

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 11 JUNE 2009

Present: Paul Applegate - Chairman
Bill Sharp
George Panagopoulos
Bernadette Whitaker
Rick Boardman
Pete Sizer

Apologies: Chris Gilmore, Steve Thomas, Richard Wheatley,
Pat Walters, Kim Newton, Dave Gould.

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

Observers: Mike Rust (from item 6)

ITEM

1. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS MEETING OF THE 9 APRIL 2009**

Page 1, Item 1 – Minutes & Matters Arising (Lifing of Equipment). This item was on the main agenda for that evening.

Page 1, Item 1 – Minutes & Matters Arising (TSE Containers and Re-Certification Programme). The Chairman reported that at the last STC meeting it had been stated that a number of CCIs believed that all equipment was lifed on condition at inspection every 6 months. However, it was pointed out that the BPA system applied to canopies and not to container systems. Andrew Hilton had since written to the Chairman of Riggers and STC stating that the BPA system (Record of Inspection) and the lifing at each inspection, covered container systems (both main and reserve containers and harness) and reserve canopy, and was not limited to canopies only, as he believed was wrongly stated in the minutes. He stated that in his opinion nowhere in the paperwork or system do containers get treated any differently to canopies at inspection time.

Following some discussion, the Committee noted Andrew Hilton's comments regarding this issue. However, they did not believe there was any written evidence supporting Andrew's views and this matter had now been referred to the Working Group looking into the whole subject of Lifing of Equipment.

Page 4, Item 7 – AOB (iv) – (Advanced Packing Certificates). This item was on the main agenda for that evening.

There being no further matters arising, it was proposed by Rick Boardman and seconded by George Panagopoulos that the Minutes of the Riggers Meeting of the 9 April 2009 be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

2. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 9 APRIL 2009**

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

3. **STUDENT HARNESS & CONTAINER SYSTEM – INITIAL CLEARANCE REQUEST**

A Student Harness & Container System – Initial Clearance Request had been received from George Panagopoulos, a copy of which had been circulated with the Agenda. George had requested that the Student Icon manufactured by Aerodyne Systems be accepted for use by AFF Students in the BOC mode. George was in attendance at the meeting and presented the equipment to those present.

Following discussion on this request, there was some concern expressed by the Committee with regard to the operation of the equipment's secondary deployment system. They felt unable to move forward with this request until they had further evidence and test data from the manufacturers on its operational performance.

4. **APPROVAL OF NEW PACKING FACILITY**

A request had been received from John Rix for the approval of a new packing facility, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda, together with floor plan of the proposed site. John had proposed that the parachute maintenance facility at QinetiQ Boscombe Down to be approved for running Advanced Packing courses and for examining Advanced Packing candidates. He had advised that the facility had a large carpeted area reserved specifically for parachute packing. He had inspected the facility and regarded it suitable for such courses.

Following some discussion, it was proposed by John Rix (proxy) and seconded by Rick Boardman that the above request be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

The Committee asked that it be noted in the Minutes that any AP Courses held at the new facility, including Course personnel must comply with the requirements as stated in the Advanced Packing Course Syllabus (BPA Form 169).

5. **REMOVAL OF ADVANCED PACKING CERTIFICATE FROM BPA SYSTEM**

A request has been received from Rick Boardman, a copy of which had been circulated with the Agenda requesting for the removal of the Advanced Packing Certificate from the BPA system.

Rick had stated that it was now some thirteen years since the Advanced Packing System was introduced. The original intention was that it should ultimately replace the old reserve packing certificate. He stated that over the years, the feeling among Riggers was that natural "wastage" would gradually allow the old certificates to go away. Whilst this had proved to be true to a certain extent, the fact remained that after nearly thirteen years, there was a two tier system in operation. At various times the committee has re-iterated that:

- No more Advanced Packing Certificates are to be issued.
- No-one holding the old style Certificate can add modern rigs and canopies to them.
- No-one holding the old style Certificate can pack a modern designed system, since it cannot be added onto the old Certificate.
- Certificate holders are supposed to be attaching a copy of their document to each repack they do as proof that they are qualified to do it.

Rick reported that two years ago, these and other criteria were reiterated at STC, and later by way of a letter sent out to all CCIs. This was because it was felt that D.Z.s must be finding it virtually impossible to keep track of whether or not a reserve had been legally packed or not, when the packer was a holder of an old certificate. In addition, it had also been found that some AP Certificate Holders were so un-current, that they were unaware that there had been a requirement for many years that they have their rating endorsed at BPA renewal time.

Rick stated that he did not believe there was a requirement for long time packers of reserves to go through the full Advanced Packer process, since they had “previous packing experience”. In his opinion, all Advanced Packing Certificate Holders who wish to upgrade to the modern Advanced Packer status, merely have to take the appropriate exam (Round, Square and Tandem). Rick had therefore proposed the following:

“On the 1st April 2010, the old Advanced Packing Certificate will cease to exist. Any holders of these certificates have until then to upgrade, by taking the exam phase of the Advanced Packers Course.”

There followed an extensive discussion on this request. Some Riggers present stated that that believed that the ‘grandfather’ rights still held by a number of packers should still be respected. However, they recognised that the system at present was becoming extremely complicated and as such they felt that there should be one system in operation.

Bill Sharp stated that he supported the proposal, but this was on the basis that there would be in the future, if necessary, some protection for riggers like himself who were technically losing their ‘bottom’ rating. He felt that current Riggers who had not previously held an AP rating should be given the rating automatically without having to attend an AP Course. A number of other Riggers present shared Bill’s views on this. However, it was pointed out that this would need to be put out as a proposal for consideration at a future meeting.

Following further discussion, it was felt by those present that the wording on this proposal as it was currently written may cause some confusion. It was therefore agreed by those present to amend the original wording of the proposal slightly to read:

“That On the 1 April 2010, all Packing Certificates other than the Approved Packing Certificates will cease to exist. Any holders of these certificates have until then to upgrade, by taking the exam phase of the Advanced Packers Course.”

It was then proposed by Rick Boardman and seconded by Pete Sizer that the above proposal be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

The Committee asked that it be re-iterated in the Minutes that after 1 April 2010 all reserves must be packed by current Advanced Packers.

6. PROPOSAL FOR THE MANDATORY USE OF LOCKING PINS ON TANDEM STUDENT HARNESSES

A proposal had been received from Rick Boardman regarding the mandatory use of locking pins, a copy of which had been circulated with the Agenda. Correspondence had also been received from Richard Wheatley with his views against this proposal, a copy of which had been circulated to those present. Rick reported that at the last STC meeting, great concern had been expressed by a number of CCIs about the detachment of a student harness upper hook on a Tandem jump. They believed that this may not have been an isolated incident and some CCIs believed that the use of locking pins may have prevented these incidents. It had been suggested that it may be the time to seriously look at making this a mandatory requirement.

Rick stated that there was already a Student modification on file; available for general use on Student harnesses using butterfly snap hooks (part numbers MS22042, MS2204 2-1, MS70121). This modification had been accepted at the Riggers Committee Meeting of 11 August 2005. He stated that other types of Tandem student harnesses, with different snap hooks, may produce more complications, but for now, since we have had the ability to do this mod since 2005, he proposed the following:

That the Student Equipment Modification authorised at Riggers 11th August 2005 be made mandatory.

A number of CCIs who were present stated that they felt the Riggers Committee were looking for a solution to an Instructor problem and that Tandem Instructors' needed to be reminded of the importance of systems checks prior to leaving the aircraft. They felt that the use of locking pins was an option if people wished to consider it, but they did not feel that making this modification mandatory was the solution.

Some concern was also expressed that if the modification was carried out incorrectly they believed it could weaken the attachment clips. However, Riggers present were of the opinion that if the modification was carried out correctly it would not alter integrity of the clips and they believed it was a positive safety enhancement.

Following further discussion, a counter proposal was tabled by Pete Sizer, seconded by Bill Sharp that the Riggers Committee recommend to STC that they consider making the use of locking pins mandatory by 1 April 2009.

For: 4 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1

Carried

Note: STC had considered the Riggers recommendation with regard to the mandatory use of Locking Pins. However, after careful consideration, they voted against this decision as they felt that the use of locking pins was an option if people wished to consider it, but they did not wish to see it become mandatory.

7. RIGGING COURSE REQUEST

A proposal had been received from Bill Sharp, a copy of which had been circulated with the Agenda requesting permission to run two Rigging Courses at RAPA over the coming Christmas and New Year period. Bill had stated that the first Course would be held over 7 days, from **Sat 12th Dec – Fri 18th Dec 2009** (see 'special permission request' below), and the second course was a normal 5-day course from **Mon 4th Jan – Fri 8th Jan 2010**.

Bill gave the meeting details of his request and stated that special permission was requested for the first course (December 09), to once again only have one Examiner present for the first two days of that course. The 4 candidates on the first half of the December course (Sat – Weds), would all be PR candidates who required minimum supervision. The second Examiner was due to arrive on the Sunday night and would be present for the remainder of the course. Bill stated that this format had worked very well for both of the winter courses held at RAPA last year. The second half of the December course would have a maximum of another 4 candidates, mostly PR's, although there was the possibility of at least one BR on the Course.

Bill reported that the exact details of how the course would be run, were the same as given to the Committee on the request for last year courses, but in short, all marking and judging of any work presented, and any passing or failing of any candidate, would be a combination of two Examiners opinions. Bill stated that the second course (January 2010) would be a normal course with 2 Examiners present throughout.

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

Carried Unanimously

8. WORKING GROUP INTO LIFING OF EQUIPMENT

Rick Boardman reported that the Working Group looking into the whole subject of Lifting of Equipment had held its first meeting that afternoon prior to the Riggers meeting. He advised those present that he would be preparing a written report of the items discussed so far and stated that he envisaged it being quite a lengthy project. He reported that the Working Group intend to hold their meetings at 2pm prior to Riggers meetings until project was completed.

Rick reported that Airborne Systems located in Wales had kindly arranged a tour of their facility, which was due to take place on Tuesday 21 July at 12 noon. He stated that they would also be discussing details of their lifting policy. For Riggers interested in attending were asked to contact Rick Boardman for further information: ricksriggery@aol.com

9. ADVANCED PACKER COURSE REPORTS

- i) An Advanced Packers Examination Course had been held at British Parachute Schools, Langar from the 20 – 23 April 2009. Ray Armstrong had submitted individual Course Report, copies of which had been circulated to those present.

Gordon Mission, Greg Taylor and Karen Saunders successfully completed the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

- ii) An Advanced Packers Examination Course had been held at the Headcorn Parachute Club from the 1 – 2 May 2009. Pete Sizer had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

Dave Holiday successfully attended the Course and had been awarded with Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

- iii) Ray Armstrong had carried out an Advanced Packers Re-evaluation at Hinton Skydiving from the 11 – 13 May 2009. David Sawyer, who had previously held an AP rating, had attended the Course. Ray Armstrong had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

Ray had reported that he had no hesitation in recommending that David Sawyer have his Advanced Packer Square rating re-instated.

- iv) An Advanced Packer Training Course had been held at Point Zero, Hinton Skydiving Centre from the 11 – 14 May 2009. Ray Armstrong had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

The Course had been attended by Christine Downer, Aaron Binks, Dorian Harwood and Madeleine Moore all of whom had been recommended to attend the examination phase of the Course at a later date.

10. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

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

11. MANUFACTURER'S SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

An FAI Technical & Safety Information Bulletin had been received from the FAI Technical & Safety Committee. This related to a Service Bulletin (No. APF010801-C* issued 02 March 2009) issued by the Australian Parachute Federation to their members concerning 3-Ring Inspection and Maintenance. A copy of the Bulletin was available on the APF website by following the link below:

http://www.apf.asn.au/documents/pdf/Service_Bulletins/APF/APF_SB010801-C.pdf

12. A.O.B

- i) Pete Sizer reported that he occasionally comes across Record of Inspection forms where service due by dates on various components had been recorded incorrectly on the forms. He asked that Packers extra vigilant when completing the forms. He also asked that it be re-iterated in the Minutes that service dates and battery change dates on AAD's must be adhered to as per manufacturers' recommendations. No reserve repack can be dated for a longer period than the expiry date of any AAD component part. In the case of a Cypres battery, the original reserve packer can change the battery and can then extend the repack date to the maximum original period allowed.
- ii) A question was asked whether a BPA member who held a foreign Riggers rating be recognised in the UK and would they be able to pack in the UK using that rating. Following some discussion, it was confirmed by those present that the BPA member concerned would need to attain a BPA packing qualification to be permitted to pack in the UK.

Date of next Meeting: Thursday 6 August 2009
BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester
at 4.00 p.m

19 June 2009

Distribution:

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

PAPERWORK REQUIRING CIRCULATION WITH THE NEXT AGENDA MUST REACH THE BPA OFFICE BY FRIDAY 17 JULY 2009