



299 Branch of the Airborne Engineers Association

Charity No: 1009201

Date: 7th March 2014

RESIGNATION: Our Chairman Tony Mossop offered his immediate resignation on the 13th February 2014 and it was accepted. He had found our current constitutional debate concerning democracy “heartbreaking” and wanted no part in it. Therefore the Secretary asked for a volunteer to take the chair on a temporary basis until the next AGM on 2nd May 2014. Bill Drayton was proposed and seconded from the floor. This was passed on a majority vote. Well done Bill and many thanks. Proposed by P. Sims, Seconded by C. Gadd, 19 for, 4 against.

Members Present: R. Abel, M. Beardshaw, G. Coe, N. Cooper, A. Costello, G. Crum, T. Cunningham, W. Draper, W. Drayton, J. Duffy, C. Gadd, D. Ideson, A. Irwin, A. Kitching, S. Knowles, J. Mace, M. Maddison, A. Mossop, S. Oliver, F. Pougher, L. Ransom, G. Ratten, K. Robinson, K. Russell, C. Shillito, P. Sims, N. Sisson, M. Tindle, C. Walker, A. Weldon, C. Woodward.

Apologies: G. Beaumont, A. Grimes, P. Hairsien, S. Hoyle, P. Robson, K. Saddington.

Guests: Joanne & Nichols Bowden, Colin's daughter & son, also Capt. J. Thompson OC 1Tp 299 Sqd

Welcome and 'Roll Call'

The chairman welcomed all present then opened the meeting.

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

Proposed by – C. Shillito
Seconded by – M. Maddison

Treasure's Report: Martin gave a run down on our Arnhem Trip and says “keep the money rolling in”
Our own funds are healthy.

Correspondence: Kevin Saddington offered his condolences on the loss of our two men; Bill Dick was his recruit Corporal upon entry to 299. Kevin asked to be remembered and sends his best wishes to all of us.

Letters of thanks have been received from both Colin and Bills family respectively for the way we handled their funerals, these were read out and then passed around.

Letter of appreciation / donation has been send by Dave Rutter, (AEA Editor), regarding a £500 donation that will be divided between various local charities in the Bournemouth area after the AGM/Reunion weekend last year. These were read and passed around.

Letter received from Dave Mellow, (Regional Secretary of the PRA), Chesterfield Branch, regarding a open invitation to the Hardwick Hall Memorial Day. 18 May 2014. A full programme of the day's events are enclosed, this event was open for discussion on our social calendar.

Dave Rutter would like to use the script "Gaddy's Legacy" taken from February's minutes, may be included in the next AEA Journal. There were no objections from the floor.

The 25th AEA Anniversary AGM/Reunion to be held on 3rd-5th October 2014 at the Cedar Court Hotel, Harrogate, Costings £134 pp for the two day package. Book early to avoid disappointment; contact me for further information & booking forms.

Sqn News: A big thank you to Officer Commanding 1 Troop 299 Parachute Squadron RE, J.Thompson and his men for supporting this association with our recent loses. Capt. Thompson requests inclusion of his men for the Elvington Trip, this is no problem and would be made welcome, the troop has its own transport. We will keep them informed.

Social Calendar: Date for the Yorkshire Air Museum Elvington will be fixed at the next meeting. Not much support for Hardwick Hall, open night at the barracks later in the year.

Chairman's Comments: Les Ransom's sad loss of his eldest daughter Jenny brought condolences and support from this association, members with wife's attended her funeral.

The Chairman offered thanks to everybody who attended and contributed to the funerals of our friends Col & Bill: our own Standard Bearer Colin Woodward, the Parade Marshall and the lad's with Standards from the CESA organisation, our "Brummie" friends from 301 both Clergy especially our friend Reverend Alan Craven the pipes & bugle. This all helped us to say goodbye to our old friends and offered much needed support to their families.

Mally South: passed away recently, another old 299er from years back, the family did not request the associations help, some of his old comrades from this association attended the funeral.

MISUSE OF THE MESSAGE BOARD: We do not want to see personal opinions been expressed, save them for the meetings. The board has now been suspended.

OUR CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES ARE NOT TO BE DEBATED AGAIN. THE VOTE IS IN MAY.

GUESTS: out of common courtesy alone, all guests should seek permission in attending our meetings.
The committee have the right to refuse.

OUR MISSING LETTERS HELD BY PREVIOUS CHAIRMEN: These letters belong to us all and are needed before the AGM to allow us all in making a constitutional decision at the vote. The Chairman asked the members for permission to request their return to this association. The letter's maybe addressed to them but they acted on our behalf and are our property. This was proposed by A. Irwin and seconded by D. Ideson this was carried on a majority vote and the Secretary was instructed to act accordingly ASAP.

SIMBO'S RAFFEL: Paul Sims organised a raffle for this meeting, the first prize been a six day trip to Normandy for the 70th anniversary with the Yorkshire Branch of the AEA, all paid for. This first prize was kindly donated by Bill (Seadog) Dick's son, Matthew. Seadog had booked and paid for the trip before his untimely death in February.

The first prize was won by Les Ransom our 92yr Arnhem Veteran, well done Les and many thanks to Matthew in making all this possible, your father would have been so very proud of this most generous gesture.

THE LIFTING OF RESTRICTIONS TO THIS ASSOCIATION: the Chairman asked the members if the restrictions could be lifted to allow FULL membership of the following:

All serving members of 299 Squadron and ANY man that served with 299 in whatever status.
This is still open for discussion.

OBSERVATIONS AND REMARKS BY G. COE, SECRETARY AND ACTING CHAIRMAN

Nobody owns this association; it is not a private club under the total control of a chosen "FEW" with everybody else just making up the numbers, **it belongs to us all** and it is precious, money cannot buy this. We must never allow it to be taken away from us.

We all owe a duty of responsibility to each other. We know of one case and there may be more, were someone has been bullied into leaving this association, this must never happen again and we show the bully boy's the door. Please be vigilant.

Nobody must ever again be frightened in speaking out for fear of retribution, everybody is equal, if you hold a job title, (Chairman Etc), this is a privilege and a responsibility to serve the members wishes, not an office of total authority to dictate and enforce your own way of doing things.

Nobody owns the moral high ground, not even the "best people", if anybody wants to bring this attitude to the meetings please do not bother, it's not what's wanted. We have to operate with total honesty, there is no need to lie to each other, we are just here to enjoy the company of similar minded people.

FAIR WARNING: those of you who attended this meeting will have witnessed an act of outrageous behaviour which was designed to sabotage this meeting and physically take control of the association by force; this was an act of desperation by a group hell bent on destroying this association, **if they cannot control it**. This problem belongs to us all, it is our responsibility to see this does not happen again; please do not sit on your hands and observe as a group, we have to tell them collectively "TO JUST GO AWAY" If they want control they must use the democratic route.

If anything like this ever happens again the committee will **abort** the meeting immediately therefore it is in our own interests to act together. Remember once people have withdrawn their membership to this association they must then ask the committee for permission to attend again, as a guest, not to just crawl in to cause mischief, whenever the fancy takes them.

An open letter was just received from "Bunny" Brown to 299; it will be read out at the next meeting. Many of our members are not on line.

Items from members: **TWO OF OUR FRIENDS HAVE LEFT US**

COLIN BOWDEN



WILLIAM DICK (SEADOG)

The ashes of both of these men will be released over Ginkel Heath, near Arnhem on the 20th September 2014 by the men of 299 Parachute Squadron RE, during the 70th Commemorative parachute drop. R.I.P.

Daily Mirror 13-4-65

2 BRITISH SOLDIERS DIE IN ADEN

TWO British soldiers—one a Territorial Army warrant officer at an annual camp—have been killed in a battle with hostile tribesmen near Aden.

Five other British soldiers—two of them Territorials—were wounded, one seriously.

The tribesmen attacked with small arms and bazookas in the Al Milah area, about fifty miles

north of Aden, on Sunday night.

The Britons—they were doing engineering work on the trade route from Aden to Dhala State—fired back. Casualties among the tribesmen are unknown.

Camp

The dead men were:

Warrant Officer II John Francis Lonergan, 36, married, of Glasgow—of 131 Parachute Engineer Regiment, Territorial Army.

Sergeant Cyril Atfield, 35, single, of Storrington, near Pulborough, Sussex—of 24 Field Squadron, Royal Engineers.

The injured:

Second Lieutenant Jeremy Kenneth Gibb, 22, of Edinburgh; Lance Corporal Robert Simpson, 25, of Gillingham, Kent; Corporal Robert Brown, 24, of Chattenden, Kent; Sergeant

Gibson George Earl, 33, of Edinburgh; Captain Eoghann MacIachlainn, 31, of the Isle of Mull, Argyllshire.

The Territorials—part-time soldiers from all over Britain—arrived in Aden at the beginning of the month for a two-week camp.

The attack came two days after nine British soldiers were hurt in two separate grenade and mine incidents in Aden.

In 1965 Lieutenant Colonel Shapland was appointed Commander Royal Engineers (Operations) and posted to Aden. There he was given the task of building a new "black top" road linking the port area with the garrison town of Dhala, on the border with Yemen some 40 miles to the north.

Mountains and deserts intersected by deep wadis, scorching temperatures and flash floods presented great technical difficulties. Security too was a major problem. The ancient caravan route was used by the National Liberation Front to smuggle arms into Aden, and the warlike Radfani tribes regarded anything that moved along it as a potential target. If Shapland had any misgivings about the dangers he faced, they were quickly confirmed when he had to escape incoming fire from an ambush. A few days later, flying over the area, he heard a loud clunk and saw bullet holes in the wing of his plane. On another occasion clambering down into a culvert to inspect the damage caused by an explosive device, he narrowly escaped detonating a concealed anti-personnel mine.

In September 1966, a group of dissidents overpowered the night watchmen at the bitumen plant and placed charges on the pump. The explosion blew the equipment 100 yards away and delayed construction work for six weeks. In other attacks the Sappers encampments were raided, the road was mined and vehicles blown up, a rock crusher was hit by a rocket propelled grenade and an excavator destroyed by explosives laid overnight. Mortar, artillery and air support sometimes had to be called in as counter measures. Twelve lives were lost and 58 were wounded as a result of dissident activities during the construction work on this road.



There were no General Service Medals (Aden Bar) issued to the men of 131 Independent Parachute Regiment RE TA for their part played in this action. Colin Bowden was still 17yrs old whilst taking part in these activities.

Web site address: www.299association.com

Next Meeting: Friday the 4th April 2014 at the Minerva, 20.00hrs, Corporation Pier, Hull.

Dates for your diary: 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

