

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2006

Present: Paul Applegate - Chairman Riggers
Rick Boardman
Pat Walters
Bernadette Whitaker
Dave Major (NV)
John Curtis
Kim Newton
Pete Sizer
John Harding
Ray Armstrong

(NV) = Non Voting Member

Apologies: There were no apologies for absence.

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

Observers: Jeff Illidge, Phil Curtis, Jason Farrant.

ITEM

1. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS MEETING OF THE 3 AUGUST 2006**

Page 1, Item 1 – Minutes and Matters Arising from the Riggers Meeting of the 1 June 2006.

When the Minutes from the meeting held on the 1 June 2006 were approved, the person seconding the motion had not been present at that meeting. John Curtis expressed some concern at this and stated that the Committee had agreed in the past that where possible when approving the previous Minutes those who propose or second the minutes should have been present at that meeting for which they are approving. The Committee noted John's comments on this matter.

Page 1, Item 1 – Minutes and Matters Arising (BPA Index of Safety Notices/Information Bulletins.

An E-mail had been received from Bill Sharp and circulated to those present with regard to his suggestion to a review of the BPA Safety Notice Index. This was in order to put it into a chronological order and to clarify or remove some of the references where it is almost impossible to source the relevant information that it concerns. Bill had reported that that several pages of the Index had already been completed, but he also required assistance from Riggers and Advanced Packers with some of the others.

Bill advised that he has made a separate button link (*SN/SI Index Update Project*) onto the BPA Approved Tandem Modifications website (accessed through *BPA Office - Safety & Training - BPA Approved Tandem Modifications*). Bill had stated that the site was self-explanatory.

However, there were 4 manufacturers (RWS, P de F, Para-Flite, RI.) for which he required some further information. At the bottom of each 'new' updated list of the above, was a list of Orphans; items where he personally had been unable to find any written reference to them. Bill had asked if any other Riggers/AP's etc had any written references to these items, if they could pass it on to him via the contact details on the site.

Bill had stressed that without assistance, this project would not be complete or will not be as accurate as it could be. He stated that he would acknowledge all receipts of information so that they know it has got through to him.

Page 2, Item 4 – Student Harness & Container System-Initial Clearance Request. At the previous meeting, John Harding had requested that the Performance Variable TD400 Tandem Parachute system be cleared for Student use. As the equipment had not been inspected by an Advanced Rigger, the Committee had been unable to consider the request further.

The Chairman advised those present that he had now inspected the equipment concerned and had completed a new form 258, which he believed had been faxed to the office. However, it was established that the form had not been received. The Chairman agreed to look into the matter.

Page 3, Item 5 (Boscombe Down). Rick Boardman had advised that he had received no reply from Boscombe Down and therefore this item would wait until the next meeting.

Page 5, Item 9 – AOB (i). At the previous meeting details were given of an incident of a student whose Cypres 2 fired after a hard landing.

An E-mail had been received from Stuart Albon, the owner of the equipment in question stating that he believed that Airtec's statement about the firing of the AAD in relation to this particular incident was inaccurate.

Stuart has had several telephone conversations with Airtec, who stated that their data download indicated an abnormality that they could not explain. There had been some discussion about the fact that this data pattern appeared on other occasions. Stuart stated that he had offered a possible explanation to Airtec for one of these occasions, in that the aircraft had to be re-routed to another airfield to refuel during a lift due to problems with ATC holds. Stuart said that he has also categorically stated that this did not happen on the lift in question, when the AAD activated, despite Airtec's insistence to him that it must have. Stuart stated that the aircraft tech log and manifests back up his recollection of the lift, and he has passed this information to Airtec.

Stuart advised that the airfield used for re-fuelling was actually at a higher elevation than the DZ, so the activation window should not have been affected. The unit had now been returned as serviceable, with a replacement cutter fitted, and was back in use. Stuart said that he could only think that perhaps a misunderstanding has occurred on Airtec's part, maybe due to a loss in translation. However, he felt that as the statement from Airtec had been minuted, a factual clarification was needed.

The Committee felt that Stuart should pass on any information relating to this particular incident to Airtec.

Page 6, Item 9 – AOB (iii). Bill Sharp had advised that regretfully, the Advanced Rigger Course scheduled for the 13 – 17 November 2006 has had to be cancelled. Bill had stated that the original 3 candidates have dwindled to 1 making the course unviable. The remaining candidate had therefore been moved to the Course taking place 11 – 15 December 2006.

There being no further matters arising, it was proposed by John Harding and seconded by Pat

Walters that the Minutes of the Riggers meeting of the 3 August 2006, be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

2. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 3 AUGUST 2006**

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

3. **AADs – FITTING TO EQUIPMENT**

The Chairman stated that there had been some confusion as to whether or not certain AADs may be fitted to parachute equipment, particularly because there were several new AADs now available and some container manufacturers have stated that certain AADs can or cannot be used in their equipment. A memo from the BPA concerning this matter had been circulated to all Clubs concerning the present status. A copy of this memo together with a letter from Bill Sharp with his comments had also been circulated with the agenda.

Correspondence from David Hickling, Paul Stockwell and further comments from Bill Sharp had also been circulated to those present, together with previous statements issued by Vigil, Airtec, and Paratec.

A good deal of discussion ensued on this matter. It was generally felt by those present that it was important that Riggers, Packers and jumpers knew where they stood on this matter.

The Committee felt that the container manufacturer and AAD manufacturer need to be in agreement that a particular AAD can be fitted into equipment. Also Riggers and Packers should at least have fitting/installation instructions available, which need to be acceptable to both parties.

Following further discussion it was proposed by Kim Newton and seconded by Ray Armstrong that:

‘Where AADs are to be fitted, both the AAD manufacturer and the rig manufacturer must be in agreement as to the fitting of the AAD, and instructions as to the installation/fitting must be available’

For: 8

Against: 1 (by proxy)

Abstentions: 0

Carried

The Committee noted Bill Sharp’s comments that if this item goes to a vote, he would vote against any proposal that allows non-Cypres AAD’s to be used in or with Cypres branded setup products, regardless of whether the container manufacturer approves it or not.

Some discussion then ensued with regard to the date that this proposal should come into effect, after which it was proposed by John Harding and seconded by Rick Boardman that the above proposal would take effect by the next reserve re-pack.

Carried Unanimously

Rick Boardman asked if the BPA could contact all AAD manufacturers to advise them of the Committee’s decision on this matter.

4. **ADVANCED PACKER EXTENSION REQUEST**

A letter had been received from Andy Page and circulated with the agenda, requesting an extension to Gerry Cepelak's provisional Advanced Packing Course.

Andy Page had stated that Gerry had attended his initial Advanced Packing Course on 16 May 2005, but due to military commitments he had been unable to attend his Examination phase. Andy stated that his planned examination course dates were 13 - 15 November 2006 at UK Parachuting.

It was pointed out that the Advanced Packing Course Syllabus did not state a time limit by which a person has to undertake their final examination phase.

John Curtis stated that he believed that a time frame of 1 year had originally been agreed and the Committee felt that this should be included on the Advanced Packing Course Syllabus.

Following further discussion, it was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Rick Boardman that Gerry Cepelak be given an extension to allow him to attend the planned examination Course in November 2006.

Carried Unanimously

5. **REQUEST FOR THE APPROVAL OF NWPC FOR THE HOSTING OF ADVANCED PACKING COURSES**

A letter from Ray Armstrong had been circulated with the Agenda requesting that the North West Parachute Centre, Cark be approved as a centre for teaching Advanced Packing courses. Ray had also included details of the facilities at the Centre.

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

Carried Unanimously

6. **TO DISCUSS THE PACKING METHOD OF TANDEM RESERVES**

At the previous meeting, some concern had been raised from those present because a candidate attending an Advanced Packers Tandem Upgrade Course had been introduced to the flat and pro packing of Tandem reserves, even though the pro packing of Tandem reserves was not permitted in the UK, unless the Tandem reserve manufacturer states in their manual, that pro-packing is permitted. This topic had generated some discussion and the Committee felt that the subject of pro-packing Tandem reserves needed re-addressing.

A good deal of discussion ensued on this issue. It was generally felt by those present that as the subject of pro-packing is being taught on Advanced Packing Courses and some manufacturers state that pro-packing is permitted, then the BPA should permit the pro-packing of Tandem reserves.

Following further discussion, it was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Ray Armstrong that Tandem reserves can be packed as per the manufacturers instructions.

Carried Unanimously

7. **ADVANCED PACKERS COURSE REPORTS**

There had been one Advanced Packer Course Report received since the last meeting, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda.

The training Course had been held at Point Zero from 6 – 10 March 2006. There was one candidate on the Course; Craig Petitt.

Dave Gould had stated that owing to an injury and the move of Point Zeros' facility to Hinton, this Course Report had not been sent to the BPA at the time. Dave expressed his apologies for this oversight and stated that Craig Petitt had not carried out any packing in the intervening time, but would carry out his supervised packing phase with Rick Boardman once the report was on file.

8. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

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

9. MANUFACTURER'S SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

- i) Circulated to those present was some technical information that had been forwarded to Paul Applegate from the French Parachute Federation concerning two Bulletins that they had recently published. The first Bulletin concerned the Advanced IN and OUT parachutes manufactured since 2004, which had been found to have defective stiffeners. The Second Bulletin concerned an accuracy canopy named Kara from Parachute Shop.
- ii) The Chairman reported that information that had been received concerning the Argus AAD, a copy of which had been circulated to those present. The information detailed some tests carried out by the Dutch Rigger Association, VVV on the Argus AAD following reported cutter problems. Following these tests, the Dutch Rigger Association had stated that they did not feel that the Argus AAD was ready yet for the market until problems are solved. A number of countries had also grounded the Argus AAD because of problems with the cutters.

The Chairman advised those present the manufacturers of the Argus had responded by stating that the tests carried out by the Dutch Rigger Association were not valid tests for a variety of reasons.

The Committee felt that a potential problem had been identified with the Argus AAD and packers who were packing reserves with the Argus AAD should check that there was nothing in the cutter that could damage the loop during a re-pack.

The Riggers Committee felt that more information was required before making an informed decision on the use of the Argus AAD in the UK. The Chairman agreed to contact the manufacturers and report his findings to the next meeting.

10. A.O.B

- i) As the Cypres II AAD was now on the market, the Committee was asked to clarify whether it needed to be accepted for Student use.

Following some discussion, the Committee accepted the Cypres II as an upgrade and agreed that it was suitable for Student use.

- ii) The Chairman advised those present of a Tandem Malfunction report that had been received since the last meeting. It was a bag lock malfunction. The Tandem Instructor cutaway, with a fast reserve deployment with a skyhook. The cutaway bag then hit the reserve canopy and the main risers tangled with reserve lines. As the main canopy came out of the bag, the Instructor grabbed the canopy between his legs and landed ok. He believed this may have been caused by possible line dump.

- iii) There have been 5 Incidents reported where AFF students on an army Ex-Ped in Germany, had pilot chutes not lifting the deployment bags from the containers. In every incident the AFF instructors had to lift the bags off the Student's backs. The rigs had been recently changed from ripcords to throwaways. It was felt that following these incidents, the change to larger pilot chutes had eliminated the problem. However, it was also felt that the containers might also have contributed to the problem, as that the sides were high and restricted the deployment bag.

Some discussion took place by those present. However, it was difficult for the Committee to comment too much as they had not seen the equipment concerned. The Committee was advised that the Centre whose equipment it was is continuing to investigate the incidents further to see if they can identify any other problem and they would advise the Committee accordingly.

- iv) Some correspondence has been received between Stuart Albon and Parachutes de France concerning PdeF Pilot Chutes, which has been circulated to those present.

Stuart had stated that during a reserve re-pack, he pulled the reserve handle to open the reserve and the flaps moved less than 1" remaining closed, for approx 2 – 3 seconds before the spring eventually punched through and flopped onto the floor. He made a mental note of this and extracted the bag from the container, paying out the lines as far as the mouthlock. The mouthlock bungee was damaged with the inner bungee cord broken near the stitching. When he tried to extract the canopy, it was stuck to the inside of the freebag where the bag had become tacky.

Stuart had contacted the previous packer who had acknowledged that there had been problems with PdeF pilot chute springs that he was aware of and after calling PdeF advised Stuart to send the freebag and the pilot chute pack to them for replacement.

After a long delay, the owner of the kit finally received information from PdeF that there was a problem with the Freebag, but denied that there was anything wrong with the pilot chute spring. They had also denied that there had been any problems with PdeF springs, despite the safety bulletin issued by the French Federation. They had sold the owner a new pilot chute and supplied a freebag free of charge. Stuart advised that he had since packed the reserve with the new components and test pulled in accordance with the safety bulletin and the spring had launched correctly.

Stuart asked that this matter be highlighted and to remind packers of the contents of the Safety Bulletin issued by the French Parachute Association concerning Quick 3.1 reserve pilot chutes. He advised that the only way of knowing if there is a problem is to open the container.

Date of next Meeting: Thursday 23 November 2006
BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester.
4.00 p.m.

5 October 2006

Distribution

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

**PAPERWORK REQUIRING CIRCULATION WITH THE NEXT AGENDA MUST REACH THE
BPA OFFICE NO LATER THAN MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2006**