

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 6 OCTOBER 2005

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

(NV) = Non Voting

Apologies: Liz Ashley

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

Observers: Jeff Illidge, Mike Gorman, Colin Fitzmaurice.

ITEM

1. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS MEETING OF THE 11 AUGUST 2005

Page 1, Item 1 (Matters Arising) – RSL Shackles. Kim Newton referred to the draft proposal that she had agreed to prepare with regard to the RSL entry in the Rigging Technical Manual.

Kim advised those present that herself, Andrew Hilton and Bill Sharp had looked at the issue of RSL Shackles, Grommets and Safety Stows. She stated that at the moment all of these items are required to be manufactured by Advanced Riggers. They had also looked at the Parachute Riggers Syllabus with regard to the Limitations of Work carried out by a Parachute Rigger. Kim stated that she had drafted a proposal for consideration at the next meeting that the manufacture of ‘safety stow’ elastic closure loops for reserve freebags is added to the Parachute Rigger syllabus.

Kim stated that with regard to RSL Shackles and Grommets, as yet, they could not agree on a proposal, but stated that they felt these items should stay as an Advanced Riggers remit until such time as a proposal could be worded.

Page 2, Item 7 – Student Harness & Container Systems – Initial Clearance. At the last Riggers meeting, Bill Sharp had put forward a draft ‘Student Harness & Container System – Initial Clearance’ form in order for it to be used to register full details of new student equipment. The consensus was that this was a good idea and Riggers present who were there discussed some ‘amendments and additions’ to the form. It was suggested that anyone with any input or comments should liaise directly with Bill Sharp in order that he could modify the form for consideration by the Committee.

An e-mail from Bill Sharp had been received and circulated to those present. Bill had stated that to date he had received no input from anyone so he had got no further with the form at this time.

John Harding reported that he had actually sent an e-mail to Bill with his comments and had not received a reply, he would therefore contact him again.

Page 3, Item 10 – Clearance of Equipment At the previous meeting, Rick Boardman had presented a foreign 2-pin pop and top container because of his concerns with the equipment. Rick advised the Committee since the last meeting he had contacted the manufacturers of the equipment concerned and was still awaiting a reply.

There being no further matters arising, it was proposed by Rick Boardman and seconded by John Harding that the Minutes of the Riggers Committee Meeting of the 11 August 2005 be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

2. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 11 AUGUST 2005**

There were no matters arising from the above Meeting.

3. **PACKING INCIDENT**

This item was held 'in camera' and all observers were asked to leave the meeting room whilst this item was in progress.

The Chairman advised those present that an incident report and letter had been received regarding a packing error. During a routine re-pack of a Sunpath Javelin, it was discovered that at the previous re-pack the Cypres loop had not been passed through the cutting head.

The previous packer was a CSI, AFF and Tandem Instructor. The CCI had 'grounded' the instructor from packing any more rigs, pending their appearance at Riggers and STC. All Cypres equipped rigs that had been packed by the instructor had been withdrawn from use and checked and no other faults were found.

The packer concerned was present at the meeting and was invited to address the meeting and to give details of the incident. He was also able to answer questions from those present. He stated that he believed the error occurred when he re-opened the reserve to change the Cypres batteries.

He stated that he had now changed his packing methods and has systems in place to prevent this problem from happening again.

The packer concerned was then asked to leave the meeting room, whilst Riggers made their deliberations.

After consideration of this matter, it was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Kim Newton that the Committee recommend to STC that the Packer concerned be written to by the Chairman of Riggers Committee reminding him of his responsibilities.

Carried Unanimously

As this item involved a disciplinary matter, the vote was taken by Advanced Riggers only.

The packer concerned was invited to return to the meeting and was advised of Riggers decision.

All observers were invited to return to the meeting.

A general point was made that packers should be careful when opening and closing reserves if they are not carrying out a full re-pack.

4. TANDEM HARNESS MODIFICATION REQUEST – JOHN HARDING

A letter from John Harding had been circulated with the agenda, requesting that Kevin Trevett be permitted to make a Tandem descent using a modified harness. John Harding explained that Mr Trevett had the condition Arthropoises (congenital disability of arms and legs). He stated that the harness had been approved by the Committee in the past for another Student with a similar disability.

John Haring presented the Tandem harness to the Committee. He stated that the harness may be able to be used as presented or may have to be slightly modified in order to accommodate the Tandem passenger concerned.

Following discussion, it was proposed by John Harding and seconded by Kim Newton that the harness as presented to the Committee be accepted for use with the proviso that in the event that it does need to be modified further, that this is carried out by an Advanced Rigger and inspected by another Advanced Rigger.

Carried Unanimously

5. STUDENT EQUIPMENT CLEARANCE

A letter from Pete Sizer had been circulated with the agenda requesting clearance for a Parachutes de France Student Atom system to be used in all forms for student use.

Pete presented the equipment to Riggers, which was fitted with small rings so in that mode could only be used for AFF. He stated the intention was to get new equipment fitted with large rings, but in the meantime, he asked that the equipment be accepted for throwaway, including ripaway type, ripcord and Static Line use once the large rings were fitted.

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

For: 5 Against: 1 Abstentions: 0

Carried

6. PROPOSED STUDENT EQUIPMENT MODIFICATION

A proposal from Liz Ashley/John Harding had been circulated with the agenda, together with the relevant paperwork and drawings requesting a proposed change to a Sunpath Javelin Student AFF/RAPS Container System. This involved:

- i) Student velcroless and grommetless toggles made from one continuous strip of bifolded type 4 one-inch square weave.
- ii) Keeper for top of toggle made from a piece of type 12 stitched to the riser above the guide ring.
- iii) Keeper for bottom of toggle and excess brake line stowage made from two pieces of type 12 stitched together.

John Harding gave the meeting some back ground information behind this request and stated that about 4 years ago, around 20 club Javelins at Netheravon had velcroless toggles put on them using the method now requested. The intention had been to trial them on experienced kit and, if successful, to convert all the student kit as well. The project had fallen by the wayside and was never used on student kit. The Centre would now like to use the toggles on student kit, hence this request.

Rick Boardman expressed some concern with regard to the form 209 (Student Parachute Equipment Change Proposal Application) that had been circulated with this request, as he did not feel that the form/writing/drawings were very clear and was concerned that someone else wishing to undertake the same modification in the future may find the drawings difficult and unclear to work to.

The Chairman stated that Bill Sharp had voiced similar concerns in a letter circulated to those present with regard to the clarity of some of these forms submitted in the past. Bill had stated that the form can be downloaded from the BPA website and any written information can easily be entered onto the form and digital photos and scanned images can also easily be pasted onto the form for a fully referable reference document for the future.

The Committee felt that they would be unable to consider this modification request for general acceptance until the paperwork had been changed for clarity and re-submitted for consideration.

Following further discussion, it was proposed by John Harding and seconded by Rick Boardman that the above modification request be accepted for use by Netheravon only.

Carried Unanimously

7. CORRESPONDENCE FROM PHILL ELSTON CONCERNING RESERVE SEALS

A letter had been circulated with the agenda from Phill Elston concerning reserve seals.

Phill stated that he had recently received a Javelin rig for repack that had, in the past six months, been taken to Kolumna in Russia. On inspection of the rig, he noticed a "seal" had been put onto the reserve ripcord. On checking the paperwork he found that this "seal" had been put on but the last packer had been himself.

Phill advised the meeting that the thread used for this appeared to have been cotton type and the routing was similar to "the American method" of sealing, ie. A clove-hitch around the ripcord above the pin swage then both loose parts of the thread turned around the closing loop and finished with a surgeons knot. However, in place of a lead seal, there was a piece of paper glued around the sealing thread.

Phill stated that he tried to remove the thread but was unable to grip it, so he decided to put the scales on the reserve handle to find out at what poundage the thread would break. Phill stated that his scales only go up to 25lbs and that this weight was passed that with ease. He stated that in his estimation, the thread broke at 35lbs+.

Phil was concerned about his pack-jobs being messed about with like this, so in future, he stated that he would try and find out if it is the jumpers intention to go abroad. If so, he would seal the rig in the BPA approved method. He suggested that other riggers and packers might wish to follow suit.

The Committee discussed this issue at some length. They considered that anyone going abroad,

and if a seal has been added by anyone other than the original packer on return to UK it should be removed.

The Committee felt that perhaps it would be worthwhile including an article on this subject in the BPA magazine. Rick Boardman therefore agreed to contact the magazine with regard to this.

8. ADVANCED PACKERS COURSE REPORT

An Advanced Packers Training Course Report had been received from Andy Page and had been circulated with the Agenda.

The Course had been held at UK Parachuting from the 29 August – 1 September 2005. The two candidates; Simon Kibblewhite and Aaron Ellen were instructed in all aspects of reserve packing practiced on various types of equipment. They will both be working under Andy's direct supervision and will apply for the examination phase in due course.

It was confirmed at the meeting that the above candidates were working towards their AP (Square) rating.

9. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

The Chairman advised those present that a BPA Safety Information Bulletin had been issued since the last meeting concerning a 3-ring failure, which occurred on a NEXT Tandem system on the 18 September, where an instructor experienced a hard opening, during which the right-hand riser released, because the middle ring and the riser locking loop broke. The RSL ring was also torn off. On subsequent inspection, it was noted that the middle ring on the left-hand riser was also slightly distorted.

The manufacturers had been contacted and had stated that they had decided to change the supplier and change over to stainless steel rings, made in Europe (the current rings are manufactured in the U.S.A). At the time that the Safety Information Bulletin was issued the manufacturers have yet to examine the equipment, or the video of the descent.

It is the manufacturers opinion that 'Collins' Lanyards **could** be fitted to NEXT Tandem rigs.

A statement was subsequently issued by Paratec stating that they believe the problem was caused by the RSL ring being passed through the 3-ring assembly. The Chairman stated that a video of the incident had been studied by the NCSO, TO and himself. The video was then studied by Riggers present. The risers involved in the incident were also presented to the Committee.

After viewing the video the meeting agreed that it appeared to be a hard opening and the riser failing after a hard opening. As a result the Committee decided that an investigation into the strength of the rings concerned should be instigated.

Following further lengthy discussion on this matter, the Committee considered the statement made by Paratec to be incorrect. The Committee agreed to form a small working group to further investigate this incident. They also agreed that a rebuttal be issued containing Paratec's statement.

The Committee agreed that jumpers have the option to fit 'Collins' Lanyards to NEXT Tandem rigs if they wished.

10. MANUFACTURERS' SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

Paul also advised those present that Airtec had issued information relating to high speed canopy piloting with rigs fitted with a Cypres, details of which would be circulated with the Minutes.

11. A.O.B

- i) A letter had been received from Bill Sharp, which had been circulated to those present regarding Tandem Sigma reserves and Pro-Packing

Bill Sharp wished to bring to the attention of the Committee that Relative Workshop had recently released an online copy of the Tandem Sigma system manual. (http://www.relativeworkshop.com/support_manuals.html).

In this manual, RWS show and approve an 'on the floor' version of pro-packing their reserves (VTC 360), into their Tandem Sigma system. In the past, their Tandem Vector manual showed a flat packing method. This 'pro-packing' method now conflicts with a previous Riggers Committee ruling (19 June 1997) that pro packing was not applicable or acceptable for the packing of Tandem reserves.

Bill Sharp had stated that the Riggers Committee recently issued a Safety Information (No 01/05) – Packing Manuals, which stipulated to reserve packers, the importance of following manufacturer's packing instructions and that they must have the manuals to hand.

As it had been stated in the past that Tandem reserves must not be pro-packed. Bill Sharp had expressed some concern that because of the item in the new RWS Tandem Sigma Manual that actually recommends it. He did not want people to think that every Tandem reserve should or must now be pro-packed just because RWS are stating they are happy with it going into their system.

Following some discussion, it was decided by those present to rescind the rule (above) from the rule in the Minutes of 19 June 1997 and refer to BPA Safety Information (No. 01/05) – Packing Manuals, which stipulated to reserve packers, the importance of following manufacturer's packing instructions and that they must have the manuals to hand.

- ii) Bill Sharp had advised that there was still one space free for a BR or PR candidate on the Riggers Course being held at RAPA in Germany, from the 12 - 16 Dec 05. Anyone interested, should contact Bill Sharp, at Bsharp2440@aol.com.

- iii) Pete Sizer referred those present to a Technical Bulletin from Aerodyne (TB003 Ed 05-2004) concerning 'Miniforce' risers, which he had asked to be circulated, as there had been some difference of opinion as to their compatibility with other harness-container systems.

The Bulletin stated that in principal Aerodyne 'Miniforce' risers are compatible with all harness-container systems providing the points on Bulletin are complied with. A copy of the Bulletin would be circulated with the Minutes for information.

- iv) Newton presented a set of Atom Tandem risers. She stated that she went to put on a new

set of risers on a Tandem Atom the previous day and noticed that they were new from the manufactures (forward facing integrity risers where the cable comes up the front). Kim stated that she was unaware of them being used elsewhere and asked for permission to use them.

It was proposed by Kim Newton and seconded by Pete Sizer that the new riser be accepted for use on all Tandem Atoms.

Carried Unanimously

- v) The Chairman reminded John Harding that the Committee was still awaiting the construction drawings that he had promised to submit some time ago for the RAPS Static Line Deployment Bag with Riser Lift Tabs as designed by Ian Robertson.

Date of next Meeting: Thursday 1 December 2005
BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester.
4.00 p.m.

14 October 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 14 NOVEMBER 2005