

**BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION**  
**RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER**  
**THURSDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2009**

**Present:** Paul Applegate - Chairman  
Kim Newton  
Pete Sizer  
Richard Wheatley  
Dave Major  
Rick Boardman

**Apologies:** George Panagopoulos, Bernadette Whitaker.

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

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**ITEM**

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

There being no matters arising from the previous meeting. It was proposed by Kim Newton and seconded by Pete Sizer that the Minutes from the Riggers Sub-Committee meeting of 1 October 2009 be accepted as a true record.

**Carried Unanimously**

**2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 1 OCTOBER 2009**

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

**3. PANELS OF INQUIRY**

a. Panel of Inquiry to Investigate Packing Issues Identified from Confidential Reports Regarding Ralph Mitchell

The Panel report had been circulated to Rigger Examiners prior to the meeting and copies were also tabled to those present that evening. The Chairman advised that it should be noted that Panel Member Richard Wheatley was referred to in the report as an Advanced Rigger, but he was in fact a Parachute Rigger.

The Recommendations of the Panel were:

- i. The Panel accept that Mr Mitchell's Advanced Packer's rating has been relinquished.
- ii. The Panel recommends that Mr Mitchell is not permitted to reapply for requalification as an Advanced Packer for a period not less than 5 years. At which time he would have to complete all the necessary requirements to gain the Advanced Packers' rating.

- iii. The Panel recommends that Mr Mitchell pay Panel costs up to a maximum charge of £200.00.
- iv. The Panel also recommends that:
  - a). As the inclusion of the ROI and Reserve Cards were extremely useful when studying the confidential reports, the Panel recommends that members using the confidential reporting system are encouraged to include copies of these wherever possible.
  - b). The BPA investigate implementing a system for informing members that a confidential report has been filed regarding them, even if it is only a brief summary of the faults found. The Panel recognises the need for confidentiality and the difficulty of achieving this if a system is implemented, but feels the matter will benefit from discussion.

The Committee was advised that Ralph Mitchell had accepted the report, including the recommendations regarding him.

Following discussion on the recommendations in (iv) above, it was agreed by those present that a review of the confidential system and the reporting of incidents would be included as a main agenda item for consideration at the next Riggers meeting.

b. Panel of Inquiry to Investigate Tandem Incident and other ratings held by Phill Elston following recommendations from STC 1 October 2009

The Panel report had been circulated to Rigger Examiners prior to the meeting and copies were also tabled to those present that evening.

The Conclusions and Recommendations of the Panel were:

- i) That Phill Elston not be permitted to reapply for a Tandem Instructor rating for a minimum of five (5) years.
- ii) That Phill Elston be written to with regard to his Category System Instructor rating, which should be reinstated, reminding him of his responsibility to all Students Parachutists and a copy of the letter sent to his CCI.
- iii) That Phill Elston's Advanced Rigger rating be withdrawn and that he is not permitted to reapply for a minimum of two (2) years. The Panel also recommends that as Phill has produced a parachute container that was acceptable on his previous Advanced Riggers' course, he should not be required to produce another if he reapplies to attend an Advanced Riggers' course within three (3) years.
- iv) That Phill Elston's Approved Rigger and Advanced Packer ratings be reinstated, but he be required to work under the supervision of an Advanced Rigger, acceptable to the Chairman of the Riggers' Committee, until that AR is satisfied with his work in general. Also, that Phill be subject to spot checks from time to time as dictated by the Chairman of the Rigging Committee.
- v) The Panel recommend that Phill is charged for the Panel's expenses in order that the membership does not have to cover the costs.
- vi) The Panel would, if the recommendations are accepted by Phil, request, the relevant ratings listed above be reinstated forthwith, in order that he may recommence work immediately.

- vii) The Panel also recommend that the Riggers' Committee consider implementing a system whereby all riggers are inspected periodically in order to check standards, similar to those carried out by the Technical Officer and the National Coach & Safety Officer when they carry out Club inspections.

The Committee was advised that Phill Elston had accepted the report, including the recommendations regarding him. An Advanced Rigger had worked with Phill supervising his work and was now satisfied with his work. Phill's ratings, other than his Advanced Rigger rating had now been reinstated.

Following discussion on the recommendation in (vii) above, it was agreed by those present that this recommendation be included as a main agenda item for consideration at the next Riggers meeting. It was also felt by those present that Mike Rust, the Chairman of this Panel be invited to attend.

#### **4. WORKING GROUP (WG) INTO LIFING OF EQUIPMENT**

Rick Boardman (Chair) reported on the meeting held that afternoon and advised the Committee of the WG's progress to date. He stated that letters had now been circulated to container and reserve canopy manufactures with the view of obtaining definitive answers from them with regard to their lifing policies.

Rick reported that one of the suggestions was that the appropriate sequence would be to establish as many manufacturers policies and warranty rules as possible, come up with a BPA generic policy, and then ask manufacturers if they have a problem with that new policy. He stated that the WG were also looking at splitting the responsibility level across the various AP/Rigger ratings.

#### **5. ADVANCED PACKER COURSE REPORTS**

- i) An Advanced Packers Training Course had taken place at Skydive Great Britain from the 29 September – 2 October 2009. Ray Armstrong had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present. The Course was attended by Ralph Weatherburn.

Ray Armstrong had reported that because of Ralph's previous packing experience, he then attended the Examination phase of the Course on the 5 October 2009 at Skydive Great Britain. Ray had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had also been circulated to those present.

Ralph had successfully completed the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

- ii) Pete Sizer had carried out an Advanced Packers Re-evaluation at Headcorn from the 3 – 4 November 2009. Frank Millerick, who had previously held an AP rating, had attended the Course. Pete Sizer had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

Pete had reported that Frank had fulfilled all the requirements for the re-instatement of his Advanced Packer Square rating.

**6. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS**

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

**7. MANUFACTURER'S SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS**

A Product Service Bulletin issued by Advanced Aerospace Designs (AAD) regarding Vigil Cutters type 3 produced in December 2007. Dom 12-07-2 (mm/yy/Batch) had been previously circulated.

After an activation of the cutter, the cutter body separated from its base. This occurred on the 19 September 2009 in Cerfontaine (Belgium).

Following notification by AAD of this incident to their cutter manufacturer, they were informed that this incident was caused by an error during the final crimping of the cutter body to its base. This permitted the internal pressure to move the detonator and its base backwards, instead of pushing the cutter knife forward. With this scenario, the knife was not able to do its job and stayed in its original position without cutting the closing loop.

This cutter was part of a production batch of 199 pieces, produced in December 2007.

In the interest of safety AAD has decided to recall all cutters from this batch and to replace all those cutters free of charge. They advise that because of the cutter manufactures assurance this can be done at the next re-pack cycle.

The Committee were advised that following this Bulletin, the Australian Parachute Federation (APF) had also released their own Safety Bulletin on this subject. Whereas Advanced Aerospace Design's Safety Bulletin makes their compliance date at the next repack cycle, the APF SB makes it mandatory prior to next use.

There then followed some discussion by those present on this issue.

A number of Riggers present believed that the Committee should take the same stance as the APF and also make it a mandatory requirement that these cutters are replaced prior to the next use especially on Student equipment. However, some were of the opinion that the Committee should not make it mandatory but should strongly recommend that the cutters were replaced immediately rather than to wait until the next re-pack cycle.

Following further discussion, Pete Sizer proposed that the Committee, should highly recommend that these cutters are replaced, rather than to make it a mandatory requirement.

A counter proposal was tabled by Rick Boardman, seconded by Kim Newton that the BPA issue a Safety Notice stating that all Vigil 'Type 3' cutters manufactured since December 2007 are to be inspected/replaced prior to the next use. Therefore any Vigil unit that has had a cutter replaced since December 2007 and the Vigil 2 listed in the Safety Bulletin were grounded until the date of manufacture of the cutter had been established.

For: 4

Against: 1

Abstentions: 0

**Carried**

**8. A.O.B**

- i) A letter has been received from Pete Sizer requesting an extension to the BR rating of Judy Walker, a copy of which is circulated to those present.

Pete had stated in his letter that Judy had been working as a BR with him for the past 18 months and had accumulated over 200 hours logged work. She was only able to spend one day a week at the DZ and keeping current on her reserve packing and jumping had meant that she had not achieved the 300 hours necessary to attend an Exam course this winter.

It was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Rick Boardman that Judy Walker be given an extension to her BR rating until the end of January 2011 to enable her attend the Rigging Course at this time.

**Carried Unanimously**

- ii) Pete Sizer had produced an update for the Index of Safety Notices, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

**(1) BPA Safety Notice Index**

- 74. UPT Skyhook modifications SN 1/09
- 75. Vigil Cutter Re-call, SN 2/09, 26.11.09

**(3) Australian Parachute Federation**

- 84. Vigil Cutters 'Type 3' Recall. SBAPF091110, 10.11.09

**(6) Rigging Innovations**

- 21. (R) RSL sleeve for Talon 2 and Telesis SB 1539 1/12/00
- 22. (A) Voodoo 2.0 packing modification SB1540 12/6/01
- 23. (A) Approval of Vigil 2 in RI Products SB 1545 15/1/09

**(12) Relative Workshop / UPT**

- 57. Skyhook modifications, BPA SN 1/09, 17.2.09

**(18) Jump Shack Index**

- 27. Redesignation of use – adjustable harness containers, 25/1/05

**(44) Vigil / AAD**

- 9. Vigil 2 approved for use in Rigging Innovations products 15/1/09
- 10. Vigil 2 manfd 12/07 cutter recall PSB 5 10/10/09

Pete had also stated that the APF website provides a useful resource. Link below for their website.

[http://docs.apf.asn.au/index.php/Service\\_Bulletins](http://docs.apf.asn.au/index.php/Service_Bulletins)

- ii) The Chairman gave the meeting details of an incident report that had been received of a Tandem main parachute that was inspected on the ground and it was noticed that a front riser rapide link was unthreaded and bent open.
- iii) The Chairman reported that Ray Armstrong had registered Karen Saunders as a Method 2 Basic Rigger. Also Pete Sizer had registered Helen Halliday as a Method 2 Basic Rigger.

iv) The Chairman reported on a Packing /Rigging Confidential Report that had been received since the last meeting. He stated that during a routine six monthly inspection and re-pack, the packer had found that the reserve pilot chute and freebag was slightly damaged. The packer involved had been advised of this incident.

v) Kim Newton reported that she recently had in a brand new set of Next Tandem kit, which was one of the smaller ones fitted with a 373 reserves.

She pointed out that there were a number of differences to the equipment, in particular to the RSL and that it had also been fitted with a new type of Collins Lanyard. She stated that she had made sure the equipment owner was aware of the differences for their reserve drills.

Kim stated that this may be a one off because of its smaller size, but felt that jumpers should be aware that there may be slight variations to the equipment in relation to its size.

vi) The Chairman reported that the Argus AAD would be coming up for its first 4 year maintenance in 2010. This was just a reminder for Argus owners.

Date of next Meeting:

Thursday 11 February 2010  
BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester  
at 4.00 p.m

1 December 2009

**Distribution:**

Chairperson Riggers Committee  
All CCIs  
All Riggers  
Advanced Packers  
Council  
CAA  
Lesley Gale

**PAPERWORK REQUIRING CIRCULATION WITH THE NEXT AGENDA MUST REACH THE  
BPA OFFICE BY FRIDAY 22 JANUARY 2010**