



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 association.

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

Date: Friday 7th April 2017.

Members Present: M. Beardshaw, B. Bilton, K. Blacker, J. Brooks, G. Coe, N. Cooper, A. Costello, G. Crum, T. Cunningham, W. Drayton, A. Garforth, A. Foster, P. Harsine, C. Ham, D. Hines, D. Ideson, A. Irwin, J. Mace, A. Lee, D. Meekin, F. Pougher, G. Ratten, K. Robinson, K. Russell, S. Saxby, C. Shillito, P. Sims, L. Smith, B. Steele, R. Swatman, Mart. Tindle, C. Walker, A. Weldon, C. Wilcock.

Apologies: F. Gray, D. Harvey, J. Duffy, A. Stimpson, C. Henrickson, C. Gadd, D. French, M. Maddison, D. Woollas, T. Walker, G. Beaumont, C. Duggan, S. Hoyle, P. Jefferson, C. Lickiss, L. Ransom, P. Robson, R. Franklin.

Welcome and 'Roll Call'

The Chairman **Chris Shillito** welcomed all present to yet again a very well attended meeting, (34), he opened the meeting with the sad news that **Paul Jefferson's** mother had died that day, he expressed the sadness felt at the meeting and passed a card around for all to sign, kindly provided by **Alan Lee**.

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

Proposed by – **Mike Beardshaw**

Seconded by – **Terry Cunningham**

Treasure's Report:

Martin Tindle gave a breakdown on the association's finances which are in good order and continue to swell as the Arnhem money pours in. He reminded all that next month's meeting marks the deadline for all monies for this trip, which stands at 37 paid deposits, therefore if you want to go, time is running out.

Martin thanks **Dave Hines** for promoting a further influx of cash into the association coffers at this month's meeting, most coming from the sale of his DVD's which he has burnt and customized himself using the film "THEIR'S IS THE GLORY" Thanks must go again to **Alan Lee** for his donations of memorabilia picked up on his last London trip supporting "Marine A"

N/B: It's with sadness that I, the Secretary, had to pass comment on what I can only describe as a rugby scrum at the end of this meeting, all for what certain individuals choose to consider as "freebies" this is not the first time and it's usually the same people, you know who you are! These "freebies" have been thoughtfully and kindly donated to this association by individuals to help bolster the association funds, using their own time and money, and usually they ask for some small donation to show some appreciation. This selfish grab and run activity witnessed tonight highlights a total disrespect for others, this is something we have all fought long and hard to banish from this association, therefore please let's not go back down this road of "I'm alright Jack" again. Thank you.

Correspondence:

After sending out the last month's minutes, the following acknowledgments, including best wishes, were received by this association from various interested people: **John Lee, John Donaldson, Mathew Williams, Olaf Dudley and John (Willy) Harrison**

E-Mail from **John Lee (President of the AEA)**, on March 7th 2017.

He thanked this association for sorting out the venue for this year's Reunion/AGM and also suggested inviting the Lord Mayor of Hull as a guest of the AEA Council, this info was passed to the function committee (organizers), **Chris Wilcock, Gaddy, Simbo and Deano** who are now planning this forth coming event.

Tony Costello posted the following message:

PALESTINE: Between 1945 and 1948 there were 784 deaths of British Service personnel, including civilians and Palestine Police. 45 of those killed were from the Corps of Royal Engineers. They will be amongst those who will be remembered on Saturday May 20th at the NMA Alrewas by the Palestine Veterans Association. I can provide Unit, number, rank and CWGC Cemetery details for any of the 45 if given the name/s. Please contact me if you require any further information. PVA Co-ordinator, 6th Airborne Division, Tel: 01482 632100 or E-mail: aevcost@aevcost.karoo.co.uk

Martin Tindle posted the following message:

Update on **Gary Newton's** health, he's out of hospital and back home again, I had a word with his wife, **Victoria** and she said he's making progress but he's still very weak at the moment, it's been a very big operation and it will be a while before he's out and about again, therefore wishing all the best to **Gary** and get well soon.

Message posted from **Tim van der Kraan**, (the new Secretary for the Chatham Branch of the AEA)

SAD NEWS WITH THE PASSING OF **Reg. Parsons** from the Chatham Branch of the AEA. He died peacefully at home after a long illness on Tuesday 7th March 2017, he leaves a wife (**Joyce**) and two sons, **Kevin & Colin**, condolences were sent from this association. Funeral information was posted at the time.

Reg. served between 1954 – 6 and there was an open invitation for those wishing to say good bye.

John Donaldson forwarded the latest media interest in the struggle for the GSM with South Arabia clasp, this has been sent electronically to those who can receive, and copies were passed around to those who can't. Better still, get your grandchildren to look up the following for you to enjoy:

Daily Telegraph, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/13/aden-army-veterans-battle-medal-recognition/>

Daily Herald printed on 20/3/2017: HERALDSCOTLAND.COM

These publications provide an excellent read mixed in with some great photos taken at the time of 300 Squadron doing their "stuff" in Yemen. Maybe the Prime Minister could be looking for a few more friends in Scotland at this very moment in time..! You never know.

Jono Palmer (Land Lord of the Ship), posted the following message regarding **Les Ransom's** coming 95th birthday.

A surprise do for **Les** to be held in the Ship Inn Dunswell, Beverly Road, all 299 invited, family and friends, everybody welcome, the people connected to this association play a massive part in his life, just pop in to say "Hello" and make his day.

The Chairman Chris Shillito posted the following on the 28/3/2017.

Great news today, **Alexander Blackman** will be released in a couple of weeks. The 299 Association played its part in supporting him in getting the result most people wished for. We took a mini bus full of 299 members down to the courts in support, but one of our members, **Alan Lee** felt so strongly about it he went to London 3 times, at great cost in money and time off work, "well done **Allan**" Outstanding Behaviour.

Social Calendar: Association dilemma.

Two open invitations for the men of 299 to mark special surprise birthday celebrations taking place on the same night, Saturday 8/4/2017, the night after the April meeting.

HAPPY 80TH TO TERRY CUNNINGHAM, some of the 299 lads got together and descended on The West Hull Rugby Club, North Rd, Gypsyville, Hull, this is one of **Terry's** Sat night watering holes and the 299 men wished **Terry** all the best at this, his surprise 80th birthday celebration organised by his daughter **Tracy**. The surprise was well received by all, with everything set for a good night, but unfortunately after a few drinks the 299 men had to offer their apologies leaving to attend another surprise birthday bash..! **N/B: awful planning but could not be rejigged because of the secrecy.**

HAPPY 95TH BIRTHDAY BASH FOR LES RANSOM, everybody piled into the Ship Inn (Dunswell) for **Les's** surprise bash organized by **Jamie & Jono** and a cracking night was had by all. **Les** wants to thank you all for your kindness, his true & honest friends from the 299 association did a fine job in making this a special occasion for him.

I could not resist including this snap of **Les**, aged just 21yrs, taken in Italy 1943, just after the Taranto Landings by the 1st Airborne Division at the start of the Italian Campaign on the 9th Sept.1943. **Les & Jamie (son) can see no family likeness..!**
"Should have gone to Specsavers"



Courtesy of **Colin Walker**

Les served throughout WW2 as a member of the 1st Airborne Division with 250 Company, RASC, 3 Platoon, his unit along with the 2nd Battalion and others, became known as **John Frost's** men, Maj. John Frost led the assault, these men raced on into Arnhem and captured the North end of that famous bridge in Sept.1944, and held it for 4 days until their positions were over run, thus spending the rest of the war as a POW, 'now there's another story..!

Chairman's Comments:

Chris Shillito reminded the members that next month's meeting on the 5th May will be this associations AGM/OGM and he is calling for a maximum turn out. All committee positions will be up for grabs, if anybody wishes to have a go on the committee please let the current Secretary Gaz Coe know ASAP on Tel 01757 268188 or E-mail: coeblimey240@gmail.com

Dress: Association Rugby Shirts if you have one, if you haven't, no worries, just get yourself there and put your mush on the official annual group photo. No berets.

Chris also thanked **Dave Hines (Web Master)** for his commitment to this association, the amount of time and money given by him in producing the many DVD's and/or other curios using his excellent computer skills is outstanding.

N/B: The film "Theirs is the Glory" was made just after the end of WW2, using survivors, from the 1st Airborne Division as actors, (and it shows), but the film is an icon, and tells the story of Arnhem very well, many new airborne recruits were shown this at the start of their training as an example of what is expected of them.

The Chairman asked **Tony Foster** to give an update on his wife's condition after her horrific road accident, **Debra** is now out of danger but some of her injuries may well be life changing, after two months of hospitalization she is thoughtfully fed up with her situation and just wants to come home, but it sounds like a long road ahead.

Paul Sims gave an update on the Brummies` and the latest news on **Davey Bowron** is his amputation of the leg has gone well and he is looking forward to his prosthetic. "**Bunny Brown**" is awaiting the outcome of the scans on his brain tumours before the medics can decide the next course of treatment.

News from **Sid Hoyle**: the hip replacement has gone well and he is back on his bike, we wish them all well.

The Chairman invited **Dean Ideson** to update the meeting on the preparation for the AEA annual AGM/Reunion in October. **Deano** gave a full account of the state of play so far, also the further intended developments still at the planning stage, **Chris** thanked **Deano** and the rest of this committee for taking the task on, thus reliving the association's administration from any other extra work.

N/B: **Deano** is a Police Officer, (Armed Response Unit), he took time out to remember **P.C. Keith Palmer** whose funeral is imminent and asked the meeting to raise a glass to the bravery of our serving officers during these troubled times.

Request from the floor by **Tony Irwin** who asked the Chairman if it would be possible to combine the Palestine Veterans Day at the National Memorial Arboretum with a mini bus day visit for those men wishing to do so on Sat 20th May 2017, the Chairman put it to the members with 11 showing interest, a vote was asked for and it was carried unanimously, **Alan Lee** volunteered for lead driver with back up from **Mike Maddison**. Timings TBC later, but it will be an early start, if you want to go make sure the Secretary has your name, there are only 16 seats on a mini bus and it will be on a first come first served basis.

It was good to see **Adam Garforth** back in the UK for a few weeks, he misses' us really, just caught the back end of the meeting, but will be at the next meeting, AGM in May.

Matters arising:

The Executive Committee of the AEA held its National OGM meeting on the 5th March, and the following info is taken from their minutes.

16 Air Assault Brigade: - The Brigadiers appeal for a Pegasus statue. The sum of £1500 was raised at the AGM ball last year, (2016), through a raffle, painting auction and crazy golf event with all the profits going to the appeal. The statue is to be un-veiled at Merville Barracks in Colchester, on Wednesday 3rd May 2017.

Consideration to be given to the following: How do the AEA members of 299 Association feel about re-forming a branch of the AEA somewhere in the West Country?

The Consensus at this meeting: - the more the merrier.

Simbo's bus stops: two winners last month Deano & Tommo, Secretaries apology: left off last month's minutes, winners this month are again two of them: Brad Steele & Simbo himself.

Items from members:

Paul Hairsine bumped into ex 299 Troop Commander **Richard Cole** who wants to be remembered to all at the association, he is now running a Cafe / Restaurant in Brunswick Bay near Filey on the East Coast of Yorkshire, invitations to pop in anytime to you all.

Update on Marine "A"

Hi everyone, I went to London on Thursday 23rd March with my son **James** and with a view to keeping cost down and booking late trains etc. I had also planned on sleeping rough in London until the courts opened next day, much to the horror of our **James**.

I received a very generous offer of a hotel room from a couple who run #fisherpattonandtherebarron a military insignia and goods company who said one of their party couldn't make it so a free room with breakfast in central London was gratefully accepted.

I was choked up with **Alan** and **Sue's** generosity when they later donated from a company support for ex-servicemen fund £100 towards my rail fare, a 131 embossed hip flask and a bottle of dark rum along with 3 lapel badges, the kindness shown was unbelievable as I was struggling to afford this visit due to recent vet's bills etc.

The outcome at the courts was not what we expected, we have to wait another few days until Tuesday for the Justices decision, it was upsetting for all concerned, but if you look for a positive in this, the delay was because the Head of the Royal Marines offered to allow Sgt Blackman a position back in the Corps if he wants it, with pension rights restored and Dishonourable Discharge changed to Honourable, therefore the Justices were unprepared for this, and did not know whether they could rule on that or if it had to go back to the military court martial, but at least they are now positively discussing AL's future after his release

I stood outside for the duration of the hearing so more info will come out later, overall a good day in London flying the 299/131 banner.

Alan Lee.



Courtesy of Tony Costello

299's Arnhem Pilgrimage 2016, (Doorwerth), NL, representatives from all 3 services flew the flag for "Big Al" on this occasion.

Web site address: www.299association.com

Next Meeting: AGM/OGM Friday 5th May 2017 at 2000hrs in the Minerva on Corporation Pier, Hull.

Dates for your diary:

Palestine Veterans Day at the NMA (National Memorial Arboretum), Alwewas, on Saturday 20th May 2017.

Falklands/MV Norland Commemoration Parade and service, Holy Trinity, Hull, on Sunday 28th May 2017, to coincide with the taking of Goose Green.

Airborne Forces Day, (Northern), Saturday 15th July 2017 at Eden Camp, Malton, parade and service starts at 1100hrs.

Allied Air Forces Memorial Day at Elvington, Near York on Sunday 3rd September 2017.

Arnhem Pilgrimage: Thursday 14th – Monday 18th September 2017. All monies must be paid by the May meeting, AGM.

THE AEA REUNION/AGM TO BE HELD AT THE MERCURE ROTAL HOTEL, FERNSWAY, HULL. HU1 3UF over the weekend Friday the 20th to Monday the 23rd October 2017, a room has been booked for the AGM.

Very important: rooms at this hotel could be at a premium over this week end, therefore book early to avoid disappointment. Remember it's the year of culture in Hull and they will not hang onto rooms on a promise. There are other hotels close by, but if you want a guaranteed room at this hotel you can reserve with your card without money being taken out of your account. Provisional costings for a room are £80per night, this is on a B&B basis. Confirmation to follow. Hotel Tele: 01482 325087, E-mail: enquiries@hotels-hull.co.uk **Details have been sent to the Executive Committee and booking forms will be in the next Journal.**

Remembrance Sunday: 12th November 2017.

ALL ABOVE TIMINGS TBC LATER.

HOT OF THE PRESS

THE 299 ASSOCIATION CONGRATULATES CHRIS WILCOCK ON HIS PROMOTION TO HALF COLONEL, THIS IS JUST A VERY WELL DONE TO OUR OWN 299 MAN.

With nothing more to discuss the Chairman closed the meeting thanking all for attending.

