



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 1st July 2016.

One hundred years ago to this day, 20,000 British and Commonwealth soldiers were killed in action on the first day in the Battle of the Somme, the bloodiest day in British military history, **we will remember them.**

Members Present: D. Barker, M. Beardshaw, G. Beaumont, B. Bilton, G. Coe, N. Cooper, A. Costello, G. Crum, T. Cunningham, W. Drayton, R. Franklin, D. French, A. Grimes, C. Ham, D. Harvey, D. Hines, A. Irwin, A. Kitching, C. Lickiss, J. Mace, M. Maddison, D. Meeking, F. Pougher, L. Ransom, G. Ratten, K. Robinson, P. Robson, C. Shillito, P. Sims, A. Stimpson, Mart. Tindle, A. Weldon.

Apologies: F. Gray, P. Robinson, Mike.Tindle, B. Steele, C. Gadd, C. Henrickson, S. Hoyle, J. Duffy, D. Ideson, L. Smith, R. Swatman, C. Wilcock, D. Woollas.

Welcome and 'Roll Call'

The Chairman, **Chris Shillito** welcomed all present then opened the meeting by thanking all for their attendance at the Minerva on this Friday evening. He asked for 1 minutes silence for the men of the Somme and then asked **Gaz Coe** to give **Binyon's** prayer of remembrance.

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

Proposed by – **A. Irwin.**

Seconded by – **G. Ratten.**

Treasure's Report: Martin brought the meeting up to date with our current financial status which continues to remain healthy. Monies due to this association via the Hull Guild Hall is currently being processed and an approximation of the final figure was given to the meeting. **This year's ARNHEM TRIP is now closed and fully booked up, all 30 places taken, monies for this has to be paid by tonight.** If any late comers want to be considered for a place, give your name to the committee just in case of any cancelations.

Correspondence: from the Secretary of the Hull branch of the PRA. **Syd. Hoyle**

JOHN TIDYMAN'S FUNERAL (13th JUNE 2016)

The association received a message of thanks for the support given for **John's** family, friends and comrades on this very sad occasion. **John** was an active member of the Hull branch of the PRA, he was ex 6th Airborne Division, Parachute Regiment

and Palestine veteran. Men from this association responded to a request from the Chairman of the Hull Branch of the PRA, **Don Shaw**, to make a presence with Standard at his funeral, this request was fulfilled with 9, 299 men stepping forward. **Thanks to the men from this association for stepping forward, and a special thanks must go to Tony Irwin for carrying our Standard yet again.**

Chairman's Comments:

COLIN WOODWARD'S FUNERAL (9TH JUNE 2016)

Many thanks to all the association members, including your family and friends who attended the funeral service for **"Woody"** our association Standard bearer. Forty seven 299 men showed their last respects for their friend, whose commitment to this association has been second to none. Standing room only at the Chapel speaks volumes regarding respect for this man, his commitment to duty within the airborne brotherhood impressed upon many. Messages of condolence have been received from far and wide, including the AEA President **Lt Col (Ret) John Lee**.

A special thanks must go to the men from the Birmingham branch of the AEA, our members from Doncaster and Kent, also the men from the Hull branch PRA including Standards. **"Woody's"** comrades from the CESA organization, (Combined Ex Serviceman's Association), brought their many Standards including a last post bugler. This gave rise to a service of remembrance that **Colin** would have been humbled, but proud of. The occasion brought together many old 299 friends from way back.

The 299 Standard was carried by Tony Irwin, one of Woody's closest friends, 301 Standard was carried by Bunny Brown, but our thanks must go to all who played their part in saying good bye to one of our friends.



Colin's wife Marion posted the following on this association's message board:

"Marion and family would like to thank everyone for all the cards and messages on the passing of our dearest **Colin**, we will love and miss him forever.

We are overwhelmed at the support and comradeship at his funeral. He will be greatly missed by each and every one of you. We felt proud that he was respected by all his friends, once again, thank you.

Marion, Jane and **Elain** would also like to thank you for the collection which will be given to the McMillian nurses and Dove House Hospice respectively.

Once again thanks, and love to you all"

Matters arising: Future trips: Arnhem Pilgrimage, Normandy, etc.

Names for any future trips will only be included on the list when secured with a cash deposit. This is the only way we can plan our trips with any certainty, we need to know numbers in estimating costs, nobody in the real World can go into a travel shop to put their name down, without a deposit, to reserve a place, that they may, or may not decide to take up at a later date, depending how they feel, when that time comes around, this would never happen, therefore the association's Treasurer **Martin Tindle** is prepared to bank any individuals deposits/funds into the associations bank as a security for pending trips throughout the year, if and as required.

Items from members:

IS THIS A SIGN OF THE TIMES?

Last week, a school named after a Second World War soldier, John D Baskeyfield VC, changed its name in a bid to shake off its “reputation with failure”

John Baskeyfield VC Primary School in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs, has been renamed **Saint Nathaniel’s Academy**. The school’s trustees say they decided to rename the school because they believed people associated the name **John Baskeyfield** with a “legacy of failure” This has been seen as an insult to his memory by children’s parents, historians and relatives of this gallant soldier, who gave his life for his country aged just 22yrs. We have to question why? Having a school named after one of the city’s greatest war heroes could ever be associated with failure. **Therefore judge for yourselves.**

About the man: Born in 1922, **John “Jack” Baskeyfield** initially trained as a butcher, but was called up to the army in 1942. He served with the 2nd Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment, an air landing unit, (Gliders), of the 1st Airborne Division, he served in North Africa, Sicily and Italy, returning to the UK in 1943. The Division was next deployed for operation Market Garden, The Battle for Arnhem.

While defending the Oosterbeek perimeter, three days into the battle, **Baskeyfield** commanded a pair of anti-tank guns which destroyed several enemy tanks before the crews were killed. **Baskeyfield** subsequently fired the guns alone until a German tank destroyed his position with a single shot killing him in the process. His body was never found, therefore he has no named grave. He was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously, during 1990 a statue in his honour was erected in Stoke-on-Trent.

The full citation for Baskeyfield’s Victoria Cross appeared in a supplement to the London Gazette on 23rd November 1944:

War Office, 23rd November, 1944, The KING has been graciously pleased to approve the posthumous award of the VICTORIA CROSS to:

No 5057916 Lance-Sergeant **John Daniel Baskeyfield**, the South Staffordshire-Regiment (1st Airborne Division) (Stoke-on-Trent).

Citation: On 20th September 1944, during the battle of Arnhem, Lance-Sergeant **Baskeyfield** was the NCO in charge of a 6-pounder anti-tank gun at Oosterbeek. The enemy developed a major attack on this sector with infantry, tanks and self-propelled guns with obvious intent to break into and overrun the Battalion position. During the early stage of the action the crew commanded by this NCO was responsible for the destruction of two Tiger tanks and at least one self-propelled gun, thanks to the coolness and daring of this NCO, who, with complete disregard for his own safety, allowed each tank to come well within 100 yards of his gun before opening fire.

In the course of this preliminary engagement Lance-Sergeant **Baskeyfield** was badly wounded in the leg and the remainder of his crew were either killed or badly wounded. During the brief respite after this engagement Lance-Sergeant **Baskeyfield** refused to be carried to the Regimental Aid Post and spent his time attending to his gun and shouting encouragement to his comrades in neighbouring trenches. After a short interval the enemy renewed the attack with even greater ferocity than before, all under cover of intense motor and shell fire. Manning his gun alone, Lance-Sergeant **Baskeyfield** continued to fire round after round at the enemy until his gun was put out of action. By this time his activity was the main factor in keeping the enemy tanks at bay. The fact that the surviving men in his vicinity were held together, and kept in action was undoubtedly due to his magnificent example and outstanding courage. Time after time enemy attacks were launched and driven off. Finally, when his gun was knocked out, Lance-Sergeant **Baskeyfield** crawled under intense enemy fire to another 6-pounder gun nearby, the crew had been killed, and he proceeded to man it single handed. With this gun he engaged an enemy’s self-propelled gun which was approaching to attack. Another soldier crawled across the open ground to assist him but was killed almost at once. Lance-Sergeant **Baskeyfield** succeeded in firing two rounds at the self-propelled gun, scoring one direct hit which rendered it ineffective. Whilst preparing to fire a third shot, however, he was killed by a shell from a supporting enemy tank.

The superb gallantry of this NCO is beyond praise. During the remaining days at Arnhem, stories of his valour were a constant inspiration to all ranks. He spurned danger, ignored pain, and, by his supreme fighting spirit, infected all who witnessed his conduct with the same aggressiveness and dogged devotion to duty which characterised his actions throughout.

N/B

We all know the battle for Arnhem was a tactical and military disaster, but the people who named the above school in remembrance of this man knew the significance in doing so, the local education authority, trustees' and establishment have to search their souls when looking for a scape goat to blame for this school's failing standards, they should hang their heads in shame. The men fighting in Arnhem during Sept. 1944 would have welcomed a referendum on the "in or out" of Europe at that time, the result would have been a running certainty. These men of the 1st Airborne Division, including the free Polish Brigade gave all they could in an attempt to free Europe from its tyranny, we couldn't have asked for anything more, whereas this small group from the establishments "we know best brigade" are prepared to do anything in **avoiding** their responsibilities, joining the rest of the wasters, where many, somehow, manage to float to the top of this great country of ours, without contributing anything. **G. Coe.**

Gaddy's sponsored free fall parachute drop for the BLESMA charity: This association voted to sponsor **Craig** at the last meeting, a proposal put to this meeting by **Paul Sims "Simbo"** for the sum of £300 to be pledged from the association's funds to support **Craig**, and this was seconded by **Dave Harvey** with the vote **for** been unanimous. **Craig** could not attend this meeting because he was on his way to Netheravon to complete his jump, but sends his heartfelt thanks to everybody for their generosity. He sends a special thanks to **Pauline & Dave Meeking** for their individual donation of £100, but thanks the many other individuals from this association that have chosen to support this worthy cause.

BLESMA: British Limbless EX Servicemen's Association, supporting the injured for life.

Brian Bilton is offering lifts to anybody wishing to attend the Airborne Forces day at Eden Camp, Tel: 508463.

Simbo's bus-stop: tonight's winner **Terry Cunningham.**

Weldo's research reveals the meeting room at the Minerva is not available to us for the September meeting on the 2nd because of a "Freedom Festival" on the Corporation Pier, therefore it will be put to you the members, at the next meeting for it to be moved to the 9th September (week after), which is available.

The Secretary **Gaz Coe** hopes that all who wants too, are receiving the minutes, if you know of anybody wanting to be included to the mailing list please let me know, Tel: 01757 268188.

Web site address: www.299association.com

Next Meeting: to be held at 20.00hrs on the 5th August 2016 at the Minerva on Corporation Pier Hull.

Dates for your diary:

Airborne Forces Day (Northern): at Eden Camp on Saturday 16th July. Free entry when wearing a maroon beret.

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 and have also been included in the June edition of then AEA Journal.

Remembrance Sunday: 13th November 2016.

