



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 3rd August 2018 at the Ship Inn, Dunswell, Near Beverley.

Members Present: M. Beardshaw, G. Beaumont, B. Bilton, J. Brooks, G. Coe, N. Cooper, T. Cunningham, W. Drayton, A. Foster, R. Franklin, D. French, C. Gadd, F. Gray, M. Hall, D. Hines, A. Irwin, A. Kitching, J. Mace, M. Maddison, D. Meekin, J. Palmer, F. Pougher, L. Ransom, G. Ratten, P. Robson, K. Saddington, S. Saxby, P. Sims, B. Steele, A. Stimpson, J. Thompson, Capt. J. C. Thompson, Mart. Tindle, C. Walker, Maj. C. Wilcock, C. Wilkinson, D. Woollas.

Apologies: P. Robinson, C. Shillito, A. Weldon, A. Costello, J. Cherry, J. Duffy, R. Swatman, K. Blacker, L. Smith.

Guests: Benny Bridges, Paddy Nolan, Steve Wilkinson and Pauline Meekin.

Welcome and 'Roll Call'

The acting Chairman and Secretary **Gary Coe** welcomed all present then opened the meeting by asking members to be upstanding and to observe one minute's silence in remembrance of **Keith Robinson, 'Robbie'** who passed away 20th July after suffering a relatively short but devastating illness. This much respected ex National Service man, long serving 299 man, 299 Association member and friend, climbed through the ranks from Sapper – Captain in record time, he always led from the front, he was blessed with a natural fitness standard rated way under his years, thus allowing him to always win over the confidence of his men. He fought his illness to the end with the usual courage that we had come to expect from him, until his 82 year old body could take no more. Glasses were then raised in a toast to **'Robbie'** and to the part he played in all of our lives. We give our blessings to his family: **Eileen (wife), Paul (Son) & Lesley (Daughter)**, who will forever be a part of this association.

At this meeting we were privileged to have several members, who for various reasons cannot attend on a regular basis; **Fred Gray**, a 299 Hull man from the 50's, who then went on to regular service with 9 Sqn for the full term, he was the AEA Archivist, also the Author of the book "The Airborne Engineers"

Charlie (Tug) Wilkinson who served in 299 for ~ 20yrs, one of the most reliable men I have ever known, never misses the Remembrance Sunday Parade, but has all on as a full time carer for his handicapped wife, it's great to see both men.

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

Proposed by – **T. Cunningham**.

Seconded by – **A. Irwin**.

Treasure's Report: **Martin** brought the meeting up to date with our expenditure including this year's Arnhem payments, the balance still looks healthy.

Correspondence:

This month's incoming has been dominated by the events and tragedies surrounding **Keith Robinson**, the news broke at the last meeting (July) that **Keith** had been admitted to the Hull Royal Infirmary's intensive care department because he was very poorly. **Paul, (Young) Robbie (Son)** and the **Chairman, Chris Shillito** organized the visiting around the family and you men did the rest in big numbers, the many messages of good will, (before death) and later with condolences flooding in, and are far too numerous to be mentioned in these minutes, the association message board went into melt down, all this was gratefully received by the family and **Young Robbie & Eileen** expressed their thanks to you all for the support given at this very sad time.

Who would have thought that **Keith** could get ill and die in such a short period of time.! **Bunny Browns** words are swimming around in my head, "none of us are hear for ever" said a few months before his own death.

I have taken the liberty of selecting just one email from the many messages posted which acknowledges the depth of feelings on **Keith's** passing, it was sent from an ex 299 man who served in the 60's – 70's and is now living in Tokyo, Japan.

"I met **Keith Robinson** at 'boot camp' - initial 6 months basic training when I first joined the unit. I was just out of high school (18 years old) and had just started work and college. He was my Cpl training instructor, together with Dick Ackroyd (Sgt) and others. He taught me discipline, self-esteem and confidence. After completion of basic training and parachute training he became my mentor, colleague and friend, keeping a watchful eye on me, along with other members of the unit, transforming me from a boy to a man.

I have never forgotten my time at the unit which brings back many fond memories and shaped me as a man. It is inevitable, we all die. What is important is how one lives, and how one helps and impacts on others. Strength and honour. Be at rest my friend. Stewart M. Bristow"

John Philips (B'ham Chairman), message Bd. 21/7/2018. More bad news, I'm sorry to have pass on to 299 Assn. Our **Davey Bowron** is in Warwick Hospital due to complications with his right shortened leg. At some time after emergency arrival it was determined he had contacted Sepsis and at present is in a coma. Will pass on further info through **Gaz Coe**.

Steve Brown (B'ham Sec), email dated 23/7/2018. Hi troops, Update on **Dave**, I had a call from **Mike Holdsworth** today who had been to visit **Dave** and said that he was in good spirits but occasionally dropping off to sleep, it may have been the conversation though! However while **Mike** was there, the Doctor was discussing things with **Dave** when **Dave** asked the Doc 'how long? To which he replied that it's uncertain, could be a couple of weeks, or a couple of months, **Dave** took the news very well.

The medics are worried about a blockage in a main artery as well as the sepsis. If you want to visit he's on Willoughby A4 or 4A Ward, Phone 01926495321. Ward code 6061.

Paul Robbie, message Bd. 24/7/2018. Gents, I can now confirm the arrangements for my dad's funeral:

Monday 6th August 13:30 hrs.

Chanterlands Avenue Crematorium, Hull.

Afterwards at the Goodfellowship.

If you need any more info please txt or ring me on Mb: 07976670550.

Dress: Association Blazer, Berets Squadron tie and Medals.

Chris Shillito, Message Bd. Forwarded message from **Steve Brown** dated 28/7/2018. **Bowron update**

Dear **Steve**, **Rosemary** and I went to see **Dave Bowron** yesterday (27/7/2018), **Dave** is rather weak but he is "soldering" on, against all adversity he has retained his sense of humour and is an example to us all, "What a Star"

Kind regards **Nev Collins**.

Social Calendar:

ARNHEM PILGRIMAGE SEPT. 2018. (Traveling times)

THURSDAY 20TH September 2018. Overnight ferry to Rotterdam

16:00 – 16:15hrs there will be a coach pick up outside the Ship Inn, Beverley Rd, Dunswell, Near Beverley, HU6 0AJ. Tel: 01482 854458.

N/B: For those of you coming on this trip from out of town by car, this is by far the best option, the parking is free and safe with no need in fighting your way through the busy Hull traffic for getting to the ferry terminal, the pub is owned by an association member and is on the out - skirts of Hull, come at it via the Beverley bypass missing Hull completely. If you get yourselves there early enough you may sample some super pub grub, very reasonably priced with a pint of the finest, it beats the hell out of that expensive ferry canteen, because you will need to eat at some time during the evening.

17:00hrs – no later, for those who have made their own way to the dock will rendezvous with the coach coming from the Ship Inn at the Riverside Terminal on **King George Dock**, Hull. HU9 5PS to check in for the overnight sailing to Rotterdam. Passports will be needed at this point for **checking in as a group**, this may be when passport number list could be needed, if you haven't given this info to the organizers you could be swimming..! We all get on the coach and drive to the rear of the buildings where we need to clear customs **as a group** before we leave the coach to board the ferry on foot. (Sounds complicated but it's not). You could be given your cabin key whilst still on the coach. Tip: as you board the ferry you could buy your tickets from the reception desk as you pass it for an evening meal and /or tomorrow's breakfast, if needed, saves a lot of hassle later.

N/B: You are recommended to have a small overnight bag for the sailing to Rotterdam. Other luggage may be left on the coach during the crossing, but you will not be able to access this once you have boarded the ferry.

We will be staying at the Fletcher Hotel / Restaurant, Kabeljauwalle 35 6865BL. Doorwerth, Holland. Tel: + 31(0) 317 319 010

Do not forget the following: your passport, sufficient Euros, your E111 card. The ship's bars, etc. accept both Euros & GBP. Holland is one hour ahead of UK time.

Travel Insurance is your own responsibility, there is `NO` automatic cover through membership to this association, the AEA, or any other organization.

ARNHEM PILGRIMAGE 75TH ANNIVERSARY 19th – 23rd SEPTEMBER 2019

Last month we started taking names for the above and for those of you who want a guaranteed place on this trip we require a £50 deposit, (refundable up until May 2019), this is seen by the organizers as a necessary commitment of intent, £10 is too easy to walk away from and we do need a guide line number for ferry bookings by **next month**, on what will be a very busy anniversary year at Arnhem, (the early bird will get the cheaper cabins), thus keeping the overall costs down for us all, when all the places are taken names will have to go onto the substitute list.

Because **Mart. Tindle** is stepping down as Treasurer at the next AGM, **Glenn Ratten** is taking charge of the bookings & monies for this trip, he is making the list out in the order of names given with a £50p/p deposit, which will 'nail' a place for certain. It's up to you in making it a commitment.

Glenn's details: Tel: 01757 700016, Mb: 07795248328, E mail: glennratten@icloud.com

Chairman's Comments: although absent from this meeting because he is on a much needed holiday he wishes to convey his thanks to **Tony Irwin** for organizing the Standards and the CESA organization of volunteers for the forth coming funeral of our friend and comrade **Keith Robinson**, these people give their time freely for such occasions, doing so through a sense of duty, they're all ex-service men and members of the Royal British Legion, where would we be without them? And they will not be around for ever..!

Tony must also be thanked for parading this association's Standard at the Airborne Forces Day (Northern) at the Eden Camp, Malton on Saturday 14th July, he also escorted two of our veterans **Les Ransom & Tony Costello** and was joined at the camp by **Syd Hoyle & Art Stimpson** ensuring a 299 presence at this occasion, and we thank them for representing us all.

He thanked **Mike Maddy & Kate** on behalf of the association members invited to his 50th bash, a good time was had by all and he asked "who gave that Arnhem Vet. **Les Ransom** the 'pink' Guitar? The oldest 'Teddy Boy' in town.

Congratulations to **Tony Weldon** 'who' for the 2nd time in the last 6yrs lifted the **David Brown Trophy** for his **display of allotment** produce, the biggest & best in his area, I always knew he would make it **big** one day.

If you could take the time to look at the association web-site 'Roll of Honour' icon, you will find the display now features music 'Abide With Me' Brilliant piece of work from our web master **Dave Hines**.

Matters arising: **John Donaldson's** continuous struggle with the MoD Medal department for the GSM 62 with Clasp South Arabia for the men from 300 Sqn. 131 Para Eng.'s who were wounded in action whilst serving in Aden 1965, whilst working on the Dhala Road. **SSM John Lonergan** was killed in this action with many men wounded.

A brief summary of the situation as it stands at the moment; **John Lonergan's** family received his medal posthumously on **John's** behalf for the part he played in this action. This act alone shows recognition of active service that nobody can deny, some / all of the wounded from 300 Sqn are denied the medal on the grounds that this was only a training exercise for 131 Para RE, even though 300 Sqn fought alongside 24 Field Sqn RE (Regulars) who also had men killed and wounded in the same action, but for these men, this action is known as 'THE BATTLE FOR THE DHALA ROAD', 30 day's in theatre was the operational minimum for receiving this award and the reservist's operational / TRAINING time did not meet with this criteria, another bone of contention.

On the 20th June 2018, a letter was sent to the Chief of Defence Staff, explaining that the Army Medal Office had said that those members of 300 Para Sqn RE who were killed and wounded in Aden were entitled to the GSM 62 under special Army Orders of 25th July 1966, (personal withdrawn from any operational theatre prematurely through death or injury will qualify for the operational award), General Nitsch, in his letter was under the impression that they had already received the GSM and explained in his letter why they were entitled to this award.

One of these wounded men, **Eoghann Maclachlainn (bullet to the face)** has just received a further letter from the Medal Dept. reading; "although you were injured whilst on an annual training camp in Aden, you unfortunately do not qualify for this award because you were there for training purposes alone, and not on operational duties" Some live firing exercise then..! Unbelievable, is there anybody out there who can do something about this injustice?

John says "watch this space there's more to come"

Allied Air Forces Memorial Day – Sunday 2nd September 2018, at the Yorkshire Air Museum, Elvington.

Again this association is invited to take part in this annual Memorial Day, this year marking the Centenary of the formation of the Royal Air Force. The event will feature the parade of standards to the Service in the Memorial Hanger, followed by the march past, Sunset Ceremony and Salute. The parade will be led by the Yorkshire Military Marching Band and Corps of Drums. We will meet in the car park for a parade briefing at 12:00hrs, I will get there early with participant tickets, there should not be a problem.
Dress: Association blazers, berets, ties and decorations.

N/B: this event gets bigger every year, great expectations for this year, but still as yet in the planning stage for this Centenary Commemoration, the fly past timings will set the format on the day, stay loose.

Sqn news: **Capt. J. C. Thompson** gave a brief update with the news that the new OC for 299 Sqn has taken to his post today; **Maj. Paul Galimore** he is an ex 131 man and we wish him well.

Planned integrated training is on the horizon for a couple of weeks in the Ukraine, with some 299 men joining 51 Sqn in Kenya and next year some will be joining 9 Sqn in Belize.

Things are not going well with 3 Troop up in Gateshead, recruitment is flat to non-existent, whereas Hull continue to get a steady flow, with 3 men just recently completing selection.

RAF 70 Sqn out of Brize Norton are not as yet up to Squadron strength with the new Atlas A400, expected to be some time in 2019, this means rationed parachute training with only one basic para course planned for next year.

N/B: Suffolk – based 12 Para HQ & Support Sqn has been restored to the ranks of 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment with a parade on Saturday 28th July 2018. Its job is to be responsible for administration & training, specialised diving, design & reconnaissance capabilities.

Items from members: **Maj C. Wilcock** announced the immediate instalment of the new OC for 131 Commando Engineers he is **Maj. Ed. Dutton** ex 300 Sqn Plymouth, he is a full time reservist giving up his civilian job as a Policeman to fulfil the role, we wish him well.

Pete Robson has out sourced some information on "The Lancaster bomber sculpture plan " a gateway to Lincolnshire, this can be discussed at a later meeting. Considered visit if enough interest shown.

Tony Irwin introduced Paddy Nolan to this meeting who is the coordinator for the Veterans Community Hub in the Hull area. **Paddy** is ex 1 Para and also a qualified Social worker, he is employed by the MoD to develop this venture with the financial backing coming from the Royal British Legion.

The aim is to develop a veteran's hub and forum with the welfare of veterans being paramount, will consist of a drop in centre in Hull offering service provider's assistance and help when needed. To encourage veterans to the centre there may be a breakfast club and more, everything under one roof. The address: Goodwin Community Hub, 63 – 74 Anlaby Road, Hull. HU3 2LL. The project is set to be opened later in the year and I will keep you informed.

Simbo's bus stop: one winner this month **Frank (Bud) Pougher**.

Web site address: www.299association.com

SPECIAL THANKS TO JOHNO PALMER FOR LETTING US USE HIS PUB, HE NEVER LETS US DOWN AND ALSO PROVIDES A SPLENDED BUFFET.

Next Meeting: to be held at the `Minerva` 20:00hrs, Cooperation Pier, Hull, on Friday 7th September 2018.

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

Dates for your diary:

YORKSHIRE AIR MUSEUM MEMORIAL DAY: 2ND Sept. 2018, details TBC, remember: Centenary year for the RAF, will be a big occasion this year, a good turn out from this association would do this association no harm at all!

**ARNHEM PILGRIMAGE 2018. THURSDAY NIGHT 20th Sept (overnight ferry) ----- MONDAY morning after overnight ferry Sept.24th 2018
Details disclosed.**

CROMWELL LOCK MEMORIAL SERVICE, (at the lock), SUNDAY 30TH SEPT. 2018. Details to follow.

29TH ANNUAL AEA GALA DINNER – SATURDAY 13TH October 2018. To be held at the King Charles Hotel, Brompton Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 5QT. (Chatham Branch of the AEA), Booking forms attached to April's minutes.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 11TH NOV. 2018, details to follow

CONTACTS:

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