



Airborne Engineers Association Scotland



www.airbornesappersscotland.co.uk

Chairman – **Mick Walker**

Secretary – **Gil Nicol**

Treasurer – **Craig Mc Quade**

Minutes of 16th Annual General Meeting held at The Royal; British Legion, Rodney Street, Edinburgh, EH7 4EL at 1230hrs on Sunday 16th November 2014

1. **Members Present;** Mick Walker, Gil Nicol, Craig Mc Quade, Gordon McLeod, Alex McWhirter, Kenny Wratten, Norrie Bishop, Frank Murray, John Donaldson, Doug Archibald, Andy Paterson, Andy Gemmell, Raymond Mannion, David Brock, Brian Earl, Roy Kay and Ronnie Drummond.

2. Apologies;

Willie Grant, Tom Ormiston, Eoghann macLachlainn, Bob Hamilton, Kim Panton, Eoin McIntyre, Dave Henderson, Andy Mullen and all overseas members

3. **Chairmans Welcome;** Mick Walker welcomed all present and thanked them for attending. A warm welcome was extended to Andy Gemmell, a former member of 3 Troop who found us through our website.

Mick was pleased at the large turnout at Grangemouth for the remembrance of the 10 sappers who tragically perished at Cromwell Lock in 1975. Mick felt that we could have done better, regarding organising the remembrance service, as it was thrust upon him at short notice to take over the service due to Peter Duff (Falkirk Sappers) felling unwell. Next Year we (The Scottish AEA) will be better prepared.

Mick also informed the members present that some of the members attended the funeral of Jimmy Simpson earlier in the year and also of the demise of Bert Leslie.

Mick then asked members to be upstanding where we observed a minutes silence in remembrance of past members and more recently Jimmy Simpson and Bert Leslie.

4. Welfare Report;

(1) Roy Kay has not been very well lately and it is good to see him attending todays meeting. Roy thanks everyone for their support and best wishes.

(2) Raymond Mannion had an operation a few weeks ago, he had keyhole surgery on his shoulder for his tendon and also work on his pulled ligaments. It is also good to see him attending todays meeting .

(3) Robin Ward, former OC 300 Para. Sqn. RE sends his best wishes to everyone.

(4) John Donaldson gave the following report regarding Bert Leslie, a former member of 2 Troop , 300 Squadron, who after a long illness passed away on 3rd November 2014. Bert resided in Canada with his wife Gwen. Bert and his wife were due to come over to Scotland in August but it was discovered that Bert had an aneurysm therefore he was unable to travel. On 6 October Bert was taken to hospital with severe chest pains where the doctors diagnosed problems with his arteries. Bert was then taken to a hospital in Toronto to see a heart specialist. After consultation they carried out a quadruple by pass and informed Gwen that Bert was in a critical condition and

had been for a long time. Bert was put into an induced coma at surgery time and sadly he never came out of it. Bert was very special to Gwen and she will always have pleasant and treasured memories of him. Bert would search the website frequently just to “have a visit” with the boys (of yesteryear) he used to say.

Gwen asked to say “Hi” to all the boys. Thank you Gwen and please accept our heartfelt condolences.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting ;

The minutes of the last meeting were proposed as being accurate by Gordon McLeod and seconded by Dougie Archibald. The minutes of the previous AGM were then proposed as being accurate by Gordon McLeod and seconded by John Donaldson.

6. Matters Arising ;

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

7. Secretary's Report ;

(a) a cheque for £50.00 has been forwarded to The Erskine Homes , Edinburgh and we have received a grateful acknowledgement.

(b) Xmas lunch—29 November—names and orders have been finalised and Gil Nicol will forward details to The Royal Scots Club. We have to be there at 1200hrs for 1230hrs.

(c) Grangemouth Memorial Service—Sunday 28th September—was well attended as stated in the Chairmans Remarks.

(d) Cenotaph Parade, London –we were allocated 4 tickets—Gil Nicol, Gordon McLeod, Kenneth Wratten & Bob Hamilton attended this parade and our colleagues south of The Border were very pleased to see us there. This was a very moving and humbling service and we felt it was a privilege to be allowed to participate.

(e) Arnhem 2014—Gil Nicol will give a report under A.O.C.B.

(f) Garden of Remembrance –3/11/14—Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh—some branch members attended to pay their respects. We were honoured to be asked to have a photograph taken in the salute position at the crosses laid out in remembrance of the service personnel killed in Afghanistan This was requested by the official photographer of Poppy Scotland.

(g) On 18 October some branch members attended “The Old Comrades Association” Dinner which was held at XV Para HQ in Glasgow—A good time was had by all in attendance as it was an opportunity to meet up with old pals from Para Reg.

(h) Names required for PRA Lothian , Xmas Dinner /Dance—Friday 5 December 2014—**Please submit names to Craig McQuade—A.S.A.P.**

(i) We received details from Dave Rutter about the distribution of monies raised at the AGM raffle

(1) Combat Stress = £100.00 (2) Help for Heroes=£213.00 (3) BLESMA = £100.00

(j) In the Birmingham AEA Branch Meeting Minutes for 3rd September 2014 it was recorded that a wreath laying ceremony will take place at Cromwell Lock on Sunday 27 September 2015—This will be the 40th Anniversary of this tragic event.

Gil Nicol has spoken to Bunny Brown (Birmingham Secretary) and was informed that arrangements for this memorial service was in the hands of 131 Commando Engineers. I have asked him who to contact at 131 with a view to getting updated information and not be scrambling about at the last minute. In the meantime Gil will contact Captain Olaf Dudley to see if he can give us any information.

(k) We have been informed, by our colleagues at Lothian P.R.A., that there is an Armed Forces Day Parade planned to be held in Aberdeen on Sunday 28th June 2015. There will also be a Parade held in Dunfermline on Sunday 26th April 2015. When further information becomes available it will be passed

on to all members. We would like a large turnout.

(1) Mick Walker had attended the AEA—AGM in Harrogate. He was the only member from Scotland in attendance. However, it appears that there was nothing of any significance to report back on. Mick was thanked for making the effort to attend.

8. Treasures Report ;

Craig Mc Quade presented his Financial Report informing us that we were still financially healthy. This was a very clear and informative report and Craig was given a show of thanks from the members for his efforts. The Financial Report and accounts were audited by Douglas Archibald. We recorded a 15% surplus on last year.

The Financial Report was proposed as accurate by Andy Paterson and seconded by Ronnie Drummond.

9. Website Report ;

John Donaldson informed us that all is reasonably well, we are still getting good interest in our website. Our picture section of the website has been updated with pictures from Arnhem and Remembrance Sunday. There will be a bill forthcoming for the website and also for the “name” which will be forwarded in due course to our Treasurer Craig Mc Quade.

10. Shoebox Appeal ;

No report as appeal suspended. It was agreed, unanimously, to remove this Item from our Agenda until further notice.

11. Election of Office Bearers;

The Chair was handed over to Gil Nicol by Mick Walker (Retiring Chairman) and later Gil Nicol handed The Chair over to the newly elected Chairman.

Office Bearers were elected as follows ;

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|---|------------------------------|
| (a) Chairman--Mick Walker-----Proposer—Gil Nicol | Seconder---Roy Kay |
| (b) Secretary—Gil Nicol-----Proposer—Brian Earl | Seconder---Douglas Archibald |
| (c) Treasurer— Craig Mc Quade---Proposer –Gordon McLeod | Seconder---Andy Paterson |
| (d) Auditor— Douglas Archibald—Proposer-Raymond Mannion | Seconder—Ronnie Drummond |

The following positions were filled as follows;

Webmaster———John Donaldson

Asst. Webmaster—Andy Mullen

Branch Rep No 1—Gordon McLeod

Branch Rep No 2—Andy Paterson

12. Subscriptions;

It was agreed to keep the yearly subscriptions at £8.00/member/annum This was proposed by Mick Walker and seconded by Brian Earl.

We were asked to remind those members present, at this A.G.M, to please consider this as a request for payment of the yearly subscriptions

Cheques should be made payable to “The Airborne Engineers Association” and given or sent to Craig Mc Quade at the following address;

37 Riverview Park

Mangerton

Newcastleton

TD9 0TF

13. Future Meetings ;

All future meetings will be held, on the 3rd Sunday of the month, every 2nd month starting from and including January 2015.

Meetings will commence at 1300 hours.

14. A.O.C.B. ;

(1) Grangemouth Memorial Service 2015 –This is generally organised by The Falkirk Sappers Group who wished to be informed of any other memorial service taking place for the 40th anniversary. Gil Nicol will liaise with The Falkirk Sappers Group and Olaf Dudley (131Commando Engineers) regarding dates and details. All options regarding this memorial service were discussed in detail and it was agreed to wait until we had further concrete information.

(2)Arnhem 2014; On 17th September we set out for Arnhem, via London (on the train from Glasgow to London “The Westies” were upgraded to 1st Class—Free of Charge—Food & Drink)

When we arrived in London we went to our hotel, a dry hotel I must add, as it was run by Iraqis--Well done Gil.

We were not aware that this hotel had only recently reopened after being closed due to the London bombings. Apparently some suspects were taken from this hotel which resulted in its closure.

So this was a good start to our trip. However it should be said that the staff looked after us very well.

While on the coach we saw a Chelsea Pensioner, travelling with our group, who was in the same group as Craig and Gil 5 years ago when they went to Arnhem. It was good to see him again as he had recently turned 90 years of age. Needless to say that wherever we went he also went and we would not let him put his hand into his pocket for anything.

When we arrived at Arnhem we stayed in a hotel called “The Postillion” which was a very good hotel with good food, clean and comfortable accommodation.

Whilst in Holland we visited Ginkel Heath, The Museum at Tafelberg, The Old Church and The Lonsdale Force Area. We attended a memorial and wreath laying ceremony at Arnhem Airborne Monument after which we attended a special celebration hosted by dignitaries at Arnhem City Hall where we were entertained by local bands including a Pipe Band. We also participated in wreath laying ceremonies at Ginkel Heath as well as The Polish Monument in Dreil.

A visit to “The John Frost” bridge was squeezed in, where those of us who wore kilts were very much in demand. We also had with us a gentleman called Hugo Frost who was the son of John Frost whom the bridge was named after. He showed a keen interest in “The Para Engineers” as he had heard so much about them from his dad. We also attended a military tattoo in Oosterbeek in the evening. Needless to say each evening, back at our hotel, we had our own little “Ceilidh” which everyone enjoyed.

Whilst we were in Oosterbeek we met up with some members of 299 Troop as well as some Scottish PRA members and we had a really good time reacquainting ourselves with some of these guys.

On the last day we went to Oosterbeek Cemetery for the Commemorative Service and this in itself was amazing where each grave had flowers laid upon it by local school children, we found this very touching and humbling. This is a tradition that all the local school children do not want to see removed as they are forever grateful to the people who came to liberate them and they will always cherish their memories.

During this trip we met up with an Australian chap, Peter Mc Hugh , who was looking up his uncles grave, who's body is interned at Oosterbeek Cemetery . His uncle was a 21 year old Aussie Pilot who let his crew bail out from the damaged aircraft and refused a parachute so that he could fly the plane and steer it away from an occupied Dutch village, thus saving numerous lives. Peter visited this village and met up with villagers who remembered this incident very well and whilst he was there he was presented with a scrap book (made up by local school children), Ice skates made with metal from the plane, ball

bearing units as well as a fly wheel, all from his uncles plane. Needless to say Peter was overwhelmed not only by the villagers generosity but also by their grateful feelings regarding his uncle. This was an amazing end to his research and journey which started so long ago and so far away. Well done Peter. On the coach, returning to London we asked the coach driver to play a demo CD on behalf of Norrie Bishop, who was member of a band performing 60s music and it was really good. Not to be outdone Dave Henderson asked the driver to play a CD from the choir he is involved in, his choir is called The Fron Male Voice Choir and Dave sings bottom base. We had a good time singing along with both C.D's. The highlight of Dave's CD was when they sang The Battle Hymn of The Republic and we sang our "Para" version. It is safe to say we had a very good time.

The meeting was brought to a close at 1400 hrs with a vote of thanks to the chair after which we adjourned to the main hall for some refreshments.

15. Date of Next Meeting;

Sunday 18th January 2015 (1300 Hrs) at The Royal.British.Legion, Rodney Street, Edinburgh.

WE WISH YOU ALL A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.