



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: 11th September 2015

Members Present: M. Beardshaw, B. Bilton, J. Brooks, G. Coe, N. Cooper, A. Costello. Cunningham, W. Drayton, J. Duffy, R. Franklin, C. Gadd, D. Hines, S. Hoyle, D. Ideson, A. Irwin, A. Kitching, C. Lickiss, F. Pougher, L. Ransom, G. Ratten, K. Robinson, P. Robson, C. Shillito, P. Sims, B. Steele, J. Thompson, Mart. Tindle, C. Walker, A. Weldon, C. Wilcock, C. Woodward.

Apologies: P. Robinson, N. Arksey, G. Beaumont, J. Cherry, C. Duggan, C. Ham, D. Harvey, J. Mace, M. Maddison, K. Russell, L. Smith, R. Swatman, Mick. Tindle.

Guests: J. Story, J. Hoyes, F. Grey, (AEA Archivist).

Welcome and 'Roll Call'

The association Secretary **Gary Coe** opened the meeting with an apology to all the members because of the forced cancelation of the July & August meetings. This had occurred mainly because of the redevelopment/and various festivals in this area of Hull in and around the Minerva. The festival problem is an annual event and the redevelopment will be on going up to, and beyond 2017, when Hull becomes the UK's City of Culture.

You, the members will have to decide on an alternative venue for these two months well before next year, therefore please put your minds to the problem, all suggestions are welcomed and will be discussed at a later date.

Caretaker Chairman required due to ill health: as we all know our current Chairman **Bill Drayton** has under gone a period of extreme trauma because of his recent heart attack and he feels the need to step back a while to give himself a period of recuperation, I feel, I can speak for the membership in wishing him continuous improvement on his road to recovery and whatever way **Bill** wishes to play it, will not meet with any opposition from the association membership.

The meeting was then asked for any volunteers to take up the caretaker post on a temporary basis and **Chris Shillito** stepped up, this was proposed to the meeting for acceptance by **A. Weldon** and seconded by **P. Robson** and the vote from the floor was unanimous, thanks **Chris**.

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

Proposed by – **M. Beardshaw**.

Seconded by – **K. Robinson**.

Treasure's Report: Martin informed the meeting that our funds are healthy and all funding for our Arnhem pilgrimage is in place and we are ready to go, find timings for this further in the minutes. Three wreaths have been purchased from The British Legion, for Arnhem, Cromwell Lock and Remembrance Sunday.

Correspondence: Cromwell Lock update from the AEA President and event coordinator **Lt Col (Ret) John Lee.**

John passed on his best wishes to our Chairman **Bill Drayton** and his family and charged the Secretary with the constitutional responsibility for overseeing any caretaking role if needed.

Cromwell Lock

Programme details for the Commemoration Service to be held at Cromwell Lock, near Newark on Sunday 27th Sept.

This service is to commemorate the 10 sappers of 300 Troop, 131 Independent Parachute Squadron RE (V) who lost their lives at Cromwell Lock whilst taking part in Ex Trent Chase in September 1975.

The service will be held at the memorial to the 10 sappers at Cromwell Lock and it is expected to last for about 45 minutes. The service will be officiated by the Rev. Stuart Turner, Chaplain to 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment.

13.30hrs on – attendees arrive on site, a car parking area will be available a short distance from the memorial.

13.50hrs – Branch Standards and detachment from 131 Cdo Sqn RE (V) will form up and march to the memorial.

14. 00hrs – service commences. Wreaths may be laid after the last post has been played.

14.40hrs – approx service concludes and guests depart.

15.00hrs onwards guests are invited to meet at the Muskham Ferry Inn, where light refreshments will be available on a cash basis.

Berets and decorations are to be worn.

General Notes: for those of you making your own way there.

The memorial is accessed from Church Lane, Cromwell, coming from the North turn off the A1 at the sign Carlton on Trent and Cromwell. Take the farm track almost opposite the telephone box and proceed for approx 800yds to a car parking area.

A show of hands was requested for the hiring of a mini bus for this event, this was unanimously agreed by the membership.

THE MEETING POINT FOR THOSE OF YOU TRAVELLING ON THE MINI BUS FOR THIS EVENT WILL BE OUTSIDE THE HULL TRUCK THEATRE IN FERNSWAY, HULL AT 11.00HRS > LEAVING AT 11.15HRS.

N/B: it important to note that nobody will be over looked for this event, if you want to go and have no transport contact the committee and a place will be found somewhere.

Presidents Commendations:

A short discussion about the President's Commendation followed, the award would be for someone who has given particularly meritorious service to the AEA or one of its branches and is decided by the President alone after considering recommendations from the AEA membership. This could be discussed at a later date!

The Lord Mayor of Kingston upon Hull and Admiral of the Humber, Charity appeal.

The Secretary attended the second meeting of the Lord Mayors charity committee and handed over a donation of £150 into the funds. This money was the profits generated from the raffle at the "Summer Bash" of 1st August at Middleton Barracks. A letter of thanks has been received from the Lord Mayors office and handed to our Treasurer.

Social Calendar: Proposed clay pigeon shooting competition with the proceeds going to the Lord Mayors charity appeal fund. Point of contact **Tony Kitching/Committee**. Input on this event welcomed.

Christmas Party with a difference

The Lord Mayor of Hull is proposing a Christmas party in the banqueting rooms at the Guild Hall, Alfred Gelder Street, Hull on Friday 11th December 2015, and this association is invited as a part of the Mayors charity fund raisin team. This event is open to other groups within the team. The details proposed for this event are as follows:

A meal of pie, chips & peas, an evening of entertainment, dancing, bar, raffle, etc, all for £10p/p, each table seats 10 people with all profits going to the Mayors charity fund. This event would be open to 299 members, friends & families, all welcome.

This was put to the membership for their support and accepted unanimously; therefore a tener secures a place, names & monies needed ASAP, please lads, make a commitment, either yea or nah, if yea, nail it with £10 at the next meeting, may bees are no good, **remember we are set to be the net beneficiaries**.

Chairman's Comments: **Bill Drayton** thanked this association's membership and all other well wishers for their massive support during his recent illness, also that of his good wife **Dorri** with all her health problems, the family were so very grateful in reading the heartfelt messages of encouragement during this frightening period in their lives, this helped them draw the strength and courage needed in this fight for his life. **Bills** condition has improved significantly, and although not out of the woods yet, he is working his way back to a normal'ish and a much healthier life style, it's good to have him back amongst us but we will certainly miss him at Arnhem this year, doctor's orders.

Matters arising: Airborne Forces Day at Eden Camp on the 11th July 2015

Thanks must go to the men from this association who paraded with Standards, **representing us all**, on what turned to be a very successful and enjoyable day.

The Summer Bash at the Barracks on the 1st August 2015

A good night had by all, even if it could have been better attended, a special thanks has to go to **S/Sgt Carl Ham** for pulling it all together, thanks to **Simbo** for running the raffle and achieving a profit of £150 for the charity fund, mainly due to some very generous donators, you know who you are, **Robbo, Beards & others**, thank you all.

Memorial Day at the Yorkshire Air Museum at Elvington on the 6th September 2015

Yet again thanks must go to the men from this association, who paraded with Standards, **whilst representing us all**, and again this turned out to be a very enjoyable day, with a full account of the proceedings, plus photo's included in Tuesday's 8th September edition of the Yorkshire Post.

N/B: This association's presence at the many events throughout the year is headed by the dedication of just a few men: Tony Costello and our hard working Standard Bearers Tony Irwin and Col. Woodward, and for their commitment we are truly grateful.

Congratulations to Tony Weldon: he has just completed his 13th Nijmegen March at the age of 69yrs; this annual event is 30km a day over 4 days and is known for the friendliness displayed by the Dutch, next year is the 100th, will he make it?

Hot News just in: the same man has just completed the Great North Run, (half marathon), says he's nearly ready for P Coy again, well done **Tony**.

Fred Grey: AEA Life Vice President, former Archivist and Ex member of 299 & 9 Squadron Para RE

We were very honoured indeed to have **Fred** at this meeting and we welcomed him as he went on to inform us all of his love for soldiering which came from his enlistment into 299 Squadron Para RE (V) at Hull during 1954. Fred is a Hull man, and was serving his apprenticeship as a Cabinet Maker with a local firm when the urge for adventure over took him. After completing his trade training he went for the regulars, and eventually 9 Squadron Para RE. He went on to praise the men of 299 who trained him up to a standard which made his move into the regulars relatively straight forward, the senior NCO's and training instructors in Hull at this period in time were all WW2 veterans, fully tried and tested in all the major conflicts of that war.

Fred informed the meeting of the AEA Roll of Honour board is to be extended to include all the men killed in training exercises, this will include the lads from the Cromwell Lock disaster and many more. The board is to be relocated from Aldershot to the **Rock Barracks** HQ in Woodbridge, Suffolk. **Fred** then presented our Arnhem Veteran **Les Ransom** with a signed copy of his book, "**Airborne Engineers**" which was gratefully received, the meeting thanked **Fred** for his contribution.

A "Minerva" collage by Jack Brooks

Jack had put together a very impressive collage on behalf of this association of all things nautical with a hint of 299 thus reflecting the historic past of this public house and all its connections with the port of Hull and its navel past, it was framed behind glass and presented to the Landlady of the Minerva by **Les Ransom** as a token of this association's appreciation for their continuous goodwill and friendship shown to us all. This was all **Jack's** idea and another example of selfless commitment to this association, many thanks **Jack** from us all.

Association Computer

The question of an association laptop has been raised from the membership, this was proposed by P. Robson and seconded by Glenn Ratten with the members voting for this unanimously. I know this gesture is full of the best intentions but would like the subject to be discussed further at a later date before any action is taken.

Items from members: the following story is regarding the ashes of the late **S/Sgt Ernie Venus**, a founder member of 299 Squadron, and also an Arnhem Veteran.

On the 17th September 2011, 299 Parachute Squadron R E parachuted onto the Ginkel Heath D Z as part of the memorial jump to commemorate the battle of Arnhem, the largest airborne assault ever made.

One of the 299 parachutist's, **Cpl Chris Duggan** jumped with **Ernie's** ashes which were then spread onto this sacred ground, this was his final wish to be back with all his old mates he'd lost in 1944.

Ernie's daughter, **Joan** had contacted **Chris Shillito**, a 299 Association member who organised through one of the serving Squadron officers **Major Chris Wilcock**, to fulfil the family's wishes to have **Ernie's** ashes spread on Ginkel Heath.

Due to the lack of places on RAF aircraft the jump was executed with the American Airborne who kindly put **Ernie** on the jump manifest enabling him to gain his American wings, posthumously. When the certificate arrived, unfortunately his name had been spelt incorrectly, **Ernest** instead of **Ernie**.

This year, 299 Squadron **2IC Major John C. Thompson** has taken part in an officer exchange placement with the American Airborne, and whilst there, and luckily for this association, he has managed to sort this mistake out, thanks **John** for a job well done.

The association now has the rectified certificate supplied by Fort Bragg and have given it to **Ernie's** family. Contribution from **Chris Shillito**.

Special message from Christine & Gary Coe, (Secretary 299 Association)

On the 10th August 2015 our son **Douglas** passed away due to respiratory failure whilst awaiting a lung transplant that never came in time, he was 43yrs old and known to many of you through attending association socials events including the odd Arnhem trip including last year.

Needless to say we are heavy in grief and heartbroken, but wish to thank you all for your kind messages of sympathy, and to those of you who helped us in laying him to rest at his funeral, we would like to say the following: the depth of feeling and love felt for our son's life by everyone present at his service made us so very proud to be his parents. We consider ourselves very lucky in having **Doug** for his 43yrs; we also draw great strength from the courage he displayed throughout his life in facing all his problems, never letting them get in his way in the fulfilment of his life.

There is nothing left to say but thank you all for paying tribute to our precious Son, we are very proud that he meant so much to so many, and we hope that your memories of him, like ours, will last forever. RIP **Doug** and thanks for the privilege in sharing in all our lives. **C & G. Coe.**

TIMMINGS FOR THE ARNHEM PILGRIMAGE:

16.45hrs: the coach leaves depot at Newport.

17.15hrs: ----- Kirkella.

18.00hrs: -----Ship Inn.

18.30hrs:-----North Sea Ferry. Do not forget your passport!

Web site address: www.299association.com

Next Meeting: to be held at the "Minerva" on Corporation Pier, Hull, at 2000hrs on Friday 2nd October 2015

A special thanks has to go to Brad Steele, association man and ex Royal Marine who without his IT skills these minutes would have not been possible, and for this I am truly grateful.

Dates for your diary:

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Arnhem Pilgrimage 2015

One trip this year: 17th – 21st September 2015, (33 attending).

Wreath laying at Cromwell Lock: 27th September 2015.

It is the 40th Anniversary of the Cromwell lock disaster when 10 of our Scottish friends perished whilst taking part in the **Trent Chase exercise of 1975.** (There are still a few places available).

The AEA Reunion / AGM 16th – 19th October at Coventry. (For more details see the Sec.)

Remembrance Sunday 8th November 2015

Christmas Party with a difference: Friday 11th December 2015 in the banqueting rooms, Guild Hall, Hull.

