



**Airborne Engineers Association
Aldershot Branch
Minutes of an Ordinary General Meeting
Sunday 2nd March 2014 at Potters International Hotel**

President: Sir Donald Spiers – Chairman: Dick Brown - Secretary: Dave Rutter

Meeting Opened: Sir Donald Spiers opened the meeting at 1135 hours.

Members present: Jimmy Hill, Wally Clift, John Pffner, Fred Gray, Bob Sullivan MBE, Gerry Hicks, Bob Wardle, John Ferry, Tony Manley, Phil Eccleston, John Smith BEM, Al Grace, Monty Dane, John Lee, Ray Coleman, Billy Morris, John Mason, Col Chris Davies MBE & John Brennan

Apologies: Bob Chatterton, John McIntosh, Stevie Stephenson, Rick Mogg, Colin Bond, Jim O'Hagan, Harold Padfield, Harold Covington, Brian Hubbard, Brendan Snoddy & Chris McVetis.

Silent Tribute: The President called upon the members to observe a minute silence in memory of our recently departed airborne colleague: Ralph Pedder.

Minutes of the Previous OGM Meeting: Proposed by Phil Eccleston & Seconded by Billy Morris that the minutes of the previous meeting be accepted. **Carried**

Treasurers Report: (Dave Rutter) The treasurer announced there were no changes to the branch finances since the last report. There will however be a large deposit into the account from member's payment for the Spring lunch and subsequent outgoings to the Oak Park Golf Club in payment for the luncheon. Proposed by John Ferry and Seconded by Bob Wardle, that the treasurer's report (subject to audit) be accepted. **Carried**

Correspondence: The secretary drew the member's attention to recently received minutes from the Birmingham, Chatham, Scotland & Yorkshire branches. These minutes were made available to the members following the meeting.

A copy of the 25th Anniversary AGM/Reunion booking form was also displayed to the members. Copies would now be forwarded to branch secretaries and will also be made available through the AEA website.

A letter expressing her most sincere thanks had been received from Vera Hearn (Ralph Pedder's sister) for the wonderful send-off provided by the branch members at his funeral.

Membership Update: (Billy Morris) Total AEA membership: 1,462 (less the notified departed as 335).

Entertainments: John Smith gave an update of numbers attending the forthcoming Spring Luncheon at the Oak Park Golf Club on Saturday 22nd March. He also reminded members that a raffle would be held during the function and that the proceeds were to be donated to a charity as agreed by the members.

He further drew to the member's attention to postal charges, which are to be increased yet again this year, suggesting we purchase our stamps before the increase.

John also mentioned the need to ensure that our widows are kept informed of future functions etc. and that we must ensure we encourage them to attend. John Ferry immediately volunteered to provide transport to bring Sally Wilson to the spring lunch and Phil Eccleston would contact Sylvia Stoddart to see if she would like to join us for the occasion.

Donation to Charity: Chris Davies, proposed that the proceeds from the Spring luncheon raffle be donated to Team Sapper. He stated that over the last few years 'you have supported our efforts to raise funds for the charity Help for Heroes. Last year, we raised over £20,000. This money was split between Fisher House in Birmingham and Battle Back'.

This year 18 of us plan a series of events, the biggest being our cycle ride from Lilleshall, where Battle Back is located, to London to meet the big Help for Heroes event when 1500 cyclists will enter London en masse on 8th June. En route, we shall call at Worcester on 5th June, Tedworth House Wiltshire, Leatherhead and Blackheath. More details are on our website; <http://www.bmycharity.com/teamsapper>

The proposal was seconded by Fred Gray. **Carried Unanimously**

AEA Reunion 2014: John Ferry gave an update on the forthcoming function, which is to be held in Harrogate and not at the original proposed location of Blackpool. The function will be held at the Cedar Hotel during the weekend 3-5th October 2014. The booking form will be displayed for downloading on the AEA website and further copies will be enclosed in the June Journal.

John also gave details from the Executive meeting (held just prior to the branch meeting). Part of which was a £250-00 donation from the central funds of the AEA towards the Normandy Veterans memorial that is to be incorporated into the National Arboretum in Staffordshire. The unveiling is to be conducted by a member of the Royal Family in September 2014. He further stated that with affect the 70th Normandy Commemorations, the Normandy Veterans Association will close and that their standard will be 'laid up' in Westminster Abbey.

Any other business:

Chris Davies expressed his sincere thanks to the association for their offer of financial support in the production costs of replacement memorial plaques in the Falkland Islands for Scott Wilson, Andy McIlvenny and Wayne Tarbard.

The plaques will be engraved in slate (as per the Pashley plaque) and they will be mounted under glass.

Finally, I am delighted to report that The Squadron has kindly offered to transport the plaques to the Falklands and to install them during The Squadron's tour there from Sep to Nov this year: a terrific gesture by today's Airborne brothers.

Dave Rutter recommended the book "We Fought at Arnhem" by Mike Rossiter. It gives the full account of the buildup and subsequent battle for the "Arnhem Bridge" as narrated by 3 combatants – one of which is our own Tom Carpenter, stalwart of the Birmingham branch who attends each and every AEA reunion and Arnhem Commemorations. The book can be obtained from local libraries or purchased through Amazon.

Chris Davies also recommended the book "Captured at Arnhem – from Railwayman to Paratrooper" by Norman Hicks. ISBN: 781783030330. It is published by Pen and Sword but it is also available on Amazon. The list price is £25 (hardcover) but I see that there are better prices available on Amazon. It really is a cracking read and I would recommend it to anyone who has an interest in how ordinary men left their 'ordinary' jobs to take part in extra-ordinary events and then went back to their lives afterwards and put their incredible experiences behind them.

John Lee gave a brief outline concerning 299 Hull Branch (AEA). Expressing his hope that the current situation will be concluded at their next branch meeting.

John Smith will be away enjoying the sunshine during the period 4th – 26th April 2014

Date of the AGM/OGM: Potters International Hotel on Sunday 11th May 2014

Despite this being a double meeting the timings will remain as commencing 1130 hours. Your attendance at these two meetings would be appreciated.

There being no further business the President, thanked the members for their attendance, conveyed his thanks on behalf of the members to the Secretary and to John Smith (entertainments) then closed the meeting at 1240 hours.

Carvery Luncheon Attendance

Members wishing to attend the carvery luncheon following the 11 May 2014 meetings are requested to notify John Smith by Tuesday 6th May
(01252 326100)

Please note to phone your booking as John's computer has given up the ghost!