

**BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION**  
**RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER**  
**THURSDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2003**

**Present:** Paul Applegate - Chairman  
John Curtis  
Pete Sizer  
Pat Walters

**Apologies:** Bill Sharp, Gary Lawry, Bernadette Whitaker, Kim Newton, Allan Hewitt.

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

**Observer:** Jeff Illidge.

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**ITEM**

1. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS MEETING OF THE 5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2003**

**Page 2, Item 3 –Reserve Re-Packing.** The Chairman had contacted Airtec with regard to finding out their views to the possibility of extending the Cypres battery life. A reply had been received from Airtec, which had been circulated with the Agenda. This reply would be taken into account when Bill Sharp's proposal was discussed under Item 3 of the main Agenda that evening.

Pat Walters referred to the fourth paragraph from the end of this item on Page 2 of the previous Minutes concerning the Record of Inspection and Cypres battery dates. Pat advised the Committee that what was quoted in the previous Minutes was not his personal view, but that he was making reference to what was actually stated in the BPA Operations Manual. He felt that it was important that this was noted.

**Page 4, Item 7 – AOB (i).** John Curtis advised the Committee that he had agreed previously to draw up a minimum criteria for the purposes of those establishments wishing to run Riggers Courses. He stated that he would do this over the winter months

The Chairman said that this was something that maybe John Curtis could liaise with Andrew Hilton, who was currently drafting the Riggers Technical Operations Manual.

**Page 5, Item 7 – AOB (c).** Allan Hewitt's request for his establishment to be approved to run Advanced Packing Courses and Rigging Courses was a main Agenda item.

There being no further matters arising, it was proposed by Pat Walters and seconded by Pete Sizer that the Minutes of the Riggers Committee meeting of the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2003 be accepted as a true record.

**Carried Unanimously**

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

There were no matters arising.

**3. PROPOSAL FROM BILL SHARP CONCERNING RESERVE RE-PACKING**

At the previous Riggers Meeting, Bill Sharp had put forward a proposal concerning reserve re-packing. The Committee had agreed to defer this item until the Chairman had contacted the manufactures find out their response with regard to extending the Cypres battery life. The Chairman had written to Airtec and their reply had been circulated with the Agenda, together with a copy of Bill's proposal, which was as follows:-

**'Service dates and battery change dates on AAD's must be adhered to as per manufacturers' recommendations. No reserve repack can be dated for a longer period than the expiry date of any AAD component part. In the case of a Cypres battery, the original reserve packer can change the battery and can then extend the repack date to the maximum original period allowed'.**

Also circulated to those present was a letter from Brian Dyas with his comments on Bill Sharp's proposal.

The Committee was also advised that correspondence had also been received from Ian Robertson, Andrew Hilton and Allan Hewitt in with their proxy votes in support of Bill's proposal, copies of which were circulated to those present.

This proposal generated some discussion. Pat Walters stated that he believed that the rules should remain the same.

John Curtis stated that he could see both sides of the argument, but he was concerned with the legal side of things if the rules remain unchanged.

It was proposed by Bill Sharp (proxy) and seconded by Ian Robertson (proxy) that the above proposal be accepted.

For: 5 (incl. 4 by proxy)

Against: 2

Abstentions: 0

**Carried**

As he above was accepted, it was agreed by those present that the above rule change will become effective at the next reserve re-pack following ratification of the Minutes at the next STC meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2003.

Bill Sharp had also asked for Rigger's opinions about the two following items, which were discussed by the Committee and minutes for information.

- ii. Bill had recently packed a Vortex 2 container (DOM Dec 02) and had noted a potential problem. The reserve free-bag has a loop at the pilot chute end of the bridle, which in his opinion is an excessively large loop for the job it has to do. On the container he had packed, the loop is 8" long when laid flat and is a definite snag point on reserve deployments, either from the container flaps or headgear of the jumper. It serves no purpose to be the size it is. Bill had stated that as everyone was aware, the bridle loop is so that you can 'larks head' the bridle to the pilot chute. The safest way of manufacturing the attachment point is to make a small loop, just large enough to pull the soft free-bag material through it. The 'not so safe way' is to have a large loop at the end of the bridle, and then thread the loop over the pilot chute but which then leaves a large loop for all future deployments. Since the pilot chute attachment is generally a one off operation, Bill saw no reason at all for the size of the loop. He asked riggers who have Vortex 2

containers on their DZ, to have a look at this problem in order that we can get it sorted out. Bill stated that he would be contacting the manufacturers about this and hopes to have their answer at the next meeting.

- ii. Bill Sharp's second item was also along the same vein, i.e. snags on deployment between containers and canopies. Many risers on main containers now come with Velcro less toggles, which at times have very poor 'excess brake retention' methods. Over a period he had noted that jumpers do not seem to be too aware of the potential danger of an excess ½ brake loop on the riser, catching on tuck tabs etc (or camera equipment) during the upward movement of the risers on deployment. In a subsequent cutaway, the main will not/may not separate and then we are back to similar problems as was caused by exposed grommets recently. There are quite a few ways of trapping this excess brake loop onto the riser itself, which requires very little rigging work. Bill wished to bring this point to the attention of Riggers, so as to make jumpers aware in the future.

#### **4. PROPOSAL CONCERNING THE CRITERIA FOR RUNNING ADVANCED PACKING COURSES AND RIGGING COURSES**

At the previous meeting the Committee had discussed a suggested criteria by the TO for the running of Advanced Packing Courses. The Committee agreed that these suggestions be put forward as a proposal for discussion at this meeting.

The Committee was also advised that a letter had been received from Allan Hewitt with his comments on these proposals, a copy of which was circulated to those present.

The proposed criteria for the running of Advanced Packing Courses and Rigging Courses was as follows:-

##### **ADVANCED PACKING COURSES**

1. BPA Affiliated Clubs wishing to run Advanced Packers Courses must notify the BPA office at least 14 days prior to the course. The BPA Riggers' Committee will then be informed of the course(s) at the next meeting.
2. Those wishing to run a course at a location other than BPA Affiliated Clubs must apply to the Rigger's Committee for permission, giving details of facilities etc.

*N.B.1 Proposed courses at locations other than a BPA Affiliated Club will not be permitted outside the UK.*

*N.B. 2 All courses must be held under current BPA requirements and guidelines.*

##### **RIGGING COURSES**

Those wishing to run a Rigging Course must apply to the Rigger's Committee for permission, giving details of facilities etc.

*N.B.1 Proposed courses at locations other than a BPA Affiliated Club will not be permitted outside the UK.*

*N.B. 2 All courses must be held under current BPA requirements and guidelines.*

This proposal generated a great deal of discussion. The Committee was made aware of Allan Hewitt's request to run Advanced Packing Courses and Rigging Courses at Skydive Spain, which was being dealt with under Item 5 on the Agenda.

The Committee made reference to Allan Hewitt's letter where he had stated that he had never requested to run a course outside of the BPA and that all of his requests had been as a BPA Examiner for BPA members who want to attend a BPA Course to work at BPA Centres on BPA members equipment.

The Technical Officer advised the Committee that he had spoken to Allan Hewitt and stated that if the Riggers Committee did agree to him running courses. It would need to go to BPA Council as he believed that this was a policy decision that only they could make for proposed courses to be held at locations outside of the UK other than at BPA Affiliated Clubs.

John Curtis also raised the question of how do we know that these facilities are covered by Public Liability insurance. He stated that he believed Riggers are not covered by BPA Insurance if they are working at a facility other than a BPA Affiliated Club. The Committee felt that this was another matter for consideration when permitting these Courses to be run.

The Technical Officer advised the meeting that he had worded the above suggested proposals based on the feeling of riggers at the previous meeting. However from the correspondence and comments that had been received, it seemed that some riggers opinions had changed.

Following further discussion on this proposal, it was agreed by those present that that NB1 in both of the above criteria for the running of Advanced Packing and Rigging Courses should be deleted altogether and thus N.B.2 now becomes N.B.1.

It was proposed by Paul Applegate and seconded by Pete Sizer that the above proposal be accepted with the above stated amendment.

**Carried Unanimously**

## **5. CORRESPONDENCE AND PROPOSALS FROM ALLAN HEWITT**

Correspondence had been received from Allan Hewitt had been circulated with the Agenda, with a number of proposals for the Committee to consider.

- i. Allan had proposed the following change to BPA form 199 (i) – Basic Riggers Course Syllabus (issue 2 Apr 2003). **'Delete (for both round and square parachutes)'**

Allan had stated in his correspondence that the Advanced Packer should be able to decide weather they want to be qualified as a rigger on rounds or squares as per the advanced packing courses. He believed it is extremely dangerous to force people to work on equipment that they have never seen before just to gain a qualification and will never work on and have no wish to be qualified to work on such outdated equipment.

Allan had also stated that it should be an option in case a new rigger requires this qualification to work on round parachutes in a local area, but as a rigger examiner it had proved very difficult for him to stay current on round parachutes as he just don't see them any more and why get qualified under a system when its almost impossible to stay current. Those who have grown up working on round reserves must know that it is a very in depth subject and if we force some one to work on rounds when they have never used one or seen one before it not only makes it very difficult to teach but with a little bit of knowledge they pass the course only to never work on one again.

This proposal generated a great deal of discussion. John Curtis pointed out that the Working Group set up to look at Rigging matters in general had discussed all of the various Packing and Rigging Course Syllabuses and the Committee had agreed on the Working Groups recommendations including BPA Form 199 (Basic Riggers Course Syllabus) to include both round and square parachutes as one of the requirements. John Curtis stated that no one had opposed these recommendations.

The Technical Officer also pointed out that this has already been decided by the Committee on several occasions and asked if Riggers are going to discuss it at every meeting.

Following further discussion, it was proposed by Alan Hewitt (proxy) and seconded by Ray Armstrong (proxy) that the above recommendation be accepted.

For: 3 (incl. 3 by proxy)      Against: 7 (incl. 4 by proxy)      Abstentions: 0

**Not Carried**

It was agreed by those present that this subject had now been discussed and voted on by the Committee on several occasions and they did not care to have this matter discussed again in the future.

ii. **Allan Hewitt had proposed to run Advanced Packing and Rigging Courses at his facility at Skydive Spain according to the BPA Operations Manual and training syllabus.**

Allan had stated in his proposal that he had the same equipment (a full time rigging facility) and worked as a BPA examiner following the Operations Manual (the address was the only difference since his previous approval). The Committee was advised that although Allan had been given approval in the past to run Courses at his establishment in Aldershot, his facilities had not been checked out in Spain.

The Committee once again referred to Allan Hewitt's letter where he had stated that he had never requested to run a course outside of the BPA and that, all of his previous requests had been as a BPA Examiner for BPA members who wished to attend a BPA Course to work at BPA Centres on BPA members equipment.

The Committee noted that following the decision taken by Riggers on the previous Item 4 (Criteria for running Advanced Packing and Rigging Courses), Allan Hewitt would now be required to provide full details of his facilities and equipment for the Committee to consider.

The Chairman agreed to contact Allan Hewitt to ask him to provide details of his facilities and equipment, which would be circulated in advanced to the Riggers that had been present that evening. Details of Allan's request would then be presented to Council members for discussion and consideration at the next Council meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2003.

It was proposed by Allan Hewitt (proxy) and seconded by John Rix (proxy) that Allan Hewitt be permitted to run Courses at Skydive Spain providing that the details of his facilities and equipment are acceptable and that Council agrees to Courses being run outside of the UK.

For: 9 (incl. 6 by proxy)      Against 1 (by proxy)      Abstentions: 0

**Carried**

**6. EXEMPTION REQUEST FROM GARY LAWRY**

A copy of Gary Lawry's request had been circulated with the Agenda for a number of named BPA members to undertake Advanced Packer training, who had not completed the required twelve month period as Approved Packers. The individuals were full time assistant staff at the

Joint Services Parachute Centre.

It was noted that since Gary had submitted his request, one of individuals had now held an Approved Packing Certificate for a year. The other individuals had held the Certificate for 6 months, 4 months and 1 month respectively.

A number of questions were raised by those present in regard to this request. The Committee felt that they would have liked to see Gary to have been present at the meeting to put forward his case and to answer any questions that may arise, but it was understood that his son was poorly and he could not therefore attend that evening.

It was therefore agreed by those present that this item be deferred until the next meeting, where it was hoped that Gary Lawry could be present.

7. **PROPOSAL FROM JOHN CURTIS THAT WINGS CONTAINERS BE ACCEPTED FOR STUDENT USE WITH OR WITHOUT BOC**

John Curtis gave the meeting details of his proposal for acceptance of Wings containers either BOC ripcord or throwaway (ripaway) pilot chutes on Student RAPS and AFF equipment in Free Fall mode only. The Committee was advised that equipment had been inspected by Pete Sizer and Paul Applegate.

It was proposed by John Curtis and seconded by Pete Sizer that the above request be accepted.

**Carried Unanimously**

8. **ADVANCED PACKERS COURSE REPORT FROM GARY LAWRY**

Gary Lawry had submitted an Advanced Packers Course Report, which had been circulated with the Agenda. Bill Steele had successfully completed the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

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

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

10. **MANUFACTURERS' SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS**

Since the last meeting the following Manufacturers Safety Bulletins had been received:-

- i) A Copy of Jump Shack Letter regarding Ripcord Pins had been received and previously circulated for information.
- ii) The Committee discussed a mandatory Service Bulletin from Capewell concerning Capewell Supplied Pins & Ripcords, which had been previously circulated. The Chairman advised the Committee that some ripcord pins outside the dates of those specified by the manufacturer have also bent, one of which had been sent to Capewell for inspection.
- iii) A Service Bulletin had also been received from Parachutes de France regarding Capewell Supplied Pins and Ripcords. This had also been circulated for information.
- iv) A Service Bulletin had been circulated to CCIs and Instructor Examiners from Sun Path Products concerning the mandatory inspection on all adjustable Main Lift Web Harnesses

on Javelin and Javelin Odyssey harness/container systems, the majority being Student Systems.

The Chairman of STC advised the Committee that he had been made aware of the above Bulletin whilst he was in Russia. He thanked David Hickling who had contacted parachute centres on his behalf with details.

Copies of the above Bulletin will also be circulated to Riggers and Advanced Packers with the Minutes.

- v) A Service Bulletin had also been received from Thomas Sports Equipment concerning Capewell Supplied Pins and Ripcords, which will be circulated with the Minutes for information.
- vi) Parachutes de France had issue a Safety Bulletin on the Maximum Operating Limits Techno 240, a copy of which will also be circulated with the Minutes for information.

## 11. A.O.B

- i) A letter had been received from Chris Thomas advising the Committee of an Advanced Packing Course being held from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> August to Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> August at Hibaldstow and the exam if necessary on the 9<sup>th</sup> August at Thomas Sports Equipment.
- ii) Bill Sharp had send in details of an Advanced Packers Course commencing 27<sup>th</sup> June 2003 for Iain Anderson. Iain had completed the Course and would attend for final examination in due course.
- iii) A letter had been received from Allan Hewitt concerning the Rigging for Instructors Manual, which he had asked to be circulated with the Minutes for information.
- iv) John Curtis advised the Committee that he is proposing to run 2 Advanced Packing Courses. He stated that the first Course is scheduled for 13 – 16 October 2003. He then plans to run a second Course before the end of December 2003 – dates to be advised.
- v) Andrew Hilton had advised the Committee that a draft version of Technical Operations Manual would be available to go out with the Agenda for the next meeting.
- vi) Pat Walters advised the Committee that one of his Tandem Instructors who also held an Advanced Packer rating had recently purchased a Tandem Sigma. Pat asked the Committee for permission to examine this Instructor on this particular set equipment to enable him to be allowed to pack it himself in the future. The Committee expressed no problem with this request.
- vii) The Chairman advised the Committee that the office had been contacted by several companies who manufacture seals and sealing bags. He stated that he did not believe these products were relevant to parachuting.

Date of next Meeting: Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2003  
BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester.  
4.00 p.m.

14<sup>th</sup> August 2003

**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 22<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER 2003**