



Airborne Engineers Association Aldershot Branch

Minutes of the OGM

Sunday 12th OCTOBER 2014 at Potters International Hotel
President: Sir Donald Spiers – Secretary: Dave Rutter

Meeting Opened: Sir Donald Spiers opened the meeting at 1128 hours

Members present: Col Chris Davies MBE, Fred Gray, Billy Morris, Jim Hill, Phil Eccleston, John Pfiffner, Bob Wardle, Al Grace, Wally Clift, Tony Manley, Syd Dane, Bob Sullivan MBE, John Ferry, John Lee, and Gerry Hicks

Apologies: Dick Brown, Jack Braithwaite, John Aldridge, Denis Healey, John Moss, Colin Bond, Stevie Stephenson, John McIntosh, John Barrie, Lt Col John Humphreys OBE, Jim O'Hagan, John Smith BEM & Paddy Waring

Minutes of the Previous OGM Meeting: (Secretary) there were no observations or comments regarding the previous meeting minutes. Proposed by Jim Hill, seconded by John Lee, that the minutes were a true recording of the previous meeting - **Carried**

Treasurers Report: (Dave Rutter) Apologies were made for the failure to produce an up-to-date financial statement.

However, the secretary brought to the members' attention an update concerning the donation to the Birmingham branch (£100) towards the construction cost of the 'Arnhem bench'. The Birmingham secretary has confirmed that Arnhem Renkum Council donated the Bench at no cost to the Birmingham branch. It was therefore proposed by Bob Sullivan and seconded by Tony Manley that the £100 donation be recovered. **Carried**

The Aldershot treasurer will contact Mrs Elsie Barrett (Birmingham branch treasurer) for re-imbusement.

AGM Meeting held at Harrogate (John Ferry) As AEA chairman, John expressed his disappointment at the attendance numbers at the AGM. Many members he suggested had instead gone shopping with their wives! He congratulated the Yorkshire branch for organising the weekend event, and hoped that their branch would again book the Cedar Court hotel in the not-too distant future. Several members offered their positive comments regarding the venue, the hotel staff and the hotel accommodation.

It was also very gratifying to have as honoured guests at the gala dinner, Joe & Kath Houlston – Joe was the founder of the Airborne Engineers Association and it was very fitting that he and Kath were present at the 25th anniversary reunion.

Distribution of the raffle receipts (£413) from the event had been previously agreed during the AGM and have now been forwarded to military charities as follows: Help for Heroes £213, BLESMA £100 and Combat Stress £100

Confirmation of these donations can be viewed on the AEA website.

Correspondence (Secretary) Extracts from the minutes of Birmingham, Chatham and 299 Association Hull were read out and those minutes were made available for the members at the closure of the meeting.

John Lee elaborated on the undertakings of 299 –they had attended a number commemorative occasions, which included the Arnhem 70th Commemoration at Woodhall Spar and the 70th Commemoration services in Arnhem. Two members also earned their American wings courtesy of the 82nd Airborne.

Entertainments: Due to the absence of John Smith there was report. However, Billy Morris suggested that prior to the demolition of Montgomery Lines (next Feb/Mar) that one last parade be organised on the old 9 Para Sq square. This met with a positive response from the members. Billy will investigate further into this matter.

Cenotaph Parade Tickets: John Ferry announced that 21 of the 24 tickets for the Cenotaph parade had now been distributed. He further expressed his delight that 3 members of the Scotland branch will once again be travelling south to join us on Horse Guards parade for the event. Recipients of the branch minutes who would like to bid for the remaining tickets should contact John a.s.a.p.

Membership Update: (Billy Morris) Past & present numbers are now 1,471 from which we have received notification of 323 members' passing. Three serving Recce Troop members from 51 Para Sqn RE were recruited during the Harrogate weekend.

Any other business: John Lee read out the contents of a letter received from Joe Houlston (the founding member of the AEA) in which Joe expressed his sincere thanks to all concerned for a wonderful weekend at Harrogate and his delight that the Association is going from strength to strength.

Fred Gray gave out a traffic warning; that Rick Mogg was now in possession of a 4-wheel mobility scooter and that the area of Hartley Witney should be avoided for the foreseeable future!

Operation Musketeer: Members wishing to purchase the book covering the personal account of Stevie Stephenson (cost £10 + £1-50 P&P) can obtain the same via Jeannette Rutter. Cheques must be made payable to JA Rutter as this is not part of the AEA merchandise. The full cost from the book sale is being donated to Help for Heroes. Sir Donald Spiers added that the forward written by a senior SAS officer about Stevie is worth the £10 on its own!

Date of the next OGM: At Potters International hotel will be Sunday 14th December at 1130 hrs

Luncheon Bookings: Those wishing to attend the carvery luncheon following the December meeting are requested to notify:
John Smith Tel: 01252 326100 or e-mail: thesmith@sky.com by Tuesday 9th December.

There being no further business the President closed the meeting closed at: 1225 hours