



Airborne Engineers Association

Registered Charity Number: 1009201

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MINUTES OF AN AIRBORNE ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) AND AN ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING (COUNCIL MEETING) HELD AT BOURNEMOUTH ON SATURDAY 2 OCTOBER 2010

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

Attachments:

1. Treasurer's Report as at 1 October 2010.

Members Present

Sixty five (65) Members were present for the Annual General Meeting.

Apologies: Numerous apologies were received, the Chairman directed that the following particular apologies be recorded: Bill Rudd (Chairman, Yorkshire Branch), Baz Bassett (Chairman, Chatham Branch, Tommy Ormiston (Chairman, Scotland Branch) and Dennis Eagan (Author/Editor, Constitution)

Remembrance

A minute's silence was held for "Departed friends and comrades".

President's Welcoming Remarks

The President, John Lee, welcomed all to the meeting and thanked those that had made particularly long journeys for their extra effort in being present. With the total attendance at the weekend set to reach 175, he stated that he was heartened by the enthusiasm for the event and the numbers present showed that the Association is thriving and in good health.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman, Joe Stoddart, spoke on a number of points, bulleted as follows:

- The Association has, once again, had a very good year – although it has been a year in which we have lost a fairly high number of members and their wives/partners. No names will be mentioned as, should anyone be missed, it has the potential to cause embarrassment or distress. Enough to say that the Association took full part in supporting their "send-off".

- Over the last year, the Association has supported and attended many parades, pilgrimages and commemorations – these included Arnhem, Double Hills, Cromwell Lock, Donnington and Woodbridge. Many of our Members have attended at Wootton Bassett and our Standard Bearers and Pipers have been kept busy at parades and funerals.
- The individual Branches have found time to ‘do their own thing’ and have had full social calendars. I visited Jimmy Simpson in Scotland, not on an official basis but I was able to bring him up to date on AEA business – I will get up there next year for an Official Drink – *oops!* – Visit. I have also spent time with Bill Rudd in Ripon and attended an excellent ‘do’ with the 299 Branch on their home ground at Hull – thank you all for your hospitality, all the Branches seem in good health and spirit.
- We have been well supported by our Members on the financial side, 2 Members donated 3 figure sums and we received a 4 figure sum from the estate of another Member. A bonus of £2,500 was generated by the World Cup Draw. Two other significant sums have been raised and subsequently donated – Bunny Brown and his Team raised £575 at the last AGM and Fred & Betty Gray raised £501 at their Golden Wedding celebrations held in the mess at Sandhurst – these sums were donated to Combat Stress and Help for Heroes respectively. Well done to all involved in raising funds for charity!

The Chairman read out a thank you letter from Help for Heroes.

- On the Welfare Front – we now have a Welfare Liaison Officer – Tony Roberts has been appointed, he is also a SSAFFA Case Officer and is experienced in Welfare matters – he will brief the meeting later on options for utilising Welfare assets.
- The AEA Shop continues to thrive under the care of Jeanette Rutter. The Website has been revamped by Dave Pace, the Journal continues to grow in strength thanks to Dave Rutter – on the recruiting side, Billy Morris reports that things are currently slow, probably due to the deployment of 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault) to Afghanistan. As you can see, the officers of the Association are working away in the background for our good and benefit. Well done, and my thanks to them all.
- As I mentioned, 23 Regiment have deployed to Afghanistan – as an Association, I’m sure you will all join me in wishing them a safe and successful tour. We will help with the ‘shoe boxes’ and anything else we can manage to make their trip more bearable.

Minutes of AGM 2009

Any points, arising from AGM 2009, were requested from the floor. There being no points raised, the minutes were accepted.

Treasurers Report

The Treasurer's figures are at Attachment 1. The Treasurer, Dick Brown, made the following additional points:

- Deposit Account Interest is low due to the current Financial climate. Various, higher interest options have been considered but will not be pursued due to the effect such options would have on the Association's Charitable Status.
- The Treasurer extended his thanks to Joe Stoddart for his efforts on the World Cup Draw – the total for his efforts reaching almost £3000.
- Thanks were also extended to Jeanette Rutter for her management of the Association Shop – a profit of £1140 has been realised this year.
- Dick echoed Joe's remarks on the generosity of individual members – Bob Kennedy's estate donating £1000 and Dick Barton donating to the Association his "winnings" of £300 in the World Cup Draw. He also added his own congratulations to Bunny Brown and team for the success of the AGM 2009 raffle.

Proposed by Jon Nichols, seconded by Brummie Dowling. That the Treasurer's Report, as presented, be accepted. **Carried.**

Membership Report

Membership stands at 1404 – our 2 newest members are Eddie Walsh and Jason Nichols, both currently serving with 23 Engineer Regiment (Air Assault).

The Membership Secretary, Billy Morris, went on to say that Membership is, at best, steadily increasing. This may be due to 23 Regt currently being deployed. An excellent letter of introduction, recently received from the new OC and SSM of 9 Parachute Squadron RE bodes well for raising the profile of the Association within the regiment.

Proposed by Tony Manley, seconded by Tony Hogan. That the Membership Report, as presented, be accepted. **Carried.**

Journal – Editor's Report

The Journal Editor, Dave Rutter, stated that the distribution list currently stands at 650, he then spoke on the following subjects:

- There has been a recent increase in costs due to postage and VAT – for this year, this does not affect the Annual Subscription – time will tell us for how long such increases can be absorbed.
- Members who have not yet changed to paying their Annual Subscription by Standing Order – please give the change some serious thought. Much Administrative effort and time would be saved – both in time and effort spent on the banking process and also the process of sending reminders to individuals – the individual Member would also be saved the time and effort of an annual postal transaction. Any Member wishing to make the change to Standing order, please contact me and I'll forward a Standing Order Mandate in their copy of the April or August Journal.

- *There is currently quite a large number of Members who have yet to pay the current subscription. As stated above, a change to Standing Order would go a long way to alleviating this problem.*
- Please submit as many items/articles for publication as possible – all eras and subjects are welcome, be it the 1940s or 21st century – serious or humorous. All submissions are welcome and of interest to Members. Accompanying photographs always enhance a submission and bring it to life.
- Branch Secretaries, please note the cut-off dates for input to the Journal and, as stated above, photographs to enhance your branch submission are always welcome. The cut-off date for the next issue is published at the bottom of Page 1 in the Journal.
- Would Members please let me know as soon as possible when their address changes. Once again, it causes considerable Administrative effort when a new address comes to light after the Journals have been posted!
- In addition to the Journal, I also maintain the Membership Directory (on sale from the Association Shop at £3.00). Please advise me soonest of any change to location, telephone number or Email address. All amendments are then passed on to the Secretary, President, Chairman and Membership Secretary.

Proposed by John Ferry, seconded by Mick Leather. That the Editor's Report, as presented, be accepted. **Carried.**

Association Shop Report

On behalf of the Shop Manager, Jeanette Rutter, Dave Rutter gave the following report:

- Sincere thanks are extended to Ray and Pam Coleman for the ease of handover of the stock and details concerning current suppliers.
- Thank you, also, to the Treasurer for conducting the recent Audit.
- As with the Journal, the recent increase in VAT will not affect stock prices for the time being.
- We are not able, as in the case of Ray and Pam, to travel to the numerous functions and events with the shop stock. Members should therefore not rely on seeing the shop at their Branch Functions and Events but must rely on the postage system or the AGM Weekend. Members can rest assured that, if the item they require is in stock, it will be posted as soon as possible after placing their order. For items out of stock, an inevitable delay must be expected. Please look in the Journal for Shop information including prices.
- Finally, sincere thanks to all Members for your support to the shop – any suggestions for new lines are welcome and, if within scope, will be considered for inclusion in the Stock List.

Proposed by Jimmy Simpson, seconded by Bob Matthews. That the Shop Report, as presented, be accepted. **Carried.**

Welfare Liaison Officer's Report

The Welfare liaison Officer, Tony Roberts, spoke on the following subjects:

- Welfare cases are generationally based – as one generation moves on, and, sadly, there are less and less WW2 veterans with us, the Welfare Agencies are now dealing with Aden, Northern Ireland and even Falklands veterans and their families.
- Members should be aware of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA) and it's very good works. I am a SSAFA caseworker and all Members and their families should be aware that the organisation is represented countrywide and there are points of contact in each county – the organisation can help in all manner of welfare matters and can even be considered as a first port of call if such a matter arises. The nearest point of contact can be found on the net, in the telephone book and local Citizens Advice sites.
- If Members have time to spare and wish to help, they can become caseworkers themselves – if you wish to help, just contact your local SSAFA Branch.

The report was accepted as presented.

Election of Officers

The Chairman called for Members to vote on the re-election of the following Officers of the Association – all of whom have volunteered for another year in post:

- Joe Stoddart – Chairman
- Geoff Howard – Secretary General
- Dick Brown – Treasurer
- Dave Rutter – Editor
- Billy Morris – Membership Secretary

The listed officers were re-elected unanimously.

Constitution

John Lee brought Member's attention to the Rules Booklet that has recently been published and also to the Annex A insert to be issued with the booklet.

He pointed out one further Amendment – the first line of Annex A should read "**Duties of the Committee Members and Advisers**".

Dave Rutter stated that the new booklet and amendment would be distributed with the next copy of the Journal.

President's Commendations

John Lee announced the award of President's Commendation to 2 Members not able to be present at the AGM – The President's Commendation is awarded to an AEA Member who,

in the opinion of the President, has given particularly meritorious service to the AEA or one of its Branches. The following 2 awards were announced:

- To John Parker – for his outstanding and selfless contribution to the profile and standing of the Association while carrying out the duties of Standard Bearer.
- To Dave Pace – for his tireless and painstaking work on the AEA Website, making it invaluable in keeping Members informed and providing a point of contact.

Afternote: The following President's Commendations were awarded at the Evening Dinner:

- *To Bunny Brown – for his outstanding service to the AEA in the Offices of Branch Chairman, Chairman and Vice-President and, of course, his organisation of numerous AGM venues and Reunions.*
- *To Frank Menzies-Hearne – for his outstanding service as the Association's Senior Piper at many functions and commemorations throughout the country and abroad, his presence is well and truly heard and he is a great ambassador for us all.*

Appointment of Life Vice President

This is the highest honour which can be awarded by the AEA. It is awarded to a Member who, in the unanimous opinion of the Council, has made an exceptional contribution to the AEA over at least 10 years.

The Chairman, Joe Stoddart, nominated Bill Rudd (Chairman, Yorkshire Branch) for this award and the nomination was approved unanimously by the Council.

This was announced to the floor by Joe Stoddart, many approving remarks came from the floor and The Chairman directed that "Many congratulations, well done and thank you Bill!" be recorded in these minutes.

AGM 2011

The venue and hosts for AGM/Reunion 2011 has been unresolved – the following 2 options were offered for a general vote:

- To return to Bournemouth in 2011 with Aldershot Branch as hosts.
- To return to Coventry in 2011 with Birmingham Branch as hosts.

When put to the vote, the Coventry option was returned as the preferred venue for 2011.

The Chairman accepted the vote and thanked Bunny Brown and team for volunteering once again.

Any Other Business

REA Airborne Branch – John Lee briefed the floor on an approach that has been made to "engender closer cooperation between the AEA and the REA Airborne Branch to foster a closer working relationship with a view to possible merger".

John pointed out that the merger being proposed was that the AEA eventually become part of the REA Airborne Branch.

The Chairman added that there is a feeling among some senior AEA Members that the time is right for reconciliation and to form a single focus for Serving and ex-Airborne Engineers when carrying out charitable and welfare activities.

The Chairman went on to brief/remind the floor that this proposal has been made before and rejected by the AEA, at the time causing considerable angst and, in some cases, anger from the Members.

The above briefing resulted in a lively and lengthy discussion from the floor – many points were made, the following are particularly worthy of note:

- John Ferry – The Association should be aware that, as officers and soldiers leave the Corps, they are officially invited to join the REA – not so the AEA, some mechanism should be in place to ensure these officers and soldiers have the option.

John went on to say that closer liaison and focus would probably be welcomed by the AEA Members but any loss of identity would be much less welcome.

- Mick Leather – Stated that it is exasperating that this should be raised again (he was involved in the discussions when it was rejected previously) and gave the opinion that “the matter should be put to bed and voted out”.
- Dick Brown – Pointed out that we do have a focus within 23 Regt but we should exploit it – our focus is the management of 9 Parachute Squadron while the RHQ, rightly, must promote the REA as the Corps ‘family’ institution.
- Mike Wardle – Pointed out that if independence is lost then so is autonomy. Our officers are both known and elected by the Membership (and, as such, are trusted to have the Association’s best interests at heart) – any move under the REA would jeopardise that relationship with the Council and certainly remove the autonomy currently enjoyed.

After much further discussion, The Chairman put the question of a merger to the vote – the vote returned unanimously against any merger.

The Chairman directed that the vote be recorded as a “**Unanimous Against**” – however, he also directed that it be recorded that “There is an appetite within the AEA for closer liaison and cooperation with the REA Airborne Branch”.

Remembrance Day Parade

Mick Leather raised the question of the Association forming it’s own small cohort to march at the Cenotaph Remembrance Service in London. He pointed out that members currently have the option to join the Parachute Regiment Association cohort or join one of the “mixed cohorts” – he contended that there are probably enough attendees to form a small but respectable cohort of AEA.

The President undertook to investigate the requirements.

Chairman's Closing Remarks

The Chairman thanked all for attending and providing invaluable input to the meeting.

He stated that a Limited Edition SAS Print had been donated for fund raising and would be the prize in a "Silent Raffle" to take place during the evening dinner.

Member's attention was brought to the "Hammering the Nail" competition being conducted throughout the weekend – a handsome prize being on offer to the winner!

Finally, he directed out that the next AGM would take place in Coventry in 2011.

For Members wishing to attend, the Council OGM would reconvene 20 mins after the close of AGM.

The meeting closed in good order at 1100 hours.

Geoff Howard

G HOWARD
General Secretary

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TREASURER'S REPORT

Statement of Account as at 1 October 2010

Assets

Cash in Hand	550.00
Cash at Bank	10633.20
Deposit Account	14348.14
Shop	2744.80
Total Assets	28276.14

Liabilities

Newsletter	5166.10
Projects	2030.17
Total Liabilities	7196.27

Working Capital

Assets	28276.14
Minus Liabilities	7196.27

TOTAL WORKING CAPITAL = 21079.90

Richard Brown

Treasurer

ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING (OGM)

Members Present

Some 40 Members returned for the OGM.

Chairman's Opening Remarks

The Chairman opened the meeting and briefed the floor that the purpose of the OGM is to deal with routine Council Business need not be included in the AGM – all present are welcome, entitled to vote and Members' input is invited.

Previous Minutes

The Secretary called for points arising from the minutes of the last OGM held at Aldershot on Sun 18 Jul 10.

There being no points arising, the previous minutes were accepted.

Reports

The following reports had been presented/heard at the AGM:

- The Treasurer's Report.
- The Editor's Report.
- The Shop Report.
- The Membership Report.

Archivists/Property Report

The Archivist/Property Member, Fred Gray, made the following remarks:

- All property (less some items at Elvington) is now distributed between Woodbridge, Chatham and Duxford. Most is on display and some items are being prepared for display.

Some small items, such as The Chairman's Gavel, are in use – other small items are at Fred's house, contact Fred for use of these items – a small, returnable loan fee will be charged.

The Elvington situation, as briefed at AGM 2009, is still unresolved, Fred, John Lee and Tom Thornton will continue to work on this.

- Archive history is now reasonably complete from 1940 to the present. Files are now compiled by unit in protective folders. There are also a number of photo albums. Again, these items can be borrowed by Branches/Individuals for a small, returnable loan fee.
- Fred is currently working on a written history of 9 Squadron between 1948 and 1977 – a task that will take 2-3 years to complete. Fred invited any individual to contribute, be it humorous or serious.

AEA Ultra Club Report

The Ultra Club Captain, Billy Morris, briefed the floor on the change from “Sports Club” to Ultra Club – the main sports being undertaken by the AEA being the endurance, fund raising events being conducted by Billy and his small, but happy, band of long distance lunatics.

Billy went on to state that 2 Major Events for 2011 are planned – Compass Challenge (Isle of Wight) 2011 and the Caesar’s Camp Challenge 2011. More details to follow. Any Member wishing to support the team in any capacity is welcome and should speak to Billy direct for details.

Branch Reports

- **Aldershot** – Fred Gray reported that the Branch has 53 Members and is now 21 years of age! The branch continues to thrive and plans are under way for a Spring Lunch and a trip to Jersey in 2011. The branch meets bi-monthly in the Potters Hotel in Aldershot followed by a lunch.
- **Chatham** – Eric Blenkinsop reported that the Branch has 40 members and has a new Chairman, Baz Bassett. The Branch is planning a Christmas family dinner and the major event for 2011 is the John Rock Dinner in Jun which will be attended by WW2 Veterans of 1 and 6 Div RE.
- **Birmingham Branch** – Bunny Brown reported that the Birmingham branch slightly preceded the national AEA and has now been around for 23 years! Monthly meets are attended by 20+ Members. The Branch is planning a Christmas Dinner. Bunny went on to say that the Branch is happy to host the AGM/Reunion at Coventry every other year.
- **Scotland Branch** – Jimmy Simpson reported that the Branch had a good visit to the Falkirk wheel, is busy on the social side and thriving. The Branch has some 30 regular attendees and meets on the odd-numbered months of the year.
- *No representatives were present for the Yorkshire and 299 Branches.*

Any Other Business

- John Smith – expressed his thanks to all Members for their support to the AGM/Reunion 2010.
- Joe Stoddart – drew the floor’s attention to the terrific charity work being carried out by Gerry Taggart and Team on the bike rides to Keevil (Double Hills), Arnhem and Normandy – the considerable proceeds going to H4H. Well done to the Team!

Chairman’s Closing Remarks

The Chairman thanked everyone for being present and for their input.

He directed that the next OGM be held at Aldershot in May/Jun 2011, date TBC.

The meeting closed in good order at 1215hrs.

Geoff Howard

General Secretary

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