



Airborne Engineers Association

Registered Charity Number: 1009201



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MINUTES OF AN AIRBORNE ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT ALDERSHOT ON 18 JANUARY 2009

Annexes:

- A. Statement of Account as at 18 Jan 09 prepared by Dick Brown.
- B. Accommodation – Booking Form 20th Anniversary AGM, Reunion and Dinner.

Members Present

Joe Stoddart (Chairman), John Lee, Fred Gray, Billy Morris, Ray Coleman, Dick Brown, Dave Rutter, Geoff Howard (Secretary).

In attendance: Bob Matthews (Branch Rep), Dennis Eagan (Draft Rules), Mick Humphries (Guest).

Apologies: Eric Blenkinsop and Bunny Brown.

The Meeting commenced with a period of silence/reflection for 'Absent Friends'.

Chairman's Opening Remarks

- The Chairman thanked all present for attending and welcomed the 'new officers in post' – John Lee (President), Bob Matthews (Chatham Branch Chairman (Des)), and the undersigned as Secretary (and, of course, himself as the new Chairman!).
- The Chairman directed that the thanks of the Committee and the Association be recorded for the 'outgoing officers' – Bill Rudd MBE (President), Mick Humphries (Chairman) and Mick Leather (Secretary) – "Thank you all for a job well done".
- He went on to express the hope that the current committee will continue that work and, in particular, take forward the work on the Constitution, Archives and Property, Charitable Status and the Association Funds.
- He further expressed his confidence that the current committee will provide 'the best of service to the Association Members'.
- The Chairman's final opening remark was to encourage committee and association members to 'keep association business moving forward between meetings by means of telephone and e-mail'.

**Afternote: Telephone numbers and e-mail addresses are now included at the head of these minutes to provide points of contact for association members.*

Minutes of Previous Meeting

There being no matters arising it was proposed by Ray Coleman and seconded by John Lee that the minutes of the previous meeting held at Coventry on 18 Oct 08 be accepted. CARRIED.

Treasurer's Report

A copy of the Statement of Account is at Annex A. Dick Brown made the following points:

- The account has been re-balanced to take back John Rock Bust funds into GPF.
- The current financial climate is adversely affecting our income from interest.
- We need to carefully consider all expenditure over the coming months.
- The shop continues to be our steadiest form of annual income.

Proposed by Billy Morris and seconded by Dave Rutter that the Treasurers Report as presented be accepted. CARRIED.

Journal – Editor's Report

Dave Rutter made the following points:

- There has been a downturn in subscription renewals – exact figures are not currently available as Dave still has to follow up on reminders etc.
- Some members have not increased their Standing Orders to meet the new subscription cost – individuals are requested to check their SO arrangements.
- All members are reminded that articles/features are required for the journal (no contribution too small or insignificant) – photographs are also always welcome.
- Bob Chatterton (Basingstoke running shop) is now an advertising contributor to the journal.

The committee accepted the Editors Report as presented.

Archivist and Property Report

Fred Gray made the following points:

- Fred is happy to remain in his present post as archivist – he has comprehensive records up until 1980 that enable him to field many enquiries in regard to Airborne Sappers and their history. He stated that sons and grandsons are now making enquiries into the involvement of their fathers and grandfathers and it is rewarding to be able to help.
- The records are less comprehensive from 1980 onwards and Fred stated the need for someone to come forward and address that period from 1980 until the formation of 23 Engr Regt (Air Assault).*
- PROPERTY – Fred outlined the locations (known and perceived) for items of display memorabilia belonging to the Airborne Engineers. There has been re-location of units and other movements of property so there are items for which the location is not clear – Fred will continue to trace and locate (with the help of other members) and continue to keep the committee updated.
- Does any member recall the whereabouts of a 9 Sqn pennant(s)? – committee members recall them as parade markers and/or antennae adornments. If any member has one or knows where one is please bring it to the attention of the committee.

The committee accepted the Archivist/Property Report as presented.

**Afternote: Possible candidates to take on the 1980 onwards period were discussed. The committee will approach these individuals in due course.*

Membership Secretary's Report

Billy Morris made the following points:

- In a slow start to 2009 only 2 new members have joined – current membership stands at 1347.
- Much work has been carried out by Dave Rutter, Bob Ferguson and Billy himself to merge and condense existing Membership Directories into the version now in use by key committee members.

Dave Rutter made this follow-up point:

- The current version of the Membership Directory exists, and is amended, electronically. Dave himself is able to keep it up to date in liaison with Billy and the undersigned. Dave stated that he would be able to print the latest version on demand and issue as required – the copy being up to date at the time of printing. The cost of each print would be £3.00.*

The committee accepted the Membership Report and follow-up point as presented.

Dick Brown tabled the following proposal:

“That the Editor provides copies of the Membership Directory to members (on individual application) at a cost of £3.00 per copy – all monies to be processed through and accrue to the Journal account.”

The proposal was seconded by Ray Coleman and CARRIED.

**Members to contact Dave to order a copy.*

The Chairman directed that thanks be recorded to all involved in the work to bring the directory to its current good order and utility.

Sports Club Coordinator's Report

Billy Morris made the following points:

- Any branch sporting activities, be it fishing, golf, clay pigeon shooting or whatever – would be of interest to other members. Branch reps should submit short articles (with pics) on such events and Billy will assist Dave with publication in the Journal.
- Any dates forecasted for such events would also be appreciated – if the dates can be circulated in time other members (from other branches) may be able to take part.
- Pictures would also be appreciated so that Billy can display them on Power Point loop during AEA functions/events.
- Billy and Bob Chatterton will be running from Rhine Barracks (Aldershot) to Rock Barracks (Woodbridge) 25-27 Aug 09. Billy is working up the technical details, there may be opportunity for individuals/groups to run a part of the route as guest runners and raise charity monies in that way – details to follow.

The committee accepted the Sports Coordinator's report as presented.

Shop Manager's Report

Ray Coleman reiterated the point made in the treasurers report (the shop being a mainstay of AEA income) and confirmed that the shop continues to thrive. A new addition to shop stock is a Pegasus Lapel Brooch for the ladies – Ray brought along a couple of samples and these were immediately purchased by committee members. The brooches are available at a very reasonable £3.50, contact Ray to obtain one for your long haired Commanding Officer!

The committee accepted the Shop Manager's report as presented.

SITREP on AEA Constitution/Rules

Dennis Eagan brought along his latest draft of AEA Rules as at 15 Jan 09. This was presented to the committee, the following actions have arisen:

- The draft to be considered by all committee members and discussed in detail at the next meeting.
- The President will form a steering committee of no more than 3 members and take forward the work.
- Full course of action/final draft to be circulated after next meeting.

The Chairman directed that a vote of thanks be recorded for Dennis Eagan and accepted his draft as a working document.

Venues for Future AGMs/Annual Dinners

2009 – An Accommodation Booking Form is at Annex B – the following points were made:

- John Lee raised the issue of car parking – after some discussion it was decided that the 'Park and Ride' option is the cheapest and most convenient – Bunny Brown is requested to supply full details for this option to the committee at the next meeting for circulation.
- The undersigned raised the issue of guests – the proposed Guest of Honour cannot commit at this time due to a pending change of job – we will continue to liaise with him.
All other proposed guests will be invited on a 'paying guest' basis. The proposals include ex-COs/OCs and SSMS plus certain senior officers. It was decided to invite serving senior officers as 'first tranche' (to allow maximum time for diaries to be adjusted) and then proceed according to response and capacity. Bunny Brown is requested to provide full details of venue capacity to the undersigned. The Chairman directed that The Secretary treat this as an ongoing task and report as required to the committee.

2010 – The organization for 2010 has been undertaken by Aldershot Branch with a proposed location at Southampton.

2011 – The Chairman will formally request the Yorkshire Branch to organize the 2011 event in due course.

Any Other Business

CHANGE OF BRANCH NAME - EDINBURGH/SCOTTISH

An approval request has been submitted to re-name the Edinburgh Branch the 'Scottish Branch'. This request was submitted by Tom Ormiston on behalf of the branch and the reason is to more accurately reflect the geographical spread of branch activity and home locations of members.

Proposed by Dave Rutter and seconded by Dick Brown that the request be approved as presented – CARRIED.

299 TROOP ASSOCIATION TO JOIN AEA?

The above association already exists and thrives under the Chairmanship of Mick Hookem. The branch has made enquiries into the mutual benefits/common aims of merging the association with the AEA. After some discussion the following course of action was decided:

- The Secretary will be visiting 299 Parachute Squadron RE(V) in Wakefield (probably late February). Once visit dates are confirmed he will invite Mick Hookem (and any other representative(s)) to meet at TAC Wakefield to discuss. This discussion will also include OC 299 Sqn – Adam Frame. John Lee will also endeavour to make himself available for the meeting. The Secretary will report back at the next meeting.

BRANCH REPRESENTATIVES

Bob Matthews made the following points:

- There will be a memorial service for John Grosvenor shortly – Bob will do his best to ensure details are circulated in good time for members to attend.
- On behalf of Eric Blenkinsop – Bob requested that the association look at 'Combat Stress' to be the charity of preference for 2009.

Afternote: Branches are requested to consider this worthy cause, Bunny Brown is requested to consider this for the AGM/Reunion weekend.

Points from the Floor?

- From Dick Brown – Dick is currently investigating the Charity Commission's Auditing Requirements – full disclosure/transparency is a fundamental requirement.

Branch Treasurers are requested to return a full Statement of Account to Dick by 22 May 09 to allow inclusion for audit purposes (an audit is NOT currently scheduled – this action is to ensure we are properly prepared should the Commission wish to carry out such an audit).

- From Mick Humphries – All requests for Lottery/Other Charitable Funding should be submitted via the Executive Committee. Mick's experience has shown that Branch requests (submitted under the Central Registered Charity Number) may not be visible to the committee when enquiries are made by the Charitable Fund Managers.

Branches are requested to ensure all applications are channeled through the Executive Committee.

- From Ray Coleman – Ray raised the point that, although a 'President's Commendation' for valuable service to the association has been approved at past meetings, no such award has yet been given.

Coincidentally – Mick Humphries (in his capacity as outgoing Chairman) has recently submitted a number of recommendations for consideration by The President and, if approved, to be awarded at this year's AGM.

The Chairman has requested that Branches submit recommendations (max 2 per branch) to The President by end May 2009 for consideration.

The Chairman directed Ray to provide a suitable certificate and emblem/badge to mark the award for consideration at the next Executive Committee meeting.

- From John Lee – John stated that he has been contacted by South East RFCA requesting that AEA Branches be invited to visit Ex-Servicemens Homes in their areas.

These homes hold numerous events through the year that attract press coverage but, more importantly, provide an opportunity to meet and support the Veterans in residence.

Branches are encouraged to contact their local RFCA and obtain a list of Ex-Servicemen's Homes in their area and details of any events/visits that would provide an opportunity to participate.

Chairman's Closing Remarks – Date/Venue of Next Meeting

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and for their input. The meeting closed in good order at 1230hrs.

Bob Matthews has kindly agreed to host the next Executive Committee Meeting at Chatham on Sun 31 May 09 commencing at 1000hrs. Further details will be promulgated in due course.

Geoff Howard

GEOFF HOWARD
SECRETARY

Distribution:

Executive Committee members.

Branches.

Webmaster – for posting on AEA Site.

Copy to File.

NOTICE – National Armed Forces Day

- **The first ever national Armed Forces Day to honour our Service personnel – past, present and future – will be held on 27 June 2009.**

- The Historic Dockyard at Chatham has been selected to host the first national Armed Forces Day events, which will be complemented by hundreds of events in towns and cities across the United Kingdom.
- Armed Forces Day builds and expands on the success of Veterans Days previously held annually on 27 June.
- Details of events planned at Chatham and elsewhere will be publicised nearer the day.
- Further information, contact details and updates are available on the Armed Forces Day website at: www.armedforcesday.org.uk

NOTICE – Volunteers for ABF Museum Duxford

- Association members will be aware that the new Airborne Forces Museum at Duxford is now up and running. The museum is still under development but already provides an excellent display. Colonel Commandant the Parachute Regiment (Maj Gen Shaw) is keen that all cap badges are represented in full and that the museum develops along those lines. Our own Brigadier Ian McGill is the Trustee representing Airborne Arms and Corps other than the Para Regt.
- The museum currently lacks a full-time Curator and Archivist but Col (Retd) David Mallam has stepped in as Hon Dep Curator and a serving CSgt from RHQ Para has been drafted in until these posts can be recruited.
- One area/initiative that requires reinforcement is representation on a daily basis by ex paras within the museum. Ideally, a pair of volunteers to be present daily – wearing Beret, Badge and Medals to provide living history and bring exhibits to life. Gil Boyd (ex 2 Para) is leading the volunteer team and has recruited some 10 from the Colchester and Cambridge PRA – more are needed.
- Association members local to the museum area who can afford their time are requested to support the museum in this way. If any member can go one step further and become the AEA Point of Contact/coordinator for this activity that would be even more greatly appreciated.
- David Mallam may be contacted by telephone or e-mail on Tel 01638 508 602 or davidmallam@btinternet.com