



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 2nd June 2017.

Members Present: G. Beaumont, B. Bilton, K. Blacker, J. Brooks, G. Coe, N. Cooper, A. Costello, T. Cunningham, W. Drayton, R. Franklin, W. Holbrook, A. Irwin, A. Kitching, J. Mace, D. Meekin, F. Pougher, L. Ransom, G. Ratten, P. Robson, C. Shillito, P. Sims, L. Smith, B. Steele, C. Walker, A. Weldon, C. Wilcock, D. Woollas.

Apologies: F. Gray, D. French, S. Saxby, M. Beardshaw, J. Duffy, A. Foster, A. Green, D. Harvey, S. Hoyle, D. Ideson, P. Jefferson, A. Lee, C. Lickiss, K. Robinson, R. Swatman, J. Thompson, Mart. Tindle.

Welcome and 'Roll Call'

The Chairman **Chris Shillito** welcomed all present then opened the meeting with a good to see for **Wally Holbrook**, not seen for a couple of years, also welcome back to **Tony Kitch** still recovering from recent surgery.

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

Proposed by – **A. Irwin**

Seconded by – **F. Pougher**

Treasure's Report: No report, Martin is on his 'Jollies'

Correspondence:

Chris Shillito Chairman, 7/5/2017, posted the following on the message board after last month's meeting;

At the AGM meeting on Friday night, the same Committee were voted in again. 55 members turned up creating a great atmosphere, and our old pal **Garth** over from Thailand and **Ozzie** and **John** who turned up from Brum, I believe the party carried on to **Tommo's** man cave. Nice to see **Gaz Newton** looking well and recovering from his operation. The Minerva Public House was certainly buzzing with some very tall stories. Well done lads a great night had by all"

Bad news posted on the 12/5/2017 by **Bud Oldfield** he informed the association about the death of **Pete Nixon**, he served with 2 Troop, Doncaster, 299 Squadron, 131 Regt Para RE, from the mid 50's – early 60's, he was a veteran from the Suez's crises, Cyprus and Aden, **Pete** was 83yrs old and was always found in the middle of things, a very popular bloke that will be sadly missed by many, **Bud** included all the funeral details.

Information posted on 13/5/2017 by **Gaz Coe** giving details for the Arboretum visit on Sat 20/5/2017, see items from members for a full account.

Lost Dog posted on 20/5/2017 by **Garth**, he has lost his little brown dog who answers back to the name of **`Sapper`** £5 reward on offer, treat with care, he goes for the throat..! Regards and respect to the gentlemen of the 299 Association, thanks for an enjoyable evening on the 5th, (AGM). Now back in Bulgaria.

Message posted by **Bud Oldfield** 21/5/2017, I am passing on my thanks to the men of 299 Association who put themselves out to say good bye to an old friend **Pete Nixon**, you travelled from afar in atrocious weather conditions for an old mate. Both the family and the rest of the old 2 troop are very grateful, I myself could not be present because I'm in **`dock`** being rehipped, thanks again lads, your old mate **Bud**.

Terry Cunningham posted an update about **Bud Oldfield** on 22/5/2017, "**Bud** came out of **`dock`** last Thursday, (18th), he's in pain, and he sends his thanks to the 299 men who went to **Pete Nixon's** funeral, we were joined there by **Nev Smails and Sheila**, **Pete** had a good send-off that was very well attended, **Nev** sends his regards and hopes to make a meeting in the summer with **Bud**. **Bud** has got to see the specialist again this week, he will keep us all informed"

Dave Rutter, (**AEA Journal editor**), sent attached update from 23 Para Egn Regt on 22/5/2017, too late to be included in the AEA Journal, have included relevant 299 info and a full account can be obtained on request.

Linda Kitching posted the following: "hi everyone, just a few words to say my **`Hubby`** (**Tony**), was rushed into Hull Royal on Sunday, (21st), with an operation to his stomach, he's in ward 6 and I'm hobbling on one leg, broken my ankle, what a pair of geriatrics, **`ha, ha`**"

N/B: Tony is out now and recovering nicely proved by attending this meeting, hopefully nothing too serious, and Linda has had the cast removed from her leg and is free to **`boogie`**

Letter from **John Lee**, (President of the AEA), is promoting a car badge, 24/5/2017

"Gentlemen, I am in the process of having an exclusive AEA Car Badge produced, pictures of the design are attached, and this design has been agreed by the executive committee" Pictures passed round. A minimum order of 25 are needed to make this venture viable and interested parties must make their intentions known tonight, the committee will take names, **John** hopes this will help promote the AEA. Final cost not known yet, depends on numbers interested. If you weren't present at this meeting but are interested, please let me know on Tel: 01757 268188 or e-mail: >coeblimey240@gmail.com<

Tony Irwin posted the following: Whilst the association attended the Falkland Memorial Service yesterday in Hull, 28th May, it did not escape our minds that it is one year to the day that we lost **`Woody`** Glasses were raised.

The Secretary **Gaz Coe** wrote the following: Brilliant turnout from this association yesterday (28th) with 23 members attending the Falklands Memorial Service and wreath laying at the Cooperation Pier in Hull.

General Julian Thompson, (ex CO 3 Commando Brigade, in charge of all land operations during the Falklands war), mixed freely with everybody, the weather was kind, and the Minerva overflowed to the tune of hundreds. A massive crowd observed the proceedings, and it was a privilege to be a part of this great occasion. Well done 299 men, you have just taken part in something you will never forget, including a thank you from the man himself.

23 Para Eng. Regt News: (full report on request).

Operations: 9 Parachute Squadron deployed to the Sinai on Operation BRANTA in early 2016 to deliver force protection for the Multinational Force and observers, two Short Term Training Teams deployed to the Ukraine on Operation ORBITAL, we have had individuals deployed in Afghanistan, Cyprus, the Middle East and Nigeria, and 299 Parachute Squadron currently have mobilised 16 Army Reserve soldiers to deploy to South Sudan on Operation TRENTON 3.

Woodbridge: Unfortunately, The Better Defence Estate Strategy, (Government quango), intends to relocate 23 Para Engr Regt to Colchester by 2027. However, just prior to this announcement the Regiment constructed a Natural Operating Surface, (NOS), as a Temporary Landing Zone, (TLZ), in support of the Royal Air Force's new Tactical Air Transport trials. It was an excellent plant construction task and superb to be included in the development of the ATLAS A400M, our future aircraft for all airdrops and parachute descents.

The Regiment continues to maintain groups of soldiers at various states of high readiness for the purpose of being ready to fight tonight, and win, as its highest priority.

New RSM WO Tom Walton ex 9 Sqn SSM. Welcome.

Sqn News:

299 Para Sqn continue to recruit strongly and support all the Regiments needs; from High Readiness Reserves, to individual tradesman in Cyprus, and now mobilisation for United Nations Missions in the Sudan. In recognition of this success their establishment has increased by 27%, (150 to 206), and they are now busy turning mass into capability in order to provide a deployable Echelon HQ and additional military engineers.

Social Calendar: Monies for the Arnhem trip have all been collected and the list passed on to our couriers, with 33 attendees this year, those of you who have given `back word` will get your deposits back when the Treasurer is back from his holidays, If we can get him off that beach..!

N/B: Anybody having second thoughts about attending this trip, finalisation has not yet happened, but is expected in the next few days, if your quick with your money there is still time to jump on board, or on second thoughts bail out.

Chairman's Comments: Falkland's War Service of Commemoration, Sunday 28th May 2017

This association had been invited to parade with SAMA 82, (South Atlantic Members Association 1982), in Commemoration for all those who lost their lives in this conflict, on this day, the 35th anniversary in the taking of the Goose Green Peninsula air field by 2 Para. The service took place in the presence of the Lord Mayor of Kingston upon Hull and Admiral of the Humber, and veterans of the Falklands War and it took the format of a Drum Head service on the square outside The Hull Minster, (Holy Trinity), the names of all those KIA was read to the congregation and the lesson was presented by **Major General (Retd) Julian Howard Atherden Thompson CB OBE**, Officer Commanding the ground forces during the first phase of the Falkland conflict, his presence had not been broadcast for obvious reasons.

The service was followed by a march, including the General, across Lowgate and on to the Cooperation Pier, (Victoria Pier), and the Naval Seaman's Memorial, where the laying of wreaths took place, **Derek French** prevented a disaster by pointing out that the tide was out and any wreaths thrown off the end of the Pier would lay in the Humber mud until the tide came in. The whole water front was by now packed with people and the General mingled and chatted with everybody whilst enjoying a couple of pints provided by the Minerva in the glorious sunshine, he was asked if he wanted to meet an Arnhem veteran, **Les Ransom**, he replied "it would be an honour" and of course **Les** would `walk with Kings – nor lose the common touch`



Courtesy of Brad Steele

23 members from this association enjoyed the privilege of taking part in this Commemoration in what turned out to be a very memorable day. Many thanks has to go to Paul Sims for carrying the association standard, it was a long service on a hot day. The General thanked the parade for marking this, a very successful day in remembering the fallen due to this conflict.

N/B: The General's military career span's from 1952 – 1986 when he retired, and as a former Royal Marine officer he served with 40 Commando in the Indonesia – Malaysia confrontation finishing his career as OC 3 Commando Brigade in the Falklands. Since retiring he has been a prolific writer, he is also a visiting Professor at the department of War Studies Kings College at the University of London.

He shows no fears in voicing his beliefs, and on 29th Feb. 2016 he issued the following statement in a television interview:
“the myth that leaving the EU would harm British national security must be destroyed once and for all”

“After spending years preparing and practising NATO plans for war against the Soviet Union, we now know that the Soviets watched the operations in the South Atlantic keenly and were so impressed by the British performance in that war, that it strengthened deterrence for the rest of the Cold War”

The myth that the presence of the EU of States has maintained the peace within Europe since WW2 is just not true, the European Union of States has stood by, on more than one occasion, and watched its own members been torn apart, and has done nothing to help, for example: The Basque Conflict, Northern Ireland, Cyprus and The Balkan Conflicts, no sign of any collective responsibility in resolving the issues on these occasions..!

Matters arising: This month the Secretary has received several requests for charity donations and feels it's not the committee's place in turning them down, association funds belongs to us all. These decisions have to be made in a democratic way and perhaps some kind of ruling could be agreed amongst the membership? There is no such thing as a bad charity, but this association cannot save the world, every man will have his favourite charity, and with the numbers attending this association the bank account could be emptied in one night during a wave of generosity.

It is the easiest thing in the world to give someone else's money away, and we cannot have people proposing the gifts of donations to a given charity out of the blue, then have it seconded, whilst looking for a majority vote at the meeting, people will usually agree the proposal to avoid looking mean or greedy.

After much discussion, the following decision has been made, **anybody seeking sponsorship or donations for a given charity must do so amongst the membership only, out of their own pockets, and not expect monies from the association's funds.**

This motion was proposed by T. Cunningham and seconded by A. Weldon with the vote being carried unanimously.

Maj. Chris Wilcock informed the meeting that he had attended the recent wedding of **Squadron 2IC Capt. John C. Thompson** who cannot shake off his addiction too wedding cake, never the less the association wishes them the best. **John** is shortly taking over the 1 Troop Commanding Officer position in Hull and he is relocating to the City, therefore we may expect more frequent visits to the monthly meetings. He has been selected for the position of Battle Field Tour Guide duties on the Falklands this year by the PRA, indeed an honour for this veteran of the conflict.

Terry Cunningham brought the latest news from the Doncaster members: **Bud Oldfield** has had two lots of staples removed this week after his recent hip replacement and the pain lessens by the day, he is working like hell on his mobility but it's steady away. **Nev Smails** had to be rushed in to hospital as an emergency early on in the week, he was kept in for a couple of days for observations but is now at home, early indications are possible Gall Stones, still awaiting confirmation. **Big John Davis**, like the rest of us is fighting the aging process but still remains positive, we wish them well.

Tony Costello came to this meeting bearing portrait sized group photos taken at the AGM, also photos taken at the Arboretum visit and asked only for donations into the association funds as reckon pence for his efforts, the Chairman thanked **Tony** for his commitment to this association. He is also in the process of submitting written accounts of this associations activities for the AEA Journal.

Dave Meekin brought some military oriented hard backed books to this meeting with donations going to the funds, he also produced a brand new pair of boots to be auctioned off to the highest bidder with **Wally Holbrook** coming out on top paying £40 into the coffers, then he immediately handing the boots over to **Les Ransom**, an earlier bidder, this was a very kind thing to do, again the Chairman thanked **Dave** for his generosity.

Paul Sims, (Simbo's bus stops), two winners this month **Graham Beaumont & Kev Blacker.**

Items from members: **Alan Lee's** script produced after his very first visit to the NMA as a member of this association.

"Well I have visited the National Memorial Arboretum yesterday, 20/5/2017, it is a fantastic place but you need more than a day to see it all, so I will return again. The 299 Association members I went with thoroughly enjoyed the outing and we paraded in blazers, berets and ties at the Palestine Memorial with our 88yr old, 2 Para veteran and a small gathering of families of soldiers connected to that campaign.

We were lucky enough to have a RM bugler and a gentleman from the Eden Camp project in North Yorkshire who gave us a historical talk on the campaign.

I saw on the inner curved walls the names of lads lost from my old unit 131 Commando who drowned on the river Trent at Cromwell Lock, (10 men), during a training exercise, it was nice to see them remembered, and also in the area of the Falklands War Col H Jones VC MBE from the Para Reg as members of our association are from both Para and Commando elements. Afterwards, when we should have been heading home we got an invite to a local pub, The Three Horseshoes by some of our Birmingham attendees and needless to say it was very difficult getting everyone to get back on the bus after about 3 pints, lol. Overall a very good trip" **Alan.**

I have to agree with everything **Alan** said about the above trip and would like to add some more comments, firstly, thanks to **Tony Costello** (Palestine Vet) who researched the event and coordinated timings/schedule, thus allowing the trip to work, the Chairman for negotiating transport, **Maddy** for taking on the driving, and of course our two Standard bearers, **Paul Sims & Tony Irwin**, thanks to you all, I know I speak for all the lads on this one.

The Birmingham attendees that **Allan** talked about are our old friends from 301 Para Sqn. and we owe a massive thanks to them for making our day, **Dave Clarke and Mike (Ozzy) Holdsworth** 'somehow', (Airborne initiative), managed to get 'Bunny' Brown out of the hospital to spend a few hours with the Hull men in sharing a couple of pints. **Bunny** looks well considering all the 'chemo' he is taking on board, a little bloated around the feet and ankles because of the Steroids, but he turned up in blazer with beret for photo opportunities. These are worrying times for 'Bunny' and his family, and our hopes and prayers are with them.

Web site address: www.299association.com

Next Meeting: Friday 7th July 2017 at 20.00hrs in the Minerva on Cooperation Pier Hull.

Dates for your diary:

Airborne Forces Day, (Northern), Saturday 15th July 2017 at Eden Camp, Malton, parade and service starts at 11.00hrs.

Allied Air Forces Memorial Day at Elvington, Near York, on Sunday 3rd September 2017.

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

THE AEA REUNION/AGM TO BE HELD AT THE MERCURE ROYAL HOTEL, FERNSWAY, HULL. HU1 3UF, over the weekend Friday the 20th to Monday the 23rd October 2017, a room has been booked for the AGM.

Very important: rooms at this hotel could be at a premium over this week end, therefore book early to avoid disappointment. Remember it's the year of culture in Hull and they will not hang on to rooms on a promise. There are other hotels close by, but if you want a guaranteed room at this hotel you can reserve with your card without money being taken out of your account. The booking slips will be enclosed in the June edition of the AEA journal.

Hotel Tel: 01482 325087, e-mail: enquires@hotels-hull.co.uk

Remembrance Sunday: 12th November 2017.

With nothing more to discuss the Chairman closed the meeting thanking all for attending.