



# Airborne Engineers Association

## Aldershot Branch

Minutes of the OGM Meeting held at Potters International Hotel

Sunday 25th November 2012

President: Sir Donald Spiers

Chairman: Lt Col (Retd) Dick Brown – Secretary: Dave Rutter – Entertainments: John Smith BEM

### Members Present:

Sir Donald Spiers, Dave Rutter, Tony Manley, Dick Brown, John Ferry, Fred Gray, John Pffnner, Gerry Hicks, Bob Wardle, Ralph Pedder, Billy Morris, Jimmy Hill, Syd Dane, Bob Sullivan, John Smith BEM, John Lee, Wally Clift, John Mason, John Barrie & Chris McVetis

**The Acting Chairman, Dave Rutter, opened the meeting at 1135 hours.** He welcomed the members present and explained that due to the untimely death of our Chairman, Joe Stoddart MBE; the agenda for the meeting would be amended to compensate for the vacancy of the post of Branch Chairman.

**Apologies:** Steve Stephenson, Harold Covington, Don Doherty, Brendan Snoddy, Dennis Healey, Ron Day, Colin Bond, Jim O'Hagan, Mick Humphries, Phil Eccleston, Eric Borlace, Brian Hubbard, Tony Gilbert, Ray Coleman, John Aldridge, Roy Sands, Bob Chatterton, Tony Roberts MBE & Rick Mogg

**Silent Tribute:** The members observed a one-minute silence in memory of Col Dennis Eagan, Joe Stoddart MBE & Harry Evans.

**Election of a Branch Chairman:** The Acting Chairman enquired if each and every member had received the letter-requesting volunteers for the post of Branch Chairman. All members present confirmed they had received the letter. The acting chairman asked if anyone present would like to offer himself as a potential candidate – there were no volunteers. The acting chairman then informed the members that he had received notification that Dick Brown had volunteered for the post.

Proposed by: John Pffnner – Seconded by: Billy Morris – that Dick Brown be elected as the Aldershot branch Chairman. Carried: **Unanimously**

**Dick Brown, the newly elected Chairman then took over the proceedings:**

**Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** There were no comments or observations concerning the minutes of the previous meeting.

Proposed by: John Lee – Seconded by: Bob Wardle that the minutes of the previous meeting be accepted as a true record of that meeting: Carried: **Unanimously**

**Election of a Branch President:** The Chairman explained that following the passing of our previous President, Col Dennis Eagan, and the branch now required a candidate to fulfil this role.

Proposed by: Fred Gray – Seconded by: Bob Sullivan that Sir Donald Spiers be elected as the new branch President: Carried: **Unanimously**

In his acceptance speech, Sir Donald expressed his delight and honour in following in the footsteps of Col Dennis, as he had served under him as a junior officer during his tour with 9 Indep Para Sqn RE.

**Treasures Report:** The treasurer, (Dave Rutter) reported that the branch finances were in a healthy state, but that there were still several members who had yet to pay their annual subscription. A polite reminder would be sent to those concerned.

Proposed by: Wally Clift – Seconded by: Chris McVetis that the treasures report (subject to audit) be accepted: Carried: **Unanimously**

The treasurer brought to the member's attention, that a bouquet of flowers had been sent to Sylvia Stoddart (delivered by Phil & Gay Eccleston) and asked that the cost (£30) be paid from our GPF.

Carried: **Unanimously**

**Correspondence:** John Lee read from the letters of thanks he had received from Majors David Jones (OC 51 Para Sqn) & John Wilson (OC 9 Para Sqn RE) for the excellent reunion weekend in Kingston Upon Hull. Each stated they had thoroughly enjoyed the occasion.

The secretary read extracts from the minutes of the recent meetings of the Birmingham, Chatham & Yorkshire branches. These minutes were later made available to the members present.

**New Branch Members:** The chairman extended a warm welcome (in their absence) to the following two new branch members:

**Col Chris Davies MBE & Peter Bailey**

The secretary had previously received an apology from Col Chris Davies for non-attendance at the meeting.

**Entertainments:** John Smith BEM gave an update on the hotel reservation for the 2013 reunion weekend due to be held at the Carrington House hotel, Bournemouth. The management had received the deposit and the reservation confirmed. Full details together with the booking application form will be enclosed in the April edition of the AEA journal.

**Normandy 2014:** John gave an insight to the Normandy 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations and together with items of interest from John Mason and John Ferry; and brought to the attention of the members the need to 'start-the-ball-rolling' for those interested in an organised trip for these celebrations. Approx. 10 members showed an interest in this idea. John Smith would seek further details regarding the proposed visit.

**Spring Luncheon:** It was agreed that the Spring Luncheon would be held on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March subject to the availability of a suitable venue. Three branch members had recently dined at the Squires Holt restaurant and decided that the venue no longer offered the service previously experienced. John Barrie suggested the Oak Park Golf Club restaurant as a possible venue and John Smith offered the Windlesham Golf Club as an alternative. A decision is to be made after a visit to these locations.

**Falklands Challenge – 75-20-30:** The chairman spoke on the subject of the 75 mile run in 20 hours to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Falklands Conflict. Billy Morris, Bob Chatterton, Jamie Rankine supported by Sam Lane-Sansam would be flying out from Britz Norton on Sunday night for the 25 hour flight to the Falkland Islands. They would be setting out on their endurance run on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November and hope to complete the challenge the following day.

Billy Morris gave a brief description of the challenge ahead of them and extended sincere thanks to the Aldershot branch members for their generous donation of the BBQ raffle receipts and also for the personal donation received from John Mason. Proceeds from the funds collected would be donated to the Stanley hospital, in the form of I-pods, and a financial donation would be made to the Combat Stress charity.

An AEA plaque was handed to Billy, which hopefully will be displayed in Liberty Lodge in Stanley. The cost of the plaque is to be charged to the AEA GPF.

A full report on their venture will be featured in the April edition of the AEA journal.

John Ferry asked Billy Morris if he would look in the Stanley museum to see if the Argentine GPMG that he had found some 15 years after the ceasefire was on display.

**Any Other Business:** The secretary gave a short briefing on the Cenotaph parade and recommended the 2013 event to those who had not experienced this special occasion.

**John Ferry** asked that a vote of thanks be recorded to the 299 Hull branch committee and their members for the excellent AGM/Reunion weekend in Kingston upon Hull. He commented on how difficult it had been for the organisers when late cancellations – some without leaving their name, required the seating plan for the Gala Dinner to be amended up until the last minute. He also commented that having a dance band that played the right type of music and a dance floor within the confines of the dining room proved to be the extremely popular. Joh Lee also spoke on the décor and table arrangements and thought it a most successful event.

**Syd Dane** asked if there was any news or suggestion concerning an organised tour for the Rhine Crossing celebrations. Bob Sullivan who had attended such a tour earlier in the year stated that as far as he was concerned it was a waste of time and money!

**John Mason** requested that an up to dated branch directory be produced. The secretary gave assurance that this would be done within the next couple of weeks.

**Branch Photograph:** As it had been 6 years since the last photograph it was suggested that we arrange for one to be taken in the near future. The secretary suggested that we wait until the spring or early summer and that a possible venue could be in front of the Wellington statue.

**Date of the next Meeting: Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2013**

**There being no further business:** Sir Donald Spiers thanked the members for their attendance and wished all present a Happy Festive Season for Christmas and the New Year and closed the meeting at 1245 hours.

**Carvery Luncheon – Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2013**

If you would like to attend the carvery luncheon following the meeting, please notify John Smith by no later than Monday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2013.

**John Smith: Tel: 01252 326100 or e-mail: thesmith@sky.com**