



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 6th January 2017

Members Present: M. Beardshaw, B. Bilton, K. Blacker, J. Brooks, G. Coe, N. Cooper, T. Cunningham, W. Drayton, C. Duggan, R. Franklin, D. French, C. Gadd, A. Grimes, C. Ham, D. Hines, A. Irwin, P. Jefferson, A. Lee, J. Mace, M. Maddison, S. McMahon, D. Meekin, F. Pougher, L. Ransom, G. Ratten, P. Robson, K. Russell, C. Shillito, P. Sims, L. Smith, J. Thompson, Mart.Tindle, C. Walker, T. Walker, A. Weldon.

Apologies: F. Gray, P. Robinson, B. Steele, A. Costello, J. Duffy, D. Harvey, C. Henrickson, S. Hoyle, A. Kitching, C. Lickiss, G. Beaumont, A. Stimpson, K. Robinson, Mike.Tindle, A. Green, R. Swatman, C. Wilcock, A Foster.

Welcome and 'Roll Call'

The Chairman **Chris Shillito** welcomed all present to the first meeting of 2017 with best wishes all round, and yet again another well attended meeting, (35), "these numbers are quickly becoming the norm, could shortly be resulting in standing room only! Then he opened the meeting by introducing another new comer to the fold, **Alan Lee**.

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

Proposed by – **G. Ratten**

Seconded by – **F. (Bud). Pougher**

Treasure's Report:

The Treasurer **Martin Tindle** gave a brief but concise statement of our accounts which are in extremely good order. He also reported that the deposit paid by people for the Arnhem Pilgrimage is fast approaching 30 places taken.

Correspondence:

The Chairman posted a big thank you to the members who made themselves available for the construction of **SANTA'S GROTO** as a big treat for the disadvantaged children of The North Brandsholme housing estate in Hull. This simple act of kindness may appear to be of little consequence to most, but it means the world to the many kids that have absolutely nothing. This group of association men have helped to project this association into the very heart of the City's Administration, our reputation goes before us within the Chambers in the Guild Hall at Hull, many thanks to you all, who knows what comes next?

Don Gale a 299 veteran from the late 50's – early 60's sends his best wishes to all at the association.

Arthur Stimpson could not make it tonight, but would like to pass on his best wishes for the New Year to you all.

Adam Garforth (Garth) has made contact with the association and wants to be remembered to all his old mates, **Garth** has gone international, living his life between Thailand and Bulgaria, depending as the mood takes him. He is now included on the open mailing list for you all to communicate with, due to be in the UK during April and hopefully catch up with you all then.

Captain Olaf S. Dudley, (Duds), 131 Commando Sqn RE sent the following upon receiving the December minutes.

"It's great to see the association doing so well. What a wonderful team you have there.

Wishing a super Christmas and a happy New Year to you all"

Season's greetings from the Donny lad's: Bud Oldfield, John Davis and Nev. Smales.

Christmas card received from **Bud** followed by a long catch up chat, they all wish to be remembered to you and send their best wishes, they receive the monthly minutes and are up to date on all matters, but "age waits for no man" and like many of us this is beginning to take its toll on both them and their wives. **Bud** is delighted with the association's progress and congratulates you all on turning it around into something that people want to be a part of, the numbers speak for themselves.

Alan Lee posted an update on a long day spent outside The Royal Courts in London in support of **Sgt A. Blackman's** hearing, (the RM Commando accused of murdering a wounded enemy soldier whilst illegally suffering from PTSD). **Alan**, along with many others were disappointed with the outcome, no bail granted, therefore another Christmas locked up, with the main appeal due in Jan/Feb this year, (date yet to be announced). He flew the flag for **Sgt Blackman** and put his point of view over in the many interviews given. Supporters for the release of Marine "A" are hoping for a more positive outcome in the New Year, and is asking for any other likeminded people to join him at the courts on this occasion. **Alan** thanked those members of this association who gave their support.

On behalf of the association I have replied to them all.

FOR ANYBODY THINKING OF JOINING 299 ASSOCIATION

There are no subs to pay or registration fees, we don't have many rules, usually a show of hands from the lads is all that is needed, but we do insist on good humour, along with total honesty and respect for each other, which goes without saying for most 299 men, we are open to any man who served with 299, red or green, it makes no difference, we are all colour blind, also rank achieved whilst serving or length of service counts for nothing in this association, every man is equally important, we also place great value on anybody wishing to be an associate member, the committee carries no authority at all, and is voted in every year by the FULL members at the AGM in May, we are just a bunch of likeminded blokes who happened to have served in the best unit in the British Army, and we enjoy each other's company.

N/B: If you know of anybody who could fulfil this criteria and may be interested, please pass the message on.

Chairman's Comments:

Chris Shillito emphasized the need in getting your deposits in for the Arnhem Pilgrimage, with the full cost to be paid by the AGM in May. He apologised for not knowing the final cost per person as yet, but our tour operator is still working on this, and it is expected to be higher than last year's due to the weaker pound.

The question of travel insurance was again raised from the floor which is totally the responsibility for each individual, if you feel you need it, you have to pay for it yourselves, and you are **NOT** covered by AEA membership, personal insurance is not compulsory for this trip.

N/B: Arnhem veteran **Les Ransom** `approaching 95yrs of age` was asked what he did for travel insurance, his reply was a classic, and I quote "couldn't get in 1944 and still can't get it now" this was greeted with much amusement by all.

The Chairman asked **Alan Lee** for any updates and background info on Marine "A" **Sgt A. Blackman**. He was a member of 42 Commando and was on his seventh operational tour in front line duty when the incident took place. Bail money totalling £200k was raised from many sources including £50k from his commanding officer, bail was refused on the grounds of it has never before been given to someone accused of murder. Dates for the trial have now been set with full support being asked for on the 8th February outside the courts at 9.00hrs, (reasons not known as yet). The Chairman then thanked **Alan** for all his

efforts and then asked the meeting for consideration in supporting this cause which brought a positive response, enquiries are to be made before any decisions are made, and the 8th is mid-week, difficulties for the working members, therefore await and watch for any forth coming developments in this area.

Items from members:

Paul Sims: Simbo's bus stops, two winners this month Kev Blacker & Gaz Coe.

Dave Hines: enamelled poppy pins ordered through **Dave** worked out cheaper than expected by £3 each, it was put to the members and all agreed to put the extra in the association funds, this raised another £72, thanks to all concerned.

Terry Cunningham: ex 2 troop 299 Sqn Para RE realised his old pals over in "Donny" had not had a chance in obtaining the association calendar, therefore he contacted **Dave Hines** to run a few more off, and he willingly obliged, he then delivered them over the festive period, and caught up with everybody. The "Donny" men where over the moon with this and are planning to attend a meeting when the days draw out more, maybe the AGM in May, always welcome.

A reminder from **Captain Olaf S. Dudley 131 Commando RE** this year is the 70th anniversary of the formation of 131, in 1947 it was then a totally airborne unit and the biggest Engineer Regiment in the British Army.

Web site address: www.299association.com

Next Meeting: Friday 3rd February 2017 at 20.00hrs in the Minerva on Corporation Pier, Hull.

Dates for your diary:

Arnhem Pilgrimage: Thursday 14th – Monday 18th September 2017.

N/B: The only sure way of guaranteeing your place on this trip is by placing a £50 deposit with **Martin** our Treasurer, **the list will be closed when the coach is full**, therefore if you wish to partake make the commitment and reserve your place now to avoid any disappointments.

The AEA Reunion/AGM to be held at The Mercure Hull Royal Hotel, Fernsway, Hull, HU1 3UF. Over the weekend Friday 13th – Monday 16th October 2017.

Full details for above to follow.

Remembrance Sunday: 12th November.

With nothing more to discuss the Chairman closed the meeting thanking the members for turning out on such a terrible night.

