

**BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION**  
**RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER**  
**THURSDAY 5 JUNE 2008**

**Present:** Paul Applegate - Chairman  
Phil Elston  
John Curtis  
Steve Thomas  
Dom Hines  
Pat Bonnar  
Dave Major  
Pete Sizer  
Kim Newton  
Rick Boardman

**Apologies:** Bernadette Whitaker, Ray Armstrong, David Gould

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

**Observers:** Ralph Mitchell, Paul Hollow, Phil Curtis, Martin Harris, Phil Cavanagh.

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**ITEM**

1. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS MEETING OF THE 10 APRIL 2008**

**Page 1, Item 3 – Proposal to amend the Advanced Rigger Course Syllabus.** Correspondence had been received by Bill Sharp stating that several people were working on tying up the wording for the amended AR Syllabus taking into account certain points that were raised at the last meeting. Bill had stated that a proposal would be ready for the next meeting.

**Page 4, Item 7 - AOB (iii).** A letter had been received from Ian Robertson thanking the BPA for the Certificate of Merit awarded to him following the last meeting. He had extended his thanks to all involved in awarding the certificate.

**Page 4, Item 7 – AOB (iv).** Rick Boardman advised those present that the questionnaire he proposed sending out to Riggers and Packers to see how much or how little round equipment was use in the UK would be circulated the following day.

There being no further matters arising, it was proposed by Rick Boardman and seconded by Dave Major that the Minutes of the Riggers meeting of the 10 April 2008 be accepted as a true record.

**Carried Unanimously**

2. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 10 APRIL 2008**

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

3. **TO CONSIDER A PROPOSAL FROM RICK BOARDMAN FOR AN EXTENSION TO A BASIC RIGGERS RATING**

A proposal from Rick Boardman had been circulated with the Agenda requesting an extension to the BR rating of R.D. 'Smudge' Smith.

Rick advised those present that Smudge had all three Advanced Packer ratings (no.54) and stated that he attended his BR course at Lippspringe in December 2006. Although Smudge attempted to pursue this rating in the first half of 2007, his additional commitment to two WPC Teams had taken up more time than he expected.

Rick also stated that between September 2007 and May 2008, Smudge had been posted overseas. The pre-deployment training had been six months long, which again curtailed his training as a Rigger.

Following some discussion, it was proposed by Rick Boardman and seconded by Kim Newton that Smudge Smith be given an extension to his BR rating until 31 March 2009.

**Carried Unanimously**

4. **MISUSE OF SOFT LINKS ON RESERVES**

This item was held 'in camera' and the observers with the exception of those concerned were asked to leave the room.

The Chairman advised the Committee that he had received a Packing/Rigging Confidential Report in which a BPA Rigger reported that he had found that main soft links had been fitted on a reserve instead of the correct reserve soft links.

The previous three packers of the reserve had been identified and were present that evening. They were asked to give their comments on the incident in question, after which they were asked to leave the meeting to enable the Committee to consider this matter further.

It was reported that the original fitter of the incorrect links could not be identified because this had not been annotated on any of the related packing documentation. However, the Committee agreed that the onus for packing errors such as this always rests with the last person who packed the equipment and whose name appeared on the Equipment Check List.

The Chairman pointed out that if the Committee wished to consider taking any disciplinary action against the Packer concerned they would have to follow the BPA Tribunal system, which would entail forming a Panel to investigate the incident and if felt necessary by the Panel a BPA Tribunal should be formed.

Discussion ensued by those present on the way forward this matter. A number of comments were made by those present on why the Committee should not be able to deal with a disciplinary matter such as this without the matter having to go to a Tribunal.

However, following further discussion it was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Rick Boardman that the Packer concerned be sent a letter from the Chairman of Riggers Committee reminding him of his responsibilities as a Packer and that this letter remain on file for future reference and would be taken into consideration should there be any future disciplinary matter involving the Packer concerned.

**Carried Unanimously**

The Packer concerned was invited to return to the meeting where he was advised of the Committee's decision on this matter.

The observers were then invited to rejoin the meeting.

During discussion on this item, the Committee had felt that the incorrect fitting of soft links was not an easy mistake to make. Even though the reserve soft link is fitted with a yellow tag for identification purposes. However, when the reserve soft link was fitted correctly the tag is hidden, and not easily identified at first glance, even though there was a difference between thickness and length of line.

The Committee felt that Riggers and Packers should be reminded to look extra closely at this area when packing equipment. It was agreed by those present that a BPA Safety Information Bulletin be issued regarding this issue.

## **5. ADVANCED PACKERS COURSE REPORTS**

- i) An Advanced Packers Examination Course had taken place at Chatteris from the 29 – 30 April 2008. Kim Newton has submitted a Course Report, a copy of which was circulated to those present.

Simon Chipp successfully completed the Course and has been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

- ii) An Advanced Packers Examination Course had taken place at Headcorn from the 27 – 28 May 2008. Pete Sizer has submitted a Course Report, a copy of which was circulated to those present.

Andrew Hughes successfully completed the Course and has been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

- iii) The Chairman gave the meeting details of an Advanced Packers Training Course that he had run at Cyprus during April 2008.

Panayiotis Panayi and Konstantinos Stavrou attended the Course both of whom were advised to practice and prepare for the Examination phase at a future date.

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

There had been one BPA Safety Notice issued since the last meeting concerning Vigil AADs, which had been previously circulated.

The Chairman stated the reason he had asked the BPA to issue the Safety Notice was because of a number of problems that had been found, both in the UK and overseas with regard to the cutters on Vigil AADs. Also an Emergency AD issued by the French DGAC (Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile) concerning Vigil AADs had also lead to his decision of the BPA issuing its own Safety Notice.

The Committee were also advised that a Safety Information Bulletin from the Manufacturers of the Vigil AAD had been received that afternoon, which they also took into consideration when dealing with this matter.

Following a lengthy discussion on the Vigil AAD issue, it was proposed by Rick Boardman and seconded by Kim Newton that a BPA Safety Information Bulletin be issued stating that with immediate effect all Vigil AADs must be fitted with Type 3 cutters. For those Vigil units with serial numbers lower than 8000 that may have either Type 1 or Type 2 cutters, these need to be replaced immediately by the manufacturer or their dealer. The reserve packing card must also be annotated to indicate that the Type 3 cutter has been fitted.

**Carried Unanimously**

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

- i) A Bulletin has been circulated concerning the recall of certain CYPRES 2 units from the production period during August 2006 to December 2006. The Bulletin lists the serial numbers of those units affected.

For information the original Bulletin issued by Airtec states the wrong production period for the units concerned. Airtec have since sent out a further Bulletin with the corrected time frame of production to the one stated above, which has also been circulated.

- ii) AAD have circulated to their Vigil Dealers concerning Vigil battery life:

*"We estimated theoretically as also mentioned in the manual a life span of 4 years and 700 jumps for the Vigil I.*

*Now after more than 4 years of experience in the field, we are able to confirm that the battery life expectation is higher than foreseen.*

*They will at least be good for 1,500 jumps or 10 years as long as the message "Bat Low" or "Bat Rpl" doesn't appear on screen, you don't need to change the battery (the manufacturer gives a life span of max. 10 years after which you are obliged to change it)."*

- iii) An 'Open' letter that AAD had sent to their Vigil dealers had been previously circulated, a copy of which be seen by following link on AAD website:

[http://www.vigil.aero/pdf/30-04-2008\\_Open-letter-to-our-dealers-and-customers.pdf](http://www.vigil.aero/pdf/30-04-2008_Open-letter-to-our-dealers-and-customers.pdf)

- iv) An E-mail from Ray Armstrong had been received asking why the office keeps circulating information that has originated from France.

The Chairman advised that this information was sent out purely as advisory unless otherwise stated.

**8. A.O.B**

- i) Ray Armstrong had advised the office that he would be running an Advanced Packers Course in early August at Hinton Skydiving.

- ii) The Committee was advised that Pete Sizer had registered Judy Walker as a Method 2 Basic Rigger.

- iii) Allan Hewitt had asked for information to be included in the Minutes informing all Riggers that the safety notice database was now online and could be viewed at [http://www.skydive-safety.com/Safety\\_Notice\\_Database.htm](http://www.skydive-safety.com/Safety_Notice_Database.htm)

Allan had stated that the current database included all manufacturers' safety notices and the advanced search had a link to all BPA safety notices, which were all available for viewing with Adobe PDF reader. Allan had requested that his e-mail address also be included as he would like as much feed back as possible from advanced packers and riggers. [allan@skydive-safety.com](mailto:allan@skydive-safety.com)

Anyone who had any questions relating to the database was asked to contact Allan direct.

Date of next Meetings: Thursday 31 July 2008  
BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester  
at 4.00 p.m

12 June 2008

**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 MONDAY 14 JULY 2008**