



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: Friday 5th April 2019 at the Minerva

Members Present: R. Able, M. Beardshaw, B. Bilton, G. Coe, N. Cooper, G. Crum, T. Cunningham, W. Drayton, D. French, D. Harvey, D. Hines, F. Gray, A. Irwin, A. Kitching, J. Mace, M. Maddison, R. Meachen, D. Meekin, F. Pougher, J. Ransom, L. Ransom, G. Ratten, P. Robson, K. Saddington, P. Sims, N. Sisson, B. Steel, A. Stimpson, J. Thompson, Mart. Tindle, C. Walker, A. Weldon, Major C. Wilcock, D. Woollas.

Apologies: P. Robinson, C. Shillito, J. Duffy, G. Beaumont, J. Brooks, C. Duggan, A. Foster, R. Franklin, C. Gadd, S. Hoyle, C. Lickiss, S. McMahon, K. Russell, L. Smith, A. Homan, M. Hall.

Guests: Benny Bridges, Martin Sadler, Pauline Meekin, Eileen Robinson, Marianne Ransom, Loran Ransom, Linda Kitching, Steve Saddington.

Welcome and 'Roll Call'

The Acting Chairman and Secretary **Gaz Coe** welcomed all present then opened the meeting by wishing that very popular 299 Association member & Arnhem veteran, **Les Ransom** a happy 97th birthday, a cake was produced for **Les** by his daughter **Marianne** for the end of the meeting and a rousing round of 'Happy Birthday To You' was delivered. All this went down well with **Les**, but he was not very complimentary about the vocal attributes from this association's membership, which almost brought tears to his eyes.

It was a pleasant surprise to welcome that veteran 299 man and author **Fred Gray**, served during the 50's before going regular with 9 Sqn, he's never forgotten his roots and it's a rare privilege to have him amongst us.

The Chairman **Chris Shillito** had offered his apologies for his absence due to the sudden death of a very close friend and a clash of dates around the funeral arrangements.

John Thompson was asked to update the meeting on **Steve McMahon**, currently in Hull Royal Infirmary fighting for his life, he had visited that afternoon and found him in a slightly better state than earlier in the week, but there is no denying the fact that he is very poorly and we can only hope and pray that miracles can happen, "where there's life, there's hope" Ward 100 and no visiting restrictions.

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

Proposed by – **F (Bud) Pougher**

Seconded by – **Tony Irwin**

Treasure's Report:

Martin gave a comprehensive breakdown of our accounts which remain very healthy. 300 2nd class postage stamps have been purchased to beat the price hike, this should just about cover our needs for the next year.

Glenn; (Arnhem 2019 accounts manager), reminds the meeting that **all monies for this trip have to be paid by May 3rd 2019 (AGM)**, failure to make this deadline will probably see your place offered to someone in reserve holding cash in hand, with your deposit being refunded. Total cost of trip £290 p/p.

N/B:

The association cannot & will not book & pay for coach's, ferries & hotels on promises, the association is expected to finalise paying fully for these services during May - June, therefore if you are serious about the Arnhem trip, you have to pull your finger out, these are the last words to be spoken on this matter, the rest is up to you.

Relevant correspondence:

Letter dated 5/3/2019 from **Ian Richardson** (Director of Communications & Event Project Officer) at the Yorkshire Air Museum, Elvington, York YO41 4AU.

To the Secretary & men of 299 Association please consider this open invitation to again parade at the Yorkshire Air Museum's Memorial Day, taking place on Sunday 1st September 2019. Once again, we will be marking some historic anniversaries, notably the 80th Anniversary of the outbreak of WW 2; 75th Anniversary of the D-Day Invasion and the 75th Anniversary of the formation of the French, Halifax Squadrons in RAF Bomber Command at Elvington.

The event will feature the customary Parade of Standards to the Service in the Memorial Hangar, housing the Halifax Bomber Mk11, followed by the March Past, Sunset Ceremony & Salute. The Parade will be once again led, by the Yorkshire Military Marching Band and Corps of Drums.

There will be no admission charge for Standard Bearers and Parade Participants, we appreciate the support of the 299 men for this poignant Memorial occasion and do hope you will be able to support again the Allied Air Forces Memorial and join us for what will be yet another memorable day here at Elvington. **`The parade would not be the same without 299's presence`**

N/B:

This invitation was put to the meeting with a positive response being noted. Association attendance for this Memorial parade was proposed by Tony Weldon and seconded by Pete Robson, with the vote for being carried, therefore 20 parade places have been requested and Standard bearer's details submitted.

Chris Shillito, message bd. dated 19/3/2019. A. great evening with the **Pilgrim Bandits** on Friday, (15th March), at the Village Hotel.

A good turnout from the 299 Association with lots of money donated to a fantastic charity who look after our injured soldiers. **Andy Green** did an outstanding job as M.C. keeping us all entertained with serious stuff and humour, in equal measures.

Well done to all who organised it, also to those who attended.

Major Olaf Dudley, E-mail dated 27/3/2019.

Re: Maj (Retd) Steve Beck – OC 131 Indep Cdo Sqn 1995-99

Dear 131 Veterans, I am sorry to inform you that former **OC Steve Beck** died on Friday 22/3/2019 following a very brief illness. I will share details of the funeral, which we expect to take place in Norwich, in due course.

Having started as a TA Sapper in 73 Engr Regt, and later been a troop commander in 59, many of you will remember **Steve** as a very popular OC. He took 131 Indep Cdo Sqn to Egypt, Romania and Brunei as well as all-over Britain, during the 4 years he served with us. He was a really unique man – intensely positive, creative and energetic, and always with that enormous smile on his face. Characteristically, he also punched massively above his weight alongside then-**Hon Col Maj-Gen Mike Mathews** in ensuring that 131 did not become a casualty of the 1998 Strategic Defence Review. We have much to thank him for.

Steve exemplified selflessness and good humour. I have attached a picture of him with his Squadron on the bridge at Toscaig (built by 299 Tp) in Applecross in the West Highlands in 1996. Most nights after work on that construction site we would go to the nearest pub – The Applecross Hotel – to dry out and warm up, as much as to eat and drink, and we packed the place out. As **Steve** didn't drink, he would regularly volunteer to the landlady to collect glasses, and to work behind the bar. Again with that huge grin on his face and encouraging words for all, soldiers or civilians. The same when visiting the task sites; despite the frequent heavy downpours, he took that infectious warmth and energy wherever he went.

Olaf Dudley.

N/B: Major Chris Wilcock also sang the praises of Steve Beck at this meeting, stating “that, as a young Troop Commander he could not have had a better example to follow”

Eamon Smyth, E-mail dated 29/3/2019.

Replacement Plaque to the Toscaig Bridge, Wester Ross

At last the plaque has been produced this week. Delays were due to work load on the **Queen Elizabeth** carrier, also the work shop been closed due to contamination.

It will be installed 29 – 30th May. The original will be posted to 131 SHQ. I have the original aluminium template which I propose taking to 299 Sqn HQ, unless there is another preferred option passed onto the AEA Birmingham.

I will get Birmingham branch to forward details for a collection in favour of the Royal Naval & Royal Marines charity 'Naval Service Benevolence Fund', this being the nominated charity supported by producing workshop. We will then forward the receipt and a thank you letter to the OC of the work shop.

Steve Brown, (Sec. Bir'ham AEA), attached to above.

I'm sure you will join with me in thanking **Eamon** for his hard work in getting this to a satisfactory and worthwhile conclusion.

N/B: This replacement plaque was initiated and paid for by Eamon Smyth, (former 131 SSM), the foot bridge was dedicated in memorandum to the mem from 300 Para Sqn RE who died in the Cromwell lock disaster of 1975. The bridge is in in the Applecross area of Scotland and was built during June 1996 by the men from 299 Tp 131 Independent Commando Squadron Royal Engineers.

Forwarded e-mail dated 31/3/2019 between Eamon Smyth & Steve Brown.

Steve, the work shop cannot take money..... a bottle of Gin has got us this far! I have stated that we will try and get the various groups within the AEA to make a collection which they could send to Tom, (Treasures Bir'ham AEA). That way it should be easy to keep tabs on. Once we have all donations it can be given to the Navy Work Shop OC for their nominated charity, including a letter of thanks.

I have not spoken to John Lee or the rest of the AEA, but, (suggestion) "if we all gave £1 p/p a reasonable sum should be occurred, how's that sound?

N/B: This suggestion was thrown open for discussion at this meeting with a general consensus being reached that the 299 Association are prepared to match the £100 paid in by the `Brums` This was proposed by Art Stimpson and seconded by Paul Sims, the vote for was carried.

Chris Shillito, message bd dated 1/4/2019.

Gentlemen, Steve McMahon is back in hospital again and very poorly this time. I will get to see him this week and you will get an update at the meeting on the 5th April.

Same day:

Just seem **Mac** at hospital, he's not very good, talking, but a bit confused and is quite bloated, he had gone back on the booze. Didn't stay long, he had a lot of family visitors.

Ward No 100 at HRI, visiting 14:00 – 16:00 and 19:00 – 20:00hrs.

Major Olaf Dudley, E-mail dated 2/4/2019 **RE – Funeral Details for Steven Beck.**

Firstly: **Steve's** funeral will be held on Thursday 18th April at 14:45hrs at St. Faiths Crematorium, 75 Manor Road, Horsham, St. Faiths, Norwich, NR10 3LF.

Floral tributes will be welcomed but the family's preferred option is that those who wish to donate can do so, to `Help For Heroes` Either option can be sent to the Funeral Directors:

**Gordon Barber Funeral Directors,
C/o Sheridan Murphy,
The Funeral Home,
317 Aylsham Road,
Norwich, Norfolk,
NR3 2AB.**

Any notes of condolence should be sent to the same address please. **Steve's wife's name is Jackie.**

Secondly: Jackie has asked me to collate reminiscences and photographs from those who knew and served with **Steve**. If you have any suitable dits and/or photos please can you send them to me at this e-mail address by Sunday 7th April 2019. < olaf.dudley@gmail.com > **RIP STEVE**

Steve Brown, E-mail dated 5/4/2019.

Gents, received a call this morning saying that **Tom Chater**, (not sure of the spelling), has passed away aged over 97yrs old. **Tom** had a chequered history if memory serves me well, he served with the Parachute Reg, SAS and 131 RE for a short time. He served in Sharjah (1973). Details to follow.

Social Calendar: **Proposed Clay Pigeon Shoot at Bygott Wood, Cherry Burton.**

Tony Kitching is prepared to organize a shoot scheduled for Saturday 11th May for all those interested, this is a popular activity, great fun, open to friends & families. Costings usually about £15 p/p please let **Tony** know your intensions on Tel: 07930015184.

Acting Chairman's Comments:

The next meeting on 3rd May 2019 at the Minerva is the associations AGM, I am asking you to get there early, (19:30hrs), for the group photo. The chosen dress is association rugby shirts and if you have not got one, still come, we have spares, besides your presence is the priority.

The Secretary needs to develop the AGM agenda, therefore any subjects up for discussion needs to be presented to him ASAP. Please don't dump a ton of info on him un-expectantly during the meeting, give him a fighting chance.

At the AGM every committee position will become vacant, and will need to be filled for this associations continuation, those of you who want to see this association continue to thrive needs to consider taking on some responsibility in its running, please inform the Secretary ASAP if you're interested, there can never be too many volunteers, and we do need stand-in's, people do take holidays or can be sick, maybe worse, remember, nobody is here for ever, and ignoring this factor will only speed up this associations decline, because in this case the "willing horse's will not be worked to death" there are enough people amongst us with the necessary skills for taking their turn at its administration, please don't wait until the situation reaches a crisis point, "many hands will make lighter work" therefore, come on in and give us a hand, we all enjoy the many activities and friendships made through the association and I'm sure none of us would want to see it fold, as we get older these friendships formed in service will become absolutely paramount.

Special thanks to the following men; Tony Irwin & Tony Weldon for sorting the rugby shirts out for the Chairman as a late call.

Glenn Ratten, Mart Tindle, Art. Stimpson, Al. Lee for making themselves available for essential light gardening duties.

Andy Green, for organising the Special Dinner Night with the "Pilgrim Bandits" a huge success, enjoyed by all.

Matters arising:

On the 3rd April the Birmingham branch of the AEA held its AGM after completing a very successful year, despite losing too many on the way. The Committee stood down which is the norm, but no volunteers were prepared to take on the Secretary & Chairman's role, if nobody steps forward this branch will cease to exist and that would be a shame. Birmingham have over 80 names on their books, these men are our friends and former comrades in arms, surely, they cannot be willing to throw it all away because of apathy amongst these 80 names,

299 Association can only wish them well, hoping that the volunteers desperately needed, step forward to save the day, come on lads!

The following letter was sent to Birmingham from **Chris Shillito**:

"Well done **Steve**, you did a great job as branch Secretary, the Secretary is the workhorse of any association and the attendance and events have doubled under your watch. A big thank you for keeping the 299 Association up to date with any current affairs and promoting the great bond of friendship between 301 and 299"

I endorse these words totally, and extend them to the whole 301 committee, it would always be a team effort and in this case it was led by **Johnny Philips**.

Items from members: **Plans to reroute the Remembrance Sunday Parade in Hull.**

Tony Irwin attended a British Legion meeting to discuss the above in Hull, all parties were asked to test individual feelings amongst their own organizations and choose between one of two options; keeping the same route or the new proposal. 299 Associations choice was to stick to the same route.

Simbos bus Stop: One winner this month, birthday boy Les Ransom with `Stockings`

Web site address: www.299association.com

Next Meeting: AGM/OGM 3rd May 2019 at 19:30hrs in the Minerva, Nelson St. Hull. HU1 1XE.

WITH NOTHING MORE TO DISCUSS THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING THANKING ALL FOR THEIR ATTENDANCE

Dates for your diary:

Allied Air Force Memorial Day – Sunday 1st September 2019 Elvington.

Service & Parade as previous years, details TBC.

ARNHEM PILGRIMAGE 2019. THURSDAY NIGHT 19TH Sept. for overnight crossing ----- MONDAY MORNING 23rd Sept. after overnight crossing, costings and availability talk to Glenn Ratten on: Tel: 01757 700016, Mb: 07795248328. Full details to follow.

CROMWELL LOCK Memorial Service 22nd September 2019, (Yet again will clash with the Arnhem Week End). This is an outrageous oversight.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 10TH NOV. 2019, muster 9:30hrs down Pease Street, Anlaby Road, Hull. Dress for parade & service at the Cenotaph.

1 Troop 299 Squadron are parading in Hull this year and will be sharing the buffet at the Minerva with the association.

CONTACTS:

Chairman: Chris Shillito, cls299@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 01482 806690, Mb: 07877277288.

Vice Chairman: Bill Drayton, dorridrayton@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 01482 376259,

Secretary: Gaz Coe, coeblimey240@gmail.com Tel: 01757 268188.

Treasurer: Martin Tindle, martinrontindle@hotmail.com Tel: 01482 653618, Mb: 07500264558.

Arnhem 2019 booking Treasurer: Glenn Ratten, glennratten@icloud.com Tel: 01757 700016, Mb: 07795248328.

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WELFARE:

The veterans Hub & Forum, point of contact Paddy Nolan, (ex 1 Para), for all your problems

Address: Goodwin Community Hub, Anlaby Road, Hull. HU3 2LL, (opposite the `Tigers Lair`).

Tel: 01482 485956, email: veteranshub@goodwintrust.org

