



299 ASSOCIATION

Charity No: 1009201

Date: 6th June 2014, D-Day plus 70yrs.

Members Present: M. Beardshaw, G. Beaumont, I. Chapman, G. Coe, N. Cooper, A. Costello, L. Crossy, G. Crum, T. Cunningham, W. Drayton, C. Duggan, P. Hairsien, C. Ham, D. Harvey, C. Henrickson, B. Holdenby, A. Irwin, A. Kitching, J. Mace, M. Maddison, A. Morris, M. Pearl, F. Pougher, G. Ratten, K. Robinson, C. Shillito, P. Sims, L. Smith, D. Stuart, J. Thompson, M. Tindle, T. Walker, A. Weldon, C. Woodward.

Apologies: W. Draper, J. Duffy, C. Gadd, J. Harrison, D. Ideson, G. Newton, S. Oliver, L. Ransom, P. Robson, K. Saddington, C. Walker, S. Hoyle.

Guests: R. Franklin, S. Walker.

Welcome and 'Roll Call'

The chairman welcomed all present then opened the meeting, for some their very first time.

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

Proposed by – F. Pougher
Seconded by – C. Shillito

Treasure's Report: Our treasure's reports that our bank is up and running again and has been for the last few weeks. Our funds remain healthy.

All monies for The Arnhem Pilgrimage this year must be paid in full for the next meeting, failure to do this means no trip, so please get switched on if you really want to go.

Correspondence: A letter of thanks has been sent to John Lee, (AEA President), this was read to all members present; his intervention in our recent constitutional debate was much appreciated.

Airborne Forces memorial RAF Barkston Heath Unveiling

A request was received by this association, as a primary point of contact for Leslie James Ransom, and I quote: "I would consider it an honour if you would ask Leslie if he would like to participate in the unveiling of the Airborne Forces memorial at RAF Barkston Heath on Saturday the 31st May 2014. I have the Dakota from RAF BoB memorial flight booked for a flypast and subject to clearance, landing and photo opportunity" Kind regards, SSM. B. Wildblood, WO 11, 674 Sqn AAC.

Les accepted this invitation and was accompanied by our Chairman Bill Drayton; see Chairman's comments for full details.

The Birmingham branch of the AEA announced the sad loss of Tom Carpenter, former 9 Field Company RE and Arnhem veteran, 299 offer condolences to his family, comrades and friends. The suggestion was raised of an inscribed memorial bench to be sited at Arnhem, with other branches possibly sharing in the costs, (estimated around £800). This was debated amongst the members and was agreed by a majority that 299 will follow the same line as our Scottish friends, therefore donating towards the costs only, if in remembrance, **all Airborne Engineers** are included.

WO 11 Pete Fenty – Dedication Service

Our President John Lee has asked this association if we would be willing to represent the AEA at the above service. The Grimsby and Cleethorpes Branch of the PRA have commissioned a memorial panel on the grave of the above ex member of 9 Para Sqn RE. Our Standard and both Red and Green are welcome. (All members have been notified).

"The service is taking place on Saturday the 14th June 2014 at Cleethorpes Cemetery, Beacon Road, Cleethorpes, at 14.00hrs. It is the unveiling of a plaque to commemorate his time spent serving in 9 Sqn. The order for the day will be along the lines of a short meeting at the graveside where family and friends can meet. Standards from various associations can be presented, a few words spoken by myself, (Charlie McColgan), and then the unveiling of the plaque by Pete's daughters Laura and Helen. Afterwards the RV, (a 10min walk), is the Pegasus bar above the RAF club on Cleethorpes promenade where there will be snacks and plenty of liquid refreshments. I'm assured we will have the England v Italy match on in the corner somewhere for the football fans amongst us, (Pete wouldn't want it any other way)"

Charlie, (close friend of Pete), the men of G & C PRA and Charlie's son Karl are all responsible for this dedication. The 14th June was chosen to coincide with the date and time of the cessation of hostilities in the Falklands, during 1982.



Courtesy of J. Lee

We have decided to travel by private vehicles, petrol sharing to keep the costs down. We are meeting at the Humber Bridge, (Nth. Bank), car park at 12.00hrs, please do not be late. If you want to be included contact the committee or make your own way there. Dress: Blazers, Tie's, Beret's and Medals if poss. J. Lee sends his thanks to the 299 men for standing too.

The GSM (ADEN): John Donaldson of the Scottish Branch of the AEA has written to the Prime Minister regarding the laying of a wreath on the grave of John Lonergan's at Ma Allah Cemetery, Aden, on the 12th April 2015, the 50th anniversary of him been KIA whilst serving with 131 Reg.RE (TA) He gave the PM a brief summary of 131's role in Aden and asked him if the GSM (Aden Clasp), could be awarded, given that 131 were the first TA Regiment to have been in action since WW 2. He has received an acknowledgement from Downing Street and his correspondence is under consideration

The fundamental problem is the MoD refuse to recognise that 131 men were in action in Aden during this period in time, despite the facts of the many wounded and also a fatality buried out there. J. Lee believes the official reason given was that 131, being at the time a Home Defence unit, were not there "officially" at Annual Camp and therefore do not qualify for any recognition. There will always be a reason; making sense of that given reason will never be a requirement in understanding any final decisions made by the MoD. John has also written to the CSG General Sir Peter Wall, a former commander of 9 Para Sqn RE, as suggested by the AEA Chairman John Ferry.

If there is anyone out there with any other ideas, please let John know, perhaps all you Aden veterans from 299 should write to your own MP's, they will be after your votes next year.

Standards where paraded at The National Arboretum Memorial for the Palestine Veterans on the 17th May 2014, A. Irwin carried 299 and C. Woodward carried The Palestine Veterans. The 299 Standard was paraded by C. Woodward at the Cenotaph in Hull today, 6th June, (D-Day), thanks go out to Costello, Irwin and Woodward for making all this happen on our behalf.

Sqn News: S/Sgt. Carl Ham gave a full and comprehensive update on what's happening within the Squadron;

There are possible future engineering and humanitarian work to be carried out in Kosovo; the OC is involved in discussions, watch this space.

New training parameters have been set in place to generally improve the skills in basic soldiering. Squadron numbers are about 72, with 1 Troop in the mid twenties.

Congratulations to Ben Holdenby on gaining his American parachute wings.

Annual camp this year is in the Falklands; refurbishing and revamping the ranges, taking over from 9 Sqn.

Many more ex regulars are enlisting into the Territorial's, much improved financial incentives along with a reduced attendance commitment needed, less than the average TA man, add to this the current employment prospects in civy street at this moment in time, therefore all goes well for the reservists.

Big Battlefield Bike Ride: Sunday 1st – Sunday 8th June 2014, Brussels to Paris – 335 Miles

Our own Craig Gadd is taking part in this "Hero Ride" (support for our wounded), in this centenary year remembering the start of WW1, he hopes to ride a hand bike across Belgium and France retracing the historical events of The Great War. This physical challenge will finish in London, via the Cenotaph marking 100 years since the outbreak of WW1. The latest news is he is doing well and was asked to lay a wreath in Arras. **But he's after your money,** "Sheggs" has got the sponsor forms, therefore please feel carefree. The question was raised about support for Craig from this association and a majority vote was taken to donate £100 in sponsorship from the association funds, this was proposed by A. Weldon and seconded by G. Ratten. We wish him well for the rest of his challenge.

Chairman's Comments: Our Chairman Bill Drayton went on to describe his day out, (unveiling), with our Arnhem Veteran Les Ransom. He first described RAF Barkston Heath as the home of the Defence Elementary Flying Training School, (DEFTS). It provides training for RN & AACorps students, also plays a secondary role as a relief landing ground for the flying activities from RAF Cranwell

History: In 1943 RAF Barkston Heath was a HCU, (Heavy Conversion Unit), for 5 Group RAF Bomber Command. The base was made available in January 1944 for the 9th USAAF, (station 483). In February of that year the 61st TCG, (Troop Carrier Group), equipped with the Douglas C-47 Sky Train and Airspeed Horsa's arrived to prepare for D-Day. Aircraft from this station helped transport 507, 101st Airborne to drop zone T, Ste Mere – Eglise in Normandy during operation Overlord and 82nd, 101st and the British 1st Division Airborne to their drop zones for Operation Market Garden.

The unveiling of The Airborne Memorial was a precursor to the building of an education centre commemorating the roles played by airfields in Lincolnshire during WW11. The site at Grantham will focus on the airborne offences of Operation Overload and Operation Market Garden in 1944. There is currently no physical representation of RAF Barkston Heath and its airborne involvement during 1944. Sgt Maj Ben Wildblood went on to say "our site will contribute to this year's D-Day commemorations, particularly for local veterans who cannot make it to Europe, and serve as a poignant educational reminder of the part serving and non serving personal contributed to the war effort"

Les bumped into one of his old pals from the same unit way back in 1944, and after losing contact over the past years, each thought the other had died, this reunion added to a brilliant and historic day, never to be forgotten. We were both made very welcome and Les was treated as almost like royalty, apparently he is still talking about it to this day, I have sent a letter of thanks to SSM B. Wildblood.

Items from members: Tony Irwin introduced some literature onto the tables at the meeting, The Hull People's Memorial and the Heroes of Hull, unfortunately this was over looked and the secretary offers his apologies to Tony. This topic will receive priority status at the next meeting. For those of you who took notice of this material, you may well find it of great interest.

Keith Farr: an old 299'er, one of our colonial members has been over for a few weeks, (family wedding), unfortunately his visit fell in-between meetings but sends his best to all the lad's he missed.

Facts and Figures about D-Day: Ian Reed, (Director of the Yorkshire Air Museum), sent me this information because many people rather over state their country's involvement.

D-Day Facts; figures Royal British Legion

Combatants: 6th June 1944

[Operation Neptune: - the seaborne assault](#)

British – 112,824

USA – 52,889

Other Countries – 4,988

[Operation Overlord – the Ground Assault](#)

British – 61,715

USA – 73,115

Canada – 21,400

Killed in Action

USA – 2,500

Britain – 1,641

Canada – 359

Norway – 37

France – 19

Australia – 13

New Zealand – 2

Belgium – 1

Germany – 4,000
(EST)

Keep historical accuracy alive for future generations and keep faith with those who gave their lives on that fateful day.

Next Meeting: 4th July 2014, Minerva, Cooperation Pier, Hull, 20.00hrs.

Dates for your diary:

WO 11 Pete Fenty – Dedication Service: 14th June 2014, Cleethorpes Cemetery, including “Standard”

ABF W/end 2014 to be hosted by 299 Para Sqn RE at their Wakefield barracks on the 11th – 12 July 2014, for full details contact WO 11 Vince May at 299 Sqn direct.

Arnhem 70th Commemoration Woodhall Spa: 6th September 2014, (full day).

Forces Memorial Day: Yorkshire Air Museum, Elvington, Nr. York.
Sunday 7th September 2014.

Arnhem Pilgrimage 2014

The 6 day option 16/9/2014 – 22/9/2014

The 4 day option 18/9/2014 – 22/9/2014

Remembrance Sunday: 9th November 2014.

