



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 7th September 2018 at the 'Minerva'

Members Present: M. Beardshaw, G. Beaumont, B. Bilton, K. Blacker, G. Coe, A. Costello, T. Cunningham, W. Drayton, D. French, C. Gadd, D. Hines, A. Irwin, P. Jefferson, A. Lee, J. Mace, D. Meekin, K. Millington, M. Platto, F. Pougher, L. Ransom, G. Ratten, P. Robson, S. Saxby, C. Shillito, P. Sims, L. Smith, A. Stimpson, Mart. Tindle, C. Walker, A. Weldon, Lt. Col. C. Wilcock,

Apologies: F. Gray, J. Duffy, M. Maddison, B. Steele, N. Cooper, C. Duggan, A. Foster, R. Franklin, S. Hoyle, A. Kitching, G. Newton, M. Parmley, J. Thompson, D. Woollas.

Guests: Eileen Robinson with granddaughter Abby, Pauline Meekin, Mrs Wilcock (Sarah), and Benny Bridges.

Welcome and 'Roll Call'

The Chairman, **Chris Shillito** welcomed all present with a special thank you to **Eileen Robinson, Keith's** widow, who brought news that money collected at his funeral amounted to £583 and was to be split equally between 'Help for Hero's' & The Heart Foundation, **Eileen** came with deposits on behalf of the extended **Robinson** family, who's intention it is, to attend Arnhem 2019 with this association, this was welcome news. **Eileen** has recovered from her broken arm and is driving again, also returned Keith **Robbies** wheel chair. He asked the meeting to be upstanding and invited **Pete Robson** to recite the exhortation from **Laurence Bynion's** poem "To the Fallen" before raising our glass's to our memories of **Davey Bowron** who we lost this week, (funeral details in the correspondence section), he then opened the meeting.

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

Proposed by – **P. Robson**

Seconded by – **M. Beardshaw**

Treasure's Report: **Martin** reported that all the expected bills for this year have been paid, including the remembrance wreaths and our usual donation to The Royal British Legion, and we thanked him for that.

Relevant Correspondence:

John Donaldson (AEA Scotland) email dated 5/8/2018:- On behalf of AEA Scotland I would like to thank you and your members for all the support you have given us. Your branch is the only branch who have supported us.

We now have the support of **Angus MacNeil who is former Capt. Maclachlann's MP** and **Maurice Cory MP** and they are both having difficulty getting replies to their letters from the MOD.

Steve Brown (AEA B'gham Sec.) email dated 14/8/2018 – Gents, I am forwarding an email from our member **Eamon Smyth** regarding a replacement plaque on a bridge on the Toscaig Estate in Northern Scotland.

Eamon has been working tirelessly on this project in his own time and by his own initiative. **Eamon** established contacts with the Royal Navy workshops in Portsmouth and is the contact for this project.

Eamon would like your thoughts on this before he goes ahead and gets the plaque made.

There will be no charge for this plaque to be engraved but **Eamon** has suggested that a donation be made to the Royal Naval Benevolent fund. Your replies regarding the format would be appreciated.

N/B: Photos of an aluminium templates were passed around the meeting.

From **Eamon:** Gents please find templates produced to show proposed plaque replacement. I am informed that the conversion from computer programme to etching is complex and they hope to improve the relief detail on the RE badge. My initial comment would be remove the square around Pegasus.

I will write to **Eamon with your comments.**

John Lee (AEA President) email dated 2/9/2018 – My regards to all 299 members. Could you let me know if any members of 299 Association are planning to attend the Cromwell Lock service this year on Sunday 23rd September and if so how many. The reason I ask is that **Arn Andrews** of the Newark PRA has invited attendees to a buffet lunch with wine and beer, plus fruit juices and he would like to know the numbers, all Engineers are invited. The address is:

Sunnybrook Farm. Caunton Rd., Bathley. NG23 6DL. Its only 10 mins from the lock.

The service is at 11:00 hrs, meeting up at 10:30 hrs.

I have informed him there may be a couple of cars going down, if you're interested talk to **Bri Bilton on 01482 508463** or **Dave Hines on 01482 860981**, some 'Brummies' will be there as well as members from Newark PRA.

Steve Brown (AEA B'gham, Sec), Dave Bowron email dated 6/9/2018, Gentlemen, it is with regret that I have to report that **Dave Bowron** a long standing member of the AEA has sadly passed away this morning at 09:50 hrs. His Daughter, **Bonnie** was at the bedside and was holding his hand when **Dave** took his last breaths.

Dave had been in a lot of pain and discomfort for some time since he was diagnosed that he had sepsis. He had been in a BUPA care home for the last 3 or 4 weeks.

N/B: A condolence card was passed around this meeting to be sent to Bonnie.

His Funeral: - 26th September at 12:00hrs, at The Woodlands Cemetery, Birmingham Road, Coleshill, Birmingham, B46 1DP

Afterwards (probably) at the Crown Club, Shard End, Birmingham, (TBC)

Acting Chairman's Comments (August): **The Funeral of Keith Robinson** took place on Monday 6th August 2018, in the large Chapel at the Chanterlands Avenue Crematorium in Hull. **Robbie's** farewell to us all, over filled the Chapel's capacity, such was the respect shown for this man. I counted more than seventy 131 men both red & green, former & serving soldiers in attendance, a couple of RAF Regt were also spotted bobbing about, add to this his family members, and a multitude of friends & neighbours all wanting to say 'Good Bye' to him, this set fare for a memorable, but sad and final occasion in his name.

John Thompson organised the ex 131 men by lining the cortege route leading to the Chapel, each man throwing one up in passing, then falling in behind the cortege and into the Chapel.

Paul (Son) planned the Pall-Bearing of three Green & three Red berets to match the operational duality experienced during the history of his service within 131, his berets, plus his service decorations were displayed on his coffin, which was palled with the Union Flag.

Pall-Bearers: Green berets: P. Robinson, M. Maddison and M. Beardshaw. Red berets: W. Draper, G. Coe and P. Robson.

People came from far and wide to honour this man, just to mention a few; **Nick McCullough** (Sqn HQ) only found out about the funeral that morning, **Grim Smith** carried the 300 Tp standard and came up from Plymouth that day, men from Doncaster, Birmingham, Newcastle and a special mention to **John (Willy) Harrison** who flew in from Belgium to say good bye to his friend, also many ex 299 men, who, for whatever reason had not been seen for many a year mixed freely with old friends on this very sad occasion.

The Standards from the CESA organisation, combined with the many associations present surrounded the congregation by lining the outer walls of the Chapel, the Hymn 'Abide with Me' was sung followed by an exceptional orchestral extension to the Hymn, that, having been heard once, never to be forgotten.

Sgt P. Robinson RAF Regt (Son) gave the Eulogy speaking fondly of his childhood memories, and finished by reading two of the many accolades written in his memory by **P. Wolstenholme & S. Bristow**, both men captured the very essence of the man, **Gaz Coe (friend)**, spoke about **Robbie's** early days with 299 Sqn and his struggle with the age factor (31yrs old when he came to the Squadron), also some of the light hearted and lesser known funnies surrounding their friendship, he finished off by thanking him for the many memories.

His remains are to be committed into **St Augustine's Church** yard in Skirlaugh, (home village), overlooking his allotment, which his wife **Eileen** intends to continue, also close by is **Bri Coe**, another friend and ex 299 man who was buried there during 2008, therefore, even in death he will still keep good company.

Keith Robinson's Epitaph may well read ----- 'He gave his Best'

G. Coe

Chairman's comments: Yorkshire Air Museum Memorial Day 2018.

Chris Shillito thanked the 19 men who paraded on Sunday 2nd Sept. for this annual event, special thanks must go to the standard bearers **Tony Irwin & Art Stimpson** who again did us proud. This years' Service & Parade marked the Centenary of the RAF and Woman's RAF. The event featured the customary Parade of Standards to the Service in the Memorial Hanger, (containing the WW2 Halifax Bomber), followed by the March past, Sunset Ceremony and Salute. The Parade was once again led by the Yorkshire Military Marching Band & Corps of Drums.

The Parade and spectators were privileged to a 20 minute display from the BBMF (Battle of Britain Memorial Flight), first on display was the Mk 9 Spitfire followed by a Hawker Hurricane displaying the D-Day markings.

Ian Reed (Director) & Ian Richardson (Event Project Officer) have sent their thanks to this association.

Arnhem 2018 (in two weeks' time) all the travel info was given out in the August set of minutes, any queries contact Gaz Coe on Tel: 01757 268188. An itinerary of a proposed schedule will be handed out on the coach, but as responsible adults, everybody is free to do their own thing.

Arnhem 2019 (next year), all 57 places have been filled and we have a reserve list in place of people wanting to come on this trip, therefore if you haven't put your £50p/p deposit down, which was a condition as a token of intent, your place could be in jeopardy, places cannot be kept open on a promise, indefinitely, this would not be fair on those with deposits to hand.

Contact **Glenn Ratten** on Tel: 01757 700016 to make your payments.

Matters arising: Apology from the Secretary:- In last month's minutes I stated that **John Lonergon's** family had received the GSM with Clasp South Arabia, posthumously, after been KIA during the Battle for the DHALA ROAD, Aden. 1965. This was an incorrect statement as pointed out by **John Donaldson** of the AEA Scotland, although. **Maj. Gen. Nitsch CBE** said, (mistakenly), "that they had received their medals"

The whole issue `hangs` on the following statement:

No medals have ever been awarded to the TA soldiers from 300 Sqn who were killed or wounded in this action, with only the regular soldiers receiving their service awards, even though they fought and died together in the same action.

N/B: John Lonergan's widow did receive the Elizabeth Cross in 2010.

Derek French kindly sent me the criteria for the Elizabeth Cross and Memorial Scroll and these are granted to the next of kin of Regular, Reserve or Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel who have died on operations, or as a result of an act of terrorism since 1st January 1948. He can't understand why **John Lonergan's** family received the Elizabeth Cross without him being awarded the GSM posthumously.

URGENT ACTION NEEDED BY ALL READING THIS:

These men are from our Regiment, (historical); 131 Para Engineers, 300 Sqn, the wounded survivors are members of the AEA Scotland Branch, who 299 is affiliated too, and many 299 men are members of the AEA. I can think of no other case of blatant discrimination in the British Army to match this deliberate denial of a soldiers active service, therefore If you would like to fight a worthy cause, this is the one, especially for your own kind, get writing and shouting at your MP's whilst these men are still alive to receive their just entitlement..! It is a national disgrace that this matter has dragged on since 1965, and without grass root support it is never going to happen, the establishment couldn't care less, there's nothing in it for them.

A dead or wounded TA soldier should never be disregarded in this way, it is ethically and morally wrong, and I am calling on all Royal Engineers & others to get involved, this also begs the question; could this discrimination be considered as unlawful, or is the MoD exempt from the `Laws in this Land` ?

Items from members: Tony Costello attended the RAF Memorial day at The Yorkshire Air Museum, and of course he took his trusted camera. He has produced some very professional shots and is taking orders, with all monies made going into the association funds. Thank you **Tony**.

Dave Meekin has taken on a voluntary position at The Hull's People Museum down Whitefriargate in Hull, this museum is packed with stuff (lot of war memorabilia) donated by the people of Hull and forms a big part in our heritage, this worthy cause can only be applauded, and it also satisfies a lot of **Dave's** interests.

Paul Sims brought an enamelled poppy badge displaying 299 Squadron RE, he is taking orders, the bigger the order the cheaper the final price, which is expected to be around £11 each. Mb: 07717887465.

Simbo's Bus stop: the lucky winner this month is Alan (Leapy) Lee.

Web site address: www.299association.com

Next Meeting: To be held at the `Minerva` on Friday 5th October 2018 at 20:00 hrs. Nelson Street/Cooperation Pier. Hull.

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

Dates for your diary:

ARNHEM PILGRIMAGE 2018. THURSDAY NIGHT 20th Sept (overnight ferry) ----- MONDAY morning after overnight ferry Sept.24th 2018, details given in last month's minutes.

CROMWELL LOCK MEMORIAL SERVICE, (at the lock), SUNDAY 23rd SEPT. 2018. Details shown in the correspondence section on the email from John Lee.

29TH ANNUAL AEA GALA DINNER – SATURDAY 13TH October 2018. To be held at the King Charles Hotel, Brompton Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 5QT. (Chatham Branch of the AEA), Booking forms attached to April's minutes.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 11TH NOV. 2018, details to follow

CONTACTS:

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

Vice Chairman: Bill Drayton, dorridrayton@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 01482 376259,

Secretary: Gaz Coe, coeblimey240@gmail.com Tel: 01757 268188.

Treasurer: Martin Tindle, martinrontindle@hotmail.com Tel: 01482 653618, Mb: 07500264558.

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

WELFARE:

The Veterans Hub & Forum, point of contact Paddy Nolan, (ex 1 Para), for all your problems.

Address: Goodwin Community Hub, 63 - 74 Anlaby Road, Hull. HU3 2LL (opposite the `Tigers Lair`).

Tel: 01482 485956, email: veteranshub@goodwintrust.org

