

# British Parachute Association

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## Riggers Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on

**Thursday 9 June 2011 at 1600**

at the BPA Office, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester LE2 9TF

**Present:** Paul Applegate - Chairman  
John Curtis  
Richard Wheatley  
Rick Boardman  
Paul Stockwell  
Bernadette Whitaker  
Pete Sizer  
Noel Purcell (NV)  
Kim Newton

NV – Non Voting Member

**Apologies:** Dave Major

**In Attendance:** John Hitchen - Chairman STC  
Tony Butler - Technical Officer  
Trudy Kemp - Assistant to NCSO/TO

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### ITEM

1. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS MEETING OF THE 7 APRIL 2011**

**Page 1, Item 1 – Proposed Cutter Relocation.** Paul Stockwell stated that he had nothing to report since the last meeting other than that he would still continue to monitor the situation.

**Page 1, Item 1 – Proposed Record of Inspection Standard.** This was a main Agenda item.

**Page 2, Item 3 – Tandem Equipment Inspection.** At the previous meeting the Committee had agreed to look at simplifying the current Tandem Equipment Inspection and in particular the 100 jump Tandem inspection book and any relative paperwork.

The Committee were advised that there were approximately 70 of the Tandem Inspection books remaining in stock. Kim Newton agreed to keep a list of suggested changes the Committee had previously discussed, which would be considered prior to the books being reprinted.

There being no further matters arising, it was proposed by Paul Stockwell and seconded by Bernadette Whitaker that the Minutes of the Riggers Sub-Committee Meeting of 7 April 2011 be accepted as a true record.

**Carried Unanimously**

2. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 7 APRIL 2011**

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

### **3. PROPOSED RECORD OF INSPECTION STANDARD**

Paul Stockwell and Richard Wheatley had produced a draft guideline to accompany the Record of Inspection Forms 112 & 112a, a copy of which had been circulated with the Agenda.

Both Paul Stockwell and Richard Wheatley stated that they saw this as a basic guideline to assist packers. They believed it would be an ever-evolving document, which would require monitoring and updating to take into account any changes.

Paul Stockwell agreed to monitor the form and if he believed there were any changes required, he would advise the Committee accordingly.

Following further discussion, it was proposed by Rick Boardman and seconded by Richard Wheatley that the draft guideline to accompany the Record of Inspection Forms 112 & 112a be accepted.

#### **Carried Unanimously**

The Committee expressed its thanks to both Paul Stockwell and Richard Wheatley for the work they had undertaken in preparing this guideline, a copy of which would be given a BPA form number and circulated with the Minutes for information.

The Committee asked that copies of the guideline be made available to candidates on all Advanced Packing Courses.

### **4. WORKING GROUP INTO EQUIPMENT INSPECTION POLICIES**

At the previous meeting, discussion had taken place regarding the way forward with this item and a number of issues had been considered by those present.

Rick Boardman reported on the Working Group meeting held that afternoon and stated that further advice was being sought from outside agencies with regard to where we stand with the current rules and what the Working Group had in mind for the future.

### **5. ADVANCED PACKERS COURSE REPORTS**

- i) At the meeting on the 10 February 2011, the Riggers Committee had agreed to a request that Steve Clarke who had previously held a Parachute Riggers rating be permitted to attend an Advanced Packer refresher and examination Course at Netheravon for the purpose of being evaluated for an Advanced Packer rating.

The Committee were advised that this Course had taken place from the 4 – 7 April 2011. Steve Clarke had successfully completed the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

George Panagopoulos had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

- ii) An Advanced Packers Examination Course had taken place at Netheravon from the 18 – 19 April 2011. The Course had been attended by David Thornton and Anthony Lock. Both candidates successfully completed the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status. George Panagopoulos had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

### **6. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS**

There had been one BPA Safety Notice issued since the last meeting:

The Bulletin 1/11, dated 8 April 2011 concerned the use of Aviacom Argus AADs and stated: "Following several incidents where Argus AAD cutters failed to cut through the reserve parachute closure loops, a number of parachute container manufacturers have stated that Argus AADs are not to be fitted to their containers.

Because of concern regarding the effectiveness of the these AADs and following a recommendation from the Riggers Committee, the BPA Safety and Training Committee (STC) at their meeting of the 7th April 2011 has decided that Argus AADs are suspended and must not be fitted in containers of parachutists jumping at BPA Affiliated Clubs and Centres or on displays by BPA registered Display Teams.

This is with immediate effect and is until further notice."

## **7. MANUFACTURERS' SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS**

- i) A Safety Bulletin had been issued by United Parachute Technologies (UPT) with regard to the inspection and strengthening the top diagonal attachment point on all Vector 3 Sport and SE Student Harness/Container Systems. The manufacturers had strongly recommended that prior to the next jump all jumpers inspect this area for broken stitching (as detailed in the Bulletin).

The Committee were advised that this Bulletin had been issued following the report that a student jumper after pulling at a planned altitude of 5000', experienced a very hard opening and broke the upper double zigzag stitching that holds the diagonals in place and tore most of the ring cover off. This allowed the large ring riser attachment to be pulled far away from its normal position, deforming the over the shoulder section of padding and in turn pulled the RSL lanyard releasing the reserve pilot chute. The manufacturers had stated that it was unlikely this stitch pattern failed completed on this one jump, but was damaged on other prior jumps and completely failed on this one very hard opening.

A lengthy discussion then ensued with regard to the Bulletin. It was pointed out by the Riggers Committee that if any repair work was required, this would need to be carried out by an Advanced Rigger or returned directly to the manufacturers.

A number of Advanced Riggers present reported that they had already undertaken repair work on a couple of rigs and had found it to be an extremely awkward repair and that in their opinion any future repairs should be undertaken by the manufacturer.

Some discussion then ensued as to whether the repair should be carried out as a mandatory requirement at the next re-pack.

Kim Newton stated that she was concerned that by taking what could be a functional piece of equipment and by adding further stitching over a piece of webbing that had already been stitched, could possibly create a potentially weaker situation than we currently had. Kim stated that in her opinion she did not believe that the Committee should consider making a mandatory repair to a set of kit that was perfectly functional unless they were directed to do so by the manufacturers.

During the discussion, the Committee recommended that all harness/container systems be checked prior to the next jump and that any jumper who sustained a harder than usual opening had these areas inspected on their rigs and once checked it was then checked on a regular basis.

A number of Riggers present stated that they believed that the inspection should be made mandatory prior to the next jump and that a BPA Safety Notice be issued accordingly. However, after further deliberation, it was agreed by those present that the Committee should stress the importance to anyone who jumped a UPT Vector 3 container that they be made aware of this Service Bulletin [UPT Service Bulletin #20110523](#) (23 May 2011) and of the importance of checking the stitching as directed in the Bulletin. If the stitching was in need of repair, the rig must not be jumped until the repair had been carried out.

The TO suggested that details of the Bulletin be passed on to the Editor for inclusion in the BPA magazine and that it also be included in the E-Newsletter to all members and the BPA web-site etc.

The Chairman said that he would also pass on this information to CCIs at STC that evening and that he would also emphasise that the Riggers Committee believed that this was an ongoing monitoring process and not just a one off inspection.

- ii) A Chairman reported that a Technical Bulletin had also been forwarded to the office by IPC Technical & Safety Committee, which concerned an investigation into Argus Cutter incident at San Marcos TX. This was for information only.

**8. A.O.B.**

- i) Kim Newton reported on a packing incident involving an Advanced Packer. The Committee was also advised that the office had on file information on a number of other packing related incidents involving the same packer.

Following some discussion on this matter, it was agreed by those present that the person concerned be formally contacted in writing asking for their comments on these particular incidents. This matter would then be considered at the next meeting.

- ii) The Chairman advised those present that correspondence had been received from Dane Kenny that morning, a copy of which had been circulated to those present. Dane had requested a further extension to the reserve packing requirements that had been granted to him by the Riggers Committee last year.

The Chairman reported that at the Riggers Committee Meeting of 8 April 2010, Dane Kenny had been granted an exemption against the requirement to hold an AP rating until he was able to attend the appropriate AP Course. This enabled Dane to continue packing reserve parachutes into Racer Containers in the following scenarios:

- Racer Containers only; Round, Square & Tandem.
- Pilgrims Parachute Club & Team Racer Container Systems.
- Personal Racer Container System.

The above exemption had been granted on the proviso that Dane attended the appropriate Advanced Packers Course by the 1 April 2011.

The meeting was advised that Dane Kenny had reported that he had been unable to attend an Advanced Packers Course within the required time frame due to work commitments overseas. He had therefore requested an indefinite exemption to the reserve packing requirements to pack Jump Shack Racer Containers only until he had successfully completed the Advanced Packing Course for other systems.

Some concern was expressed by those present that this matter was being considered under AOB and not on the main agenda. However, the TO reported that Dane Kenny had intended to put this request on the agenda for the meeting in April. Dane had spoken to the TO when he was away from the office in States concerning this matter. He stated that obviously Dane had not sent anything in for this meeting until today. He stated that Dane had intended to be present at the Riggers meeting today, to discuss the matter, but unfortunately, he now had a prior commitment.

A number of Riggers also expressed their concern that because they had no details of what equipment Dane Kenny had packed over the past year, they did not feel they could agree to Dane's request for an indefinite extension or that Tandem equipment be included in the request.

Following further discussion, it was proposed by Richard Wheatley and seconded by Pete Sizer that Dane Kenny be permitted to continue packing reserve parachutes into Racer Containers as detailed in exemption given in 2010, but that Tandem equipment be excluded from the exemption. This was agreed on the proviso that Dane Kenny attends the appropriate Advanced Packing Course before the 31 March 2012. If he was unable to complete an AP Course before that time, the Riggers Committee would not consider any further extensions. The Committee also required that Dane submit the rating renewal section of the membership renewal form, which had been suitably endorsed as proof of his packing currency.

For: 4

Against: 2

Abstentions: 1

**Carried**

- iii) An e-mail had been received from Andy Hughes regarding an ongoing issue with pilot chute in tow type malfunctions with Icon containers, a copy of which had been circulated to those present. Andy Hughes had also included a summary of the various correspondence between himself and the manufacturers regarding this issue.

Following some discussion on this matter, the Committee noted Andy's concerns, and thanked him for forwarding the information.

- iv) The Chairman reported that he had been approached by an Advanced Packer who had recently come across a number of soft links that had not been assembled correctly as per the manufacturers instructions.

The Committee felt that packers should be reminded that there was more than one method of assembling soft links and that they follow the correct method for individual manufacturers.

The Committee also referred to the document produced by Phil Ellston in September 2008, which included manufacturers recommendations and rulings on soft links, a copy of which was available from the office on request.

- v) Some discussion ensued with regard to who was qualified to sign up Rigger and AP ratings at membership renewal time. It was felt by those present that this was an area that required clarification and it was agreed to include this as a main item on the next Agenda.

- vi) Pete Sizer advised the meeting that over the next couple of months he would be training up one of his jumpers as an Advanced Packer. He stated that this would not be done over the consecutive 4 days, as was standard practice, but the training would still include all of the requirements as per the AP Syllabus. Pete stated that he would submit a Course report once the training had been completed.

- vii) The Committee was advised that George Panagopoulos had registered Andy Shaw as a Method 2 BPA Basic Rigger.

Date of next Meeting: Thursday 4 August 2011  
BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester  
at 4.00 p.m

17 June 2011

**Distribution:**

Chairperson Riggers Committee  
All CCIs  
All Riggers  
Advanced Packers  
Council  
CAA  
Editor - Skydive

**PAPERWORK REQUIRING CIRCULATION WITH THE NEXT AGENDA MUST REACH THE BPA OFFICE BY FRIDAY 15 JULY 2011**