

BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION
RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING
BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER
THURSDAY 2 AUGUST 2007

Present: John Hitchen - Chairman
Rick Boardman
Pat Walters
Dave Major
Pete Sizer
Bernadette Whitaker
Steve Thomas

Apologies: Paul Applegate, Phill Elston.

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

Observers: Colin Fitzmaurice, John Page (*from item 8i*)

ITEM

The Chairman of STC stated that Paul Applegate was not able to be present to attend the meeting and had requested that John Hitchen chair it on his behalf.

1. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS MEETING OF THE 31 MAY 2007**

There being no matters arising, it was proposed by Pat Walters and seconded by Dave Major that the Minutes of the Riggers meeting of the 31 May 2007, be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

2. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 31 MAY 2007**

There were no matters arising from the previous Minutes.

3. **TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM BILL SHARP FOR PERMISSION TO HOST TWO RIGGING COURSES**

A proposal had been received from Bill Sharp, a copy of which had been circulated with the Agenda requesting permission to host two Rigging Courses. The dates of which were as follows:

10 – 14 December 2007

7 – 11 January 2008

Bill had stated that there were only a couple of spaces still available on either Course and anyone interested should contact him by e-mail at: Bsharp2440@aol.com

The Chairman of STC said that he had been extremely impressed by the rigging facilities at RAPA during a recent inspection at the Club.

Following some discussion, it was proposed by Bill Sharp (proxy) and seconded by Pete Sizer that the above request be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

4. INCIDENT REPORTS

- i) The Chairman of STC advised those present that Bill Sharp had sent in further details of an incident concerning the recent failure of a mini 3-ring riser at RAPA, details of which had been circulated with the agenda. He stated that a BPA had also received an Incident Report following this incident.

Bill Sharp had stated that the jumper concerned had reported a very hard opening on his Performance Variable ‘Spark 190’ main. Immediately on deployment, the right riser broke at the small ring/loop area, giving him a streaming canopy, which resulted in a cutaway and a successful reserve deployment/landing. A subsequent investigation seemed to suggest that the most likely cause was a misrouted 3 ring, i.e. the closing loop was passed over the small ring and the middle ring. There was no damage to the grommet, cutaway cable or anaconda housing.

Bill had stated that when this scenario (of a misrouted ring) was given a ‘cursory glance’ it could be a little hard to pick up. The canopy had done about twenty jumps since its last ‘disconnection’ at reserve repack, which Bill had stated was not by himself, but that would mean that it had been missed on the flight line by twenty odd checkers. The rig owner had also stated that he had not disconnected/reconnected the rig at any time.

Bill had stated that as nothing concrete can be proven against any of the connected parties, it was suffice to say that all concerned had been made aware of the potential dangers of what happened and he felt this also should serve as a reminder and warning to all others when rigging and/or flight line checking equipment.

Pete Sizer advised those present that he had been at RAPA when this particular incident occurred. He stated that he shared Bill Sharp’s view that the equipment had been mis-assembled.

- ii) The Chairman of STC advised the Committee that an incident report had been received of a misfire on an Argus AAD. The AAD had fired at about 3,000ft as the parachutist deployed his main. He stated that it appeared that the AAD reset itself at 3,000ft in the aircraft on the way to altitude. The AAD had been sent to the manufacturers for further investigation.
- iii) Another incident report of a malfunction/deployment problem had been received where the jumper reported that a line broke at half-break setting (finger trapped type). The equipment involved was a Tear Drop, BOC Throw away.
- iv) The Chairman of STC advised those present that Andy Montriou had advised Paul

Applegate that he had recently come across a Quasar rig where he found the grommet that the Cypres washer butts up against had male parts facing down. This meant that the turn back of male grommet was starting to cut into the loop that was sandwiched between the grommet and washer. Andy had stated that he would contact the manufacturers to report this incident.

Paul Applegate had stated that he did not believe this to be a manufacturing problem, but may be just a 'one off' occurrence. However, he felt that everyone should be made aware of this incident.

5. ADVANCED PACKERS COURSE REPORTS

- i) An Advanced Packers Training Course had taken place at UK parachuting from the 4 – 7 June 2007. Andy Page had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

Paul Jordan, Stephan Thain and Ryan Mancey had attended the Course and had been advised to return for the final examination phase at a future date.

- ii) An Advanced Packers Course had taken place at Skydive Brid from the 15 – 17 June 2007. Ray Armstrong had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

Simon Nath attended the Course for conversion from the old style Advanced Packing Certificate to the current Advanced Packer rating.

Simon successfully attended the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

- iii) An Advanced Packers Training Course had taken place at Skydive Brid from the 19 – 22 June 2007. Ray Armstrong had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had also been circulated to those present. The packing instructors running the Course had been Ray Armstrong, Paul Burns and Nicky Johnston.

Ally Milne, Samuel Bemment, Chris Cook, Neil Butcher, Owen Martin and Sara Orton attended the Course and had been advised to return for the final examination phase at a future date.

Both Ally Milne and Sara Orton had now both successfully completed their Advanced Packers Examination Courses at Skydive Brid. A copy of their respective Course Reports had been circulated to those present.

The Committee was informed that Ally had been issued with his Advanced Packer (Grade S) rating. However, the office was still awaiting Sara's complete paperwork to arrive in the post upon receipt of which, her rating would be issued.

- iv) Eliot Martin had attended an Advanced Packer Tandem upgrade/conversion Course, which had been held at Skydive Brid. Eliot already held an Advanced Packer (Grade S) rating. Ray Armstrong had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

The Examiners stated that Eliot achieved a level of competence that they felt with

practice he would be able to reach the standard required to attain an Advanced Packer Tandem qualification when presenting for the examination phase.

Eliot had subsequently attended the Advanced Packers Tandem Examination Course at Skydive Brid. A Course Report had been submitted, a copy of which had also been circulated to those present.

Eliot Martin successfully attended the Course and had been upgraded to include Advanced Packer (Grade T) status.

- v) An Advanced Packers Training Course had taken place at the Headcorn Parachute Club from the 9 – 12 July. Pete Sizer had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

Rohan Beal and Judy Walker attended the Course and had been advised to return for the final examination phase at a future date.

- vi) Ray Armstrong had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which has been circulated to those present. Joe Willoughby had presented himself to be examined for conversion from an old Advanced Packing Certificate to the current Advanced Packer rating.

Joe successfully attended the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

6. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

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

7. MANUFACTURER'S SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

A number of Service Bulletins and Advisory Notices had been circulated since the last meeting:

- i) A product Services Bulletin had been received from United Parachute Technologies dated 30 January 2007. It advised that all Tandem loop style reserve ripcords manufactured by Relative Workshop prior to October 2004 with black shrink-wrap on the swage are inspected for any broken filaments. If found, the ripcord needed to be replaced immediately. The Bulletin had stated that since October 2004, clear shrink-wrap was used to visibly inspect the filaments.

Some concern was expressed by those present that this Bulletin had only just been received bearing in mind it had been issued in January by the manufacturers. It was pointed out that manufacturers do not always send the Association their Bulletins as a matter of Course. Pete Sizer said that he had happened to see this Bulletin by chance when searching for something else on the Internet and had forwarded to the office at that time.

- ii) The French Parachute Federation had published 2 Bulletins. The first Bulletin involved the snap to hold container main flap on an Advance rig. The second Bulletin required changing the bottom part of the steering lines on the Decelerator 120 made before December 2001. This was because it was too short for tall persons (risk of stall).
- iii) The French Parachute Federation had published a Bulletin making it mandatory to

change all Vigil cutters made in March 2007, whatever the shape of the cutter hole, or the loop was found damaged or not. An E-mail had also been received from the French Parachute Federation concerning a potential issue found on a Vigil cutter made in January 2007.

- iv) Another Bulletin had been issued by the French Parachute Federation. Some cutten webbings had been found on a reserve riser from a Talon 2. They suspected it had been done by the person in charge of receiving and opening the rolls coming from the supplier. Rigging Innovations (RI) had been contacted, but in the meantime the French Federation had asked their Riggers to check any rig from RI made in blue navy webbing type 7 manufactured between 30 June 99 and 1 July 2000.

The Committee felt that this had been a quality control issue and not a production problem.

- v) The Chairman of STC advised those present that some information had been received from Ian Robertson concerning a Vigil cutter fault.

Ian had stated that there had been safety notices regarding Vigil cutters with the plastic inserts, which said to look at the outside edges for damage. Ian had found the following damage to the inside of one of the cutter inserts, which was installed in a Javelin rig. (Vigil Serial Number 03917 - Manufactured 15/07/05).

One side of the plastic cutter insert was found to have a piece missing from it, which could possibly lead to damage to the closing loop. It had been withdrawn from service and the unit was being returned to the manufacturer.

Ian stated that you have to look very carefully at an angle to the borehole before you would find any damage.

- vi) An e-mail had been received from Eric Fradet questioning the use of the Argus AAD in Tandem equipment. Eric had included a report from Aviacom explaining there was a 218 miles per hour speed limit on any Argus unit, providing a cutter inhibition.

Eric stated that he believed this speed could be quickly reached after exit, in Tandem and in a case where the drogue was not deployed there was a possibility of exceeding that limit. Consequently, Eric had therefore asked that jumpers should consider the use of such a device in their Tandem equipment.

Some discussion took place by those present with regard to what other AAD manufacturers parameters are for normal skydiving.

The Committee felt they did not believe that this was something that would occur in the normal capabilities of the sport and that generally speaking no electronic device was going to be able to come up with every scenario with the kind of variations there are. However it was felt by those present that parachutists should not rely on AADs for operating outside of normal skydiving parameters.

- vii) The French Parachute Federation had issued a Service Bulletin concerning riser loops on the Tandem Advanced manufactured by Basik Air concept. This followed an incident with a riser loop found damaged because of an incorrect setting, which cut the loop jump after jump. It was required to check all riser loops on the Tandem Advance.

- ix) A Technical Advisory has been received from Basik Air concept concerning Advance

Tandem system T1 and T2 manufactured before April 2006.

The manufacturers had requested that owners of all Advance Tandem equipment manufactured before April 2006 verify the left side diagonal back strap at the Oeticker clamp level, which maintains the reserve housing located on the shoulder right beside the 3 ring system. This is because of a potential risk of damage on the type 8 webbing because of the clamp friction on the webbing.

8. A.O.B

- i) A request had been received from John Page asking that the subject of Tandem Harnesses be discussed. Mr Page had requested that the Committee look at the suitability of interchanging the Tandem harness from the Next system with the Sigma and Vector systems. Mr Page stated that as he understood it from the previous meeting, that it was thought that approval from the manufacturer should be sought, but stated that he was quite confident that some of the BPA approved Tandem modifications also lacked such approval for example the use of Next BOC pockets on Vector containers and the use of the Next drogue on Vector systems.

The Chairman advised those present that a letter from Bill Sharp had been received on this matter, a copy of which had been circulated to those present.

Bill had stated that he did not know who gave Mr Page the understanding that manufacturers' approval should be sought for this change, but that Mr Page was correct when he said that no such approval was ever sought from, or granted to, by any Tandem manufacturer for any of the other BPA Approved Tandem Modifications approved in the past. That's why they are called 'BPA Approved'.

Following some discussion, it was felt by those present that Mr Page should refer to the Tandem Modification website for the modifications that are already approved by the BPA. If he then wished to get something approved, which was not on the list, he would need to submit a Tandem Modification request for consideration by the Committee. This request must be supported by a BPA Rigger.

- ii) Pat Walters reported on an incident that he had brought to the attention of the Chairman of Riggers.

Pat stated that he had received a phone call from a jumper regarding his AAD. The jumper advised Pat that he had not jumped since his last re-pack and on checking his kit had found that he could not read the read-out on his Cypres AAD. The jumper asked Pat if he could have a look at it for him. Pat advised the jumper concerned that he should really refer back to the original packer. However, Pat had agreed to assist.

Pat stated that on checking the AAD himself, he was not able to read the LCD display on the AAD either. He immediately sent the AAD to the manufacturers, which they repaired and returned several days later.

What concerned Pat was that when he checked the remarks section on the Inspection Check List. The following had been written with regard to the AAD:

“Cypres display unit damaged, but readable (just)”

Pat was concerned with the word ‘just’ being used on the Check List in this way. He

stated that in his opinion if equipment falls within a 'just' serviceable category, it was not acceptable to put that equipment back into service.

The Committee also agreed with Pat on this matter and following further discussion, it was felt by those present that packer concerned should be contacted regarding this issue and that the Chairman of the Rigger's Committee be asked to address this matter further.

Pete Sizer reported that he had seen a number of AAD units that had damaged displays units. He stated that the glass displays on AADs were not well protected and can be easily damaged. He felt that packers should bear this in mind when handling equipment.

Date of next Meeting: Thursday 27 September 2007
BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester
at 4.00 p.m

9 August 2007

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 10 SEPTEMBER 2007**