

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 1 JUNE 2006

Present: Paul Applegate - Chairman
Bill Sharp
Kim Newton
Pat Walters
Rick Boardman
John Harding
Phill Elston (NV)
John Curtis
Bernadette Whitaker
Pete Sizer

(NV) = Non Voting Member

Apologies: David Gould

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

Observers: Jeff Illidge, Mike Rust

ITEM

1. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS MEETING OF THE 30 MARCH 2006**

Page 1, Item 3 – Proposed Changes to the BPA Operations Manual. Following acceptance of the new Tribunal Procedures (BPA Form 256), the Chairman clarified a number of points raised by those present with regard to how the new procedures would affect the way in which the Riggers Committee deal with disciplinary matters.

Page 5, Item 10 – AOB (vi) - Packing/Rigging Confidential Reports. At the previous meeting the Committee were given details of a number of Packing/Rigging Confidential Reports that had been received.

John Curtis stated that prior to the introduction of the new system, if a Rigger/Packer had found a packing mistake they then contacted the person concerned to advise them of that mistake. He stated that he believed that with the introduction of the new system in some cases this was not now happening.

Some discussion ensued. It was felt by those present that John's assumption that people were contacted following a problem found with their packing had not always been the case. In many cases the Committee were not advised of any packing irregularities and therefore they had little or no way of being able to identify any developing trends, hence the introduction of the new system.

With the new system now in place, in the majority of cases the person making a packing error had been contacted. However, it was pointed out there had been instances when the person submitting the packing/rigging confidential report had been unable to contact the person concerned.

The Committee felt that in all cases a person found making a packing mistake should be advised otherwise they may continue to make that same mistake.

Following further discussion the Committee felt that the new system was working fine, but if the person making the report is unable to contact the person concerned, then it was felt that the Chairman should formally contact the person concerned to advise them that a packing/rigging report had been submitted.

Page 5, Item 10 – AOB (vii). At the previous meeting John Harding had given details of a malfunction at his Centre, which had occurred on a fairly new Icon rig. A number of other reports had also been received of pilot chute hesitations on new Icons. As a result of these problems a BPA Safety Information Bulletin had been issued.

Paul Applegate advised the Committee that following further research into these incidents and discussions with the manufacturer, it had been established that these incidents may have resulted due to a number of problems including incorrectly sized pilot chutes. The manufactures were now aware of these problems and they had agreed to replace the pilot chutes concerned. Owners were advised to contact their equipment supplier regarding this aspect.

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 30 March 2006 be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

2. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 30 MARCH 2006**

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

3. **EQUIPMENT CHANGE PROPOSAL – JOHN HARDING**

A proposal from John Harding had been circulated with the Agenda, together with the relevant paperwork and drawings requesting to convert older style, hook and loop fastener secured steering toggle with a replacement hook and loop fastener free steering toggle system on Javelin Type 8 (Mil-W-40088) Risers.

Following some discussion, it was proposed by John Harding and seconded by Rick Boardman that the above modification be accepted for general use.

Carried Unanimously

4 **STUDENT HARNESS & CONTAINER SYSTEM – INITIAL CLEARANCE REQUEST – BILL SHARP**

A proposal from Bill Sharp had been circulated with the Agenda, together with the relevant paperwork and drawings requesting that the Telesis 3.0. (TSO 23 (c) Category B) manufactured by Rigging Innovations be cleared for use in the S/L and cable pull F/F mode.

Bill advised those present that the Telesis 3 had been cleared in the past but this system has a conventional harness configuration, i.e. no hip or chest rings, hence this new clearance.

Following some discussion, it was proposed by Bill Sharp and seconded by Kim Newton that the above request be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

5. PROPOSAL FROM JOHN HARDING CONCERNING THE RESERVE RE-PACK CYCLE

A proposal from John Harding with supporting paperwork had been circulated with the Agenda requesting that the current reserve re-pack cycle is extended from 6 months to 12 months.

John had stated that he believed that one of the biggest arguments against extending the repack cycle is one of safety and said that ironically, the same argument had been used for extending the repack cycle. He stated that those against the extension of the repack cycle argue that lengthening the amount of time a parachute system was required to be presented for inspection was detrimental to safety.

John believed that the simple truth was that the responsibility of ensuring the airworthiness of a parachute system lies directly with the user of the system. He stated that a valid repack date was no more a guarantee of airworthiness than a MOT is a guarantee of roadworthiness. It was merely one of the checks that must be made and having a shorter repack did not encourage the user to better maintain a system, nor would a longer repack discourage maintenance.

John Harding had also included information and statistics on tests carried out by a number of organizations regarding the handling of parachute material vs porosity. The results from these organizations show that there was a marked increase in the porosity of the fabric due to handling, and this is mainly during the packing process. They also concluded that parachutes that undergo such a porosity increase might not pass TSO tests. John had also included information of countries that have adopted a one-year re-pack cycle and a list of manufactures who have endorsed 1 year repack cycles on their equipment where regulations allow.

John stated that there was a fair amount of data supporting a longer repack cycle on grounds of safety and as far as he had been able to ascertain there was no documented evidence to support the notion that a 1 year repack cycle would be in anyway detrimental to safety, hence his proposal.

John's proposal generated a great deal of discussion. Although some members present did agree with John, others expressed some concern with regard to having a re-pack cycle of 12 months.

The Committee felt that a number of factors need to be considered. Firstly, the deterioration of equipment over a period of time. Secondly, the amount of jumps carried out on equipment varies, obviously the more equipment is jumped the more wear and tear it is going to occur. Some people may only do 30 jumps a year; some people may do 200 within 6 months. Finally, Student and Tandem equipment gets used a lot. The Committee felt that most CCIs would ask that this equipment is looked at more frequently.

All in all Riggers felt they had a responsibility to jumpers and majority of those present felt that 12 months was just too long and they would need an awful lot of convincing to support a 12 month re-pack cycle.

John Harding stated that he believed there was enough evidence to support 12 months. He stated that he believed that by packing rigs every 6 months was damaging reserves and it is the handling

of them that was causing the damage.

The Committee asked Bill Sharp for some input, as Germany have a one year re-pack cycle. Bill stated that he considered it was a bit of a minefield at times, because various components are 'lived' separately. A re-pack therefore, is only valid until the shortest expiry date of a specific component part.

Tony Butler stated that the Riggers Committee needs to ask STC if they wish to make changes to the current requirements. If yes, then the Riggers Committee would need to justify why.

6. ADVANCED PACKING COURSE REQUEST – CHRIS THOMAS

Chris Thomas had notified the BPA of his intention to run an Advanced Packers Course and this Course had now been held from the 22 – 25 May 2006.

The Committee were advised that Maggie Penny and Judith Lees had attended the 4 day Course at Thomas Sports. Both candidates were in possession of the old packing certificates under the grand father clause and were very compliant packers for this reason Chris had allowed them to take the examination phase on 26 May, which they both successfully completed and were awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

7. ADVANCED PACKERS COURSE REPORTS

- i) An Advanced Packers Round upgrade Course had been held at Headcorn Parachute Club from the 11 – 12 April 2006. Tim Denson had successfully completed the Course and was upgraded to Advanced Packer (Grade R) status. A Copy of the report had been circulated with the Agenda.
- ii) An Advanced Packers Tandem upgrade Course had been held at Headcorn Parachute Club from the 13 – 14 April 2006. Richard Parrott had successfully completed the Course and had been upgraded to Advanced Packer (Grade T) status. A copy of the Course Report had been circulated with the Agenda.
- iii) An Advanced Packers Tandem upgrade Course had been held at the Services Parachute Centre, Northern Ireland from the 17 – 21 April 2006. Stuart Smith had successfully completed the Course and had been upgraded to Advanced Packer (Grade T) status. A copy of the Course Report had been circulated with the Agenda.
- iv) An Advanced Packer Training Course had been held at UK Parachuting from the 24 – 27 April 2006. Chris Taylor attended the Course and was advised to practice in preparation for the Examination phase. A copy of the Course Report had been circulated with the Agenda.

8. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

As previously reported, a BPA Safety Information Bulletin had been issued concerning a number of reports the BPA had received regarding the Aerodyne 'Icon' Containers, where jumpers had experienced pilot chute hesitations, in some cases resulting in reserve rides.

9. MANUFACTURERS' SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

A number of manufactures safety notices/information bulletins had been received since the last meeting:

- i) A Safety Bulletin had been received and previously circulated from Parachutes de France concerning the temporary grounding of Techno 240-B reserve canopies.
- ii) A Service Bulletin had been received and previously circulated from Advanced Aerospace Designs concerning the Vigil AAD. A particular attention is requested to look carefully that the small plastic loop protection heads of the cutter(s) are not damaged during the repack of the reserve. If any degradation sign is detected on the plastic loop protectors, it is imperative to replace the cutter unit and the loop to avoid any reserve loop deterioration.
- iii) Information had been received from Aviacom SA concerning the Argus AAD, a copy of which had been circulated to those present. An Argus fired on the ground after they had shipped it to a dealer. To err on the side of caution the manufacturers had stopped shipping the units right away and 40 units of the May batch that already had been shipped were recalled on the 27 May. All concerned dealers and skydivers have been informed by phone and or email. These units will be upgraded as soon as the manufacturers receive them and be shipped back to the owners after testing. The evaluation units and the April production batch were not concerned by the Service Bulletin. The manufactures state that they will start shipping again by 8 June.
- iv) Bill Sharp drew the Committee's attention to a Safety Bulletin issued by Parachutes de France on 19 April 2004 concerning Freebags. Bill stated that he did not remember seeing this Bulletin until someone had brought it to his notice. The Riggers present that evening did not recall seeing the Bulletin either. Therefore a copy would be circulated for information.

10. A.O.B

- i) John Harding had requested that the Riggers Committee accept the Equinoxe canopy from Cimsa for Student use. It was pointed out that as this was a main parachute for use by Students, it did not therefore require acceptance from the Committee, but thanked John for bringing it to their attention.
- ii) Pete Sizer had prepared an update to the BPA Index of Safety Notices and Information Bulletins, a copy of which had been circulated to those present:

(2) SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETINS INDEX

96. Aerodyne 'Icon' containers – slow opening, SI 1/06 11.5.06

(8) PARACHUTES DE FRANCE

- 43. Flexpack container, SB 06/001 11.1.06
- 44. Tandem Drogue bridle length, TIB 06/001 19.1.06
- 45. Techno 240 slop opening – grounded SB 6/02 21.4.06
TSB 4/06 WN9
EAD 2006.0105-E 28.4.06
- 46. Freebags – Sticky material, SB 04/001 19/4/04

(24) SUNPATH

10. Red Cordura on reserve container (mfd 2/02-10/02) SPSB004 12.12.05

(35) AERODYNE

1. Icon containers – slow opening, SI 1/06 11.5.06

(38) AIRTEC

8. Other AADs not approved in Airtec pockets 24.3.04

9. High Speed Canopies 21.9.05

(44) VIGIL/ADVANCED AEROSPACE DESIGNS

3. Damage to cutters, SP#2 18.4.00

Bill Sharp advised those present that he had recently been looking at the Index of Safety Notices and reported that many of the items included were now out of date and some of the older items were not in chronological order and for this reason it had proven difficult for new packers to find certain information contained within the index.

Bill suggested that the Index is updated to make it a more workable document, which could then be put on the BPA website. He asked for the Committee's thoughts on this matter.

The Committee thought this was an excellent idea and asked Bill if he would be willing to take on this task, which he agreed to do. Bill stated that he may need some assistance from Committee members with identifying any old safety bulletins etc.

The Committee expressed their thanks to Bill for undertaking this task.

- iii) Chris Thomas had notified the office that he would be running an Advanced Packers Tandem upgrade Course from the 29 May.
- iv) The Chairman gave the meeting details of a number of packing/rigging confidential reports received since the last meeting, copies of which would be kept on file at the BPA office.
 - a) Misrouted closing loop on a 1 pin Raven 1 reserve
 - b) An Atom Freebag had been found where the lines on one side had been incorrectly stowed – the lines had been folded back over themselves and crossed over one another.
 - c) A jumper having completed his descent laid his canopy on the floor and found the lower control line on the right side had come apart where the lower control line attaches to the half brake setting loop (cat's eye). Upon further inspection both lower control lines were found to have been finger trapped at the cats eye and toggle end without bar tacks to secure the loops in side the line.
- v) Bill Sharp advised those present of an EASA ruling, which has affected German Riggers. The BPA were not aware of any legislation, which may affect Riggers in the UK, but this was an area, which would be monitored.
- vi) Rick Boardman asked whether there was any reason that Agendas/Minutes could not be sent via e-mail. This was an area that was being looked at by the office at the moment.

Date of next Meeting: Thursday 3 August 2006
BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester.
4.00 p.m.

9 June 2006

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 17 JULY 2006**