



299 ASSOCIATION

Charity No: 1009201

Date: 3rd October 2014

Members Present: R. Able, D. Barker, M. Beardshaw, G. Beaumont, B. Bilton, G. Coe, N. Cooper, A. Costello, T. Cunningham, W. Drayton, J. Duffy, C. Duggan, R. Franklin, D. Ideson, A. Irwin, A. Kitching, C. Lickiss, J. Mace, F. Pougher, L. Ransom, G. Ratten, K. Robinson, C. Shillito, P. Sims, J. Thompson, C. Walker, A. Weldon, C. Wilcock, C. Woodward.

Apologies: P. Robinson, P. Robson, M. Maddison, J. Harrison, W. Draper, C. Gadd, C. Hendrickson, K. Saddington, L. Smith, R. Swatman, K. Russell, J.C. Thompson, J. Brooks, Mart. Tindle, T. Walker.

Guests: Benny Bridges, C. Cooper.

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 – F. Pougher.

Seconded by – A. Weldon.

Treasure's Report: Martin was unable to attend this evening but assures me our funds are healthy, especially after the 'Ransom Army' shirt sale, Chris Shillito gave a run down on all the facts and figures up to now and they're still selling like 'hot cakes', these profits, along with a kind 'dropsy' from Pete Robbo has given our funds a welcome hike.

Correspondence: A letter has been received from **Anthony 'Jimmy' Hill**, The National Secretary for the AEA.

He raises three points:

a) The Remembrance Parade at the Cenotaph, Whitehall, London. Tickets have been allocated to members of the AEA again this year; for those of you who may be interested in attending your names are needed ASAP, clearance required for security reasons, contact me for details.

b) Area secretaries are to provide an annual summary of important calendar events to be read out at the Airborne Engineers Association AGM which was held in Harrogate on the 4th October 2014, copies were circulated at the meeting, and if anybody requires a copy to be sent to their computer please let me know. Remember the Airborne Engineers Associations National AGM/Reunion runs from Oct – Oct, 299's AGM runs from May – May.

c) Is there any 299/AEA member wishing to volunteer for any of the National AEA Posts, such as Chairman, etc, etc? If so contact me for details.

Social Calendar: Next year's jolly boys/pilgrimage was mentioned with several suggestions coming from the floor; Arnhem, Normandy /Pegasus Bridge, Ypres, etc. It was decided to think about it for a month and narrow it down to 1 or 2 options and let Malcolm Tindle do some basic costing and timings for us all to decide. For those of you who are interested; would you please try and let me know any preference you may or may not have before the next meeting, even if you just want to go along with the majority, we need to know one way or another, just to get things moving.

Chairman's Comments: Bill Drayton gave a run down on the following;

Arnhem 70th Commemoration at Woodhall Spa on the 6th September 2014

He thanked the eleven 299 men for giving their time and presence for this special Commemoration, a very full and enjoyable day which included a parade through the village to a piped band along with Standards, a Church service at St. Peters in Remembrance of those men who failed to return in 1944, wreath laying at the Memorial Stone and then on to a sit-down lunch kindly provided by the good people of Woodhall Spa, who have never forgotten the lads that called this place home. He went on to thank 'Woody' for doing the business with our Standard, also Tony Costello for covering the event and again providing some brilliant photographs for the association Archives.

The whole occasion was honoured in having two Arnhem Veterans present; our own Les.Ransom & Jack Taylor, these two men were scurried away by the media at every opportunity for interviews and photo sessions. Autographs are still free if you move in quickly!



Courtesy of Glenn Ratten

Jack Taylor & Les Ransom, Arnhem Veterans

On the back of the menu we found the following script which we would like to share with you all, this was read out to the meeting by Chris Duggan:

Woodhall Spa and a Bridge too far

**Airborne troops from near and far, prepared for war in Woodhall Spa,
Monty, and his big idea, although intelligence was clear,
An air armada of monstrous size flew in quest of Monty's prize.**

**Into Holland, gun for gun, our mission was to fight the Hun,
And fights were fought but seldom won.**

**Yet I survived, and fought no more, I might have died in forty-four,
Free of anguish, and of pain, home in Woodhall spa again,
To a welcome I shall e'er remember, good folk of Woodhall, each September.**

John Crosson

Ex 7th Galloway Battalion

The Kings Own Scottish Borderers

1st Air Landing Brigade, Veteran of the Battle for the bridge at Arnhem.

Our Comrades ashes: were handed over to the officers of 1 troop 299 Parachute Squadron RE for their journey to their final resting place on the 20th September at the Cenotaph on Ginkel Heath, Ede in Holland. The two eldest sons of both men; Nick for Colin Bowden and Mathew for Bill Dick made the hand over watched by relatives, serving soldiers and former members of the Squadron, many who had served with these two men, this all happened on the 9th September at the Middleton Barracks in Hull. The whole story was covered by the Hull Daily Mail with a two page spread including pictures and published on the 10th September. The Chairman thanked all concerned for helping to make this happen, especially `you` the association men who managed to make some time for your old pals and their families. I have sent a letter of thanks on behalf of this association to the OC 299 Squadron, Major Brad Hardwick for his support in this act of remembrance.

The Invictus Games: the Chairman congratulated Craig Gadd who just missed out on a medal in the cycling but more than made up for it with a Gold as a part of the sitting Volley Ball Team. Well done Craig, brilliant effort.

Arnhem Pilgrimage:

This trip was made up of 299 members and friends of 299 and was split into two groups; a 4 day and a 6 day option, in total 54 people enjoyed the trip. The people on the 6 day option enjoyed a day in Nijmegen and on the 18th attended the AEA Birmingham Branch bench dedication at Oosterbeek Cemetery. Friday the 19th saw a lot of activity around The Schooner Inn with many reunions of old friendships enjoying a liquid lunch together.

Saturday 20th at Ginkel Heath DZ the parachuting was held back because of low cloud, it was well into the afternoon before it started and all the parachutists had to wait to be debriefed together. The consequence of this delay meant this association missed the service at the Engineers memorial in Driel but eventually the Squadron men delivered the ashes to the next of kin, where, in-between thunder storms, the ashes were spread at the Cenotaph and a small service took place with former 1 Troop OC, Mike Tindle, who had served with both men, gave the obituary. This was very much appreciated, especially by the families.

N/B: The 299 Para's were flown to the DZ by courtesy of the American 82nd Airborne, therefore our two comrades gained their American Wings, also both were registered on the manifest, another jump for the records and Colin Bowden gained promotion to L/Clp, something he'd managed to avoid for years.

Sunday 21st The Remembrance and Laying on of flowers Service by the local school children at Oosterbeek Cemetery, always heartbreaking.

After the service we made our way to Driel and laid our wreath at the Engineers Monument, "Whispers in the night"



Courtesy of Glenn Ratten

Craig Gadd & Paul Robinson

about to lay the 299 wreath at Driel

Special Thanks: to Malcolm and Martin Tindle for another memorable trip, these two men put the time and effort in organizing these trips for us all and it's very much appreciated, everybody seems to have enjoyed this years and we all look forward to the next, wherever it may be.

Sqn news: Former Squadron OC Major Chris Wilcock gave a brief but concise update on the immediate future of both 299 Para and 131 Commando RE, all looks very positive over the next few years but as we all know the Politian's may develop other ideas. He went on to praise certain members present at this meeting for their input/support which had been given to him from the day of his enlisting as a Sapper with 299, through to this present time, these factors being fundamental in his development as a soldier and an Officer, for this they were thanked.

Matters arising: Remembrance Sunday coming up on the 9th Nov.muster at the usual place, Pease St. Anlaby Rd. Hull. 9.45hrs. Back to Middleton Barracks for a drink with the Troop after the service, we had 19 last year, is there any chance we could better this?

Maddy has asked the association if it would mind the Hull Ambulance crews joining them after the service at the Barracks, no objection from the 299 members but it depends on the numbers, remember the size of the bar!

Items from members: Chris Duggan has made contact with Steve McMahon and reports he's getting his life together, hopes to be bringing him down to the barracks after the remembrance parade.

Bus stop winner this week; Dave (Ronnie) Barker, almost like beginners luck.

Next Meeting: Friday 7th November 2014 `Minerva` at 20.00hrs on Cooperation Pier, Hull

Dates for your diary:

Palestine Veterans Association Reunion and Service at Edan Camp on Saturday 18th October 2014.

This is a annual reunion and service for the veterans of British military forces and Palestine Police who served in Palestine between 1923 and 1948.

Remembrance Sunday: 9th November 2014