

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2006

Present: Paul Applegate - Chairman
Pat Walters
Bernadette Whitaker
Pete Sizer
Dave Major (NV)
Kim Newton (from item 3)

(NV) = Non Voting

Apologies: Allan Hewitt, Rick Boardman, Bill Sharp, John Harding.

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

Observers: Jeff Illidge, Mark Bayada, Alex Busby, Nigel Allen.

ITEM

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON

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

John Harding had proposed (by proxy) seconded by Pete Sizer 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 1 DECEMBER 2005

Page 1, Item 1 (Minutes & Matters Arising) – Student Harness & Container Systems – Initial Clearance Form. Bill Sharp had advised the Committee that he had no update on this item at present because he had received no input from anyone, apart from what was reported in one of the recent minutes (from John Harding) that he had tried to contact him. Bill had stated that after the Minutes reported this, he emailed John but again received no reply. Bill reported that there may have been a problem with his Internet provider, which may have prevented some e-mails getting through. In order to revitalize this project, Bill had asked that riggers take a look at the original draft form that had been circulated with the Agenda for the Riggers Meeting of 11 August 2005, and if they had any comments at all, they could contact Bill either via his AOL address (Bsharp2440@aol.com) or failing that, RAPA's phone number 0049 5254 982 2378, or fax number 0049 5254 87456. Bill had stated that he hoped to have an updated copy of the form for consideration by Riggers at the next meeting.

Page 3, Item 1 (Minutes & Matters Arising). John Harding had now produced the construction drawings RAPS Static Line Deployment Bag with Riser Lift Tabs as designed by Ian Robertson. Copies were circulated to those present and were also be available on request from the BPA office.

Page 3, Item 3 (Proposal from Kim Newton concerning the Parachute Rigger Syllabus). Kim Newton had produced a set of draft Guidelines for the manufacture of Safety Stows, which was a main agenda item for that evening.

Page 3, Item 4 (Packing Incident). This item was ongoing.

Page 7, Item 8 – A.O.B (viii). At the previous meeting, Pat Walters had given the meeting details of some equipment that had come to him for a reserve re-pack. It was noted that there were a couple of errors in the wording in the Minutes relating to this item and the Committee had therefore amended the paragraph to read as follows:

“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”.

There being no further matters arising, it was proposed by Pat Walters and seconded by Bernadette Whitaker that the Minutes of the Riggers Committee Meeting of the 1 December 2005 with the above stated amendment be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 1 DECEMBER 2005

There were no matters arising from the above Meeting.

4 CORRESPONDENCE FROM BILL SHARP

Correspondence from Bill Sharp concerning a number of rigging related issues had been circulated with the Agenda. Letters from Allan Hewitt and Rick Boardman commenting on Bill's correspondence had also been received and had been circulated to those present.

The Committee then discussed the points made by Bill Sharp in the order as appeared in his correspondence:

i. Items that are so blatantly obvious that they fall well outside all the regulations (including the Ops Manual) will not be dealt with at all.

Following some discussion, the Committee felt that Bill had made a number of fair observations, which were noted by those present. They also took on board comments by Allan Hewitt and Rick Boardman.

ii. Items presented for clearance on official BPA forms that are so unclear that the majority cannot read or decipher them should not be dealt with at all.

Bill had specifically referred to BPA form 209 - Student Parachute Equipment Change Proposal Application), where on a number of occasions the forms had been submitted, which were unclear.

The Committee discussed this point and they felt that Bill had made a number of valid comments.

iii. Items tabled as disciplinary matters without any info being given to Advanced Riggers and above.

Bill had stated that in the previous year there had been a number of disciplinary items reported to the Committee. He had stated that all these incidents were discussed by all and dealt with finally by a vote from Advanced Riggers and above. In none of the these cases was Bill (and other AR's etc), ever able to put in any input at all as they were not informed of the incidents unless they were present at the meeting.

Bill had stated that he receives STC minutes but does not receive disciplinary matters specifically marked for CCI's only. Bill had asked why Advanced Riggers or Examiner Riggers cannot be sent info as it becomes available so that they can put input in if they wish. He stated that the Committee are talking about important matters and trends etc but AR's/Rigger Examiners know nothing about it until after it has been dealt with.

Following discussion on this matter, the Committee felt that Bill had made a fair point here and it was agreed by those present that Examiner Riggers or Advanced Riggers may request information to be sent to them prior to a meeting.

iv. Don't deal with items that are not on the Agenda but should have been.

Bill had stated that as a participating and active member of the Committee, he strongly objected to 'non life threatening' issues being slipped under the door because they don't appear on the Agenda. He stated that many times it appears that this is simply because the person proposing the item couldn't be bothered putting out the item in time for all to see. All eligible Riggers have the right to proxy input and proxy votes. Please remember this as it is within non-attending rigger's rights to challenge any subsequent decisions made by the Committee on important 'non Agenda' items.

Overall, the Committee felt that Bill Sharp had highlighted a number of valid points for future consideration.

In correspondence circulated from Allan Hewitt. Allan had stated he appreciated the fact that Bill had taken a look at the past years events. He stated that it showed a dedication that should be respected and possibly promoted as an annual review of the system. He felt that Bill should be thanked by the Committee for managing to spend his free time working on Committee issues.

Allan had also stated that he felt that the whole system needs to be looked at, not by Riggers but by the Committee who are responsible for setting it up in the first place, the STC or even Council, in fact council would be better placed to review these issues as they respond directly to the members and its current BPA members that are losing out, not members of STC. Allan strongly recommended that council set up a working committee to look at the rigging politics and the direction that it should be taking. I for one think that the committee does not give priority to teaching and educating its rigging members and improving safety.

The Committee was advised that Allan Hewitt had also raised some points with regard to Pro Packing of Tandem reserves, which were noted by the Committee. This issue had been dealt with at the previous meeting and Reserve packers were reminded again of the importance of following the canopy manufacturers packing instructions and that they must have the manuals to hand.

5. REQUEST FROM HQ PARACHUTE SUPPORT WING

A request had been received for the HQ Parachute Support Wing, which had been previously circulated with the Agenda requesting to use the Fury replacement parachute on BPA programmes as outlined in the conditions listed below. The Fury authority was originally granted at the BPA Riggers and STC Meetings of 7 December 2000.

The replacement parachute for the Fury is referred to as the LPS, (Lightweight Parachute System). The canopies are Silhouettes ranging in sizes from 190 to 260, in an Atom Container. The reserves remain Raven 3 and with a Cypres AAD.

All the conditions outlined previously remain extant. This request was for specialist troops, instructors and Survival Equipment Fitters under the following conditions:

- a. At all Military and BPA Affiliated Drop Zones.
- b. All parachutists are full members of the BPA (in accordance with the BPA Operations Manual).
- c. Personnel are placed 'on duty' whilst parachuting.
- d. Military Parachuting using the LPS with AAD.
- e. All parachutes have a current Military Record of Inspection sheet.

Any changes that are requested to this permission will be notified to the BPA.

Following some discussion, it was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Pat Walters that the above request be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

6. DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR THE MANUFACTURE OF SAFETY STOWS

At the previous meeting, the Committee had agreed to add the manufacture of Safety Stows for reserve free bags to the Parachute Rigger Syllabus, providing a set of guidelines for these items was drawn up. Kim Newton had agreed to produce a set of draft Guidelines for the manufacture of Safety Stows for consideration by the Committee, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda.

The Committee was advised that Kim had produced an updated version of these Guidelines, which was tabled to those present, which included a couple of minor amendments, as follows:

MATERIALS

The Cord would normally be expected to be 3mm-5mm shock cord.

LENGTH

The length will normally be between 5 and 9 inches.

Following some discussion, it was proposed by Kim Newton and seconded by Pete Sizer that the Guidelines produced by Kim Newton for the manufacture of Safety Stows be accepted, with the amendments as discussed.

Carried Unanimously

7. REQUEST TO HOST AN ADVANCED PACKERS COURSE

A request had been received from Geoff Wood of Hinton Skydiving Centre to conduct an Advanced Packers Course at Point Zero from the 6 – 9 March 2006.

The Committee was advised that the Course would be run by Dave Gould and would be run for one Student who fulfilled the requirements to attend a Course.

Following some discussion, it was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Kim Newton that the above request be accepted for the one person with the proviso that the facilities at Point Zero had been previously approved.

Carried Unanimously

8. RIGGERS COURSE REPORT

A Riggers Course had been held at RAPA from the 12 – 16 December 2005. The Association wished to thank the Club for hosting the Course. A copy of the Course Report had been previously circulated with the Agenda.

The Examiners conducting the Course were Bill Sharp (RE 53) and John Curtis (RE 18). There were a total of 5 people attending the two courses (2 x Basic Rigger and 3 x Parachute Rigger).

Mike Evans and George Panagopoulos successfully completed the Basic Riggers Course and had been awarded Basic Rigger status.

Iain Anderson, Paul Stockwell and Steve Studders successfully completed the Parachute Riggers Course and had been awarded Parachute Rigger status.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COURSE EXAMINERS

Bill had stated that the Examiners were in general consensus that changes could/should be made to the link between reserve packing (Round and Square) and the actual job of rigging (patching and repairs) etc. In the opinions of the Examiners, round reserve packing as a pre course requirement, is of little benefit to the candidates especially since once they get the round reserve rating, very few of riggers can claim to be current (and therefore legal) in maintaining that rating, year in and year out.

The Chairman advised the Committee that in correspondence previously circulated from Allan Hewitt and Rick Boardman. Allan had stated that he was in agreement with the Course Examiners on this matter. Rick Boardman had stated that so long as our system allows rounds, then we must teach it.

The above recommendation generated some discussion from those present. The Committee felt that although the argument does carry some weight and they took on board the recommendation made by the Examiners on the Course and the comments made by Allan and Rick. It was felt by those present that at this time whilst round reserves were still in use then, it still must be taught and the qualification was still required as a pre-requirement for Rigger training.

In summary, Bill had stated that the course was once again a success. and that all candidates worked very hard, but also turned out a lot of good quality work and they seemed to enjoy it. They had plenty of hands on rigging practice, and were always busy. RAPA has very good facilities for Rigging Courses and it was his intention to run a similar Course again next year. If anyone knows of potential future candidates should contact Bill direct: BSharp2440@aol.com

During this discussion, Pete Sizer referred to the Parachute Rigger Syllabus and stated that one of the requirements was the manufacturing of 3 ring risers. He felt that this was more suitable for the Advanced Rigger syllabus. Pete asked for comments from the Committee as to whether or not this should be kept in the PR syllabus. The Committee felt that Pete may wish to put forward a proposal for consideration by Riggers.

9. ADVANCED PACKERS COURSE REPORT

An Advanced Packers Examination Course had been held at the Headcorn Parachute Club from the 13 – 14 December 2005. A copy of the Course Report had previously been circulated with the Agenda. Richard Parrott had successfully completed the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

10. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

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

11. MANUFACTURERS' SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

The following Safety Bulletins had been received and circulated since the last meeting:-

- i. The Technical & Safety Committee of the International Parachuting Commission (FAI) had issued the following Technical & Safety Bulletins:
 - a) WN3 referred to information issued by Airtec GmbH on 21 September 2005 regarding 'High Speed Canopy Piloting with CYPRES'. This had been previously circulated for information.
 - b) WN4 referred to a Service Bulletin issued by Sunpath Products Inc #SPSB004 dated 12 December 2005 regarding Sunpath Javelin Containers with red cordura 1000d reserve containers, with a date of manufacture between February 2002 and October 2002 only. This had been previously circulated for information.
 - c) WN5 referred to i) a Bulletin issued by Airtec GmbH concerning AADs produced by other manufactures and ii) Airworthiness Directives (D2005-248) & (D2005-248R1) issued by Luftfahrt-Bundesamt (LBA) concerning Omega containers.
- ii. Parachutes de France had issued a Safety Bulletin concerning Emergency canopy P51s (P/N 2004710600 and Harness container Flexpack (P/N 80020130 or 8002013000), which had been previously circulated.
- iii. Parachutes de France had issued a Technical Information Bulletin concerning Tandem Drogue Chute bridle P/N: P2007022801/P1007022810, which had been previously circulated.

12. A.O.B

- i. The Chairman advised those present that since the last meeting he had received two Packing/Rigging Confidential Reports, which would be kept on file at the BPA office for future reference.
- ii. Pete Sizer had notified the office that he would be running an Advanced Packers Course from the 6 – 9 March 2006 at the Headcorn Parachute Club. Anyone interested in attending this Course should contact Pete at the Club.

Date of next Meeting: Thursday 30 March 2006
BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester.

4.00 p.m.

9 February 2006

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 13 MARCH 2006**