

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 3 AUGUST 2006

Present: John Hitchen - Chairman STC
Rick Boardman
Pat Walters
Andy Page
John Harding

Apologies: Paul Applegate, Pete Sizer, Bernadette Whitaker, Dave Major, Phil Elston.

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

Observers: Sylvia Radcliffe, Jeff Illidge.

ITEM

In the absence of Paul Applegate, the meeting was chaired by John Hitchen.

1. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS MEETING OF THE 1 JUNE 2006

Page 3, Item 5 – Proposal from John Harding concerning the Reserve Re-Pack Cycle. At the previous meeting, the Committee had discussed this proposal at some length. John Harding said that he was unhappy with part of the Minutes relating to this issue as the Minutes had stated that the majority of those CCIs present felt that a re-pack cycle of 12 months was too long and they would need an awful lot of convincing to support a 12 month re-pack cycle. John Harding did not believe that this statement accurately reflected what was said at the meeting.

John Harding stated that a vote had not taken place on his proposal, mainly because of statement the TO had made towards the end of the discussion on this issue, which had not been minuted and which John believed had been pertinent to the discussion.

The TO had advised the Committee that the CAA had said that any changes to the current requirements would require a 'safety case' from the Riggers Committee, in which the Riggers Committee would need to justify their reasons for any changes, which the CAA would need to agree to. The TO had stated that initially, the Riggers Committee would need to approach STC with any proposed changes.

Following some discussion, it was agreed by those present that Minutes be amended to reflect what was said at the previous meeting regarding this matter.

Page 6, Item 10 – AOB (ii) – BPA Index of Safety Notices/Information Bulletins.

A letter had been received from Bill Sharp, a copy of which has been circulated to those present. At the previous meeting, Bill had agreed to start a 'reorganization' of the BPA Safety Notice Index.

Bill reported that so far, he had made no more progress on this project, due to his summer holidays and a busy summer period. He stated that this would be a long term project and he hoped to get back into it as soon as possible.

Bill had stated that one idea that he had been considering, in order to get help from the Rigger membership so as to find proper references to some of the items in the Index, was for him to put a page link into his BPA Tandem Modifications website, on items that he required further information on. He stated that he hoped this will be up and running before the next meeting and that he would report further then.

Page 6, Item 10 – AOB (vi). At the previous meeting, Rick Boardman asked whether Agendas/Minutes could be sent by e-mail.

The Chairman of STC reported that it was the offices intention in the future to send Rigger Agendas/Minutes and any safety related information to Riggers and Advanced Packers by e-mail. He stated that a form asking Riggers and Advanced Packers to provide details of their e-mail addresses had been circulated with the agenda. Anyone who had not provided this information was asked to do so in order that their details can be added to the database.

There being no further matters arising, it was proposed by Rick Boardman and seconded by Andy Page that the Minutes of the Riggers meeting of the 1 June 2006 with the above stated amendment, be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 1 JUNE 2006

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

3. EQUIPMENT CHANGE PROPOSAL – ANDY PAGE

A Student Parachutist Equipment Change proposal application from Andy Page had been circulated with the Agenda, together with related paperwork and drawings.

Andy had asked for a modification on the Strong Dual Hawk Tandem harness to move the secondary drogue release from the R/H lift web position, (which is adjacent to the primary drogue release) and reposition it on the L/H lift web, which will allow for L/H operation in the event of R/H arm or hand injury or student interference.

Andy had stated that this secondary release was originally intended to go on the student harness, but this was not generally used in the UK so Andy had said that it seemed sensible to have the R/H and L/H option rather than both on the same side. Andy presented the equipment to those present.

Following some discussion, it was proposed by Andy Page and seconded by Rick Boardman that the above modification is accepted for general use.

Carried Unanimously

4. STUDENT HARNESS & CONTAINER SYSTEM – INITIAL CLEARANCE REQUEST – JOHN HARDING

A Student Harness & Container System – Initial Clearance request from John Harding had been circulated with the Agenda.

John had requested that the Performance Variable TD400 Tandem Parachute system be cleared for Student use. The equipment in question was available for inspection. However, following some discussion, it was agreed that this item be put back until the end of the meeting, to enable the Committee members to inspect the equipment.

At the end of meeting, the Chairman of STC referred the Committee back to this item and those members present were able to inspect the equipment.

At this stage, the Committee's attention was drawn to the fact that the equipment had not been inspected by an Advanced Rigger prior to it being presented that evening. It was pointed out to those present that the intention of the newly created BPA form 258 – (Student Harness & Container System - Initial Clearance) was that the equipment requiring initial clearance is inspected by an Advanced Rigger. It is that Advanced Rigger who then submits the application request for consideration by the Committee. Therefore, until such time as the correct procedures had been followed, the Committee felt they were unable to consider the request further.

The Chairman of STC reported that in Bill Sharp's correspondence he had commented that on this request, the BPA form being used (Form 258) was not designed with a Tandem System in mind. Bill stated that he is not saying it could not be used for Tandem systems, but if it is to be used for this in the future, he felt there may be some additions required to the form. He also believed that the last section, small digital photos etc should be included for future reference. The Committee noted Bill's comments and agreed that a new form should be created for Tandem equipment.

5. LETTER FROM RICK BOARDMAN CONCERNING RAF PACKERS AT BOSCOMBE DOWN

A letter from Rick Boardman had been circulated with the agenda concerning RAF Packers at Boscombe Down. Rick said that he would like discuss this in principle at this meeting, with a view to formally proposing some set criteria at the next meeting.

Rick Boardman advised the Committee that some of the parachute maintenance and packing team at Boscombe Down were still encountering problems when they take military expeditions abroad, in particular the USA. He stated that as far as the US are concerned, they are required to be qualified to the standards set down by the UK National Governing body, and the RAF qualification is frequently viewed to be insufficient

Rick stated that the relevant packers at Boscombe Down were willing to join the BPA as full members, and attend a full Advanced Packing course. Although they would need an exemption to attend a course without having the required year in the sport. They would need to do the course and pass it. Rick stated that he would be willing to get his workshop to the required standard for the course to take place and that he would be willing to run the course under the supervision of the relevantly qualified personnel, or let those people run the course at his workshop.

Following some discussion, the Committee considered that this was a reasonable request and asked that Rick present a formal proposal for consideration at the next meeting.

6. ADVANCED PACKER COURSE REPORTS

A number of Advanced Packers Course Reports had been circulated with the Agenda:

- i) An Advanced Packers Tandem Upgrade Course was held at Thomas Sports Equipment

from the 19 – 22 June 2006.

Maggie Penny and Judith Lees both attended the Course and were permitted to take the examination on the final day. Both candidates were successful and were awarded Advanced Packer (Grade T) status.

- ii) An Advanced Packers Tandem Upgrade Course had been held at Thomas Sports Equipment from the 29 – 30 May 2006 attended by Geraldine McGuinness.

Geraldine successfully took the examination phase on the 27 June 2006 and was awarded Advanced Packer (Grade T) status.

- iii) An Advanced Packers Tandem Upgrade Course was held at the Headcorn Parachute Club from the 3 – 5 July 2006 for Louise Cliff.

Louise successfully passed the examination phase of the Course on the final day and was awarded Advanced Packer (Grade T) status.

Some concern was raised from those present because Pete had stated in his report that Louise 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 generated some discussion, after which it was felt by those present that the subject of pro-packing Tandem reserves needed re-addressing and it was agreed to put this as an agenda item for discussion at the next meeting.

- iv) David Gould had also submitted an Advanced Packers Tandem Upgrade report, a copy of which was tabled to those present. Phill Elston had successfully attended the Course.

The Committee was advised that David Gould had not sent in the accompanying paperwork for this Course. Once this has been received, Phill's rating would be issued.

7. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

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

8. MANUFACTURER'S SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

A number of manufacturer's safety notices/information bulletins had been circulated since the last meeting, which are around the table for information.

- i) A service bulletin had been circulated from Parachutes de France concerning the Techno 240-B. During dummy tests, a slow deployment of a Techno 240-B had been detected. The Bulletin included details of, Slider and Steering Line replacement and packing modification.

John Harding expressed some concern with regard to Parachutes de France attitude towards the issue of their safety bulletins. He stated that at times, it takes them a long time to issue them. He also stated that there have been occasions whereby he has been made aware of a potential problem through word of mouth and when he browses their website, he find that the information is not there. He also stated that it is difficult to get English translations of some of their bulletins.

Following some discussion the Committee requested that the Chairman of Riggers contact Parachutes de France to ask them if they can be a bit more pro-active with their safety notices/technical bulletins.

- ii) A Bulletin has been circulated by the French Parachute Federation concerning Quick 3. reserve pilot chutes on equipment from Parachutes de France.

The French Federation had been informed of some coils being locked during extraction of some spring reserve pilot chutes Quick 3.1. These incidents which occurred despite folding of the fabrics in between the coils, which might have been incorrectly folded and/or maybe an insufficient compressed pilot chute during the closing of the reserve flaps.

The Bulletin explained the new procedures of folding the mesh and fabrics inside the coils including recommendation of how to close the container with a Quick 3.1 reserve pilot chute.

- iii) Information had also been circulated from the Rigging Innovations website with the Agenda concerning the status of Vigil AAD in Rigging Innovations products.

Rigging Innovations (RI) have stated that as of 12 June 2006 it does not approve the installation and/or use of the Vigil AAD in any RI product.

- v) Tabled to those present was some technical information that had been forwarded to Paul Applegate from the French Parachute Federation concerning the attachment of collapsible sliders. That the bowl + benji elastic that you can find mounted on the reserve flap is not permitted any more on French drop zones. They will still tolerate the 'velcro' attachment only if jumpers follow their recommendations to not fully grab both parts (male + female).

- vi) Also tabled to those present was some technical information forwarded to Paul Applegate from the French Parachute Federation concerning the issue of sticking risers.

This concerned Atom Tandem risers V4 made in 2006 which were found to be sticky. They stated that Parachutes de France have stated that they have identified all of the parts concerned and have contacted all customers regarding this problem. However, no safety information bulletin had been issued by them concerning this issue.

9. **A.O.B**

- i) The Chairman of STC advised the Committee that an incident report had been received where a Student who had a hard landing and his Cypres 2 fired. However, the unit was returned to the manufacturers who investigated that the aircraft with the Student on board had gone elsewhere to re-fuel before completing the lift. The re-fuelling airfield was 150ft lower and therefore when the Student had the hard landing, the AAD fired because it was still in its activation window, which is 750ft down to 120ft.

ii) **Confidential Reports:**

The Chairman stated that one report has been submitted since the last meeting, this concerned Cypres batteries were found to be out of date. The Rigger concerned had been advised of this incident.

vii) Bill Sharp had requested permission to run two Riggers Courses at RAPA at the end of this year. The dates are as follows:

13 – 17 November 2006 – Advanced Riggers Course

11 – 15 December 2006 – Basic/Parachute Riggers Course

It was proposed by Bill Sharp (proxy) and seconded by Andy Page that the above request be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

Bill had advised there were still some slots spare for suitably qualified people. Please contact Bill Sharp at Bsharp2440@aol.com

Date of next Meeting: Thursday 28 September 2006
BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester.
4.00 p.m.

8 August 2006

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 11 SEPTEMBER 2006