

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2005

Present: Paul Applegate - Chairman
Rick Boardman
Liz Ashley (NV)
Ian Robertson
Pete Sizer
Allan Hewitt
Ray Armstrong
Dave Major
John Curtis
Kim Newton
John Harding

Apologies: Bernadette Whitaker.

In Attendance: John Hitchen - Chairman STC
Tony Butler - Technical Officer
Kieran Brady - Council
Ralph Fielding - Council
Trudy Kemp - Assistant to NCSO/TO

Observers: Ralph Mitchell, Jonathan Horne, Colin Fitzmaurice, Jeff Illidge.

ITEM

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

The Chairman of STC took the Chair pending the election of a Chairperson.

Kim Newton proposed and Ian Robertson seconded a motion that Paul Applegate continues in the post as Chairperson of the Riggers Committee for a further year. This was unanimously agreed by those present.

Carried Unanimously

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS MEETING OF THE 2 DECEMBER 2004

Page 1, Item 1 – Proposal to run an Advanced Packers Course (Paul Burns). The Committee was advised that Paul Burns had been given permission to run an Advanced Packers Course at Point Zero with the proviso that he provided written details to the Chairman of the facilities at Point Zero, and subject to those facilities being satisfactory. To date nothing had been received from Paul Burns and the Chairman agreed to contact him on this matter.

Page 2, Item 3 – RSL Shackles. Kim Newton reported that she had spoken to Andrew Hilton and Bill Sharp with regard to the RSL entry in the Technical Manual and it was planned to circulate a draft proposal with the next Riggers agenda for consideration by the Committee concerning this item.

There being no further matters arising, it was proposed by Kim Newton and seconded by John Harding that the Minutes of the Riggers Committee Meeting of the 2 December 2004 be accepted

as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

3. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 2 DECEMBER 2004**

There were no matters arising from the above Meeting.

4. **REVISION OF RIGGERS MINUTES – 7 OCTOBER 2004**

At the Riggers Committee Meeting of 7 October 2004, the Committee unanimously accepted Pete Sizer's proposal with regard to a Student Tandem Equipment Modification involving the fitting of release tabs on side-tie buckles to Tandem Student harnesses, as per the drawings previously circulated.

The Minute referring to this item actually related to another proposal from Pete Sizer (not previously circulated) requesting a change to the specification for BPA Minor Mods 1 & 2, for the use of AML 16720 double gate snaps as an alternative to previously listed snap hooks. This request was not discussed or voted on at the meeting and would therefore need to be considered at this meeting.

Following some discussion on this item, it was agreed by Pete Sizer that he would withdraw his proposal at this time.

In a letter circulated from Bill Sharp. Bill had commented on the importance of reading the Minutes properly for absolute clarity, particularly the person who originally proposed the item.

5. **ACCEPTANCE OF IAN ROBERTSON'S RAPS STATIC LINE DEPLOYMENT BAG**

The Chairman advised those present that at the Special STC Meeting held on the 7 October 2004 to consider the recommendations of the RAPS Panel/Working Group, it had been agreed by that Committee that the Ian Robertson (IR) Bag be presented to the BPA Riggers Committee for consideration for general use for Students.

Ian Robertson had prepared a proposal including construction notes and drawings of the RAPS Static Line Deployment Bag with Riser Lift Tabs, which had been circulated to Advanced Riggers with the Agenda.

Ian presented an example of the Static Line Bag to those present after which it was proposed by Ian Robertson and seconded by Allan Hewitt that the RAPS Static Line Deployment Bag with Riser Lift Tabs as designed by Ian Robertson for Student equipment be accepted. This was on the basis that anyone else wishing to manufacture the bag must ensure that it is made to the original specifications and that this is not deviated from in any way. It was also agreed that the Bag would also be added to list of S/L Bags that had been previously accepted for use.

Carried Unanimously

The Committee expressed their thanks to Ian Robertson for the work that he had put in to this project and congratulated him on his S/L Bag design and they believed to be a prime example.

6. **ACCEPTANCE OF VIGIL AAD FOR STUDENT EQUIPMENT**

Paperwork from Advanced Aerospace Designs had been circulated to Advanced Riggers with the

Agenda for acceptance of the Vigil AAD for Student equipment.

The Chairman presented an example of the Vigil AAD to those present.

Some discussion ensued with regard to the technical and operational side of the Vigil AAD. The BPA had not carried out its own testing on the AAD, as they did not have the expertise or facilities to do so. It was pointed out that the BPA had never carried out tests on any other AAD that had been accepted for use in the past. The Committee felt that this was down to the individual AAD manufacturer.

It was felt by those present that the minimum the manufacturers of the Vigil would need to do for acceptance of their AAD was to present their equipment and installation manuals. They would also need to certify that they had tested their equipment with other AAD setups in and that it functioned properly and that it was acceptable. Some members present felt that if the Committee asked for this information from the manufacturers of the Vigil, then they would need to ask other AAD manufacturers to supply the same information as well.

The main area of concern by the Committee was the installation of the Vigil AAD and what the Committee required was copies of the installation Manual and fitting instructions from AAD manufacturer and details of what equipment it is approved for use.

During the discussion, it was felt by those present that perhaps it would be helpful if the Committee obtained information from container manufacturers and that their guidelines be followed with regard to AAD installation.

Following further discussion on this item, it was proposed by Allan Hewitt and seconded by John Harding that if STC accepts that the Vigil AAD can be used for Student and Tandem equipment then all installation has to be done according to the container manufacturers installation instructions.

For: 8

Against: 0

Abstentions: 1

Carried

It was agreed that the Chairman would contact the Vigil manufacturer for the above information.

7. DISCIPLINARY MATTER

This item was held in camera. All persons with the exception of Advanced Riggers and Rigger Examiners were asked to leave the meeting whilst this item was discussed.

The Chairman advised the Committee that he had been notified by Rick Boardman that during a reserve re-pack on a TSE 1-pin Teardrop container, he had discovered that the bridle line had been incorrectly routed/stowed, which would have almost certainly resulted in a reserve 'pilot chute in tow' type malfunction, had the reserve needed to be used.

The Advanced Packer who had packed the reserve was present at the meeting and was invited to give his comments regarding this incident and he was also able to answer a number of questions put to him by members of the Committee. He was then asked to leave the meeting whilst the Committee considered the matter.

Following further consideration by the Committee regarding this matter, it was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Kim Newton that the Advanced Packer concerned have his Advanced Packers rating suspended for a period of six months and that after this time he attend a final examination course for re-evaluation having done some packing under direct supervision, which must be properly documented and endorsed.

Carried Unanimously

The Advanced Packer concerned was invited to return to the meeting and he was advised of the Committee's decision on this matter. He was advised that he had the right to appeal to STC if he so wished.

The remaining Riggers Committee members and observers were then invited to return to the meeting.

The Chairman advised those present that whilst discussing the above incident, it was noted that the Advanced Packer concerned had not followed the equipment manufacturers packing manual properly when packing the reserve and had incorrectly packed it. The Committee felt that packers should be reminded of the importance of reading safety notices and packing manuals.

Allan Hewitt stated that he was concerned in particular with regard to the number of incidents relating to bridle line stowage and he stated that in his opinion packers were not following their manuals diligently enough.

During the discussion it was noted that not all incidents or minor infringements are reported to the Committee because Riggers tend to deal with the individual concerned as they arise. John Harding re-iterated the importance of problems being identified early on and that there should be a system of reporting incidents or problems as we find them, to the Committee, however minor. It was felt by those present that this could be a main agenda item for consideration at the next meeting.

A proposal was put forward by Allan Hewitt that a Safety Information Bulletin be circulated stating that anybody packing a reserve parachute that entailed using a reserve bridle line and a staged deployment loop rig follows the manufacturers instructions 100% as incorrect assemblies have caused major problems in the past.

Ian Robertson also proposed that a reminder be included in Minutes that packers be especially conscious of looking at their safety notices and manuals specific to the equipment being packed because failure to do so almost resulted in a fatality.

John Harding suggested that the above two proposals be combined. However, no formal proposal was seconded, but it was unanimously agreed that a Safety Information Bulletin be issued regarding the importance of having the manufacturer's manual to hand when packing reserves.

8. PROPOSED CHANGES TO BPA FORM 197 – APPROVED PACKER COURSE SYLLABUS

The Committee was advised that when the various packing/rigger course syllabus forms were introduced in 2003, the Approved Packer Course Syllabus had also been accepted. However, there was no Approved Packer qualification within the BPA, but there are holders of Approved Packing Certificates (BPA Form 111). Therefore, there should not be an Approved Packer Course Syllabus.

The Technical Officer had therefore drafted a change to the form, to reflect the reality of the situation and had titled the form; 'Guidelines for obtaining an Approved Packing Certificate. A copy of the proposed form had been circulated with the agenda.

Following some discussion, it was proposed by John Curtis and seconded by Rick Boardman that the proposed changes to BPA Form 197 – Approved Packer Course Syllabus be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

9. REQUEST FROM MICK NEALIS

A request from Mick Nealis had been circulated with the agenda requesting that Stewart Smith (BPA no. 913586) be allowed to attend an Advanced Packing Course having not been a BPA member for 18 months. The meeting was advised that Stewart had been trained in the USA and had been packing his own equipment since Dec 03. On his return to the UK in May 04 he joined the BPA, which meant that he had only been a BPA member for 10 months although he had been an active jumper for 14 months. The Committee was advised that during this period Mr Smith had completed 180 jumps and had worked at the JSPC at Netheravon carrying out packing checks for Students.

Following some discussion on this item, it was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Ian Robertson that the above request be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

10. REQUEST FROM ALLAN HEWITT TO RUN A BPA RIGGERS COURSE

A letter from Allan Hewitt had been circulated with the agenda requesting to run a BPA Rigging Course at Thomas Sports Equipment in March 2005. Allan had stated that the reason for this request was that TSE was not an Affiliated Centre, however it had all the facilities and meets the BPA rigging loft minimum criteria. He also stated that the Course would be held under current BPA requirements and guidelines.

It was proposed by Allan Hewitt and seconded by John Harding that the above request be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

11. ADVANCED PACKING CONVERSION – REQUEST FROM ALLAN HEWITT

Allan Hewitt asked for this request to be withdrawn.

12. REQUEST FROM ALLAN HEWITT FOR PERMISSION FOR JONATHAN HORNE TO ATTEND A RIGGING EXAMINATION COURSE

A letter from Allan Hewitt had been circulated with the agenda requesting permission for Jonathan Horne to attend a Rigging Examination Course once he has gained his Advanced Packer (Grade R) rating. Currently Jonathan Horne held an Advanced Packer (Grade S) rating and he was also a BPA Tandem and AFF instructor.

Allan Hewitt advised the Committee that Jonathan had completed a non BPA Rigging course outside of the UK and would like to attend a BPA Rigging Examination Course. He had been taught by himself and he had followed the BPA rigging system exactly. To date Jonathan had completed over 300 hours rigging work and met all the requirements of a Basic Rigger and had completed the training as per the BPA rigging syllabus. However, Jonathan had not been registered with the office as a BR working under the 300 scheme and this was the reason for this request.

Allan Hewitt pointed out that the Committee had accepted foreign trained persons in the past so he saw this as no different as the precedent had been set. However, it was pointed out to Allan that although the Committee had accepted foreign trained persons in the past, this had only been considered on the basis that they held a recognised foreign Rigging qualification in the first instance.

The Committee discussed this request at some length. Some concern was expressed by those present because Jonathan had not been registered with the BPA as a BR and that one of the requirements to register was that the applicant held an Advanced Packer (Grade R) rating, which at this time Jonathan does not hold. In essence, Jonathan had logged the 300 hrs before he was allowed to log them. The Committee felt that he should follow the system that we have in place in order to qualify as a Rigger.

Allan stated that the aim of the Committee is to encourage members to qualify as both Advanced Packers and Riggers this was an opportunity to qualify at least one more BPA Rigger.

Following further discussion on this item, it was proposed by Allan Hewitt and seconded by Ray Armstrong that the above request that Jonathan Horne be permitted to attend a Rigging Examination Course be accepted. The voting was as follows:

For: 8 (incl 4 by proxy)

Against: 5 (incl. 1 by proxy) Rick Boardman & John Harding wished to be named

Abstentions: 1 (John Curtis wished to be named)

Carried

The Chairman stated that he did not wish this decision to be seen as a precedent for similar requests in the future.

13. BPA RIGGERS COURSE REPORTS

Two BPA Riggers Courses had been held at RAPA since the last meeting and the Association thanked RAPA for hosting the Courses. Copies of the Course Reports had been circulated with the Agenda.

i) The first Course had been held from the 29 November – 3 December 2004.

The Examiners conducting the Course were Bill Sharp (RE 53) and Ian Robertson (RE24). There were a total of 4 people attending the Course, all for upgrading from BR to PR status. The four candidates successfully completed the Course and were awarded Parachute Rigger status. The successful candidates were: Liz Ashley, Richard Aveyard, Phill Elston and Dave Major.

The Recommendations from the Course Examiners were as follows:

- a) The Examiners recommend that the list of manufacturing items to be made on the Course from within the PR Syllabus, be prioritised into a 'must do' and a 'could do' list of items. Candidates would start with the priority items, (one pilot chute instead of two, one d-bag instead of two, patches, line replacements, risers etc) and depending on their ability and time remaining etc, they would still go on with the less 'important' items later in the week. All candidates can be busy throughout the course, but some will be naturally quicker than others due to their previous experience and/or ability. The others however, who are still producing good safe work will take longer than the hours available on the course to complete all the items. This should not mean that they fail.
- b) Both Examiners recommend that changes should be made to the need for BR (and PR) candidates, to hold a round reserve packing certificate as a requirement for rigging courses.

ii) The second Course was held from the 6 – 10 December 2004

The Examiners conducting the Course were Bill Sharp (RE53) and Andrew Hilton (RE 179). There were a total of 3 people attending the Course, 1 for BR, 1 for upgrading from BR to PR and 1 for upgrading from PR to AR.

The candidate attending the BR Course successfully completed the Course and was awarded Basic Rigger status. The successful candidate was Steve Studders.

The candidate attending the PR Course successfully completed the Course and was awarded Parachute Rigger status. The successful candidate was Chris Clark.

Unfortunately, the candidate attending the AR Course was unsuccessful and was advised to re-apply at a later date.

The Recommendations from the Course Examiners was as follows:

- a) Both Examiners recommend that changes should be made to the need for BR (and PR) candidates, to hold a round reserve packing certificate as a requirement for Rigging Courses.

14. EXAMINER RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BPA RIGGERS COURSES

The 3 Rigging Examiners involved with the Nov/Dec 2004 rigging course's (held at RAPA), had the following two recommendations to make to the Rigging Committee. These recommendations had been previously circulated with the Agenda.

- 1: That the 'Manufacturing Syllabus' part of BPA Form 200, (Parachute Rigging Course Syllabus) be slightly amended to take into account the following:

"That the list of manufacturing items to be made within the PR Syllabus during the course, be prioritised into a 'must do' and a 'could do' list of items". This split to be decided either by a stated order of priority list, or to be decided by the Examiners on each course.

This recommendation is requested because it was found that although all candidates were always busy throughout the course working time (42+ hours), and all had more than adequate facilities, some are naturally quicker than others in completing their work tasks. This was because some have greater previous experience and/or ability, whereas others, who are still producing good safe work, were taking longer than the hours available on the course to complete all the items in the syllabus. There are several items within the syllabus that are 'duplicates' (pull out and throwaway pilot chute, S/L and FF deployment bag etc), and others which are not so difficult or taxing to manufacture (toggles, student FF bridle line etc). Also, all the candidates have already produced all of these articles as 'bring with me' items for the course. It was thought that if the work list was prioritised, even on a course-by-course basis, this would be fairer overall to all candidates. This would still mean that the PR candidates have to produce a minimum acceptable amount of work in order for them to be marked on, and failure to do enough, would jeopardise their chances of passing the course."

The Examiners had stated that if the above recommendation was agreed in principle, Andrew Hilton would put forward a formal update of the Syllabus in due course.

Ian Robertson gave the meeting some background information on this particular recommendation, as he had been one of the Examiners on the Riggers Course.

Following some discussion by those present, the Committee agreed in principle to this recommendation and agreed that Andrew Hilton be asked to update the syllabus for

consideration by the Committee.

- 2: That changes should be made to the need for BR (and PR) candidates, to hold a round reserve-packing certificate prior to rigging training.

“All the Examiners are aware that this has been debated in the past, and once again, the Examiners are not trying to stop the training of riggers to repair rounds, as this will still continue. Equally, we are trying to stop riggers (and AP’s) from holding a round AP rating if they so wish. What we are trying to do is rationalise the current regulation which requires a rigger (or potential rigger) to hold the rating but in many case’s it is an ‘empty’ qualification.

It would be fair to say that more than half of BPA riggers of all grades are probably not ‘current’ in packing round reserves and as this is a basis for their rigging ratings, their rigging ratings must be suspect. This problem won’t go away and must be addressed properly and openly.”

Some members present were a little surprised that this item had come up for discussion once again despite the Committee on numerous occasions agreeing that they want people to pack round reserves before commencing Rigging training. This decision had been made on the basis that whilst there were still round reserves in use they should be included in Rigging syllabus.

John Harding referred to the Committee having to consider Examiners recommendations from Rigging courses every time there was a Course even though the Committee had debated this subject at great length previously and had actually stated that they did not wish to discuss this particular issue again in the immediate future. He stated that in his opinion this approach to Examiner recommendations needed addressing.

Following some discussion on the above recommendation, it was the general consensus of opinion from those present that we were qualifying people to work on equipment that they rarely came across very often or wished to work on

The Committee was also concerned because of the fact they don’t see round reserves very often therefore they are then not going to remain current on this equipment but they are still qualified to work on it.

Allan Hewitt commented that he himself had found it difficult to keep current on round reserves. He then had to teach someone to pack them when all they want is a qualification to pack square reserves.

Ian Robertson stated that the thinking behind this recommendation was that it had been established that the number of round reserves in the UK was now on the decline. The Examiners did not wish to stop people learning about round parachutes, they were just saying they do not think it is mandatory to attend a Rigging Course.

John Harding stated that a Working Group who looked at the whole Packing and Rigging Course Syllabuses looked at the issue of round reserves a couple of years ago. He believed that if this needs to be changed the whole system/syllabus needs looking at. It was suggested that because other areas of the Rigging Course Syllabus were being looked at then perhaps the Committee should consider setting up a working group to come up with some proposals for the committee to consider.

Following further discussion on this item, Allan Hewitt stated that based on this recommendation and other recommendations he would like to write a proposal for the

next meeting for consideration.

15. ADVANCED PACKERS EXAMINATION COURSE REPORT

An Advanced Packers Examination Course had been run by Paul Burns from the 28 – 29 November 2004. A copy of the Course Report had been circulated with the agenda. Gavin McLeod and Martin Robiette had successfully completed the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

16. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

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

17. MANUFACTURERS' SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

The Committee was advised that since the last meeting a product service bulletin had been received from Mirage Systems inc. concerning the Automatic Activation Device cutter location on all of its harness/container systems a copy of which had been previously circulated for information.

The Chairman stated that there was some ambiguous wording in the service bulletin stating that affected containers must be modified not later than the next repack, or 120 from the last repack, whichever is earlier.

The Chairman reported that the manufacturers had now stated in writing that the affected containers must be modified not later than the normal UK repack cycle of six calendar months from the issue date of the product service bulletin.

18. A.O.B

i) Pete Sizer had submitted an Advanced Packers Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present. The Course had been held at Headcorn Parachute Club from the 7 – 10 February 2005. The three candidates on the Course; David Halbert, David Danskin and Eliot Martin had completed all parts of the Course Syllabus and were advised to practice under supervision and prepare for the examination phase.

ii) The Chairman advised those present that Kim Newton had submitted details of the facilities for Rigging and Packing Courses at NLPC that that this had been circulated to those present for information.

iii) An e-mail from John Harding had been circulated to those present stating that at the Riggers meeting of the 5 June 2003 it was proposed that; as from 1.04.04 holders of Advanced packing Certificates may not add new equipment types to their Packing Certificates. This proposal carried unanimously and the Minutes of this meeting were accepted by STC at its meeting on the 7 August 2003.

John Harding stated that unfortunately, it seemed that this decision did not make it into the Operations Manual or the Technical Manual. He stated that he was aware that there are holders of Advanced packing Certificates Holders that are not only packing equipment not listed on their certificates, but also having new equipment added to them. He stated that this needs addressing.

Following some discussion on this matter, the Committee agreed that the above decision is included in the Technical Manual and John Harding agreed to liaise with Andrew Hilton regarding this.

- iv) John Harding gave the meeting details of a one pin Teardrop loop on a reserve that had been found with ten separate faults on it. He stated that he had contacted Airtec to see if they had a standard for manufacturing these loops and they had sent back the instructions for making one pin teardrop loops. John Harding stated that he had also done a drawing for them as well. Copies of which would be circulated with the Minutes for information.

John Harding reported that he had also recently found four rigs where the Aerodyne Reserve Canopy Soft Links had been incorrectly assembled. John asked that the instructions for assembling the links be circulated with the Minutes for information. The drawings from Parachutes de France SA detailing the assembly of their soft links would also be circulated with the Minutes for information.

- v) Pete Sizer had notified the office of his intention to run an Advanced Packers Course at the Headcorn Parachute Club from the 14 – 17 March 2005.
- vi) The Chairman advised those present that a letter had been received from Chris Thomas stating that Noel Purcell had spent a day at TSE packing a Pop Top round reserve as well as a Zerox round reserve. Chris had stated that a total of 5 were done on the day. The Chairman stated that this was as per a request from the Riggers Committee at a previous meeting for Noel to maintain his Advanced Packer (Grade R) rating. This had followed his attendance on an Advanced Packers Course where it had been noted that Noel had only packed one round reserve on the examination phase for upgrading to AP (Grade R) status.
- vii) Kim Newton had submitted an Advanced Packers Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present. The Course had been at the North London Parachute Centre from the 24 – 27 January 2005. There were three candidates on this Course; Lloyd Quenby, David West and Chris Vella. All had completed all parts of the Course Syllabus and were advised to practice under supervision and prepare for the examination phase.
- viii) Kim reported that it had come to her attention that a packer in the USA had opened up one of her reserve re-packs to install a Cypress AAD and had re-closed it without a full reserve repack. Kim expressed her concern as the packer's actions had invalidated the reserve in this country she felt that they should be made aware of this.
- ix) Rick Boardman stated that an issue had been raised that evening with regard to the fact that not all incidents or minor infringements are reported to the Committee.

Rick stated that he believed that Riggers should be using the BPA incident reporting system a lot better than they do at present. He believed that if all incidents including minor infringements were reported using the BPA Incident Report form, the Committee

would be in a much better position to identify potential problems.

During an earlier discussion that evening, the Committee had acknowledged that this was an area that warranted further discussion and it had been agreed to include this as an agenda item for the next meeting.

Date of next Meeting: Thursday 14 April 2005
 BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester.
 4.00 p.m.

9 March 2005

Distribution

Chairperson Riggers Committee
All CCIs
All Riggers
Council
D. Beaven (CAA)
Lesley Gale
File

**PAPERWORK REQUIRING CIRCULATION WITH THE NEXT AGENDA MUST REACH THE
BPA OFFICE NO LATER THAN MONDAY 28 MARCH 2005**