



299 ASSOCIATION

Affiliated to the AEA, Charity No: 1009201

The aims and ideals of this association are decreed as being:

Promoting and maintaining contact with past and present members of 299 Squadron RE.

Promoting and encouraging such events as may bring pleasure to all members of this association.

Relieving where practicable any hardship or distress suffered by a member, or dependent(s) of a member of this association.

Promoting and maintaining contact with the members of 131 Independent Squadron RE; and all other Airborne/Commando associations.

W. Dick, (Seadog), 2/8/2002

Date: 2nd April 2015

Meeting & Social Night

(Held at the Ship Inn, Dunswell, Nr. Beverley)

Welcome and 'Roll Call'

The chairman welcomed everybody to the Ship Inn for this short meeting, the main purpose for this evening's get together is to celebrate **Les Ransom's forthcoming 93rd Birthday**, (5th April), a total surprise for him, and a good excuse for the rest of us in enjoying an evening with good friends. Names and apologies were entered into the records.

Minutes from the last meeting were proposed as a true record?

Proposed by – **S. Hoyle**

Seconded by – **P. Robson**

Treasure's Report:

Martin sends his apologies for his absence this evening, he informs me that our funds are still healthy, but he **NOW** needs the total numbers for booking the ferry / hotel for our Arnhem Pilgrimage. Time is running out; therefore please get your deposits in.

Correspondence:

Norland Bell Memorial Service: **Syd Hoyle** gave notice of another service to be held at The Holy Trinity at 1430hrs on Sunday 19th April 2015. It will follow the same format as last year with the addition of the tug "**Yorkshireman**" doing a couple of circuits at the "Pier Head" (**Minerva**) then into the pub for a lager sandwich. The usual high ranking and very important people are to be expected, but more importantly enough of the lads, (South Atlantic Vets), will attend the service in what looks like becoming an annual event. March past and salute after the service. Attend under your own steam; the association is very busy this month, and dare not try and organize another function.

Some of you may be interested in a tour of Hull's old town and its many attractions with these Falkland vets, on the Saturday evening before the service, these guys just love to take in all Hull's cultured heritage, for more info see Syd.

Apology: In the last month's minutes I misquoted the Exhortation as "They shall not grow old" whereas it should be: "They shall grow not old". Well spotted TC and thanks.

Knights of St. Columba: letter received from this organization addressed to the OC 1Troop, 299 Squadron RE and has been passed on to this association for our support. The Chairman filled in the details about this man, but the subject surrounds a WW1 hero from Hull: **The Reverend Chaplain William Finn (1875 – 1915)**. Bishop Terence Draine will say a Centenary Memorial Mass for Fr. Finn in The Sacred Heart, Southcoates Lane, Hull, at noon on Saturday April 25th 2015.

Extract from the letter:

"On behalf of Fr. Minskip, (Port Chaplain for Hull), I should like to extend an invitation to representatives of your officers and men to attend this mass, as I am sure you would like to join the Lord Mayor of Hull in honouring a soldier / priest who was considered one of Hull's bravest sons. Yours M. R Bell, (Sec. KoSC)" I have replied offering 299's support.

N/B: *The Knights of Saint Columba is a Catholic fraternal service organization, the largest of its kind in Britain. Formed in Glasgow in 1919, it was named in honour of St. Columba, a Christian missionary from Ireland who helped to introduce Christianity to the people of Northern Britain.*

Cromwell Lock Memorial Service: Letter received from **John Lee, (AEA President)**, updating us all with the situation as it stands at this present time. The letter was read out to the meeting with everything still at the planning stage; John will keep us informed on the future developments.

Social Calendar:

Battle of Britain Memorial Flight at RAF Coningsby on the 16th April 2015, for full details see dates for your diary.

Important note: This association has to give the RAF a full list of names & numbers of those attending this group function at least 10 days before the day of our visit, for security reasons, this after all is still an operational base, therefore if you have any doubts about your intentions to attend, please let me know immediately, it will make my life easier. Tel: 01757 268188.

Don't just fail to turn up, this takes the place of someone who would jump at the chance in taking up this privileged opportunity, please think of others at all times.

Les Ransom's birthday bash: a great success, **Les** was taken completely by surprise. The Ship Inn was packed to its gunnels with family, friends and association men, and thanks to **Syd**, a group of special friends from the **Grimsby & Cleethorpes PRA** joined us all in wishing him well, such is the love and respect for the man.



Bill Drayton

Les Ransom

Syd Hoyle

The 299 Association Choir!!!



Tony Weldon Chris Shillito Les Ransom Bill Drayton Paul Sims

The association have a lot of people to thank for putting on this special night; **John Palmer (Jonno)** and **all his staff** for rigging out his pub with WW2 memorabilia, putting on a tremendous spread and meeting the needs of a lot of very thirsty people.

Special thanks must go to **Tony Irwin / Charlie Lickiss**, also **Charlie's wife Darleen** for their part in producing a framed poem titled; **Heroes of Arnhem** written in both Dutch and English, showing an airborne motif and a photo of **Les**. This was presented to **Les** on behalf of the association by **Tony**, a very thoughtful gesture.

Glenn Ratten and Tony Costello for taking and sending me the photo's shown in these minutes, and all of you, the **members** for turning out to wish **Les** a happy birthday. Thank you.

Chairman's Comments:

William Finn, a hero from Hull

Bill Drayton proceeded to give a brief history on the life of **Chaplain Fr Finn**; he was born in Hull and ordained into the Catholic priesthood, serving as a Curate at Middlesbrough Cathedral, Chaplain at Houghton Hall, and as Parish Priest at Market Weighton, East Yorkshire. He enlisted in the army at the outbreak of WW1 and was commissioned as Chaplain to the 1st Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers. This Battalion along with Anzac troops took part in the Gallipoli Campaign of April 1915. The Battalion landed on "V" beach on Saturday 25th April 1915, Fr Finn had been ordered by his Colonel to stay on the landing craft out of harm's way, remember, he would have been 40yrs old. The men were cut down in their hundreds and upon seeing the carnage Fr. Finn climbed over the side to help with the wounded, receive their acts of contrition and administer absolution to the dying men, shot several times he tried to discharge his duties before being mortally wounded by shell fragments, the Battalion was almost wiped out, only 11 men survived the campaign. His OC put him up for the VC, but this was refused by the MOD on the grounds that he disobeyed a direct order in going ashore, however he was awarded a posthumous Military Cross for his actions on this day, the first Catholic Chaplain to be killed in WW1.

A soldier who survived the carnage wrote home with the following: *"Dear Joe, the worst of all was we had a priest who came along with us. He was in the boat, he insisted on coming with us, as he said he would be wanted for the poor boys. They were all calling for him, but the poor priest could do nothing for them. He got out of the boat afterwards and made a great run for the beach, but the Turks got him as soon as he landed, for he was hit four times. He died that evening, but he was still asking for us up to the time he died"*

The Sacred Heart Church in Hull, Yorkshire, was built in 1926-7, and paid for by Councillor Frank Finn KCSG, the then Lord Mayor of Hull, as a memorial to his brother, Father William Finn, killed, serving as a Chaplain in heroic circumstances. Fr. Finn often spoke of himself as a Yorkshire man with a strain of Celtic blood, an Irishman battered on the Yorkshire Moors; he was one of eight children, his parents migrating to Hull from County Mayo in Ireland.

Items from members:

Johnny Mace has been to see **"Beau"** and reports that he's holding his own; he's getting over his bypass op. Just had a new pace maker installed and waiting and hoping for a keyhole job for his aneurysms ASAP. We all know **Beau**, and you can't keep him down for long, he should sail through his MOT after this lot, and it hasn't cost him a penny. We wish him well.

Tony Weldon, "Weldo" looked up **Bud Pougher** and reports that his recovery from surgery is going well but he's struggling a bit with the chemo / radio therapy. Only a couple of weeks treatment left to go, then everything should be on the up. Again we wish him well.

Tony Irwin, (Archivist) reports that **Fred Grey, (AEA Archivist & Author)**, has made contact with him with regards to 299's history, **Fred** is a Hull man and served with 299 mid – late 50's, before going regular with 9 Sqn. He is over in Canada for a while but upon return threatens to attend one of the associations meetings, bringing with him some of his 299 memorabilia, as with all 299 men he will be made most welcome.

Next Meeting: AGM/Reunion to be held at the "Minerva" Corporation Pier, Hull, at 2000hrs on Friday 1st of May 2015.

The association, (that's all of us), asks for a massive turn out for this meeting, not only for the voting in of the next committee, but the intension of taking this associations group photo for prosperity, and keep sake, also a chance to meet up with a few old friends. Dress; smart casual, Squadron ties, Blazers if you have, but if you have to come straight from work that's also OK, please just come. Remember time waits for no man.

The Chairman reminded the meeting once again, and for the last time, that all committee places will become vacant at the next meeting; if you are interested in standing for a job please make sure your written request is given to the Secretary at least 21 days before the AGM, nothing will be accepted after this date. Thank you.

Dates for your diary:

Visitation to the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight: RAF Coningsby: 16th April 2015

Leaving time is 0800hrs from outside the Hull Truck Theatre in Fernsway, Hull.
Dress: smart casual, Sqn ties, Blazers if you have.

Norland Bell Memorial Service in The Holy Trinity, Hull at 1430hrs on Sunday 19th April 2015

Centenary Memorial Mass for Reverend Chaplain William Finn: to be held in The Sacred Heart, Southcoates Lane, Hull, at 1200hrs on Saturday 25th April 2015.

Standards are to be paraded, Dress: uniforms for serving members, non-serving members: Berets, Sqn. Tie, Blazers if you have and Medals. Muster at the "Ravensar" public house, (car parking), at 1100hrs. Refreshments will be served after the Mass.

299's AGM/Reunion at the Minerva on the 1st May 2015 (Group Photo), All welcome.

Commando Sappers Reunion 15 – 17 May 2015 at the Royal Marine Base, Chivenor, Devon.

Serving & former Commando trained members of 131 Indep Cdo Sqn, please do your best to attend this fantastic event.

Email: 131cdo@armymail.mod.uk for an application form by return, and/or see 299 Secretary for further details.

The itinerary reads: Friday night in the bar, update, photo and military stands on Saturday morning, followed by the usual Veterans vs. Serving golf match, REA charity raffle, bar and live band playing a journey through the decades.

Airborne Forces Day at Eden Camp on the 11th July 2015

Dress: if you wear your maroon beret admission is free.
Standards are to be paraded.

Summer Ball at The Middleton Barracks, Hull on the 1st or 2nd of August 2015 (Details to follow)

Arnhem Pilgrimage 2015

One trip this year: 17th – 21st September 2015

Wreath laying at Cromwell Lock: 27th September 2015, (provisionally)

It is the 40th Anniversary of the Cromwell Lock disaster when 10 of our Scottish friends perished whilst taking part in the **Trent Chase exercise of 1975**; (further details to follow).

The AEA Reunion/AGM 16th – 19th October 2015 at Coventry, (for more info see the Sec.)

Remembrance Sunday: 8th November 2015

NOTE: - IF YOU ONLY ATTENDED ONE MEETING IN THE CALENDER YEAR, THE NEXT IS THE ONE TO ATTEND, 1ST MAY, AGM / REUNION, PLEASE PASS THIS MESSAGE ON TO ALL YOUR PALS, COME AND GET YOUR "MUSH" ON THE OFFICIAL ASSOCIATION PHOTO AND MEET A LOT OF OLD FRIENDS IN DOING SO. There is no charge for the privilege!

