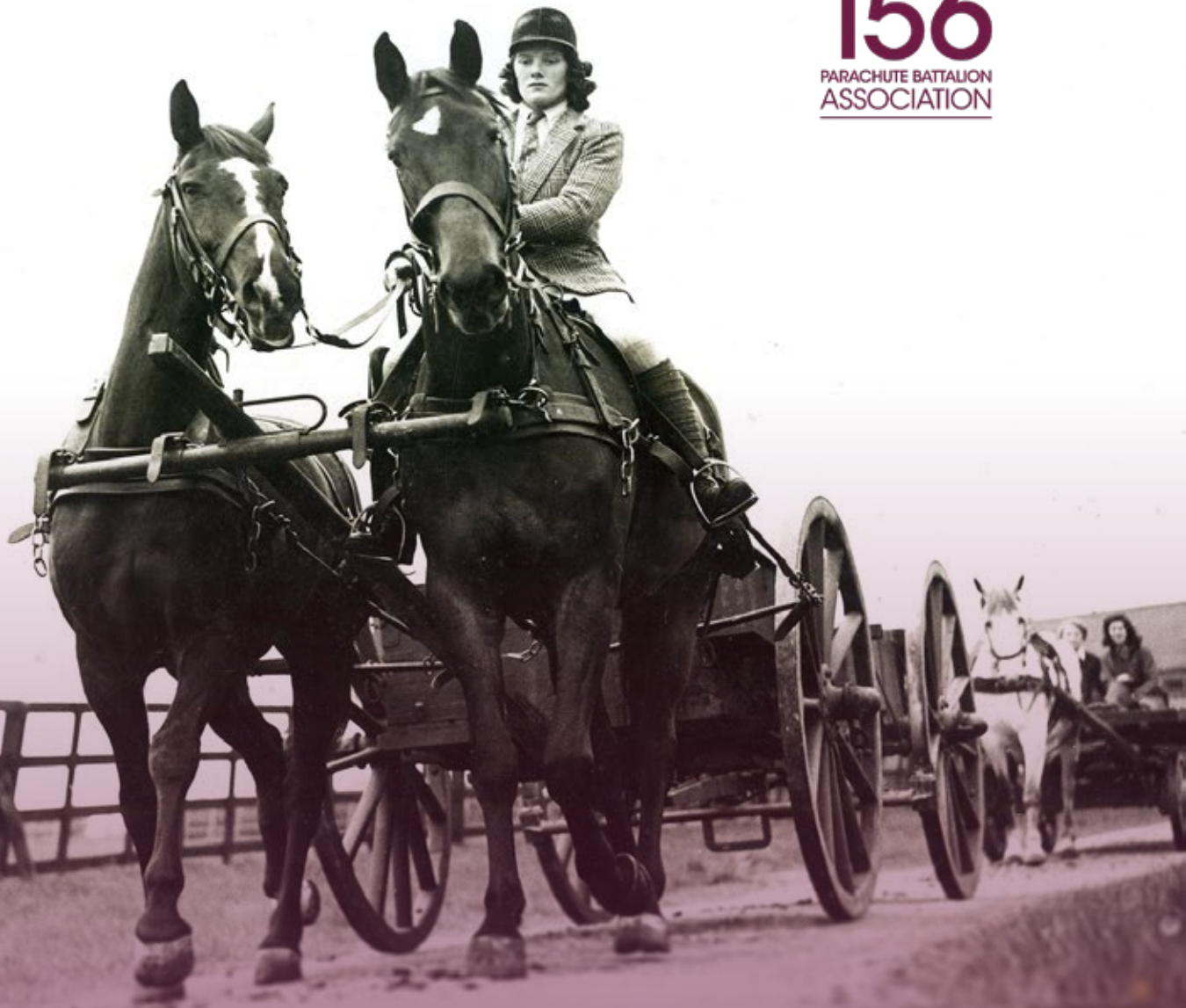




151
156
PARACHUTE BATTALION
ASSOCIATION



151/156 Parachute Battalion Association

Newsletter 6 | November 2023



The bust of Col John Waddy created by sculptor Vivien Mallock and commissioned by Alan Curtis is now on display in the drawing room of the Airborne Museum 'Hartenstein'.

Cover image – Riders from the Remount Depot, Melton Mowbray 1943



Dear Members,

The newsletter covers our Reunions both in Arnhem in September and in Melton Mowbray on 6th/7th October 2023. The Melton reunion was held in conjunction with the Defence Animal Training Regiment, part of the Royal Army Veterinary Corps, which has a link to the 156 Parachute Battalion going back to the war years.

When the 151 was formed in India in 1941, it gained the nickname of ‘Lindsay’s Lancers’ after its first CO – Lieutenant Colonel Martin Lindsay – bought horses for all his officers out of his own pocket. Lindsay then went further and had the Battalion build a three-mile race course with fences just outside Delhi. By organising regular race meetings – where his officers risked life and limb – it demonstrated their courage and at the same time provided a good day out for all whilst also improving morale, which had been Lindsay’s plan all along.

In March 1943, Lieutenant Colonel Sir Richard Des Voeux took over as CO. When the Battalion returned to England he carried on in a similar vein to Lindsay using horses to boost morale. This was evident when, following the presentation of his plan for Market Garden to his senior commanders, he arranged a ride out using horses from the Remount Depot in Melton. He probably envisaged that it would be the last occasion for some where they were all together. This would, inevitably, be the case.

The link to the Remount Depot in Melton goes further as several officers of the Battalion found their future wives there – Company Commanders John Waddy and Geoffrey Powell were cases in point.

At our Reunion in October at Saltby Airfield, RSM Mathew Eade gave a short introduction on the role of the DATR today. Debbie Nicholls, Brian Riley and

Colonel Richard Dixon-Warren spoke about the new plan to create an Airborne Trail in South Kesteven. In September 1944, Saltby was the main departure point for paratroopers bound for Arnhem, i.e. the 2nd, the 156 and the 11th Parachute Battalions, as well as more than half of the Polish Brigade.

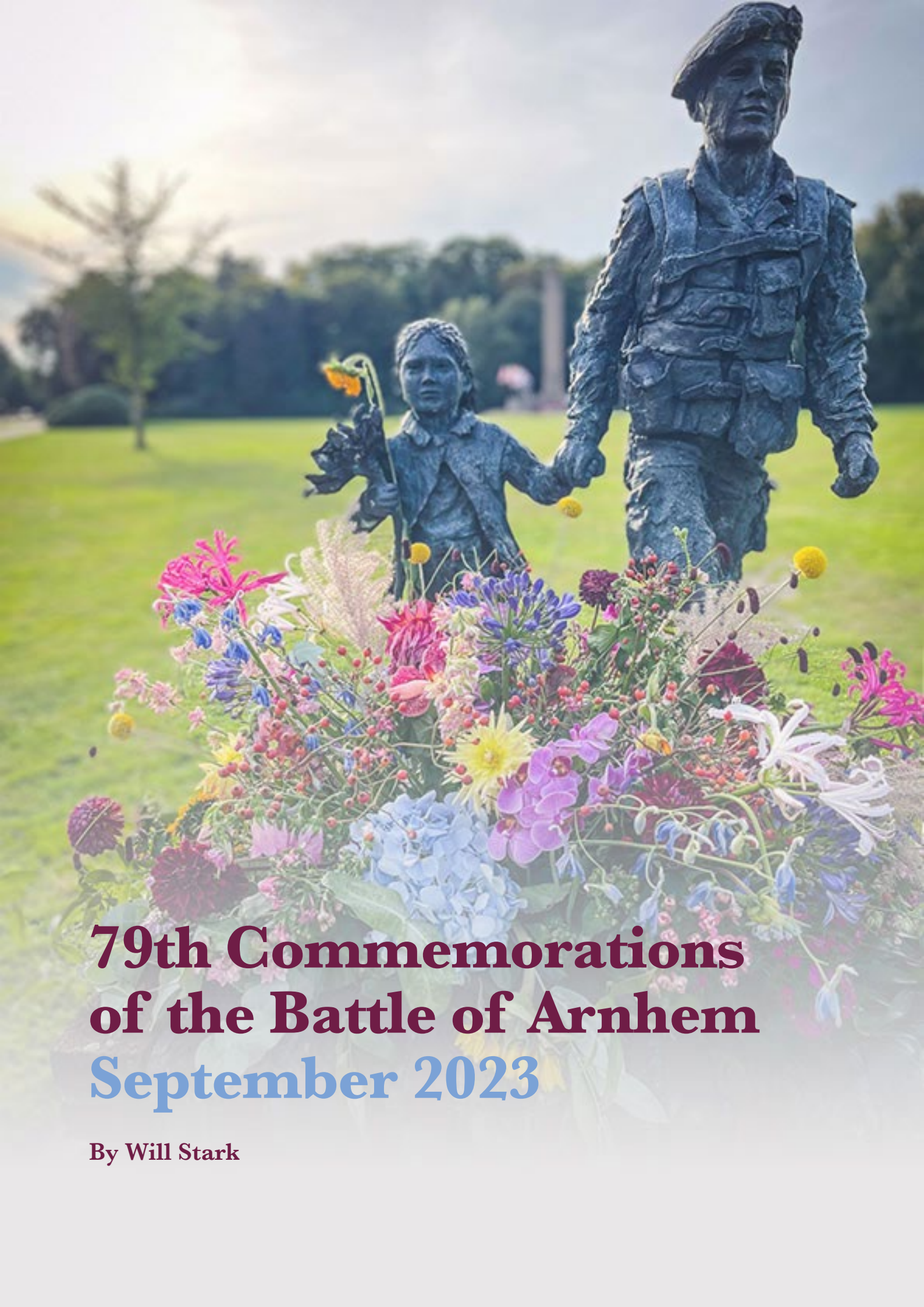
Following the service conducted by Chaplain The Reverend Brian McAvoy at Saltby, our members were invited to the DATR where CO Lieutenant Colonel Mike Robinson gave a talk about the service the Regiment provides. This was followed by a demonstration using the attack dogs trained at the centre, as well as visiting the horses and the farrier.

Our dinner on the Friday evening was held at Sysonby Knoll Hotel attended by family and friends of the 156. The 60 attendees heard two excellent speakers: Lieutenant Colonel Mike Robinson and author Rupert Hague-Holmes.

The following day our remembrance service took place in St Mary's Church, Melton Mowbray. This was attended by around 200 people, including the daughter of Lieutenant Colonel Sir Richard Des Voeux, Elizabeth Aird, and his grandson James Pockney, Leicester DL Lieutenant Colonel David Young and Melton's Mayor and Lady Mayoress Alan and Jane Hewson.

Music was provided by two choirs and two soloists and the speakers were Martin Wenner (son of Captain Michael Wenner), author Rupert Hague-Holmes and Raven Wenner. RSM Eade spoke of his experiences serving with Special Forces in Afghanistan with his dog Radio, who has been put forward for the Dicken Medal. Brian McAvoy conducted our service for the 10th year with exceptional warmth and enhanced with his Irish charm.

Next year will be the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Arnhem which coincides with the disbandment of the 151/156 Parachute Battalion. A very special occasion is in store.



79th Commemorations of the Battle of Arnhem September 2023

By Will Stark

I expected the commemorations to be a little quieter this year since it is the year before the 80th Anniversary and the fact that we didn't have any 151/156 Association events organised. I was quite wrong and I attended numerous events along with a number of 151/156 Association members.

Thursday 14th September

First up was the wreath laying in memory of the men from the battalion at The Hollow (the 4th Parachute Brigade marker post) on the Valkenburglaan. With a group of just over a dozen, the wreath was laid by Michael Hurst and Michel van As, a Dutch friend of the Hursts and of 156. Michael Hurst's father, Pte William Hurst, of 10 platoon, C Company was part of the group of a hundred or so men that bayonet charged into and later out of the Hollow on the 20th September 1944.



Michael Hurst & Michel van As laying the wreath. The wreath reads "In memory of all those brave men who fought and died near here in September 1944".



*The group at The Hollow. **Left to right** – Will Stark, Leslie Hurst, Roy Henderson, Michael Hurst, Michel van As, Oliver Storey, Tina Henderson, Daryl Henderson, Holly Henderson, Isabelle and Tanya Storey.*



***Left** – Pte William Hurst prior to joining the 156 Parachute Battalion (image courtesy M Hurst).*



***Right** – Michael Hurst explains the action in and around The Hollow on 20th September 1944.*

151/156 Parachute Battalion Association

Next was the short journey up the road through northern Oosterbeek to the 156 Battalion marker post on the Dreijenseweg. Youth took over the wreath laying here with Oliver Storey (great grandson of Pte Duncan Henderson of C Company) taking on the honours. And what a grand job he did too.

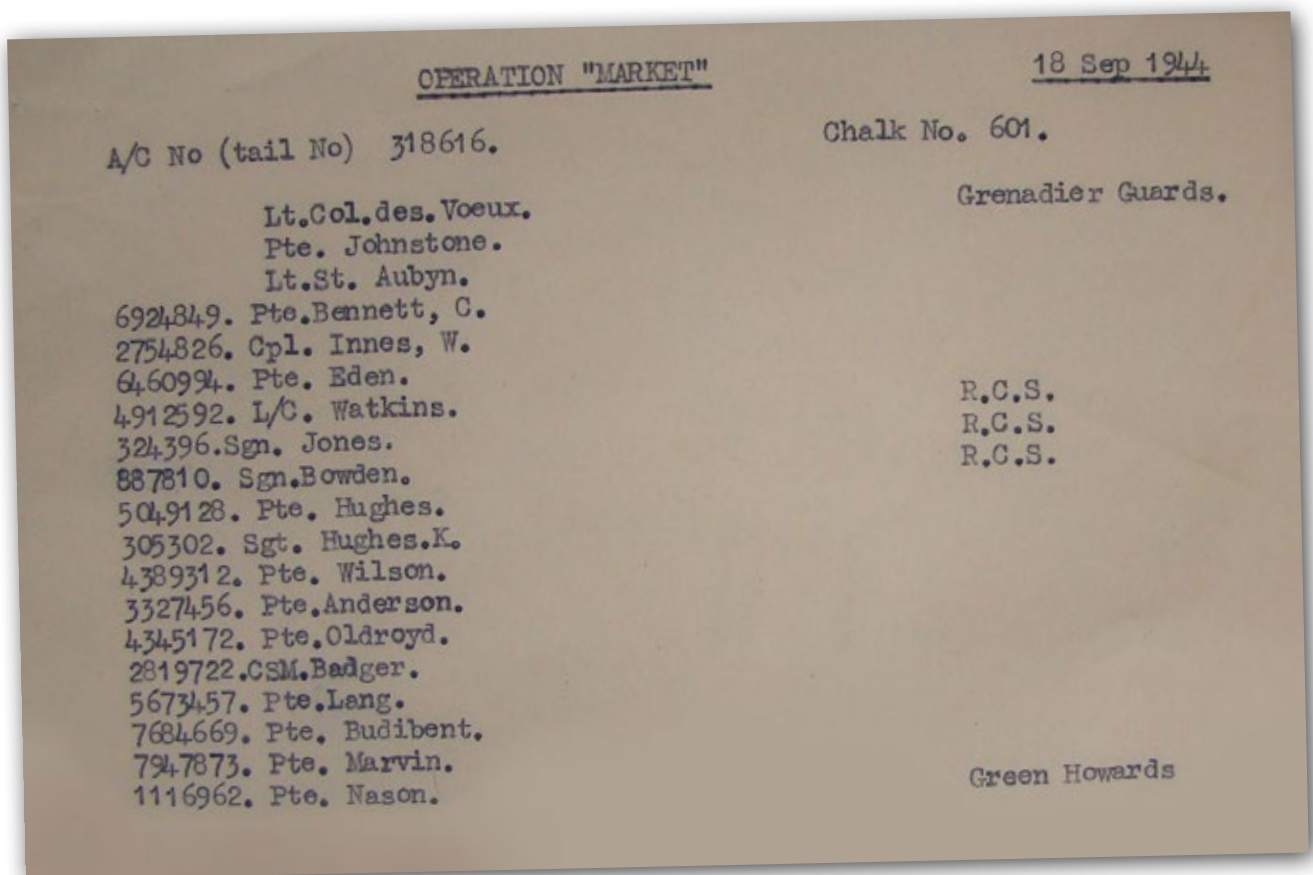


Top left – 156 Bn marker post. **Top right** – Oliver Storey lays the wreath at the marker post. **Bottom left** – Oliver and Isabelle, the great grandchildren of Pte Duncan Henderson at the 156 Bn marker post. **Bottom right** – The wreath-laying group.



Friday 15th September

On Friday we woke up to a cracking warm and sunny day and perfect for the Arnhem 1944 Fellowship battlefield tour. After the short ceremony at the Needle opposite the Hartenstein I was introduced to the Nason family (Wayne, Tracy & Jade) by Alec Wilson of Friends of the Tenth. Wayne Nason's grandfather was Pte Fred Nason of HQ Company who was on the same Dakota (Chalk 601) as Lt Col Des Voeux. I agreed to meet them after the Fellowship walk and take them around the area.



Chalk 601 plane manifest with Pte Nason at the bottom and possibly last out of the plane. (Image courtesy of John Howes)

The Fellowship walk this year was looking at 1st Battalion, The Border Regiment positions on the western edge of the Oosterbeek perimeter conducted by Fellowship President Dave Locke and Trustee Glenn Schoen.



Top – Discussing the positions of C Coy, 1st Bn, The Border Regiment.

Left – Will Stark & Roy Henderson show off some hi-vis fashion.

Right – Memorials to the 1st Bn, The Border Regiment & 4th Bn, The Dorset Regiment on the Westerbouwing

Bottom – The group gathers at the positions of 12 platoon, B Coy, 1st Bn, The Border Regiment.

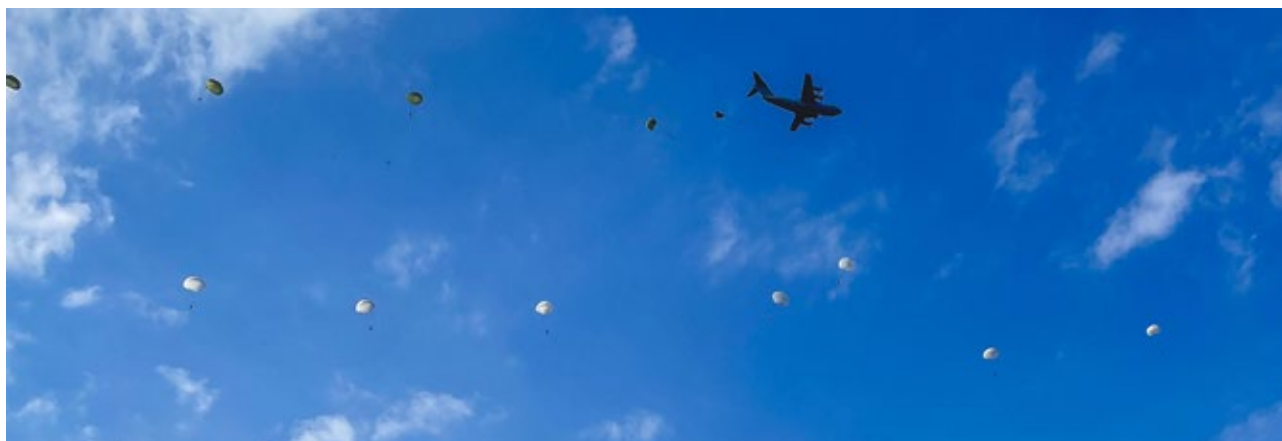




Wayne and Tracy Nason, with their daughter Jade (on the left) at the 4th Parachute Brigade marker post at The Hollow.

Saturday 16th September

Saturday morning saw us up early and off to Ginkel Heath for the parachute drops and service. Again it was another cracking sunny day. It was good to see so many 151/156 Association members in the Fellowship tent.





The service on Ginkel Heath viewed from the Arnhem Fellowship tent.



The 156 Battalion, The Parachute Regiment was well represented at Ginkel Heath with relatives of Pte J Sneddon, Pte A Munro, Pte D Henderson, Pte J McGinty, Pte J Cole & Pte F Nason in attendance.

After the service at Ginkel Heath I then cycled the route the 156 Battalion took on the evening of the 18th September 1944 all the way to the blocking line on the Dreijenseweg. It was here that I met up with Steven McCumisky (nephew of Pte A Munro), Alistair Hill (nephew of Pte J Sneddon) and his father-in-law Billy Muir. Steven was laying a wreath in memory of his uncle near the location where he was reported killed in action.



Alec Munro 1944

Pte Alexander (Alec) Munro, Army No 14273032, was from Wishaw, Lanarkshire in Scotland, the same place where Pte Jimmy (Jock) Sneddon came from. Alec enlisted into the General Service Corps and volunteered for airborne forces. He successfully passed his parachute training at Ringway on course 102, which ran from Feb 7th–Feb 18th 1944. His course report states that Alec was a ‘Hard worker, confident, good performer’. He was then posted to 5 Platoon, A Coy, 156 Battalion, The Parachute Regiment. He flew to Arnhem in Chalk 608 * on the 18th September.

Alec was reported Killed in Action on the Dreijenseweg on the morning of the 19th September at the same location as 4 Platoon commander Lt Watling. Alec was only 22 years old. He has no known grave and is remembered on Panel 9 at the Groesbeek Memorial to the Missing, southeast of Nijmegen.

Lt Watling’s first burial was in a garden at the corner of the Dreijenseweg and Van Limburg Stirumweg along with a number of other unidentified soldiers. It is possible that Alec Munro is one of these men and may rest next to Lt Watling in the Arnhem & Oosterbeek War Cemetery but I suspect we will never know.

** Numbered 698 in the official Chalk lists but this is probably a typo as it doesn’t fit in with the sequence of chalk numbers for the 156 Battalion.*

Image – Airborne Assault Duxford



Alec (Jock) Munro's signature on the rear of the photo

Ringway course 102. Is it possible that Alec Munro is in the 3rd Row, 7th from the left?



Alistair Hill, Steven McCumisky & Billy Muir with the wreath dedicated to Alec Munro.



Alexander (Alec) Munro (14273032)
4th Para Brigade, 156 Battalion
A Company, 5th Platoon
From Wishaw, Lanarkshire Scotland

On the morning of Tuesday 19th Sept 1944 at
around 8.30am near this spot during 4 para, 156
btn, A companies assault against the blocking
line Alec Munro made the ultimate sacrifice in his
service to his country. He remains at rest in
the woods gone but certainly not forgotten. Scotland
salutes you, the people of Wishaw salute you and
your extended family salute you. Rest easy
knowing you live on in memory through the
generations and always will.

Steven McCumisky & William McCumisky,
Sept 2023

***Alexander (Alec) Munro (14273032), 4th Para Brigade, 156 Battalion, A Company, 5 Platoon
From Wishaw, Lanarkshire Scotland***

On the morning of Tuesday 19th Sept 1944 at around 8.30am near this spot during 4 para, 156 btn, A Company's assault against the blocking line Alec Munro made the ultimate sacrifice in his service to his country. He remains at rest in the woods gone but certainly not forgotten. Scotland salutes you, the people of Wishaw salute you and your extended family salute you. Rest easy knowing you live on in our memory through the generations and always will.

Steven McCumisky & William McCumisky, Sept 2023

Sunday 17th September

The weather finally broke on Sunday morning and I thought we were in for another soggy service at the Arnhem & Oosterbeek War Cemetery. Luckily the rain stopped just in time and the well attended service remained dry.



No umbrellas required!



The standard bearers' parade



Alistair Hill with the flower child at his uncle's grave



Alistair Hill's uncle, Pte Jimmy (Jock) Sneddon



Major M Page, HQ Coy, KIA 20th September 1944



Lt Col Sir R Des Voeux, KIA 20th September 1944



Pte A Eardley, 5 Platoon, A Coy, KIA 19th September 1944



CSM R Badger, HQ Coy, KIA 20th September 1944

Monday 18th September

My final duty at the 79th commemorations for the 151/156 Parachute Battalion Association and The Arnhem 1944 Fellowship was the service at the Ede Mausoleum to remember the sacrifice of the Dutch Resistance. The Ede mausoleum is the final resting place for over 40 resistance fighters during the Second World War, many who helped members of the 156 Bn hide and then escape after the battle of Arnhem.

The service was conducted by our friend from the Cornwall branch of the Parachute Regimental Association, Tom French. I was given the honour of reading out the Kohima. A naughty tippie of whisky was supplied by Jenny French in memory of Tony Hibbert who would have loved such shenanigans.





**151/156 Parachute
Battalion Association
Reunion
October 2023**

Friday 6th October – Saltby Airfield

Following the warm welcome and lunch at the Buckminster Gliding Club, Chaplain The Reverend Brian McAvoy conducted the Service of Remembrance for the families and friends of the 156 where wreaths were laid by Warrant Officer Ian Chick, 4 Para, and Air Marshal Philip Sturley.



A group of around 60 gathered at Saltby Airfield this year.



Top – Left to right: Capt Bladon RAVC (who played the Last Post); Michelle Kerry-O'Reilly; RSM Mathew Eade DATR; Tracey Bettaney.

Bottom – Flying was paused for Paul Turner to provide trips in his 1940s jeep along the runway. Next to Paul Turner is Will Stark's mother, Margaret (daughter of Pte John McGinty), and seated behind is Will's father, John, and Will's wife, Abi.



Chaplain The Reverend Brian McAvoy talks of the 156 who did not return from Arnhem. On the right Air Marshal Sturley looks on. Both men served in the Royal Air Force, spending time at nearby RAF Cottesmore, which the 156 used for much of their parachute training in 1944. On the other side of Brian McAvoy is the Leicester PRA Standard Bearer, Mike Mann.



Friday 6th October – Remount Barracks



Two members of the Defence Animal Training Regiment demonstrate the skills of the specially trained Belgian Malinois dogs.



The DATR buy and train horses for our military and police services. With up to 300 horses that need regular exercise and new shoes every six to eight weeks, the base is always a hive of industry.





Commanding Officer Lt Col Mike Robinson giving a talk about the role of the horses to a party of 156 Association members. Left to right: Roy and Tina Henderson; Peter Shepherd; Stephen Sykes; Jonathan Taylor; Debbie Nicholls (Military Communications Officer for South Kesteven Council and niece of Lt 'Loopy' Levine 2nd Parachute Battalion Arnhem); and Jean Shakespeare-Taylor.



Saturday 7th October – St Mary’s Church, Melton Mowbray



Above – Left to right: James Pockney (grandson of Lt Col Sir Richard Des Voeux); Rosie Anderson (daughter of Col Geoffrey Powell); Elizabeth Aird (daughter of Lt Col Sir Richard Des Voeux); Stephanie and Ellie-May Hancox (granddaughter and great granddaughter of Sgt John O’Reilly); Pony Pegasus with Pony Major Jamie Richards; Col David Young, Deputy Lieutenant Leicestershire; Standard Bearer Brian Fare; and Michelle Kerry-O’Reilly.

Below – Left to right: Abi Stark; John and Margaret Stark; Pony Pegasus with Pony Major Jamie Richards; Standard Bearer Brian Fare; Paul Turner; Jean Shakespeare-Taylor (niece of Lt Billie Wood); and her son Jonathan Taylor.





Above – Dog handlers from the DATR joined us outside the church.

Below – Wreaths laid, the first by Dinah Wickson, who lost her father Pte Edward Oliver (whom she never met), killed in an RAF bombing raid on Berlin when he was a POW; and the second by Elizabeth Aird who lost her father Lt Col Sir Richard Des Voeux at Arnhem.





Martin Wenner (son of Capt Michael Wenner)



Violinist Sarah Cresswell plays 'The Lark Ascending' by Ralph Vaughan Williams.



View of St Mary's Church with the Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Melton Mowbray, Alan and Jane Hewson.



RSM Mathew Eade of the DATR talking of his time serving with Special Forces in Afghanistan with his dog Radio.





I WAS NAIVED
I WAS SICK
I WAS IN PRISON

ORQMS RG BADGER
Pte D BARRETT
Pte CE BENNETT
Pte JA BIRD
Pte J BOYD
Pte GT BROWNLOW
Sgt GF BRUCE
Pte JW BUDIBENT
Pte A BUTLER
Lieut HMA CAMBIER
Pte MH CARNEY
Pte JR CARTER
LCpl JF CLAYTON
Pte H CLAYTON
Pte JT COBB
Pte FR COLEMAN
Pte E COOPER
Pte S COWIE
Pte CH CREASY
Lieut J DAVISON
Lieut LD DELACOUR
Lieut Col Sir RICHARD
des VOELUX Bt
Lieut WS DONALDSON
Pte WH DOWSETT
Pte GMW DRAKE

Pte WP DUNCAN
Pte A EARDLEY
Pte AW EVANS
Pte JLS FISHER
Pte HE FLETCHER
Pte DE FORD
LCpl R FROST
Pte R FULLER
Pte DL GEORGE
Pte J GEORGE
Sgt JM GIBBON
Pte GH GIBSON
Sgt G GIBSON
Pte J GIBSON
Pte J GIBSON
Pte J GIBSON

Pte S IRONS
Pte EE JOHNS
Pte R KILLINGWORTH
Sgt JC KINSLEY-SMITH
Pte D LANG
Pte GW LAYTON
Cpl W LEACH
Pte HW LEWINGTON
Sgt O LILLY
LCpl E LYNAS
Pte D MALCOLM
Pte J MANNING
Pte SK MARRIOTT
CSM N MCKINNON
Pte A MUNRO
Pte E OLIVER
Major MS PAGE
Sgt ED PARKER
Pte F PARKIN
Pte HJ PHILPOTTS
Pte W POLLOCK
Pte H PURTON
Pte EV RITSON
Pte W RHODES
Pte TPW ROGERS
Pte SAUNDERS
Pte L SLACK
Pte L SMITH
Pte WH SMITH
Pte J SNEDDON
Pte H STANYER
LCpl C STEAD
Pte T STEVENS
LCpl ATG STIRLING
Pte G TANSLEY
Pte RA TAPPIN
Pte P TAYLOR
Pte DG THORP
Pte AD TRUEMAN
Pte G TUTTON
Pte L WAGENMAKER
Sgt AO WALKER
Pte J WALLACE
Sgt W WASLEY
Lieut SE WATLING
Cpl RJ WEST
LCpl FV WESTBURY
Sgt B WHITE
Pte AL WILLIAMS
Pte JM WILSON
Pte J WILSON
Lieut RW WOOD

Steven McCumisky & Alistair Hill, the nephews of the two Wishaw men killed at Arnhem, Pte A Munro & Pte J Sneddon.



Post Reunion Magic.

Written by John O'Reilly & Will Stark
Designed by Will Stark
Photographs by Will and John
Edited by Rosie Anderson
www.156para.co.uk

Rosie Anderson
rosieanderson@gmail.com
0208 788 0999

John O'Reilly
john.oreilly@thorotonpublishing.com
01949 851354

Will Stark
will@156para.co.uk
07854 687772



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151/156 Parachute Battalion

Delhi, October 1941 - Melton Mowbray, October 1944