

**BRITISH PARACHUTE ASSOCIATION**  
**RIGGERS COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**BPA OFFICES, 5 WHARF WAY, GLEN PARVA, LEICESTER**  
**THURSDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2004**

**Present:** Paul Applegate - Chairman  
Kim Newton  
Andrew Hilton  
Bill Sharp  
Pat Walters  
Bernadette Whitaker  
John Curtis  
John Harding  
Pete Sizer

**Apologies:** Allan Hewitt.

**In Attendance:** Tony Butler - Technical Officer  
John Hitchen - NCSO  
Chris Allen - Chairman BPA  
Dave Hickling (after 6.30 pm) - Council/BPS Langar

**Observers:** Richard Aveyard, Dave Major, Mike Rust, Jeff Illidge, Colin Fitzmaurice,  
Simon Wilkinson.

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**ITEM**

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON**

The Chairman of STC took the Chair pending the election of a Chairperson.

Kim Newton proposed and Pete Sizer seconded a motion that Paul Applegate continues in the post as Chairperson of the Riggers Committee for a further year. This was unanimously agreed by those present.

**Carried Unanimously**

**2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS MEETING OF THE 4 DECEMBER 2003**

There being no matters arising from the previous meeting, it was proposed by Pat Walters and seconded by Bernadette Whitaker that the Minutes of the Riggers Committee meeting of the 4 December 2003 be accepted as a true record.

**Carried Unanimously**

**3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 4 DECEMBER 2003**

**Page 3, Item 4 – Fatality JSPC Netheravon** John Curtis referred to the Board of Inquiry Report into this fatality and asked if the spandex pocket in which the main parachute BOC deployment toggle was in good order. The Technical Officer stated that all the equipment was in good order and that the toggle easily went back into the pocket.

**4. PROPOSED RIGGING FOR INSTRUCTORS MANUAL**

A draft copy of the Rigging for Instructors Manual produced by Andrew Hilton and Pete Sizer had been circulated with the agenda. Circulated to those present was a letter from Allan Hewitt with his comments for consideration by the Committee.

Andrew Hilton stated that he had also received a number of minor changes that he would incorporate into the Manual.

Some discussion took place with regard to the title of the Manual, during which the Committee agreed to name the Manual - 'Equipment Knowledge for Instructors'

Following further discussion, it was proposed by Pat Walters and seconded by Kim Newton that the 'Equipment Knowledge for Instructors' is accepted with any minor changes to be incorporated by Andrew Hilton.

**Carried Unanimously**

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Andrew Hilton and Pete Sizer for the work that they had carried out on this item

**5. PROPOSED RIGGERS TECHNICAL OPERATIONS MANUAL**

A draft copy of the Riggers Technical Manual by Andrew Hilton had been circulated with the agenda. Circulated to those present was a letter from Allan Hewitt with a number of comments he wished the Committee to consider.

A good deal of discussion ensued, during which Andrew Hilton stated that the Manual is not a complete listing of all the rules, but is simply a listing of rules that have not been recorded elsewhere and must be read in conjunction with all BPA rigging and related documents.

During the discussion a number of areas in the Manual were discussed, which involved changes to the current rules. The Committee felt that any changes to the current rules would need to go out as agenda items for consideration by the Committee at a future meeting.

The Committee then discussed each of the points raised by Allan Hewitt in his correspondence, which also included some changes to the current rules. Again it was pointed out that if Allan wished to make any amendments to the current rules, his proposals would need to go as an agenda item for a future meeting.

After further discussion, it was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Andrew Hilton that the title of the Manual be changed to the 'Rigging Technical Manual' and that it be accepted as written.

For: 8                      Against: 1 (by proxy)                      Abstentions: 0

**Carried**

**6. PROPOSED REVISED ADVANCED PACKER COURSE SYLLABUS**

A proposed revised Advanced Packer Course Syllabus had been circulated with the agenda. Comments from Allan Hewitt on this item were also circulated to those present, which the Committee took into consideration.

The Committee discussed a few minor alterations to the Syllabus after which, it was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Kim Newton that the Advanced Packer Course Syllabus (BPA Form

169) be accepted with the minor amendments discussed that evening, which Andrew Hilton will incorporate.

For: 8                      Against: 1 (by proxy)                      Abstentions: 0

**Carried**

**7. PROPOSED REVISED RESERVE PACKING TRAINING RECORD**

A copy of the proposed revised Reserve Packing Training Record was circulated with the agenda.

It was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Kim Newton that the Reserve Packing Training Record (BPA Form 175) be accepted.

**Carried Unanimously**

**8. PROPOSED RIGGING LOFT MINIMUM CRITERIA**

A copy of the proposed Rigging Loft Minimum Criteria had been circulated with the agenda. Comments from Allan Hewitt on this item were also circulated to those present, which the Committee took into consideration.

Allan Hewitt had stated in his correspondence that he was against this because the proposed form states that Rigging Courses can only be held within the UK or at the British Military Centres at RAPA or Cyprus. The Committee said that this rule had not come from the Riggers Committee, but was a decision made by Council.

It was proposed by John Curtis and seconded by Bill Sharp that the proposed Rigging Loft Minimum Criteria be accepted.

For: 8                      Against: 1 (By proxy)                      Abstentions: 0

**Carried**

**9. ADVANCED PACKERS COURSE REPORT – JOHN CURTIS**

An Advanced Packers Course had been run by John Curtis from the 15 – 18 December 2003. A copy of the Advanced Packers Course Report had been circulated with the agenda. Dave Skinner and Jim Hood had attended the Course and would be returning at later date to take their final examination.

**10. CORRESPONDENCE FROM BILL SHARP CONCERNING RESERVE PACKING**

i) At the previous Riggers Meeting, Bill Sharp had submitted a Riggers Course Report from the Course held at RAPA in November 2003. In the report Bill had promised an additional ‘Examiner recommendation’, which he was unable to fully prepare for inclusion in the Course Report. A copy of the complete recommendation had been circulated with the agenda for this evenings meeting and was as follows:

**‘The Course Examiners were in general agreement that the requirement to hold an AP (R) qualification prior to attending a BR course should be reviewed and could be waived completely’.**

Bill Sharp had stated in his paperwork that the Examiners are aware that the Rigging Committee has recently stated they did not want to revisit this again in the near future.

However, it is a rigging course recommendation from the Examiners and they believe it should be looked at it again, in order to improve the Rigging Courses.

There followed a short discussion on this matter, after which, the Committee accepted the Recommendation from the Course Examiners.

Bill Sharp gave the meeting details of his reasons behind the recommendation. Following some discussion, it was felt by those present that, as this subject had been discussed at great length in the past, they did not wish to discuss it again in any depth that evening and it was agreed by those present that the requirements for attending an Advanced Packers Course should remain as they are.

- ii) At the previous meeting Pat Walters had expressed his concern that under the present system once a person has qualified as a Rigger, they are allowed to pack Tandem Reserves with no further training at all, as long as they have the appropriate Manual to hand. The authority for this was a 28 May 1992 Riggers Committee ruling that newly qualified Riggers automatically have the words "ALL TYPES" on their packing certificates without having to have specific named types of equipment.

Pat Walter's main area of concern had been that unless a potential rigger already held an Advanced Packer (Grade T) rating prior to attending a PR Course, where then did they get the experience to pack Tandem reserves as they have received no formal training. The PR Course content does not include Tandem reserve packing.

The Committee felt that Pat had highlighted an area of concern. Although some Riggers present believed that Parachute Riggers should have some experience of packing Tandem reserves, they did not believe that an Advanced Packer (Tandem) qualification should be a pre-course requirement. The Committee felt that they should be encouraging potential riggers not discouraging them by necessarily having to attend another Course.

The Committee had generally felt that Riggers should be familiar with Tandem Equipment and that perhaps Basic Riggers should be introduced to Tandem reserve packing during their training, but how this was introduced in terms of a proposal would need some thought.

Bill Sharp had also expressed similar concerns regarding this matter, in his correspondence that had previously been circulated with the agenda.

Bill believed that the use of the 'All Types' system by recently qualified PR's is allowing Tandem reserves to be packed by people that have had no formal training at all and that the problem is compounded by our own AP system that does recognise the need for a specific Tandem AP course for everybody else.

Bill had stated that since the June 96 introduction of the 'new' AP rating, the legal use of the 'All Types' for Riggers packing reserves should have become redundant. It was a product of the old reserve packing system that was never formally rescinded, which was introduced in May 1992 as a tidy up of the then reserve packing system, where individual canopies and containers had to be entered on a reserve packing card. At that time, Riggers were deemed to be more familiar with the newer kit arriving on the market and it was getting impractical to continually update 'Reserve A into Container A', 'Reserve A into Container B' etc. It was therefore decided, rightly or wrongly that Riggers would be cleared to pack all reserves into all containers.

In Bill Sharp's opinion, Riggers who qualified under the old system (up to June 96) are still fully legal to use the 'All Types' ruling under grandfather clause rights. Riggers qualified between the first AP courses up till now, should not be using the 'All Types' to pack Tandem reserves (bear in mind that as PR's they will have had to hold AP (R) and AP (S)

in order to do their rigging rating). Equally PR's qualified from this day (including the last rigging course of November 03) must not be allowed to continue to use this hole. The Committee generally accepts that there is a hole as it was suggested at the last meeting, that one answer might be 'to introduce the BR to Tandem reserve packing during their training'. We already have an 'introduction', it is the AP (T) rating, and surely we don't want another qualification.

Bill Sharp believed that the problem for the Rigging Committee is how to deal with PR's qualified in the 'June 96 till today' bracket. Given the relatively few number of rigging course's run over the last few years, perhaps these people should get some form of an examination of their tandem reserve packing ability, from independently rated people (Riggers Committee to decide), if they want to continue to pack tandem reserves. If they have been packing tandem reserves, Bill did not see the need for them to attend the formal instruction course but just to be tested. Individuals, through their 'tester' would then be qualified through individual exemptions given by the Riggers Committee and we would be able to legitimatise their Tandem reserve packing rating.

There followed a lengthy discussion on this matter, during which it was felt by those present that potential rigger candidates should be familiar with all types of equipment knowledge prior to becoming a rigger.

Pat Walters put forward a suggestion for the Committee to consider with regard to changing the minimum requirements for becoming a Basic Rigger.

Pat suggested that the potential BR's must hold an Advanced Packer rating for both 'Squares' and 'Tandem' prior to registering as a BR or their attendance on a BR Course. They must then attain the Advanced Packer 'Round' qualification prior to attending the final examination Course. Pat stated that the reasoning behind this was because 'round' parachutes were becoming less common.

The Committee discussed Pat's suggestion and it found general support from those present. However, a formal proposal would need to be put forward for the Committee to consider at the next meeting

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

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

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

There had been three Manufacturers' Safety Notices or Information Bulletins received since the last meeting:-

- i) A service bulletin had been received from Relative Workshop concerning all Skyhook equipped rigs. This had been previously circulated with the agenda.
- ii) A service bulletin had been received from Parachutes de France concerning all reserve canopies manufactured between 01.01.1987 to 31.02.1989. This had been previously circulated with the agenda.
- iii) A service bulletin had been received from Sun Path Products Inc. concerning installation of the Small Cypres Pocket. This bulletin would be circulated with the Minutes for information.

**13. A.O.B**

- i) Pete Sizer advised those present that he had run a Tandem Reserve Packing Course from 26 - 28 January 2004. Paul Stockwell (AP97) and David Major (AP68) successfully completed the Course and had been awarded Advanced Packer (Grade T) status.
- ii) A request had been received from John Curtis to run an Advanced Packers Course sometime between February and the end of March 2004. This was agreed by those present.
- iii) The Chairman advised those present that an Advanced Packers Report had been received from Geoff Hughes, a copy of which was circulated to those present. The Course had been held at the Services Parachute Centre (NI) from the 27 – 30 January 2004. Jeff Montgomery, George Easton and Carl Jackson had attended the Course and were advised to return to the complete the examination phase in the future.
- iv) Andrew Hilton referred to item 10 on that evenings' agenda and stated that the Committee still needed to clarify the situation with regard to how they were going to deal with those Parachute Riggers who have qualified since June 1996 and were using 'all types' rating and thus clearing them to pack Tandem reserves.

Following some discussion on this matter, it was agreed by those present that a formal proposal was required for consideration at the next meeting Andrew Hilton to draft a proposal along the lines that Parachute Riggers who have qualified since 1996 who have never been formally tested need to be checked by an Advanced Rigger on their tandem reserve packing.

- v) Kim Newton asked if 'Student' AADs need to come through the Riggers Committee before they are used in the UK. She stated that there is a new type on the market and asked if Clubs wish to use them do they need clearance first. It was agreed by those present that new AADs need to be accepted by Riggers and STC.
- vi) David Hickling asked Riggers to look at a PDF Military Tandem rig, to be used for Student civilian use. He stated that it was similar to the PDF civilian Tandem rig, other than additional 'D' rings on the harness and other minor differences, such as zips etc. He stated that it was to be used by BPS, Langar in the same way as they use their other Tandem equipment.

Following inspection of the equipment, it was proposed by Pete Sizer and seconded by Andrew Hilton that the above equipment be accepted.

For: 4                      Against: 0                      Abstentions: 4 (including Bill Sharp)

**Carried**

The Chairman took on board John Curtis comments that equipment should be looked at first prior to it being presented to the Committee.

- vii) Chris Allen presented a Student RTS Mirage AFF rig for acceptance for use in the UK subject to it being checked by an Advanced Rigger. This was because the rig did not have an adjustable harness, or the rip-away type secondary handle fitted, though it was the same in all other respects.

It was proposed by John Harding and seconded by Pete Sizer that the above equipment be accepted for Student AFF use in the UK. This was subject to inspection by an Advanced Rigger and the BPA office being notified.

**Carried Unanimously**

- viii) The Committee was advised that Allan Hewitt had requested permission to run an Advanced Packing Course in Gibraltar in early March 2004.

The Chairman stated that a decision had been made previously by Council that Advanced Packing Courses can only be held within the UK or at the British Military Centres at RAPA or Cyprus. Therefore the Committee were unable to discuss this request.

Date of next Meeting: Thursday 8 April 2004  
BPA Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester.  
4.00 p.m.

13 February 2004

**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 MARCH 2004**