



Airborne Engineers Association Scotland



www.airbornesappersscotland.co.uk

Chairman – Douglas Archibald

Secretary – Gil Nicol

Treasurer – Craig Mc Quade

Minutes of Meeting held at The Royal British Legion, Rodney Street, Edinburgh, EH7 4EL at 1300hrs on Sunday 16 September 2018

1. Members Present; Mick Walker, Gil Nicol, John Donaldson, Alex McWhirter, Bob Hamilton, Brian Earl and John Carter.

2. Apologies Dougie Archibald, Craig McQuade, Ronnie Drummond, Kenneth Wratten, Andy Mullen, Bob Masson, Gordon McLeod, Alex Cockburn, Kim Panton, Eoin McIntyre, Andy Paterson, Andy Gemmell (sunning himself in Alaska), Ron McCartan and Eoghann macLachlainn. Apologies are taken as read from our overseas members but it warrants note that Willie Grant invariably apologises for not making it from Thailand.

3. Chairman's Welcome; In the absence of our chairman Mick Walker occupied the chair. He then welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. He also welcomed John Carter as a new member although John was not "new" to us having attended several recent Cromwell Lock events.

4. Welfare; We still have a number of guys suffering from various ailments, namely Kim Panton, Ron McCartan, and Andy Mullen. Alex Cockburn is looking after his wife Beth who has only recently had both hip joints replaced. We wish them all well

5. Minutes of the previous meeting; The minutes of the meeting of 15 July 2018 were agreed as being accurate on the motion of Mick Walker who was seconded by Alex McWhirter.

6. Matters Arising There were none.

7. Secretary's Report; (a) AEA Scotland Annual Lunch—We had our Annual Lunch on Saturday 1 September at The Royal Scots Club, Edinburgh which was well attended. The ladies, as always, were turned out very nicely. Needless to say a good time was had by all. The lunch was felt to be good value for money and the venue will be proposed again for next year at the AGM.

(b) 29 AEA—AGM & Reunion Gala Dinner 12 - 14 October 2018—This will be held at Chatham—as far as we know only one member, Kenneth Wratten, will be attending.

(c) **Micky Yule-He** has sent a letter thanking us for our donation and we wish him all the best in his endeavours.

(d) **Replacement Plaque – Bridge at Toscaig**—The members were shown the email submitted by Steve Brown regarding the design of the plaque and advised that Gil had co-ordinated and submitted the observation of members. The donation to the Royal Naval Development Fund will be discussed at the AGM.

(e) **Cromwell Lock Memorial, Newark**—Gil Nicol has spoken to Dan Hazard who is the Manager of the Cromwell Lock and it was agreed that we (AEA Scotland) would send a donation of £100.00 towards the purchase and installation of a new hedge at the monument— This was agreed unanimously by our members.

(f) **Cromwell Lock Memorial Parade, Zetland Park, Grangemouth**—This will be held on Sunday 23 September 2018 at 1030hrs for 1100 hrs at Zetland Park, Grangemouth—Berets and Medals to be worn. After the service we will retire to The British Legion Club, 4 Dundas Street, Grangemouth where we will have refreshments and sandwiches.

(g) **Cromwell Lock Grangemouth Parade**—There are certain costs to be met for this parade and they are as follows Bugler = £25.00, Piper = £25.00 and Sandwiches £50.00, these were passed as acceptable by the members present. Mick Walker asked about the wreath and was immediately volunteered to supply one. Bob Hamilton agreed to liaise with Gordon McLeod about the insert for the wreath.

(h) **Erskine Homes**—We received the recent News Letter.

(i) **Leuchars Station**—This was formerly RAF Leuchars and is now home to the Royal Engineers as well as other Regiments and Norrie Bishop (via Gil Nicol) asked us if we would like to carry out a visit in 2019. It was agreed to leave this until our next meeting to discuss in more detail, although the general consensus was agreeable.

8. Treasurer's Report;-Although our Treasurer was not in attendance he has informed us that we are still in funds and looking financially healthy.

9. Webmaster's Report; John Donaldson informs us that all is ok with our website and we are still receiving hits. He is still updating it on a regular basis

10. Future Meetings; All future meetings will be held on the 3rd Sunday of the month, every 2nd Month commencing from 21 January 2018. Meetings will commence at 1300hrs with the exception of the AGM which will commence at 1230hrs.

11. A.O.C.B; (a) OCA Dinner—There will be an Old Comrades Association Dinner on 20 October 2018 held at XV Para, Holdsworth Street, Glasgow—There will be a 3 course meal at a cost of £15.00 per head. Details can be had from the branch Secretary.

(b) PRA Lothian Branch—Will be holding their annual Christmas Dinner and Dance on Friday 7 December 2018 at The Royal British Legion, Rodney Street, Edinburgh. Ticket prices are expected to be the same as last year. Please contact Gil Nicol at our A.G.M. in November if you are

interested. Family and Friends are also welcome.

(c) Garden of Remembrance Edinburgh—There will be an opening service at Princes Street Gardens, Edinburgh on Monday 29 October 2018. (1030hrs for 1100hrs)

(d) General Service Medal (Aden); John Donaldson submitted the following report.

The latest letter dated 21 August 2018, was received from the MOD (Lord Howe) and addressed to Angus MacNeil MP.

The MOD have once again dipped into their barrel of excuses and the latest one is that because 300 Para Sqn RE and 131 Para Engr Regt were not on the posted or attached strength of any unit or formation serving in the Federation of South Arabia, and did not spend the required number of days in theatre, they do not qualify for medallic recognition.

The MOD do not seem to understand that 300 Para Sqn RE was part of 131 Para Engr Regt and whilst 299, 301, 302 Sqns and Headquarters were based at Al Anad, 300 Para Sqn RE was sent further up country to Al Milah and attached to 24 Fld Sqn RE who were based there and that only 300 Para Sqn RE were involved in the firefight.

Lord Howe went on to say that he has asked his officials to re-examine the circumstances of the deaths and woundings {Lord Howe calls them injuries in an attempt to belittle them} as there seems to be some confusion around messages being disseminated by the MOD previously.

The deaths and woundings caused by enemy fire at Al Milah are a matter of record in Hansard dated 13 April 1965 and another places and there is no need for further investigation. Lord Howe is just looking for other excuses not to award the GSM

John has sent a letter to the MOD, copied to Angus MacNeil MP, explaining once again about the make up of 131 Para Engr Regt and where they were based in the Federation of South Arabia.

John received a letter from the Defence Business Services, who are responsible for the administration of medals, in reply to his letter to the Chief of the Defence Staff. They have pointed out that the issues raised are with the medals policy staff.

John has also sent a letter to Maurice Corry MSP at the Scottish Parliament asking for an update on letters he sent to the MOD, however, to date he has not received a reply. It would appear that he is no longer interested in giving his support.

AEA Scotland would like to thank Gary Coe and the members of 299 Association for their continued support in this saga.

Watch this space as there will be more to come

(e) Arnhem; Mick Walker reminded members that next year is the 75th anniversary of “Operation Market Garden” and as such will be even more special. He felt if we wanted to organise a trip it should be done asap; Other branches seem to be well advanced in their planning and depending on numbers we may wish to seek to attach ourselves to one, some or all of them. It was agreed that we leave this matter until our AGM on 18 November when we will have a better attendance.

(f) AGM; Mick advised that Dougie Archibald will not be standing for re-election as Chairman. Also said that both the incumbent Treasures and Secretary had been in post for some time and urged everybody to give nominations some thought.

(g) 300 Troop; There was reunion of ex 300 Troop lads held last month in Falkirk which was attended by Messer's Archibald, Carter, Cockburn and Walker. Most of the lads who attended were non-para but John Carter felt it would be worthwhile for us to contact this occasional forum with a view to getting new members. This was well received and discussions will take place either at the AGM or early next year. Whilst he had the floor and although it was too late for Cromwell Lock, John advised that his wife was a qualified and practising florist.

Date of Next Meeting; 20th AGM on Sunday 18 November 2018 (1230hrs) at R.B.L. Rodney Street, Edinburgh. Note the earlier start.

“Please be punctual as we will be electing Office Bearers for 2018/2019”

NB The current Secretary and Treasurer are willing to carry on in Office if requested, however this does not preclude members from submitting other nominees.