



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: February 6th 2015

Welcome and 'Roll Call'

The chairman welcomed a very well attended meeting, (30 +), names were taken and apologies read out, all to be recorded into the records.

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

Proposed by – P. Robson

Seconded by – A Irwin

Treasure's Report: Martin reports that our funds are healthy; he also reminds the meeting that Arnhem deposits are needed ASAP for booking purposes.

Correspondence:

AEA Golf Tour 2015 (messages from Dave Rutter)

This year cost is **£145 per person**, Bed & Breakfast at the **3* Ramada Hotel, Nottingham**. This includes 3 rounds of Golf at the following courses:

Ramsdale Park (Wednesday), Oakmere Park (Thursday), Morley Hayes (Friday).

To be held Wed 2nd to Fri 4th September 2015.

"Lessons have being learnt and this year we are going more central to allow everyone wishing to participate to be able to travel on the day without covering considerable distances. We have also shifted the tee times to allow arrival and departure to be more participant friendly and have dispensed with Dinner, no one eats it"

For all those interested, please contact the organizer **Mick Leather** at mleather350@gmail.com

Payment will have to be in full this year, send cheque payable to **M. Leather** or e-mail him for details to electronically transfer. The address is:

Bryn-y-Wawr, Coedybryn, Llandysul, Ceredigion, SA44 5LH.

ALL WELCOME!!

With nothing bigger than a Bren gun: The defence of the schoolhouse at the road bridge during the Battle of Arnhem 1944
By N.M.G. Cherry, 38 pages 16 illustrations 2 maps, Priced at £8.

This booklet looks at the actions of a small group of men from the 1st Parachute Squadron Royal Engineers and C Company of the 3rd Parachute battalion who held a vital position in the defensive perimeter around the road bridge. This group occupied a schoolhouse on the Eastern side of the bridge from the evening of 17th September to the afternoon of the 20th with nothing bigger than a Bren gun and against heavy and repeated attacks. Numerous accounts from members of both units who fought there are included. (I believe that one of 299 PSI's from the 50's & 60's, Joe Mally, fought in this action).

Available in the UK from: **N Cherry 3 Church Road, Warton, Lancs, PR4 1BD. E- mail for information on orders:**
niall.cherry@baesystems.com Cheques made payable to N. Cherry + £2 per copy postage.

John Lee: A message from the AEA President

He thanked 299 for keeping him up to date on all matters and is pleased to see "Bud" Oldfield is recovering well from his operations, also passes on his regards.

Cromwell Lock:

John has informed this association that he is the point of contact between the AEA and 131 who are hoping to send a contingent under the directive of Olaf Dudley for the ceremony at Cromwell lock on 27th September 2015 and will keep us posted with any further news. We need to establish possible numbers interested in attending, remember, it's the week after the return from our Arnhem Pilgrimage! Possible group transport may be needed?

John Davis: ex 2 Troop and 1 Troop S/Sgt. from the late 50's, 60's and 70's era, he wishes to be remembered to all the lads he served with, he hopes to team up with the other "Donny" lads for the meetings, he also wishes the association every success as it continues to grow. **All 299 men are welcome John, at any age, and anytime, it would be great to see you again.**

Danny (Anthony) Daniel: has made contact and wishes to be remembered to all the lads, God willing, his intentions are for attending the next meeting, along with his old pal **Ole Girtchen**, all good news.

The Secretary reminded the meeting that AEA membership forms are always available, just ask, any other association's details can be obtained as needed.

Sqn News:

Squadron **2 IC Capt. John C.Thompson** attended this meeting after being called back from his duties in East Africa early, due to his father's health status, he arrived home just in time to say farewell to his father who sadly died, and this association offers its deepest sympathy to John and all his family.

John proceeded to update the association with news of the new 1 Troop **OC. Lt. Sam Long** who has just completed his reservist Commissioned Officer training at Sandhurst College, we wish him well.

1 Troop strength stands at 30 +, Squadron at 142, 150 needed, hopefully this number will be reached by March this year. 299's retention rate is one of the best within the reservist Army, have only lost 16 over the last 2 years, also the Squadron bucks the trend, leading in the national recruitment drive. The Army requires 1000 troops in readiness for NATO support and 1 Troop, 299 Squadron leads the way with its HRR commitment. The Squadron boasts 2 Cross Country champions from Hull, Sappers Hooker & Hadley, with Spr. Hadley selected to represent the Army, well done lads.

Squadron training this year is planned to take place in Kenya, 6 week exercise with the 82nd Airborne, Cyprus and Slovakia.

The C130 Hercules are to be withdrawn in preference to the new A400m, (similar size to the C17 Galaxy), this has a capacity for simultaneous sticks of 120.

Social Calendar: Visitation to the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight: RAF Coningsby: Thursday 16th April 2015.

This visit has been planned with a mandate given by the members because of requests from some who failed to be included on the 2013 visit, there are 25 places up for grabs with first preference being given to those who missed the first trip, only then can we fill any vacant places. If you would like a place on this trip please give your name to the Secretary ASAP, Tel: 01757 268188 or email: coeblimey240@gmail.com this is a full day, excellent venue, well worth the experience of being amongst these living legends, the coach will pickup in Fernsway, Hull, time to be decided by Malcolm Tindle to meet our `Hanger Tour` time of 11.00am.

Chairman's Comments:

The Chairman, Bill Drayton brought into the meeting one of those iconic ceramic poppies from around the tower of London fame, which had been gifted to him by his son, he then proceeded to open up a discussion on the event. This was the closest most of us have been to a part of that magnificent display of: **`Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red`** from around the tower of London, designed for the commemoration of the outbreak of the "Great War", in 2014, its centenary year. Tom Piper, the designer tried to give the appearance of blood seeping from the tower crashing over in waves and filling the moat. The original idea was that of ceramic artist Paul Cummings who wished to honour the 888,246 British & Commonwealth troops who died in the First World War and raise money for six service charities at the same time. Once the first poppy was planted by Yeoman Sergeant Crawford Butler the installation began to grow, More than 25,000 volunteers generously gave their time to plant poppies, transforming the tower's moat into a sea of red, volunteers came from all over the world and had their own influence on the display, thus becoming as much the artist as Paul or Tom.

The buying of these poppies raised millions of pounds for the following Charities; **Help for Heroes, The Royal British Legion, Combat Stress, SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen & Families Association), Coming Home (Haigh Housing Trust), COBSED (The Confederation of Service Charities).**

This money will help the veterans of both today and tomorrow with some of their needs.

Never complain about getting older, this privilege has been denied to so many.

Welfare report: the Chairman asked the members for an update on the current sick list, he was glad to see **Les. Ransom** back at the meetings "you can't keep a good man down" it was the "Stereos" that did the trick, with everything now back in tune.

"Weldo" brought us the latest news on **"Bud" Pougher**, who is staying with his daughter in Derbyshire whilst recuperating from massive surgery to his neck, he is doing well, having to master speaking again, this time he's cutting out all the bad language, its BBC lingo all the way. Good news, just received, "Bud" is home again, he now feels ready to receive visits/phone calls on: 01482 637367, everybody is welcome. N/B the skin graft stitched onto his tongue, taken from his arm, now reads "MAM & DAD" Not many of them about!

Norman Arksey: has under gone heart surgery, (Stents), feeling a lot better now but big life style changes are a must, Doctors orders, along with essential follow up treatments. Standard bearing has to take a back seat for the time being.

Ole Nelson Girtchen: is now nearly fully recovered, and thanks us all for thinking about him.

Johnny Mace: gave an update on **"Beau"** and on top of all his problems he's now got the Flu, the medics have at last decided in which order to tackle his complicated and urgently needed heart surgery which is crucial for his future well being. We believe he has a date for surgery, sometime in the middle of this month, we are all pulling for you `Beau`

The Chairman passed on his, and our best wishes to all the lads that are struggling with health issues reminding them that the association support net- work is in place, you must not be too proud to ask, nothing is too much trouble, just let us know, do not struggle on in silence.

Matters arising:

There have been requests from some members for an association dinner/dance with approximately 50% of the membership present at this meeting offering support for such an event. Therefore this committee will not be taking responsibility for initiating this venture, but will support and help people with any of the many suggestions made during the meeting.

What you've got to remember; we the committee members hold no position of authority, that lies with the membership, we are just ordinary members like the rest of you, we just happen to be doing a job, and it is grossly unfair to expect the committee to organize something without there being a clear mandate from the association, previous administrations did this on many occasions never bothering to ask the membership, and struggled to avoid a loss by pulling anybody in off the street. Remember the funds belong to all of us. Therefore any members who are prepared to take on this responsibility, ie social/entertainment person's or committee, please feel free in seeking permission from this association, and you have our blessing.

Items from members:

Tony Irwin, Archivist wishes to thank the members for all the memorabilia dug out of them old boxes and tins stored in the attic.

A special meeting for **Mathew Williams, Bill Dick's** son, one year almost to the day, less we forget.

The Chairman reminded the meeting that the AGM is in May, all committee places will become vacant; 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.

Big Bill Drayton thanked everybody for making this a very enjoyable meeting.

Next Meeting: To be held in the Minerva, on Corporation Pier, Hull, at 2000hrs on the 6th March 2015

Dates for your diary:

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

Arnhem Pilgrimage 2015

The duration of our annual pilgrimage to Arnhem will be decided at the next meeting by you the members, and will be arranged around Saturday 19th Sept.

Wreath Laying at Cromwell Lock: 27th September 2015

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

The AEA Reunion/AGM 16th – 19th October 2015 at Coventry

Remembrance Sunday: 8th November 2015

