

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 8TH AUGUST 2002

Present: Paul Applegate - Chairman
Kim Newton
John Harding
John Curtis
Allan Hewitt
Pat Walters
Richard Wheatley

Apologies: Bill Sharp, Steve Thomas, Pete Sizer, Bernadette Whitaker, Paul Burns.

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

Observers: Mike Rust, Mike Gorman.

ITEM

1. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS MEETING OF THE 6TH JUNE 2002**

Page 1, Item 1 – AOB (ii). The item concerning foreign rigger ratings was on the main agenda for this evening.

Page 1, Item 1 – BPA Rigging Manual Update. This item was on the main agenda for that evening.

Page 1, Item 1 – Advanced Packing Course. John Harding stated that he felt that the previous Minutes did not accurately reflect the concern that has been expressed by Pat with regard to the packing of reserve parachutes.

Pat had not been concerned with the wording in the Operations Manual. He was concerned that people were not observing the Operations Manual with regard to those persons qualified, wishing to pack reserve parachutes into 'piggy back' containers with a Cypres AAD installed must be cleared by an Advanced Instructor Advanced Rigger who has successfully completed the Airtec Course and have been issued with a qualification and an Airtec number.

Page 3, Item 8 – AOB (iii) – Tandem Types. At the previous meeting John Harding had raised some concern regarding the classification of the "Atom" Tandem System as a "Vector" type. The root of his concern was in the differing emergency drills required between the two systems and he believed, following discussion with Tandem Instructors, that the differences were so great as to warrant a separate classification for the Atom system.

The Riggers Committee had felt that this was a potential problem, and it therefore recommended to STC that they consider the type rating currently assigned to the Atom system. John Hitchen stated that he would raise this matter at the STC meeting this evening.

Page 4, Item 8 – AOB i (b) Reserve Packing Courses – Qualifications to Examine. At the

previous meeting it was agreed that a Working Group be set up to look into the packing and rigging in general and particularly the Advanced Packing Course syllabus. This Panel would consist of John Curtis, John Harding and Pat Walters.

John Curtis advised those present that he would be unable to sit on a Working Group until the autumn when work commitments allowed. The Committee felt that this may not be the best time to start the Working Group, but that it would start when all the relevant people were available.

At the previous meeting, subject to the above Working Group recommendations with regard to the running of Advanced Packing Courses, that Parachute Riggers of two years standing with the criteria as set out in the Rigger Minutes of 11th April 2002 could run an Advanced Packers Course and that those Riggers qualified to run a Course could subsequently examine.

John Curtis stated that he was extremely concerned with regard to Parachute Riggers being permitted to examine on the Advanced Packing Course and what the Committee agreed at the previous meeting concerning this item was dangerous and he asked that these concerns be recorded.

A great deal of discussion ensued with regard to the issue of who could run and subsequently examine on Advanced Packing Courses. People seemed to have different interpretations of the rules. It was felt by those present that this was an area the Working Party had been set up to look into once it got started and it wasn't something that was going to be solved tonight.

It was felt that there were not many riggers present tonight who had been in attendance at other meetings and they were reticent to change what had been agreed at other meetings until the working party had come up with recommendations that the Committee could consider.

At the previous meeting some concern had been expressed with regard to the poor standard of reserve packing in general, which was an item to be dealt with by the Working Group. There was some concern however that there may be people "in the field" that could be packing without holding any current packing qualifications.

All holders of the old style Advanced Packing Certificate were subject to an annual currency certification at the time of membership renewal. Anyone found packing that had not been signed would be brought to the Committee and dealt with accordingly.

Page 5, Item 8 – AOB (ii). At the previous meeting, the Committee had accepted a proposal from Kim Newton for a new Vector container to be accepted for Student parachuting once it had been evaluated by Kim Newton and an Advanced Instructor who was AFF rated. Kim had been unable to present the equipment previously, as it had not been delivered as yet.

Kim was now able to present a set of kit to the Committee. Kim stated that she had evaluated the equipment, which she was happy with. The Committee agreed that the equipment be accepted for general use.

Page 5, Item 8 – AOB (iii) – Tandem Modification Request. The Committee was advised that this item in the previous Minutes that had been recorded incorrectly: Paragraph 1, third line stated; "The Committee was advised that the container....." This should have stated; "The Committee was advised that the **canopy**...."

Page 5, Item 8 – AOB (iii) – Tandem Modification Request. At the previous meeting the Committee had approved a request from David Gould to pack a Paratec Twin 402 Tandem reserve into a Relative Workshop Vector II Tandem Container.

A letter from Bill Sharp had been received protesting against this clearance, as the request was not on the main Riggers agenda and should not therefore have been discussed. Bill had stated that he was not against the actual combination that was cleared, only with the way it was presented.

Bill Sharp had also pointed out in his letter that the Committee had been advised at the previous meeting that the container had approved this combination of components. Bill had stated that this was not the case as he had contacted the manufacturer and they had denied any such claim and he was concerned that the Committee had been misled this way.

The Committee was advised that Mr Gould had re-submitted his proposal, which had been circulated with the agenda together with supporting paperwork and a copy of Bill Sharp's letter.

It was proposed by Dane Richardson (proxy) and seconded by Dave Gould (proxy) to pack a Paratec Twin 402 Tandem reserve into a Vector II Tandem container be accepted for general use.

For: 6 (incl. 2 by proxy)

Against: 1

Abstentions: 1

Carried

The Chairman stated that he would speak to the two people concerned for misleading the Committee.

Page 5, Item 8 – AOB (v). At the previous meeting Allan Hewitt had submitted a Rigging Course Report. A question had arisen during that meeting whether the two candidates were qualified to attend this Course as both of them held only Advanced Packer (Square) only ratings. The Committee believed that to attend a Parachute Riggers Course, candidates had to hold an "all types" Advanced Packer rating, which included squares and round reserves.

At the meeting Allan had referred to the Parachute Rigger Syllabus, which stated that one of the requirements to attend a Rigging Course was that the candidate held an Advanced Packer rating and he could not find anything in past Riggers Minutes that stated that candidates required an "all types" rating to attend a Parachute Rigger course.

There now resulted in a long and lengthy discussion that at times evoked strong feelings, which took about an hour during which time the following points were noted:

- i) When the Committee was discussing the issue of a two-tiered system for the Advanced Packers Course at the Riggers Committee meeting of 11th June 1998, the Minutes had stated that anyone wishing to attend a Rigging Course would still need to have attained the full Advanced Packers qualification.
- ii) On the Parachute Riggers Course Syllabus (BPA Form 200, Issue 1 – April 2000) and approved by the Riggers Committee on the 6th April 2000, one of the requirements to attend a Course is that the candidate holds an Advanced Packer rating.

It was noted that the Syllabus does not state that the candidate requires an "all types" rating.

- iii) Both candidates had attended a Riggers Course that not been approved by the Committee as per BPA Operations Manual requirements.

Allan's comment on this was that he had registered both candidates with the Basic Riggers under Method Two training scheme and that once they had completed the 300 hours of logged rigging work they had attended the Final Assessment Course. Allan stated that he could not remember anyone advising the Committee of a potential Rigging Course for those people working under Method Two training.

Allan Hewitt said he had for years followed the syllabus approved by the Riggers Committee. He didn't believe he was doing anything wrong.

The Technical Officer stated that in fairness to Allan and with all the arguments around the table,

he did not believe that Allan had set out intentionally to do anything wrong. What it did highlight was that there is confusion as far as rigging rules go and there seemed to be different interpretations of the rules as they stand. He stated that he believed that what the Committee needed a “rule book” containing all of the rules the requirements in an easy to find format where all areas of Rigging could be looked at. It was felt that this was an area the Working Party on rigging in general could look into.

In summary, Allan had qualified two people who could not work on round reserves. The general consensus of opinion of those present is that they did not want to see people qualifying as Riggers that had not worked on round reserves and John stated that he felt that in this instance the ratings of the two people qualified by Allan should not stand.

Allan Hewitt advised those present that stated that the two concerned are working out there knowing that they will never touch round reserves.

The Chairman then asked whether there was any proposal that the Committee could consider.

John Curtis proposed, seconded by Kim Newton that the two people concerned who now hold a rigging rating where they cannot work on round reserves have them rescinded until such time as they have got a round reserve ticket and been checked out on their round rigging work.

A counter proposal was made by John Harding and seconded by Kim Newton that the Committee ratify the Parachute Rigger ratings of Caroline McQueen and Gordon McConnell with the proviso that they do not work on round reserves and that they cannot upgrade their Rigger ratings any further until such time as they upgrade their Advanced Packer rating to include round reserves. The vote on this counter proposal was as follows:

For: 5 Against: 1 Abstentions: 0

Carried

A question was asked as to how do we deal with future candidates in the future. It was agreed by those present that until the Working Party had met we would not accept any more “square only” qualifications.

Page 6, Item 8 – AOB (vi) – Point Zero Equipment Rebuild

At the previous meeting, the Committee had accepted for use a rebuild of a Tandem Vector container by Point Zero.

The Committee was advised that Bill Sharp had requested that the Point Zero rebuild be given a name and he also requested details of the canopies.

Circulated with the agenda was correspondence from Point Zero stating that the rebuild was now called “PZ Option”, containing a Paratec 372 main canopy and Vector II Tandem reserve.

It was proposed by David Gould (proxy) and seconded by Richard Wheatley that the Point Zero rebuild known as “PZ Option” be accepted for use.

For: 5 (incl 1 by proxy) Against: 0 Abstentions: 2

Carried

There being no further matters arising, it was proposed by Kim Newton and seconded by Richard Wheatley that the Minutes of the Riggers Committee meeting of the 6th June 2002, with the above amendment be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

2. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 11TH APRIL 2002**

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

3. **DISCIPLINARY MATTER**

The Committee was advised that the Panel of Inquiry formed to investigate the alleged packing incidents involving a BPA Rigger had now completed its Report, a copy of which had been circulated to all CCIs and Advanced Riggers with the Agenda. The Panel Report, the Conclusions and Recommendations required acceptance by the Committee.

Having studied the various paperwork and spoken to persons involved, the Panel felt that the Rigger concerned did not exercise enough care and attention when carrying out his duties as an Advanced Packer and Parachute Rigger, with regard to the incidents that were investigated, which were:

- i) On a Vector Tandem rig, previously inspected and repacked by the Rigger concerned, it was found during subsequent repack that the rear-left brake line of the reserve was not routed through the rear-left slider grommet.
- ii) On a Javelin rig, containing a PD143 reserve that had previously been packed and inspected by the Rigger concerned, a number of irregularities were discovered during a subsequent repack:
 - a) The inspection check list did not have any boxes ticked at all.
 - b) No pull force was recorded.
 - c) All the reserve connector links were found to be loose and easily undone with just fingers.

The Conclusions and Recommendations of the Panel were as follows:

CONCLUSIONS

The Panel accept that the rigger concerned felt that he was under pressure to complete tasks he was given in what he believed to be an inadequate time frame. However, the Panel felt that after having approached his CCI with his concerns regarding what he believed to be an excessive workload, he could have approached the Chairman of the Riggers' Sub-Committee and not carried out his work in what proved to be an unacceptable manner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Recommendations of the Panel are that the Rigger concerned has his Advanced Packer and Parachute Rigger ratings suspended for 12 months, from the date that the Riggers Sub-Committee originally suspended them (11th April 2002). That prior to having them re-instated, an Advanced Rigger evaluates him in order that his packing and rigging is re-assessed and that it is considered to be up to the accepted standard. The Panel also recommends that he be sent a letter from the Chairman of the Riggers' Sub-Committee reminding him of his responsibilities.

It was proposed by Paul Applegate and seconded by John Curtis that the Panel Report including its Conclusions and Recommendations required acceptance by the Committee.

As this was a disciplinary matter, the voting on this item involved only those Advanced Riggers present.

For: 5 (incl. 2 by proxy)

Against: 0

Abstentions: 0

Carried Unanimously

4. BPA RIGGING MANUAL UPDATE

John Harding advised the Committee that the Panel set up to review the Rigging Manual produced by Allan Hewitt had met last week. As there had not been enough time at the meeting to read and digest all the material that had been tabled during the meeting, it was decided that one member of the Panel (John Curtis) would take away the printed version of the "Manual" to peruse and John Harding would take the CD ROM version to review. Allan had also agreed to send the other members of the Panel a copy of the CD ROM to review.

John Harding read out his report that he had prepared following his review of the CD ROM contents:

John stated that in his opinion the Manual was not what the Committee had asked for the following reasons: there was not an updated version of Tony Knights "Rigging Manual" on the CD. Many of the document files are not formatted correctly for the published requirements. Many of the documents were direct copies of documents already in the public domain. Several documents related only to Sky Science.

John was unable to find any meaningful instructional content anywhere on the CD other than what he believed were some poorly drafted and illustrated guides to producing some of the preparatory work required for attendance on a rigging course.

John believed that it was the intention of the Committee to have produced a relevant and up to date source of information for reference to both riggers and instructors. He believed that this information must by necessity include detailed instruction on methods of construction of many items that a rigger will be required to make.

John advised the Committee that what the CD ROM does contain is a very good system for searching safety notices, which was an invaluable tool for anyone packing reserves. However the version on this particular CD was not up to date. If this safety file database was brought up to date and maintained it would be an excellent and worth while aid to any riggers or reserve packers. However it is not a manual by any stretch of the imagination.

John Curtis stated that he had reviewed the manual and basically had agreed with John Harding and stated that we had not got anything other than a safety notice database which he stated was good.

The Technical Officer referred to the Safety Notice database and stated that although it was a good system, it was a system, which needed to be kept up to date. He believed this was something that was entirely separate from the Riggers manual.

Mike Gorman who was the BPA computer liaison person commented that if the manual was to be brought "in house" the BPA would need to purchase more equipment, ie CD writers.

Allan Hewitt advised those present that when the Panel had met last week to discuss the Manual it was decided that there had not been enough time to evaluate the Manual properly. In fairness to Allan there had not been enough time for everyone present at the Panel meeting to review it thoroughly. It was therefore agreed that this item be put on the main agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

5. PROPOSED CHANGE TO BPA OPERATIONS MANUAL

A proposal from Bill Sharp concerning foreign re-packs had been circulated with the agenda.

Bill had stated that the governing body of parachuting within Germany had recently extended the reserve repack cycle in Germany to 12 months. In order for German jumpers to be able to use their equipment at BPA Centres, he had proposed the following change to the Operations Manual.

Bill had proposed that reserve parachutes that have been packed in a foreign country, in a manner acceptable to the parachuting organisation of that country, may be jumped at a BPA Club for up to 12 months from the date of that packing. This is provided that the parachuting organisation of that foreign country allows 12 months validity for a reserve repack; otherwise the foreign country's lesser time will apply. The onus is on the jumper to prove that country's repack cycle.

The Committee gave this proposal careful consideration, but it was felt by those present that it could be a minefield as it goes beyond our current system and the proposal failed to find a second.

The Technical Officer asked the Committee if they would consider increasing the BPA reserve repack cycle to 12 months, possibly, for experienced kit only and asked for comments and input on this.

6. THE FUTURE OF RIGGING WITHIN THE BPA

A paper from John Harding concerning the future of rigging within the BPA, together with a letter from Bill Sharp with his views and comments on John's letter, was circulated with the agenda.

John did not believe that things were going very well with rigging in this country and it was in his opinion that the following areas needed to be reviewed and he had written his own thoughts on the various points for consideration by the Committee:

- i) Rigger ratings
- ii) Renewals
- iii) Discipline
- iv) Rigging Practice
- v) Codification of existing rules
- vi) Limitations of work.

Because of the time element, the Committee was unable to go through John's letter point by point. However, John drew the Committee's attention to the last paragraph in his letter where he had asked the Committee via the Chairman to appoint a panel comprising both riggers and other qualified persons to review all areas of rigging with the BPA system.

It was agreed that this item be put on the main agenda for discussion at the next meeting. John asked for more input and feedback.

7. FOREIGN RIGGER RATINGS

Due to the lateness of the hour, it was agreed by those present that this item be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

8. TANDEM VECTOR HARNESS CONTAINER SYSTEM MODIFICATION

A request had been circulated with the agenda, together with relevant information and drawings from John Harding to incorporate a Next Harness Container System secondary drogue release handle onto a Tandem Vector Harness Container System, for general use.

It was proposed by John Harding and seconded by Kim Newton that the above request be accepted.

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstentions: 1

Carried

9. MODIFICATION TO STUDENT AFF EQUIPMENT

A request had been circulated with the agenda, together with relevant paperwork and drawings from John Curtis to install a BOC ‘throwaway’ pilot chute system onto a Telesis AFF container.

John Curtis presented a set of the equipment with this modification to those present.

It was proposed by John Curtis and seconded by Kim Newton that the above modification be accepted for use on all Telesis containers.

For: 5

Against: 0

Abstentions: 1

Carried

The Committee was advised that John Harding had prepared a more comprehensive set of drawings for this modification, a copy of which could be obtained from the BPA Office on request.

10. ADVANCED PACKERS EXAMINATION COURSE REPORT – GEOFF HUGHES

Geoff Hughes had submitted an Advanced Packers Examination Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated with the Agenda. Andrew Davies had successfully completed the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

11. ADVANCED PACKERS EXAMINATION COURSE REPORT – DAVE CHAPMAN

Dave Chapman had submitted an Advanced Packers Examination Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated with the Agenda. Stuart Albon had successfully completed the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status. The Committee was also advised that he had then completed the Tandem examination and had also been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade T) status.

12. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

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

13. MANUFACTURERS SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

The Committee was advised that Parachutes De France had issued a safety bulletin since the last meeting, which had been previously circulated for information. The bulletin concerned the mandatory grounding of all Ninja main canopies until further notice.

14. A.O.B

i) Pete Sizer had submitted an Advanced Packers Examination Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present. Garry Wilson, already an Advanced Packer

for Square reserves, had now successfully completed the Course for round reserves and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade R) status.

- ii) Pete Sizer had submitted a further Advanced Packers Examination Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated with the Agenda. Mick Danby, already an Advanced Packer for square reserves, had now successfully completed the Course for Tandem reserves and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade T) status.
- iii) John Harding had an item he wished to draw to the Committee's attention concerning Advanced Packers. John stated that at the Nationals recently he was doing a lot of kit and docs checks and one of the things that he had come across several times were people who were training to be Advanced Packers who were signing for their reserve re-packs themselves on the Record of Inspection.

John Harding was sure that they had been properly supervised, but he asked that it be recorded that only those people who hold a qualification to pack a reserve can sign the Record of Inspection, not people in training.

Date of next Meeting: Thursday 10th October 2002
BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester.
4.00 p.m.

14th August 2002

Distribution

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