



SLIPSTREAM

The Newsletter of Central Scotland Branch
The Parachute Regimental Association

Issue No. 010

December 2004

POINT OF HONOUR

By John McCormack

On Sunday 26th September 2004 3 members of the PRA John McCormack, Dave Parton, and Bob McBride paraded with Royal British Legion Scotland Drill Squad at a re-dedication of the Lazeretto Point war memorial at Sandbank near Dunoon Argyle.

It was a very stormy day and for those who know the point, at times it was difficult to stand up straight. 200 people mainly ex-servicemen and women and Dunoon's Argyll Pipe Band turned out for a short service in the terrible weather.

The war memorial was built in the 1920s by local subscriptions in remembrance of those who fell in the Great War. Memorials to those lost in subsequent conflicts have been added including the loss of six submarines.

Erosion by the sea has been undermining the monument and work has been

carried out to save it, financed by a committee of volunteers. Over £40,000 was raised by them for the restoration work and we wish them well in the future.

Over the years, this familiar landmark on the shores of the Holy Loch has been for many mariners, the first mark of home. It has recently gained even more exposure as it is strategically placed at the entrance to the national park.



PRA Members Dave Parton, Bob McBride & John McCormack at the Point



GREETINGS FROM NEW ZEALAND

Good morning Terry,

My name is Frank Clark, ex 15 Para, I am now living in New Zealand and am involved with the Airborne association here

At the present time we are busy organising our 2005 national reunion to be held over the weekend 4th-5th and 6th March in Turangi, a small town at the southern end of Lake Taupo in the centre of the North Island, (good trout fishing too)

On Tuesday some of our members attended the funeral of Major John Absolon (RA) in Palmerston North, John was an associate member of our association, as his son Richard Absolon MM served with 3 Para and was killed in the Falklands. John was a very staunch supporter of the Airborne family and will be greatly missed.

After the funeral I was given one of your newsletters and I must say, I was very impressed with both the quality and the content.

I have attached a photo that was taken at St Pauls Cathedral in Wellington last year on Remembrance Sunday, That's me getting my knees cold.

Well I will close now and look forward to hearing from anyone over there who would like to get in touch.

Utrinqe Paratus.

Frank Clark



I am sure we all hope that our comrades in New Zealand have a great time at their reunion in Turangi. It certainly looks somewhat different from Aldershot and the fishing might just be superior to the canal! Should any of Frank's old pals wish to contact him, Terry and Davie can supply his email address.



Old Comrade Association Dinner

By John McCormack

On Saturday 30th October, 2004, over 50 members for the Scottish Airborne Forces - Old Comrades Association met for their annual dinner at the new Pearson Hall Houldsworth Street'



Sgt. Maj. Nig. Turnbull and a friend enjoying a chat

The evening began with a drink in the lounge, then a four course meal of soup, braised steak, apple gateau; coffee & cheese - a first class meal with a bottle of whisky on each table donated by Col. Sid Winship.

Highlight of the evening was a talk by Col. Rutherford OBE on what was happening to the amalgamation of the infantry regiments with particular attention to our own Para Regiment and the Scottish Regiments. He also mentioned the King's Division, Queen's Division and the Brigade of Guards. Very much a government man, he had me convinced that the amalgamation of the Scottish Regiments was a good thing. He had



Top Table at the Dinner

Left to Right: Capt. Wallace 4 PARA; Maj. Stevens 15 PARA; Col Rutherford OBE Para. Rgt.; Col. Winship 15 PARA; Wallace McKie 15 PARA; Maj. Bell, Scy. PRA North.

done his homework, and spoke very well indeed. I think he should go into politics.

We were then informed by Wallace McKie that he was standing down as the organiser of the dinner. Wallace was hopeful someone would take his place. We then retired to the lounge where old memories were discussed and analysed.

Major Bill Ball, Regional Secretary of the PRA North, informed me that he brought a team of English boxers to Scotland in the 60s who gave our boxing team a hiding. I was having none of this; I think he was a bit tipsy. Can anyone remember that event?

Do you think the proposed reorganisation is good for the army? Why not have your say? It is your newsletter.

SENGA STRIKES!

Wee Senga was talking to her teacher about whales. The teacher said it is physically impossible for a whale to swallow a human because even though it is a very large mammal it's throat is very small. Senga stated that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. Irritated, the teacher reiterated that it is physically impossible.

Senga said, "When I get to heaven I will ask Jonah". The teacher asked, "What if Jonah went to hell?" Senga smiled, "Then you ask him".

Later, the teacher was observing the children whilst they were drawing. Walking around to see each child's work, she got to Wee Senga who was working diligently. She asked what she was drawing and Senga replied, "I'm drawing God." The teacher paused and said, "No one knows what God looks like." Without looking up from her drawing Senga said, "They will in a minute."

The children had all been photographed, and the teacher was trying to persuade them each to buy a copy of the group picture. "Just think how nice it will be to look at it when you are all grown up and say, 'There's Jennifer, she's a lawyer,' or 'That's Michael, He's a doctor.' A small, familiar voice at the back of the room rang out, "And there's the teacher. She's deid."

BRANCH NEWS

DEDICATION

Sunday 22ND May 2005 will be the day a new branch of the PRA in Newark will, host its dedication of Colours.

Our branch has received an invitation to attend. This will probably involve a weekend away. Please give it some consideration as numbers are required soon to arrange hotels, buses etc.

A member of our branch, Albert Oswald, is their Standard Bearer. This will mean that there are now 114 PRA branches.

WELCOME

A warm welcome is extended to 2 new members, both from Yoker:

Davie Murphy;
George Finan.

SEHESTEDT (Keil Canal) 30th ANNIVERSARY (09-14th Sept)

Another successful trip. A magazine has been produced detailing the history of this tragic event etc. Well worth the reading. If you would like a copy then get in touch with any member of the Committee.

ARNHEM 2004

Over 100 from the Scottish region attended this year's event, the 60th Anniversary. One group was led by the Dundee branch, which included the Glasgow contingent. The other group was the lads from Aberdeen, who all flew over. Bill Gourlay and Brian Clarke from the Dundee branch are commended for their efforts.

We had the branch standards on parade, proudly flown by Denis Mc Cormack and Davie Parton. The drop at Ginkel Heath was spectacular, so was the Dutch crowd that had turned out to watch it.

There were bicycles everywhere!

The food overall at our hotel was not bad but a better scoff was to be had at the Aberdeen branch's watering hole, the "DE WAGG". Three 'Weegies, as we are known in Aberdeen were given a reprimand by the owner, **ALL 3 WERE EATING, off the same plate!** Well, we don't have loads of Gas/Oil here in the West coast to afford a plate each?? **Frank, let go of the PLATE!! and the owner's neck!!!**

ARMISTICE DAY PARADE

Over 50 members formed up on a cold and grisly morning even more tried to get into the Civic chambers afterwards. The ticket allocation was not what we had asked for. We were given 40 initially. This put a damper on some faces as they thought they were going to miss out. Eventually we were given more to cater for our needs.

A Mini-Bus was again on hand to ferry the members to the Bus/train stations. Most though headed straight for 15 Coy, 4 PARA's hall. Again all were keen once the beer (draught, you know!!) got flowing, to relive their experiences, old and young alike.

The usual war stories re-told and the same old songs were sung. Ah, the memories. Can't wait for next year to come around.



ARNHEM

If only more of our youth realised!

Non-Members Note!

In future we will only be issuing tickets to branch members. If you are considering joining the branch, then admittance to the City Chambers on Remembrance Day is another reason for joining. Sort out your PRA membership then join us.

WEBSITES

Check out our New Branch Website at: www.centralscotlandpra.co.uk

Website: www.parachute-regiment.com will no longer be the "Official Website". Of the Parachute Regiment. The Ministry of Defence has decided that, due to among other things the Freedom of Information Act coming into force in January 2005, all military websites will be centralised and accessible through the main MOD web page. Please visit it at: http://www.army.mod.uk/para/units/regimental_hq.htm and you will find a more up to date site than the previous one. The PRA page is: http://www.army.mod.uk/para/parachute_regimental_association/index.htm

SEAGULL TRUST

Once again the branch had members and their families enjoyed a cruise on the Union Canal and a swing in the Falkirk Wheel. The branch had in fact hosted residents from Flanders House as well and all finished up with some scoff with a whisky or two to wash down the food. All had another good day and Frank Cameron, our new



Left: Terry McCourt (Secretary), Bob Crocker (Aberdeen Branch Chairman), Frank Cameron (Vice President) enjoy the hospitality the at Le Waag pub. Right: The wreath-laying ceremony at the Airborne Plain.

Vice President, presented the Skipper with a Branch Plaque

AGM CHILWELL

Out of the 12,970 PRA members only 45 attended the meeting, held on October 2nd. This number included 12 Committee members.

The proposed amendment to the constitution regarding the definition of "AIRBORNE SOLDIER" is still current. Please consider that although the definition should reflect the joining criteria for the association it must also take into account entitlement or benefits provided by the Airborne Forces Security Fund.

Minutes of the meeting are being compiled and will be distributed to each of the branches as soon as possible. It is important that all members of the PRA are included as part of the consultation process. It is your view that counts.

AGM

The branch office holders are as follows:

President:	Col.L.Robertson (rtd)
Vice President:	Frank Cameron
Chairman:	Jim Carey;
Vice Chairman:	Sammy Moynihan;
Secretary:	Terry McCourt
Treasurer:	Jim Collins
Welfare/ Fund raising:	Jack Connor
Membership Secretary:	Martin O'Hear
Quartermaster:	Dave Parton



AIRBORNE FORCES SECURITY FUND

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 214015

Lt Col (Rtd) Banks Middleton has now retired from the post of controller and his office in Aldershot is now closed. The new controller of the fund and Regimental Treasurer, Mr. Nicholas Humphrey, is now in post in RHQ Colchester. His assistant, Mrs Sandy Millbank is on **01206 541748**.

Q. What is the fund for?

A. It was set up in 1942 and provides help for all those members, ex-members, and their dependants who are in financial difficulties.

Q. How is it Funded?

A. Originally it relied on donations and bequests. In 1947 as the wartime units were disbanded their funds were donated to the Security Fund. These were invested and still provide income today.

Q. How is it Run?

A. The Fund is managed by a Board of Trustees (all ex Airborne) who meet twice a year. The day-to-day running of the Fund is the responsibility of the Controller who, with his staff, has an office at RHQ, The Parachute Regiment.

Q. How can I make contact if required?

A. In one of the following ways:

1. Write to the Controller direct at:

The AB Forces Security Fund
RHQ PARA
Flagstaff House, Colchester
Essex CO2 7SW

Telephone: (01206) 541748 – Civil

2. Through SSAFA Forces Help

3. Through the Royal British Legion

SSAFA and the Royal British Legion can be found in your telephone directory. Ring them and ask them to visit. **REMEMBER, THIS FUND IS HERE TO HELP YOU. Don't be afraid to ask.**

They help over 600 people a year and have made grants of over £2.5 million since 1942

CONNOR'S KA-TASTROPHE

Jack Connor has been having problems since purchasing a car from a well known family firm. Not only was he deprived of his car for almost three months due to it being faulty but the “final solution” was a car which Evil Knievel would balk at.

The constant annoyance and stress was the last thing that Jack needed after his heart attack. The lack of a car caused cancellation of a number of plans, including his wedding anniversary, fund-raising and R. Noald's clerk (not the real name of the firm involved) showed no interest in normal customer satisfaction.

Unfortunately for the particular garage involved they had taken on a member of the Maroon Machine and he was not for curling up. With the able support of his son, battle ensued and Jack was victorious, receiving a newer car with less mileage. Jack's message to all is that if a maroon Ford Ka number X212 U55 is offered for sale then, for safety's sake, decline.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "IT'S GOOD AS NEW"?

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Does anyone recall or know of Mr Tom Cumliffe? He was Champion Recruit of 179 platoon in October 1959. Should anyone remember Tom, could you please contact Mrs Irene Norman on 01695 632591. She would love to hear from you.

Obituary

Ernest Sheddon

Ernest (otherwise known as "Staff" or "Jock"), who died on 8 August 2004, was born on 14 March 1920 and raised in Jordanhill, Glasgow. In August 1939 he was called up straight from school into the H.L.I. He was billeted at North Kelvinside School in Maryhill where he later taught for 29 years.

Serving as a PT Instructor, he was stationed in various places in England until 1942 when he volunteered for the Parachute Regiment, being transferred to 12th (Yorkshire) Battalion for training. His travels with the 6th Airborne Division began with a drop behind the German lines at 01.20 hrs on D-Day, where they reinforced the assault troops at Pegasus Bridge. They went on to fight battles at Ranville, Longeval and Breville with great loss of lives, around 75 men remaining out of 700.

After returning to the UK to replenish battalion numbers they were sent to Belgium to the aid of the Americans fighting the Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes in severe winter conditions. Their next jump was over the Rhine, spearheading the advance across Germany by progressing 400 miles to the Baltic, where they were the first troops to meet up with the Russians.

After some leave they were sent to the Far East - Malaysia, Singapore and Java until March 1946 when he returned to be de-mobbed and train as a P.E. Teacher.

Ernest didn't talk of his war experiences, and only started attending reunions following the 50th anniversary in 1995. His family only learnt recently, that he had brought down an enemy plane at Horsa Bridge, Longeval on the River Orne -with a Bren gun! A letter from his comrade, Eddie Ogden describes the scene.

"My platoon -the mortars, had to make our way towards the river bridge. The river was on our left and on our right was a steep slope, so we had to

stick to the path. We could not hurry as beside our own kit I carried a 3-inch mortar barrel weighing 441bs and two 10lb bombs. As we clambered up to the bridge, over came the Jerry fighter. Everybody dashed here and there, and there was "Jock" with a Bren gun firing away, a cheer went up as the plane was hit, and smoke poured from it."

After the war Ernest enjoyed many outdoor activities -rowing, rugby, sailing, skiing, pony trekking, climbing. He was an active member of the community, Church Elder, Boys Brigade Captain, and a member of the Scottish Country Dance Team.

He married Rose in 1963 and enjoyed a happy family life raising three children (Carole Valerie & Graham), and now has grandchildren in both Milngavie and Australia.

Ernest retired in 1980 after teaching for 33 years, and continued to live an active life, including, bowls, badminton -and took up curling as his main sport at the age of 70!

He joined the local Glasgow Parachute Regimental Association in 1995 where he was honoured to renew his acquaintance with Brigadier Alistair Pearson who was one of the officers he had served under (the others being General KT Darling and General Richard Gale). In 1999 he met up with 12th Battalion in Scarborough -after 50 years.

Even though his health had declined over the past 6 years, he was still game enough to take up wheelchair curling this year (2004) at the ripe old age of 84! Ernest Shedden was a man who was blessed with a very well balanced personality. He threw himself wholeheartedly into every activity and yet there seemed to be a calmness and contentment at the very centre of his life.

His funeral was on 14 August 2004. His family were extremely moved by the presence of the 17 Veteran Para's from the Central Scotland Branch of the Parachute Regimental Association who honoured Ernest by their presence and acted as pallbearers. They too had "stood at the door".

SICK PARADE



The following members are suffering ill health:

- ♦ **Walter Howatt**
- ♦ **Alex Ferguson**
- ♦ **Jack Connor (on the mend)**
- ♦ **Denis Inglis**
- ♦ **Walter Irvine**
- ♦ **D. (Mushy) Mc Kendrick**

STOP PRESS: Since printing, Mushy has been taken into the Royal Infirmary.

For an update on Drayton's health etc please call Mike French on 0141 558 1425.

Jack, who is much improved sends his thanks to all those who have helped him during his illness. He particularly wants to thank the medics in The Southern General's Ward 10, involved in testing for prostate cancer. Apparently he would rather look them in the eye next time! He also wishes to thank Tracy, Roddie and Hillary at The Victoria Hospital's Rehabilitation Unit, especially the girls, for reminding him what a heartbeat sounds like!

Do you know any of these lads? If so, why not send him a "get well soon" card or letter. We are sure it would be most gratefully received. If you need an address, contact the secretary on 0141 954 1213 or email: Airborne@tmcourt041.fsnet.co.uk

If any member knows of any of our brethren who are ill and/or in need of financial help, please contact the Welfare Secretary, or failing that, another member of the committee, with the details.

MEDAL / RECORD OF SERVICE / WAR PENSION ENQUIRIES!!

Need help? Contact the Secretary:

0141 224 3075

Diary Dates

2004

JANUARY

December 3rd

Regimental Council Meeting.

December 11th

15 Coy. 4 PARA, Christmas party

December 25th

Have a very good time!



The next edition of SLIPSTREAM will be out on 6th March 2005. If you have any stories, photographs, etc., please pass them to Terry McCourt or e-mail or post direct to the editor.

Some items may require editing to fit the space available. If photos, etc., are posted then please include SAE. Computer images should, if possible be saved in TIF or GIF format.

Editor's Contact Details:

Davie Howie,
11, Dunn Street,
Dalmuir,
Clydebank.
G81 4BQ

Tel. 0141 562 9185
Mob. 0777 329 5930

E-mail:
d.howie@ntlworld.com

Thanks to all who contributed.

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