

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 1 DECEMBER 2005

Present: John Hitchen - Chairman STC
Rick Boardman
Phill Elston (NV)
Dave Major (NV)
Bernadette Whitaker
Pat Walters
Steve Thomas
Pete Sizer
Kim Newton

(NV) = Non Voting

Apologies: Paul Applegate, Liz Ashley, John Harding.

In Attendance: Tony Butler - Technical Officer
Trudy Kemp - Assistant to NCSO/TO

Observer: Jeff Illidge.

ITEM

In the absence of the Chairman of the Riggers Committee, the meeting was chaired by The Chairman of STC.

1. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS MEETING OF THE 6 OCTOBER 2005**

Page 1, Item 1 (Matters Arising) – Student Harness & Container Systems – Initial Clearance Form. Bill Sharp had advised that he was still in the process of drafting the proposed form and hoped to have an update for the next meeting.

Page 2, Item 3 – Packing Incident. The Committee was advised that the Chairman had written to the Packer concerned.

Page 3, Item 5 – Student Equipment Clearance. At the previous meeting the Committee had accepted the use of a Parachutes de France Tandem Atom container for Student use.

It was pointed out to those present that on the second paragraph of this item, the previous Minutes stated that: “The Committee had accepted the use of a Tandem Atom container for Student use”. This should have read: “The Committee had accepted the use of an Atom container for Student use”.

Page 3, Item 6 – Student Equipment Modification. At the previous meeting the Committee had accepted a proposed change to a Sunpath Javelin Student AFF/RAPS Container System. The Committee was advised that correspondence had been received from Bill Sharp, which had been

circulated to those present. Bill had stated that during the discussion of this item at the previous meeting, there had been a number of comments made by those present about the lack of clarity of the application for future understanding.

Bill Sharp had stated that the idea of Form 209 was to properly document modifications to student equipment and that if it is presented to the Riggers Committee in an untidy or unclear manner, the whole application should be rejected at that point until clarity is achieved.

The Committee took on board Bill's comments and it was felt by those present that anyone submitting future applications must ensure that any drawings are produced in a clear manner and that written instructions are legible and concise.

Page 5, Item 9 – BPA Safety Notices/Information Bulletins. With regard to the item concerning the Safety Information Bulletin issued concerning the 3-ring failure, which occurred on a NEXT Tandem system. The Minutes stated: "that it is the manufacturers opinion that 'Collins' lanyards should be fitted to NEXT Tandem rigs". The Minutes should state: "that it is the manufacturers opinion that 'Collins' lanyards **could** be fitted to Next Tandem rigs".

The Chairman of STC stated that it had been his intention to arrange to have some tests carried out on the 3 ring in question at a local university. However, they had backed out of carrying out any tests at the last minute. He stated that the video of the incident had been shown to other Tandem Examiners and Tandem Instructors.

The Chairman of STC stated that in his opinion the three-ring release failed due to a hard, possibly out of sequence opening. The 3-ring release was shown to be assembled correctly, and in-line throughout the freefall part of the descent, certainly until the drogue release was operated. He stated that he believed that on deployment or during the deployment the RSL shackle/ring or bridle passed over the 3-ring release and somehow got jammed or trapped between two of the rings, as the 3-ring system came under tension. It was observed on the video that during freefall the RSL bridle occasionally passed over the 3-ring assembly.

The Chairman of STC reported that Paul Hollow had written a letter to him supporting this opinion, which he read out to those present.

The Chairman of STC then asked for comments from those present on this matter.

There followed some discussion, after which it was felt by those present that after an extensive investigation into this incident they did not believe that the equipment in question had been assembled incorrectly and they agreed with the Chairman of STC's conclusions as to the probable cause of this incident.

Page 6, Item 11 – AOB (i). Bill Sharp asked for clarification for what he understood was the decision reached about the Tandem reserve pro-packing item. It seems that it is now permitted to pro-pack RWS Tandem reserves into the Tandem Sigma system (because the manufacturer approves pro-packing of the reserve in their manual). He stated that it is still not permitted to pro-pack Tandem reserves into any other Tandem system (Riggers 19th June 1997), unless the Tandem reserve manufacturer states in their manual, that pro-packing is permitted.

Bill wished to clarify that Relative Workshops have approved their own Tandem reserves to be pro-packed into the Tandem Sigma, not other manufacturer's Tandem reserves.

Technically, since the reserve manufacturer dictates the packing method (using the manuals to hand), any RWS Tandem reserve, which is approved by the BPA to be used with another manufacturers Tandem system, can be pro-packed.

Bill was concerned that people may misinterpret what was said at the last meeting with regard

to pro-packing Tandem reserves. Reserve packers were reminded again of the importance of following the canopy manufacturers packing instructions and that they must have the manuals to hand.

Page 7, Item 11 – AOB (v). It was reported that John Harding had still not submitted the construction drawings that he had promised to some time ago for the RAPS Static Line Deployment Bag with Riser Lift Tabs as designed by Ian Robertson.

There being no further matters arising, it was proposed by Pat Walters and seconded by Rick Boardman that the Minutes of the Riggers Committee Meeting of the 6 October 2005 with the above stated amendments be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

2. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 6 OCTOBER 2005**

There were no matters arising from the above Meeting.

3. **PROPOSAL FROM KIM NEWTON CONCERNING PARACHUTE RIGGER SYLLABUS**

A proposal had been received from Kim Newton that had previously been circulated with the Agenda that the manufacture of ‘safety stow’ elastic closure loops for reserve freebags is added to the Parachute Rigger Syllabus, ensuring that guidelines for the manufacture of these items exist.

In correspondence circulated from Bill Sharp. Bill had stated that he believed Kim was putting forward some construction stipulations, but in principal, provided the safety stow was made to certain approved guidelines, he stated that he was in favour of this.

Following some discussion by those present, it was proposed by Kim Newton and seconded by Pete Sizer that the above proposal be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

Kim stated that she would be happy to draw up a set of guidelines for these items.

4. **PACKING INCIDENT**

This item was held ‘in camera’ and all observers were asked to leave the meeting room whilst this item was in progress.

Rick Boardman addressed the meeting and stated that he had sent in a Packing/Rigging confidential report following a packing incident. Rick stated that on inspection of a Javelin Odyssey, it was found that the reserve was in fact a PD143 main canopy and had been packed as a reserve on several occasions. The data card had revealed the assembly to this container in 2003 by an Advanced Packer. Two other Advanced Packers had dealt with this equipment since then.

Following some discussion on this matter, it was felt by those present that this was a serious incident and it was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Kim Newton that the Chairman of Riggers Committee investigate this incident further.

Carried Unanimously

Rick Boardman stated that he was concerned at the number of packing incidents involving Advanced Packers that had been brought to the Committee’s attention recently. He felt that in his

opinion it was either the teaching or the selection of Advanced Packers was failing.

Rick asked why can't we set a time bar on being an Advanced Packer? From Square to Round to Tandem to PR rating, there is a finite point in time by which packers MUST upgrade to the next one. Those who are qualified to "teach" the AP courses should only teach to people who genuinely want to move up the system.

The Committee took on board Rick's comments.

All observers then invited to return to the meeting.

5. ADVANCED PACKERS COURSE REPORTS

- i) An Advanced Packers Examination Course Report had been received from Geoff Hughes and had previously been circulated with the Agenda.

The Course had been held at the Services Parachute Centre, Northern Ireland from the 10 – 11 October 2005. Stuart Smith had successfully completed the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Square) Status.

- ii) Pete Sizer had submitted an Advanced Packers Examination Course Report, which had been previously circulated with the Agenda.

The Course had been held at the Headcorn Parachute Club from the 1 – 2 November 2005. Dave Danskin had successfully completed the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Square) status.

- iii) An Advanced Packers Re-evaluation Course Report had been submitted by Andy Page and had previously been circulated with the Agenda.

The Course had been held at UK Parachuting from the 31 October – 1 November 2005. Ralph Mitchell had attended the Course and Andy Page had recommended the full re-instatement of his Advanced Packers (Square) rating.

- iv) Andy Page had submitted an Advanced Packing Conversion/Upgrade Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated with the Agenda.

The Course had been held at UK Parachuting from the 2 – 4 November 2005. Ralph Mitchell had attended the Course for upgrading to AP (round) status.

Andy had reported that Ralf has previous experience of packing round mains and was instructed in all aspects of round reserve packing, safety information, acid mesh testing and non destructive tensile testing. He practiced on various types of equipment during the Course and was advised to return for the final examination when he and his supervising Rigger feels he is ready.

6. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

There had been no BPA Safety Notices or Information Bulletins issued since the last meeting.

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

A Technical Information Bulletin had been received from Parachutes de France with regard to BT80 main canopies. This had been previously circulated for information.

8. **A.O.B**

- i) Kim advised those present that she had received a request from Pablito Perrazzoli, an American Senior Rigger on how to obtain a British Rigging qualification. Kim asked for the Committee's advice on this.

Following some discussion on this matter, the Committee agreed that Mr Perrazzoli would need to follow the requirements of the BPA Operations Manual to become a BPA Rigger.

- ii) Circulated to those present from Kim Newton was information on Skyhooks

Kim advised the Committee that following discussion with Pablito Perrazzoli at Relative Workshop, she would like to make sure that packers and Vector owners are aware that there had been an improvement on the skyhook.

Kim stated that both skyhooks are easy to check for correct installation, if you hold the bridle at the skyhook you should see that the longer portion of the bridle is towards the freebag (shorter portion to pilot chute) with the pointed or open end of the hook towards the freebag).

Kim advised that there were differences in how the skyhooks are tacked to the bridle and packers should remember to have **the relevant instructions to hand**, skyhook ones are silver and skyhook II's are anodised blue and have an holographic serial number.

- iii) Kim Newton had advised the office of her intention to run a Tandem Reserve Packing Course at Chatteris on the week commencing 16 January 2006.

- iv) An Advanced Packing Upgrade/Conversion Course Report had been received from Kim Newton that she had held at the North London Parachute Centre and had been circulated to those present.

Mike Evans had attended the Course for upgrading to Advanced Packer (round) status. Mike had received instruction and practice in P.H. testing and tensile testing on round reserves. He had received instruction and practice on packing round reserves with various diapers and various containers. He also received instruction and practice with assembly of round reserves, round reserves with Cypres AAD's and instruction in compatibility and packing tools.

Mike took the written exam and completed 3 repacks as detailed on form 175. Mike successfully completed the Course and was awarded Advanced Packer (Grade R) status.

- v) Correspondence from Phill Elson concerning rigs fitted with "Bungee & Ball" method of stowing the slider had been circulated to those present.

Phill advised the Committee that he had noticed with some concern over the past year or two that it was becoming "fashionable" that rigs be fitted with a "Bungee & Ball" method of stowing the slider. He stated that on inspecting a PDF Atom container prior to a reserve re-pack recently, he noticed something with one of these mods that he thought should be brought to the attention of all riggers/packer and indeed jumpers.

Phill stated that the previous re-pack documents were not available to him as the owner was abroad and at the time of writing, had not found them or forwarded them to him. Neither could he recall who had done his last re-pack. He stated that the Atom has the reserve ripcord armoured housing terminating at the hinged part of the top reserve cover flap. (This leaves 4-6" of bare ripcord wire). The Bungee of this mod had been passed not only around the reserve cover flap, but UNDER the reserve ripcord as well.

Phill stated that in his opinion, this would not be an immediate problem as he did not believe that anyone is going to stow their slider before checking their canopy. However, consider that the owner of this system jumps a side/top mount camera assembly on a regular basis and imagine the results if, whilst under a fully functioning main canopy, he were to turn his head sharply, the cameras to tangle with the collapsed slider and he then turn his head to look the other way in a hurry. He has, in effect, operated an RSL and has two canopies out!

The other thing that concerned Phill about this type of mod was that on small containers –such as Javelins - that the "Ball" due to its size, could, in theory, restrict the opening of the top reserve flaps because of the distance between the hem of the yolk and the hinge seam of the reserve flaps.

Some concern was expressed by the Committee in the way that sliders are being stowed on equipment and of the inherent problems this may cause.

- vi) Pete Sizer had provided an update of the BPA Index of Safety Notices, a copy of which had been circulated to those present. The update was as follows:-

(2) SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETINS INDEX

95. Next Tandem 3-ring failure, SI 3/05 22.9.05

(8) PARACHUTES DE FRANCE INDEX

42. BT80 Modification for hard openings, TI 5 002 10.10.05

(12) RELATIVE WORKSHOP

53. Vector Tandem Reserves: line attachment, PSB 23.5.05

(43) PARATEC

2. Next Tandem 3-ring failure, SI 3/05 22.9.05

(45) PERFORMANCE VARIABLE

1. Omega Container grounded, AD 12.7.05

2. Omega flap modification, AD 21.7.05 & SB 200501 (18.7.05)

viii) Pat Walters brought to attention of the Committee a mod on a Javelin where the RSL had been partially removed, but the loop was still attached to the riser. As a result when the equipment had come in for reserve re-pack, Pat could not cut away the main canopy.

Date of next Meeting: Thursday 2 February 2006
BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester.
4.00 p.m.

6 December 2005

Distribution

Chairperson Riggers Committee
All CCIs
All Riggers
Council
D. Beaven (CAA)
Lesley Gale
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**PAPERWORK REQUIRING CIRCULATION WITH THE NEXT AGENDA MUST REACH THE
BPA OFFICE NO LATER THAN MONDAY 16 JANUARY 2006**