



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 5th August 2016

Members Present: M. Beardshaw, G. Beaumont, B. Bilton, K. Blacker, G. Coe, N. Cooper, A. Costello, W. Drayton, A., Foster, R. Franklin, C. Gadd, A. Grimes, C. Ham, D. Harvey, A. Irwin, P. Jefferson, A. Kitching, J. Mace, D. Meeking, O. A. Nelson-Girchen, J. Palmer, F. Pougher, L. Ransom, G. Ratten, P. Robson, C. Shillito, P. Sims, L. Smith, B. Steele, A. Stimpson, Mart. Tindle, C. Walker, T. Walker, A. Weldon, D. Woollas.

Apologies: F. Gray, P. Robinson, S. Hoyle, Mike. Tindle, D. French, M. Maddison, C. Henrickson, T. Cunningham, J. Duffy, C. Duggan, D. Hines, R. Swatman, C. Wilcock, J. Thompson.

Welcome and 'Roll Call'

The Vice Chairman **Bill Drayton** stood in for the Chairman who had just returned from his jollies coming directly to this meeting, he welcomed all present to the Ship Inn at Dunswell then opened the meeting by thanking the Landlord for the use of his premise at such short notice also the ample buffet laid on at no cost to this association, many thanks **Jonno**.

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

Proposed by – **F. Pougher**.

Seconded by – **N. Cooper**.

Treasure's Report:

Martin gave an update on the bank balance which still remains healthy, but still no cheque from the Guild Hall as yet, (the Civic wheels turn slowly, especially when giving). Bit of bad news with respect to the Arnhem Pilgrimage our tour operator has miss calculated the cost of the trip by £25p/p, £285p/p not £260p/p, therefore **all people attending this year's Pilgrimage please get your £25 in to Martin ASAP**. The committee takes full responsibility for this cock up and offers apologies to all concerned, hope this does not knock the edge off your trip.

Correspondence:

A few notes taken from the last meeting of the Aldershot Branch of the AEA:

"The AEA President **Lt Col (ret) John Lee & Fred Gray** had delivered the 'Roll of Honour' to RHQ 23 Para Engr Regt. The roll of Honour has since been permanently located in a special display cabinet, the cost of construction being 50% funded by a (£400) grant from the AEA and the remaining £400 by the REA"

"**John Lee** gave notice that **Lt Col Clark (CO 23 Para Engr Regt)** was about to hand over to his successor and that he was to be promoted to full Colonel in the post of Military Advisor to the Prime Minister"

299 Facebook: If you want something to be made public with regards to this association please don't rely solely upon this social media site, 80% of our active members, (members that attend meetings fairly regularly), either do not possess a computer or if they do, do not visit these sites, therefore are excluded from this tree of knowledge, therefore you may be wasting your time with much important information not getting through.

Application Forms for most association can be obtained from the Secretary Gary Coe. Tel: 01757 268188

Most members of 299 Association are also members of other associations such as the PRA, AEA, CEA and the REA. There is no compulsion in joining any of any other organization, it is purely up to your own personal preference.

Sqn News: S/Sgt Carl Ham

The Squadron has just recently returned from exercises in Poland, working with American Troops using this new-fangled system named **TESEX**, its beyond me, but best described as some kind of high tech way of predicting efficiency on the battle field. The Squadron have just completed a parachute jump week, this enables men in reaching their annual parachuting commitment as reservists plus keeps everybody switched on. Another free fall course is pending for those who wish.

Social Calendar:

S/Sgt Carl Ham posted the following: our association member and friend **Capt. John Thompson** is handing his kit in after many years' service with 299 and I invite all members of 299, past & present, to come to the Middleton Barracks on Saturday 10th September for a social come send-off bash. Tickets £10p/p, timings to follow. **Tommo** is dedicated to 299, his length of service with the unit bears testament to this, therefore let's give him a real association farewell to soldering by supporting this function. Every cloud may have a silver lining **Tommo** could have more time for the association.

Chairman's Comments:

Service of celebration and thanksgiving for John Trevor Key. Friday 15th July 2016, at the Chanterlands Avenue Crematorium, Hull.

I would like to thank the 12 men from this association who turned out to give this old 299er a proper send off from some of his old 299 mates, Trev never got around to joining any association because his life was always too busy flying backwards and forwards between his other jobs and homes in Africa. His family had requested a military presence with Standards, and this wish was fulfilled by both the PRA Hull Branch & 299 Association.

Trev Key: 22nd September 1941 – 5th July 2016

The Service was conducted by **Major Stuart Barker** from the Salvation Army, Hull.

A recording of "Amazing Grace" by the Black Watch was played upon entry into the Chapel thus reflecting Trev's Scottish roots, after the welcome, a poem, "**If**" by **Rudyard Kipling** was read out, final verse as follows:-

"If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings – nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much,
If you can fill the unforgiving minute with sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth, and everything that's in it,
And – what is more – you'll be a Man, my son! "

A script titled “**He’s Gone**” was read out during the service by **Steve** (Son in-law), before we all left the Chapel too “Bring me Sunshine” by **Morecombe & Wise**. The family offered their thanks for the military present, and yet again we have to thank **Tony Irwin** for fulfilling the Standard bearing role. Another new member amongst the congregation, **Don Gale** served with 299 late 50s – 60s, welcome aboard **Don**. All good and honest 299 men are welcomed to this association.

Airborne Forces Day at Eden Camp on Saturday 16th July 2016.

A group from this association, led by that 94yr old Arnhem Veteran **Les Ransom** paraded with Standard at the above, they were blessed with good weather and after the proceedings enjoyed a few beers with some old friends from the Grimsby & Cleethorpes Branch of the PRA, **Bri & Dee Dingley** and **Charlie McColgan**, **Pete Fenty’s** mate from the Falklands. Thanks to **Tony Irwin** for taking care of our Standard, also the two volunteer drivers **Bry Bilton & Mike “Maddy” Maddison**, who ferried all unselfishly, it’s a good job these fellas are tea total !

Matters arising:

299 Association Ties

The Chairman **Chris Shillito** has made enquiries with regards to the above and we are looking at a quality item, (silk), embroidered with the association motive’s which together are unique within the British Army, our members have served as a part of 131 Reg/Sqn as Airborne or Commando soldiers, or in some cases both, and the Squadron is now totally Airborne as a part of 23 Parachute Engineers Regiment, therefore this association is entitled in showing both wings and daggers respectively because of our history, and this is what is intended, it all depends on you guys. We cannot proceed without a minimum number of 25, estimated cost £16/17 apiece, obviously the more the merrier and a list will be passed around at this meeting, this tie is intended for all association members regardless of background, anybody who failed to attend this meeting and wishes to be included on the list must contact **Chris** on Tel: 01482 806690 or Mob: 07877277288.

E-mail: cls299@hotmail.co.uk ASAP. Please don’t expect another list coming around in the near future, this can only be made to work with a bulk purchase.

Items from members: **Tony Weldon (70yrs)**, has just completed “**The Walk of the World**” for the fourteenth successive time.

International Four Days Marches, Nijmegen, is the largest multiple day marching event in the world. It is organized every year in Nijmegen, Netherlands, during mid-July, as a means of promoting sport and exercise. Participants walk 30, 40 or 50 km daily depending on their age, gender and category, and upon completion receive a medal, (the four day cross), endorsed by **Queen Wilhelmina** on 6th October 1909. The medal is an official Dutch decoration that is worn on a Dutch military uniform alongside other campaign and service decorations. This year’s Walk was the Centenary, (War years missing).

This event was originally set up as a part of the Dutch Army’s fitness regime. The first four day’s marches took place during 1909 and was timed to commence on the day after the “Queen’s Day” celebrations, then in August. 306 Soldiers set out from ten barracks on the 150 km walk from garrison to garrison. At this stage only one category existed for the military, with defined weights to be carried. The fame of the Four Days Marches grew during the 1930s but was interrupted with the occupation. After the Second World War, despite the ravages caused by the fighting, Nijmegen took up the challenge of reviving the Marches thanks to a fund-raising campaign among the population and the efforts of many volunteers, its efforts were successful. In 1946 there were more participants than ever before, a trend which has continued with many civilians taking part, hence the differing categories. Restrictions have had to be put in place, Armed Forces from all-over the world send contingents, and they usually march in teams, although some individuals march alone. On the final day of the march the spectators hand out Gladiola to those crossing the finishing line as a mark of respect.

N/B: the Gladioli is the official flower for the marches, name is derived from the Latin for Gladiator.

Tony started these marches towards the end of his military service and has continued to self-finance ever since demob. He completes these walks and also takes part in the Humber Bridge half marathon as well as the Great North Run every year respectively, he has done so since the loss of someone near and dear to him, quietly collecting sponsorship money for good causes, never any fuss, he will never approach any of you men for sponsorship and will not be happy about this disclosure, he just gets on with it in his own way, no personal bests or mountains to climb with this man, what you see is what you get. His choice of good causes for this year is to be this associations funds, therefore on behalf of us all I have to thank him for his generosity and can only marvel at his commitment to this association, he gives, expecting nothing in return, also his level of fitness at his age, says it’s his way of saying thanks 299 for giving him direction in the fulfilment of his life. “**Weldo**” you’re an example to us all, thank you again.

Any Other Business

Craig Gadd has received a thank you letter from the charity "Blesma" after his splendid sponsored sky dive, he asked for the full letter to be read out to the meeting. I quote the first paragraph:

Dear Chairman, on behalf of everyone at Blesma, The Limbless Veterans, I would like to offer my sincerest thanks to you and all at 299 Association for your generous donation of £441, which was safely and gratefully received today.

Craig went on to personally thank the association for their support in this venture and informed the meeting that a grand total of £18000 was raised over this free fall week end. Brilliant effort by all.

Pete Robson has personally taken it upon himself and commissioned printed plaques of two of our friends and former 299 men who died 2014, **Colin Bowden & Bill Dick**, whose ashes were dispersed around the monument at Ginkle Heath, Holland. The plaques are printed on very thin sheet aluminium and taken from our roll of honour site, photo & script of each man. It is intended, with permission to locate these small plaques somewhere in the vicinity of their final resting place. Again a marvellous gesture **Pete**, only hope we can pull it off.

Simbo's bus stop: this week's winner Johnny Mace.

There being no further business the Vice Chairman thanked all for a very enjoyable and well attended meeting and closed the proceedings.

Web site address: www.299association.com

Next Meeting: again the Minerva is not available, therefore the same format has being agreed by the members for us all to meet at The Ship Inn, Dunswell at 20.00hrs, on the 2nd September 2016.

Dates for your diary:

Capt. John Thompson leaving do at the Middleton Barracks Saturday 10th September 2016, tickets £10p/p

Arnhem Pilgrimage: 15th – 19th September 2016. Details to follow closer to the time.

AEA Reunion/AGM 2016: The Royal Court Hotel, Keresley, Coventry. Friday 14th – Monday 17th October. Booking forms can be obtained from the Secretary.

Remembrance Sunday: 13th November 2016.

