



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 associations.

W. Dick, (Seadog), 2/8/2002

Date: Friday 1st November 2019 at the 'Minerva'

Members Present: M. Beardshaw, B. Bilton, J. Brooks, G. Coe, N. Cooper, T. Cunningham, J. Duffy, D. French, C. Gadd, D. Hines, A. Irwin, T. James, J. Mace, R. Meaching, K. Millington, F. Pougher, L. Ransom, G. Ratten, P. Robson, M. Sadler, S. Saxby, C. Shillito, P. Sims, B. Steele, R. Swatman, Mart. Tindle, C. Walker, A. Weldon, P. Wolstenholme.

Apologies: F. Gray, P. Robinson, M. Maddison, D. Woollas, G. Beaumont, K. Blacker, D. Harvey, S. Hoyle, A. Kitching, M. Maddison, D. Meekin, L. Smith, A. Stimpson, A. Homan.

Guests: Benny Bridges, former Hull City player, Royal Engineer and long-time friend of 299.

Welcome and 'Roll Call'

The Chairman **Chris Shillito** welcomed all present then opened the meeting by inviting Craig **Gadd** to recite the Exhortation from the "To the Fallen" by **Lawrence Binyon**. He was pleased to see **John Duffy** making a show again after his recent life changing losses and as always good to see **Benny Bridges**.

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

Proposed by – **Kev. Millington**

Seconded by – **Pete Robson**

Treasure's Report: **Glenn** updated our current financial status which still remains healthy, also reminded us all that a decision will be required for next year's association trip, he is already taking deposits.

Relevant correspondence:

Roger Howells posted the following message in the October minutes for the Birmingham branch of the AEA dated 2/10/2019.

“All Veterans are entitled to PRIORITY NHS TREATMENT for any condition relating to their service, this includes those who do NOT receive a war pension” This is law, but you may have to educate your Doctor.

AEA Vacant Posts, e-mail from Chairman **Steve Wallis** dated 6/10/2019 regarding a number of posts becoming available on the **Executive committee**.

Dave Rutter has informed us of his intention to resign as the Editor of the Journal following publication of the June 2021 edition. The intention is that, by this time, the Journal will be published online rather than in its current `Hard` format.

Jimmy Hill has informed us of his intention to resign as the National Secretary as soon as a replacement can be found.

Lt Col (Retd) Will McDonald has advised of his wish to stand down as the association Archivist. The Association Archives are currently stored in the Corps Museum at Chatham.

N/B: direct your intensions to Stephen.wallis57@ntlworld.com

Dave Rutter sent an e-mail dated 8/10/2019 regarding the **2020 AGM/Reunion** to be hosted by the Yorkshire branch. This will take place between 16 – 18th October and will be held at the Cedar Court Hotel, Harrogate, details to follow.

Chris Shillito message bd, dated 15/10/2019. A fantastic turn out for **Big Bill** yesterday, a great send off for a great guy. A big thank you to our Birmingham brothers and others who travelled a long way, nice to see `yabs` and **Jonny Brennan** there. Well done to all concerned.

David Drayton (Bills son), message bd. dated 15/10/2019. Fella's, just wanted to say, what a fantastic send off yesterday, my dad would have been made up with that. On behalf of **Dorri, Helen** and I, thank you so much for taking the time to say goodbye.

Tony Foster, message bd, 15/10/2019. What a great send off for **Bill** from his family, friends and all 299.

Sue Sinclair (Bill's sister), message bd. 17/10/2019. Thank you so much for the amazing send-off you gave **Bill**. What an honour and privilege it was to meet you all, and to be able to put faces to names heard mentioned over the years. It was a very humbling experience and I know **Bill** would have been so proud. A big thank you to **Chris** for your words, both personally and on behalf of the association, and what you meant to **Bill**. There may be more words to come from them, but I would also like to thank you on behalf of **Bill's** siblings.

Ian Bedford (Bill's nephew), message bd, 17/10/2019. I am gutted I couldn't make it to my **Uncle Bill's** funeral. He was a big influence on my childhood and I remember how proud we all were of him. Fond memories of watching him march every Remembrance Sunday and watch him parachute at Bridlington.

He was a big man in stature and in heart and will be sorely missed by all who knew him. Thank you all for giving him a good send off. **RIP Uncle Bill.**

Craig Gadd, message bd, 17/10/2019. **To David, Sue and Ian.** It was a real honour to be part of **Bills** send off, and really proud to call **Bill** a good friend. I did my first ever camp with **Bill** some 27yrs ago and he kind of took me under his wing. I've also had the pleasure of drinking with him and **Chris** on many a Sunday afternoon.

Dorothy Drayton (Bills wife), e-mail dated 18/10/2019. Thanks 299 for the kind messages of sympathy, she keeps herself busy caring for her elderly neighbour who is not very well at the moment and knows it will take time in coming to terms with her loss. **Dorothy** thanks all for their generosity at **Bills** funeral raising £725.58 for the Dove House Hospice in Hull.

Chris Shillito, message bd, 18/10/2019. To all **Bills** family, it was a great honour for me to say a few words at my friends funeral and would like to thank **Dori, Helen and David** for giving me the opportunity to do so, I think they did a great job of holding it together on the day and it was a pleasure to meet his sister's **Sue and Jacquie**, a lovely family.

Fred Gray, e-mail dated 22/10/2019. **Charlie McColgen**, ex 9 Sqn was so impressed with the flower children of Arnhem at the Cemetery this year, (many fainted), that he decided to raise money to buy every flower child a maroon beret, and his appeal has now reached £5000.

When I rang **Paul Morris**, ex 299 Commando and association member, to see if he had received my cheque for my purchase of his WW2 Commando cap badge, for some reason he had not, and he said that "I should not bother with the cash and accept the badge as a gift" I think he was going to give the money to the branch funds anyway. I felt uneasy about that so on behalf of 299 Association I have donated the £25 to the appeal.

Would you please let the branch members know of the donation by **Paul** and the 299 Association branch.

Best wishes to all branch members, regards **Fred.**

Chris Shillito, message bd, 24/10/2019. Gentlemen, the underprivileged children of Brandsholme need our help. The ex-Lord Mayor has asked us to help with a Halloween type them in the Ash Plantation, Grampian Way, Brandsholme. We have done this many times before, its easy work and tea and coffee are supplied on tap with sandwiches, crisps & biscuits. It would be great if you can spare a couple of hours at around 10:00hrs on Thursday the 31st of October. TIA.

Dean Ideson, message bd, 27/10/2019. 50% sale at Humberside Airport on Friday 1st November through to Monday the 4th. Perfumes, cosmetics, handbags, watches, toys, etc. Its open to the public, but the earlier, or sooner you get there the better, before it sells out.

N/B: you could be reunited with a previous confiscation...!

Social Calendar:

Association trip for 2020

At the last meeting **Glenn Ratten (Treasurer)** asked the membership if they wanted a change from our annual Arnhem Pilgrimage and a show of hands were in favour of change, (35 attendees at that meeting). **Dave Hines (Webmaster)** has willingly offered to try and resurrect an earlier trip organised through 'Acklams' but the same rulings of a minimum number of 20 people will still be needed and a £50 deposit will secure a place on this trip.

At this evenings meeting, and after much discussion it was decided to go for Normandy, around September if possible, this was proposed by **Tony Irwin**, Seconded by **Frank (Bud) Pougher** the vote for being unanimous. The committee will try and put something together including prices.

Invitation to Middleton Barracks on Friday 8th Nov. 2019 by Sgt Tom James

The template from the Toscaig Bridge commemoration plaque replacement initiated by **Eamon Smyth** has now been mounted and is on display at the barracks and **Tom** has kindly offered to open the bar and welcomes the association to visit for a bit of a get together just before the Remembrance Sunday parade were 1 Troop will share a buffet with the association at the Minerva. This is an informal gathering meeting around 19:30hrs. Please make an effort.

Les Ransom kindly invites all 299 Association to the Ship Inn, Dunswell for his daughter Maryanne's 40th birthday party on Saturday evening 23rd November 2019.

It will be one of **Johnno's** open buffets with a barrel of free beer thrown in, also music, remember the Ship has accommodation in the Captains Quarters around the back if needed.

Chairman's Comments:

Chris thanked the members for their support at the late **Bill Drayton's** funeral and their part in helping to say goodbye to our friend.

Chris also thanked the 8 men from this association who turned up to the Ash Plantation on the North Bransholme Housing Estate in Hull to help build **Councillor Harrison's** annual Halloween experience for the disadvantaged children living on this estate. The Councillor telephoned her thanks to the 299 men for saving the day in giving the kids this treat. She is dangerously ill and could not attend the proceedings this year and we can only wish her well, hoping she gets all the luck needed in coping with her recent health problems.

Hull City Council have asked this association to support a parade and wreath laying service at North Bransholme's own memorial 'To the Fallen' this will take place on Thursday 7th November 2019 at 10:00 hrs. Standards will be paraded. Muster before 10:00hrs at Apping Close, Grampian Way, (Opposite 'Herons Foods') this is a short service and will be attended by the Lord Mayor plus some of our City's Fathers and should be considered as an honour. It would be great if you could attend.

The Chairman is calling for a maximum turnout for Remembrance Sunday on the 10th November and despite of all the rumours the muster point is still down Pease Street 9:30hrs. Buffet & raffle after at the Minerva, bring the family.

Our **Webmaster Dave Hines** has been at it again by adding the falling poppy leaves plus music (Pack up your troubles in your old kit bag) to the home page of our web-site, yours to withhold. He has also produced a memorial 2020 calendar dedicated to **Bill Drayton**, selling them off with the money going to association funds. **Chris** thanked **Dave** personally and was joined by the membership for this generous and unselfish act.

Matters arising:

Charlie McColgen's beret appeal

After Charlie gave his beret to one of the flower children of Arnhem this year and prompted this appeal for any spare Maroon berets for donation and / or money to buy them, (see **Fred Gray's letter**). **Craig Gadd** proposed this association should donate £100 and this was seconded by **Paul Sims** and the vote for was carried, and in addition a further £50 was donated from individual members, therefore a cheque for £150 pounds + £25 via **Fred Gray** for this charity.

Items from members:

Bill Drayton's Funeral 14/10/2019

Well over 100 people turned out to honour this man, coming from every corner of the UK and the near continent.

Ex-special forces lined the road sides leading to the Chapel at the Crematorium, throwing one up as the cortege passed, each man falling in behind the hearse forming ranks of two following the cortege towards the Chapel, this maneuverer was coordinated by friend and former **Sgt A Weldon** under the direction of friend and former **Capt. C. Shillito**. Amongst these military men the following units were represented: 131 Para Regt RE, 131 Cdo Sqn RE, 59 Cdo Sqn RE, 9 Para Sqn RE, Royal Marines, Para Regt 6th Division, RAF Regt, REME. SAS and 1st Batt Para Regt. This list acknowledges a respect for the man.

A team of Pallbearers - friends carried him into the Chapel which was standing room only with Standards holding the perimeter. His casket was dressed in the union flag with his decorations and two berets, green & red reflecting the duality of his service.

Bills wife **Dorothy** elected to hold a humanist funeral in paying tribute to his life and the Celebrant (in place of Clergy), led the proceedings by calling people forward who wanted to say a few words about **Bill**, interdispersed with some of his favourite music. **Sue (Bills sister)** spoke fondly about growing up with him, reflecting his natural affinity with animals, thus disclosing a latent but gentler caring side to his character.

Chris Sillito, a long-time friend and brother in arms recalled some of the many stories surrounding **Big Bills** service with 299, and he spoke well, giving him a dignified farewell whilst celebrating a life well lived, always recognising the sadness of saying goodbye for ever to his friend.

Tony Irwin stood on duty with the association standard throughout these proceedings.

The Wake was held at the Hull & East Riding Sports Club where 299 managed to drink the place dry, something **Bill** would have been very proud of.

G. Coe

Terry Cunningham brought best wishes from our Doncaster friends, all are well but **John Davis** continues to recede into his own little world.

Simbos bus Stop: only one winner this month Kev. Millington.

Web site address: www.299association.com

Next Meeting: Friday 6th December at the Minerva, usual time.

WITH NOTHING MORE TO DISCUSS THE CHAIRMAN CLOSED THE MEETING THANKING ALL FOR THEIR ATTENDANCE.

Dates for your diary:

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 10TH NOV. 2019, muster down Pease Street, Anlaby Road, opposite the Tigers lair.

Dress for parade & service at the Cenotaph.

1 Troop 299 Squadron are parading in Hull this year and will be sharing the buffet at the Minerva with the association.

CONTACTS:

Chairman: Chris Shillito, cls299@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 01482 806690, Mb: 07877277288.

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Archivist: Tony Irwin, bigtirwin@hotmail.com Tel; 01482 793847, Mb: 07928956592.

WELFARE:

The veterans Hub & Forum, coordinator Callum Day for all your problems

Address: Goodwin Community Hub, Anlaby Road, Hull. HU3 2LL, (opposite the `Tigers Lair`).

Tel: 01482 485958, email: veteranshub@goodwintrust.org

