



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 4th November 2016.

Members Present: D. Barker, M. Beardshaw, G. Beaumont, B. Bilton, K. Blacker, J. Brooks, G. Coe, N. Cooper, G. Crum, T. Cunningham, W. Drayton, A. Foster, R. Franklin, D. French, C. Gadd, A. Grimes, D. Harvey, D. Hines, D. Ideson, A. Irwin, P. Jefferson, J. Mace, D. Meekin, F. Pougher, L. Ransom, G. Ratten, K. Robinson, p. Robson, K. Russell, C. Shillito, P. Sims, L. Smith, A. Stimpson, R. Swatman, J. Thompson, Mart. Tindle, C. Walker, T. Walker, A. Weldon.

Apologies: F. Gray, P. Robinson, A. Costello, J. Duffy, S. Hoyle, A. Kitching, M. Maddison, B. Steele, Mike. Tindle, N. Arksey, C. Wilcock, N. Sisson, D. Woollas, O. A. Nelson – Girchen, C. Lickiss, C. Henrickson, M. Hall, C. Duggan, J. Cherry.

Welcome and 'Roll Call'

The Chairman: **Chris Shillito** welcomed all present then opened a very well attended meeting, (39), by inviting **Dave Barker** to recite those few lines from **Binyon's** poem "For the Fallen" **They shall grow not old.....**

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

Proposed by – **D. Hines**.

Seconded by – **T. Cunningham**.

Treasure's Report: **Martin** summarised the association's financial status which is in good order after the injections of funds from the Lord Mayors Charity appeal fund. All monies from this year's Arnhem trip have now been paid, and those wishing to save for next year's trip are welcome to do so.

N/B: places for next year's Arnhem trip are rapidly been taken!

Correspondence: Re GSM South Arabia Clasp (last month's minutes)

Apology: I inadvertently reported that the action fought by 300 Squadron against dissidents at 'al Milah` during the Dalha Road construction in the Yemen (Aden) took place in 1966, **this was incorrect**, and it should have read April 1965, many thanks to the many for pointing this out, and please accept my apologies.

Whilst on this subject another point of interest submitted by **Roger Howles** (ex 301 Sqn), and again never mentioned by the military is that 131 Para Eng. Regt was the first and only Airborne unit to complete operational parachute drops into the Yemen, (South Arabia), two drops recorded; Beverley's and Argosy's, and he describes in one of the drops as approaching the DZ from the sea in very high winds gusting up to 30mph at 700ft, "a total shambles" One of our late friends talked of a similar story, **Colin Bowden** (ex 299 Sqn, deceased), possibly the youngest man in 131 to complete the drops, he was not yet 18 years old in April 1965. Thanks to you all for your contributions.

DEATH OF FRED MATTERFACE 12/10/2016

This was very sad news indeed about **Fred's** death, **Fred** served both with 9 Para Eng Sqn & 59 Cdo Eng Sqn and was posted to 299 as PSI late 60's – early 70's.

He was a very popular and much respected man who led from the front, he was a brilliant engineer and a first class Soldier possessing a wicked sense of humour, and he went down well with the men of 299 for his down to earth approach to soldering and total honesty, a genuine guy who had the ability for helping each man reach his full potential within the unit, he had no time for glamour boys within the Troop, these were quickly shown the door, only men with a commitment to 299 without any selfish interests were required, **RIP Fred, the stories will go on for ever.**

N/B: Unfortunately the news of **Fred's** death came through too late for organising a Funeral detail from this association, he died in Dorset which would have required a stopover for the Hull men.

An afterthought: **Fred** arrived at 299 whilst I was away on a course and upon return I refused to believe **Matterface** was his real name, this lasted a while, thought the lads were setting me up.

AEA Reunion/AGM 2016 at the Royal Court Hotel Coventry 14th – 17th October.

Five members of this association attended the above on the 15th & 16th and a jolly good time was had by all, on the Saturday 15th the party split with some going to the National Arboretum for the unveiling of a monument dedicated to the Commando Engineers and the others attending the AEA - AGM.

AEA - AGM

I have yet to receive any minutes from this meeting, therefore I am totally relying upon memory, (main points).

The election of a President for the Airborne Engineers Association, **Lt Col (Ret) John Lee**, and the current President, agreed to serve in this position for a further two years, because no takers for this position had been recorded.

This was proposed to the membership and seconded, the vote for was unanimous.

I have contacted **John** and offered our congratulations and thanks for taking on the task, he replied with thanks sending his best wishes to all at this association.

The National PRA are looking for cash to commission a statue of Pegasus with Bellerophon to be sited somewhere at the Merriville Barracks in Colchester, this was put up for discussion at the meeting and a sum of £500 donation from the AEA funds was finally agreed upon unanimously, after first been proposed & seconded.

The AEA Reunion/AGM 2017 proposal for 299 Association to host was given some time, the meeting was told it is in the embryotic stage and we hope to make an announcement in the not too distant future.

The Chairman posted a thank you to the Birmingham Branch of the AEA for producing a brilliant week end, and it was great to see many old friends again.

E-mail from Mathew Williams, (Bill Dicks Son), received Nov 1st 2016.

Dear Gary and the members of 299 Association.

I wanted to get into the association meeting pre Arnhem but didn't make it due to work. I obviously didn't see you all there this year as we went in August as part of our family holiday so Helen, Oliver & Isabel could see the spot where Dad is.

Unfortunately my plans to sit and have a whiskey with him where somewhat scuppered by the fact the pub was closed. Thankfully the Association came through yet again and a quick post to the Facebook page ensured both He and Colin were suitably toasted when you arrived.

I was particularly humbled by the thoughtful gesture of commemorative plaques attached to the flag poles on the site and would of loved to have been there this year to see them. I know Dad would be happy to know his passing is still in your thoughts and his final resting place will always be a place of quiet reflection for many.

October also came and went and the November meeting falls on Helen's birthday but I did not want to let any more time pass before I had a chance to pass on our thanks.

Please also forward me an address so we can send a family donation to the Associations war chest on Dad's behalf.

Many thanks again

Matt

The above was read out to the meeting and the Secretary, (**Gaz Coe**), asked the members present for their feelings on this kind offer of a donation into the associations funds, the general consensus been that **Matt** could buy the instigators, **Pete Robson aided by Brad Steele**, a pint at next year's Arnhem Pilgrimage, and we will call it quits. It's our privilege to look after our own and we will always remember them, thank you **Matt**.

Colin Woodward's widow `Marion` posted a message of thanks through the association for **Dave Hines** efforts in producing the 2017 Remembrance calendar's, each month showing a 299 photo which included a snap of **Colin, (Woody)**, during his Army career. **Tony Irwin** maintains contact with **Marion** and will see that her requests for more diaries are met.

SPECIAL REQUEST: WOULD ALL MEMBERS PLEASE ANSWER ANY ASSOCIATION TEXT MESSAGES RECEIVED, EVEN IF IT IS JUST TO SAY OK, THIS ACKNOWLEDGMENT IS OFTEN ALL THAT IS NEEDED AND IT LETS THE COMMITTEE KNOW THAT THE INFORMATION IS GETTING THROUGH, ALSO IT'S GOOD TO TALK. THANK YOU.

Social Calendar:

Former training officer **Capt. John Thompson, (Tommo)**, thanked the association members for attending his farewell bash at the Middleton Barracks on the 10th Sept. big numbers of ex 299 men attended, and he apologised for not getting around to everyone on the night but a combination of emotion and alcohol mixed with a tinge of sadness made this an impossible task.

John brought news of 299's Christmas party to be held at Wakefield, all 299 welcomed, past & present, full details attached at the end of the minutes.

N/B: Squadron transport provided from the Barracks both too, and at the end of the evening from Wakefield back to the Barracks. Sounds good to me!

Chairman's Comments:

The Chairman thanked the men who turned out to help set up the `Halloween` party for the children of the Brandsholme Estate in Hull, this is all done on a voluntary basis with a little Local Government funding and initiated by Councillor Anita Harrison, (former Lord Mayor of Hull & **Tony Kitching's** sister).

Work party: Gaz Coe, Glenn Ratten, Dave Hines, Dave Meekin, Chris Shillito, Mike Beardshaw and Paul Sims, all stayed on to form the scariest part of the display.

More volunteers needed to help set up `Santa's Grotto` (no elves please), Wednesday 7th December all day if possible, but any time given would be welcomed, this is all happening for the same reasons and at the same place: Ash tree Plantation, Lothian Way, Brandsholme, Hull. Names to **Gaz Coe**: Tel; 01757 268188.

Armistice Day: For those who wish to attend, 11.00hrs on Friday the 11th November at the Hull Cenotaph, anybody and everybody welcome, meet at around 10.30hrs, Standards will be present.

Remembrance Sunday 13th November 2016

Muster at Pease Street off Analby Road at around 10.00hrs. Dress: berets, blazers, ties and decorations can to be worn, the association would welcome a big turnout for our annual day of Remembrance, and a wreath will be laid after the service at the Cenotaph in Ferensway, Hull.

It was proposed by **Tony Weldon** and **seconded by Paul Sims** for a buffet to be supplied by the `Minerva` for after the parade, the vote was unanimous for this to be funded through the association. Please consider this a family occasion.

Unsung heroes: The Chairman drew attention to the excellent work done, without recognition by **Tony Irwin & Paul Sims**, `Simbo` works tirelessly behind the scenes, making and keeping contact with all former 299 men, he runs the face book site and because of his longevity of service he is a wealth of information and knowledge. Both **Paul & Tony** take care of the standards since the sad loss of **Colin Woodward**, not many volunteers for this job but these two men just take it in their stride. **Tony** collates and keeps our Archives, an absolutely vital job, because without its history any unit amounts to nothing, its history is the bedrock of its existence. Both these men play a vital role on the social side of things, there is not much goes on without them knowing, again this is vital in allowing any possible intervention by this association, this is a prerequisite for the very existence of this association, reference to **Bill Dicks** Charter at the top of these minutes, **Chris Shillito**.

Matters arising:

9 Squadron have a new Commanding Officer: **Major Jack Crossly RE**. He was previously the SO2 at HQ to 16 Air Assault Bde. We wish him well.

Items from members: `Simbo's` bus stops, two winners this week: Dave Hinds & Simbo himself, WHAT !!!!!!!

With nothing further to discuss the Chairman brought this meeting to a close by thanking all for their participation.

Web site address: www.299association.com

Next Meeting: Friday 2nd December in the `Minerva` at 20.00hrs on Corporation Pier, Hull.

Dates for your diary:

Remembrance Sunday: 13th November 2016, service to be held at the Cenotaph in Hull.
Muster: 10.00hrs in Pease Street, (off Anlaby Road), Dress: Berets, Blazers, decorations.

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

N/B: secure your place with a £50 deposit paid in to the Treasurer, **(Martin)**

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299 PARA SQN RE.....ALL RANKS AND GUESTS XMAS PARTY.

The 2016 all ranks Christmas celebration will be held on Saturday 10th December 2016 in the AR Centre, George Street, Wakefield

The evening will cost £10 per head and will offer a Christmas buffet lunch followed by live music in the bar and finished off with the Xmas money tree.

(All ticket sales will go towards the nights main event The Money Tree')

The night is open to All ranks including guests.

This will be a great opportunity for those that know any old serving members from 299 to pick up your phones and make them aware of this night and encourage them to join us for some food and drinks.

The attendance form is attached. Please complete the form and return it to the Sqn Office (email or hard copy) or hand to your Troop PSI. If unable to print the form please complete it and email it back to the Sqn. If you are unable to open the attachment the information required is shown below. Simply email your detailed requirements by return of email for collation by the Sqn Office who will submit your details to Denise Miller.

To: Denise Miller AO Fin Clk

From: Troop:

I will/will not be attending & I will be bringingguests.

I will /will not require transport from AR Centre Hull / Gateshead

I have the following special dietary requirements

Nil known.....

Any questions about anything then give me a call.

Kind Regards

Regards

SSgt D Penn

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