Sue

If you live in the Dover area, please get in touch via the Secretary: secretary.doverpra@gmail.com



The Tyneside Branch

The Tyneside Branch welcome all Airborne Warriors to attend a Branch open meeting on Friday 4 Apr at 1900hrs in the PTE Social Club Millers Rd, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 2XP. There will be free drinks and good company. Why not take the chance to meet up with old friends and make some new ones. If you require more details contact the Tyneside Branch Secretary at secretarypra.tyneside@gmail.com



80th Anniversary of Soldier Magazine

To mark the 80th anniversary of the Army's official magazine, I am delighted to announce that they have their very own exhibition at the National Army Museum. It is open now, runs until July and is free to attend.

As many of you will know, the NAM is a great day out. Go along and see the short film to discover the amazing story behind the mag... and see if you can find any familiar faces/ personalities from the regiment on the wall of covers at the same time!

The National Army Museum is the British Army's central museum. It is located in the Chelsea district of central London, adjacent to the Royal Hospital Chelsea, the home of the "Chelsea Pensioners".

Royal Hospital Rd, London SW3 4HT

More details are available in the attached flyer.



BRANCH NEWS

Portsmouth Branch Award

A long-standing member of the Portsmouth Branch 'Pompey Para's' Ken Newton has decided to stand down as Chairman. At the age of 90 years he has accepted that the years have brought about the realisation that however reluctantly he must give way after 14 years as an excellent Chairman.



It was proposed at the extra ordinary meeting that followed the AGM that Ken be awarded an honorary Vice Presidency of the Portsmouth and District Branch. The members voted unanimously in agreement. Ken was presented with a certificate of "Lifetime Vice President".

Ken is an outstanding member of the branch and thoroughly deserves this award.

I am pleased to announce that we have recruited a new PRA Admin Assistant. More details will be available at a later date. They are due to start work week commencing 17 March 2025.

Affiliation Fees 2025

Thank you to all those that have forwarded their affiliation fees for 2025. Branches that may be having some difficulty raising this sum are requested to make representation to their Regional Secretary. The annual Affiliation Fee is £60, following a small increase last year.

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. **A Reminder of the Benefits**

- Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) permission to use the Regimental Logo on Branch Standards and letterheads.
- Full Public Liability Insurance and Branch Standard Insurance (new certificate issued in Apr 25).
- Access to Regimental support for organised functions, i.e. Pony Mascot and associated Regimental assets (subject to availability).
- Support from the National Executive Committee and RHQ PRA on constitutional and branch management and membership matters.
- The ability to fundraise in support of the Branch, its members and branch activities.
- Receive Monthly Branch Newsletters and other correspondence.

It is requested that all Affiliation Fees are paid NLT 31 March 2025.

Glasgow & West Commemorate VE and VJ Day

The Glasgow and West Branch will hold services this year to commemorate Victory in Europe (VE) and Victory in Japan (VJ) day. The services will be held at the Veterans Knightswood Cross, Junction of Baldwin Avenue / Fulton Street, Knightswood, Glasgow, G13.

VE Day on Saturday 10th May 2025.

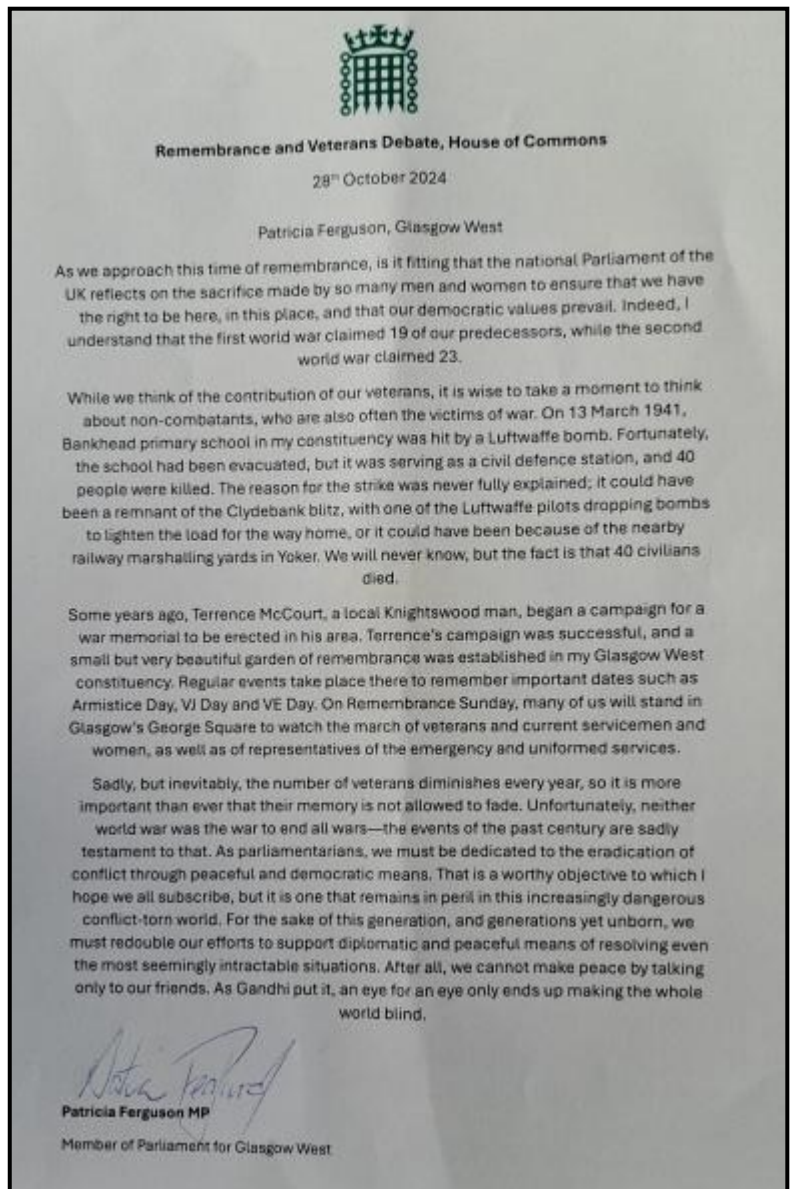
VJ Day on Saturday 16th August 2025.

A short Christian service takes place then there is the Last Post and Reveille played.

Veterans then form up on Baldwin Avenue to march past hopefully with our Lord Provost led by the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders Balaclava Pipe Band.

They will wind their way down the Great Western Road to the Lincoln Inn where there will be a Finger Buffet, Music and a Raffle for a Worthy Cause.

Branch Secretary Terry McCourt was instrumental in the building of this memorial and campaigned for some years. He was praised by local councillors for his hard work and determination.



PRA Fundraising and Donations

Your continued support to the Regimental Charities is vital to the direct support of Airborne Veterans and their families, now and in the future.

Can I please ask that you consider PRA HQ when looking at who you donate your branch funds to throughout the year. Branches should be aware that the donation of money to other charities and organisations must be in line with Charity Commission guidelines. The objects of The Parachute Regimental Association Charity must be met by anyone receiving payment.



Applications for funding for events and activities are still welcome but will be subject to strict criteria. These must be supported by a business case, which is available from this office. We are very fortunate that some of this liability has now been taken up by Support Our Paras.

We do understand that some branches have very limited funds so thank you very much to those branches that have very kindly donated to assist us recently. Any amount is greatly appreciated.

The Manchester branch carried out a collection in February which raised £857.34. The members very kindly voted to round this up to £1,000 and donate it to PRA HQ. Thanks to all that took part in the collection.

We have received a very generous donation of £693.63 from SS&WD. If anyone knows who this is please let me know at: secretary@prahq.com as we would like to thank you.

Website News and Events - [View Events Here](#)

Please keep an eye on the website for the latest up to date information on Airborne events across the country. There are a variety of Airborne related events going on this year already.

If you have anything that needs advertising, please let us know. We require the date, timings and as much detail as possible. This can be updated nearer the event date.

Events and activities can also be published on the PRA Facebook page for wider coverage, website and in this newsletter.

Please help us to support you.

Branch Activities

Has your branch been involved in a new activity? Then let us know. Others have started various initiatives to get members involved so why not try some of their ideas:

Walking Groups
Curry Club
Breakfast Club
Branch Visits
Pass Out Parades

Any other ideas that we can push out to branches would be very welcome

Lynaghan Appeal

Earlier in February Michael had his 5th round of Lutetium-177 PSMA; his clinicians are happy and Michael is responding well to treatment.

It is a long journey and the support he has received so far has been amazing. Thank you very much to all those that have donated to the appeal.

If you are in a position to support Michael's journey in any way, your contribution can make a significant difference to his wellbeing and that of his family.

[Please Donate Here](#)



The Parachute Regiment Warrant Officers & SNCOs Dinner Club

The annual dinner is held every year at the WOs & SNCOs' Mess 1 PARA (SFSG) in St Athan. The RSM 1 PARA is trying to reach out to past members in order to boost attendance.

In order to renew membership and be included in the distribution list, please contact the Dinner Club secretary: Jennie Pitt MBE – Hon Secretary. Email: jennie.pitt163@mod.gov.uk

Address: The Parachute Regiment Warrant Officers and Sergeant's Mess (Past & Present) Dinner Club. J1 Office, Churchill Lines, MOD St Athan, BARRY, CF62 4NX

Support Our Paras Online Shop

Support Our Paras now have their own online shop. Please find attached to this newsletter the details on how to access their products.

The shop is run from here in Colchester and provides a number of items not available from other suppliers.

So if you would like to support the charity directly please take a look. They have an ever growing range of items and even Valentines cards for that special person in your life.

For more details please click on the link: <https://supportourparas.org/shop/>



SUPPORT OUR PARAS

Welfare Process



It is very important that PRA Branches use the SUPPORT OUR PARAS welfare team for any cases that are reported to them.

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.



Serving Personnel, please contact your Unit Welfare Officer (UWO) and/or Medical Officer (MO).

Serving Personnel, for those needing career advice contact: Nick Thorogood, Careers Transition Officer (CTO)

✉ CTO@supportourparas.org
☎ 07944 558780

Veterans, please contact: Lisa Stapleton, Welfare Manager

✉ WM@supportourparas.org
☎ 07340 347136

Mental health support and advice please contact: Laura McPhilemy, Head of Welfare

✉ HoW@supportourparas.org
☎ 07702 190685

Financial Assistance Process:

- Step 1:** Contact SUPPORT OUR PARAS Welfare Team
✉ WM@supportourparas.org
☎ 07340 347136
- Step 2:** Once needs are established a referral will be completed to a case working organisation, RBL or SSAFA.
- Step 3:** An allocated caseworker will start an application for assistance, known as 'Form A'.
- Step 4:** Completed Form A, and any attachments is sent electronically to military charities, including SUPPORT OUR PARAS, for consideration.
- Step 5:** Successful grants are issued swiftly back to case working organisations for onward payment.
- Step 6:** Urgent grants can be made on the same day if required.
- Step 7:** The process is both confidential and transparent, providing an audit trail.