



# THE AIRBORNE ENGINEERS JOURNAL



For All Airborne Sappers - Service Not Self



# The Airborne Engineer

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*Thank you to everyone who has provided the content for this issue of the Journal, your input is much appreciated. If you would like to submit an article for a future issue, please get in touch using the Webmaster & Journal contact details above.*

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## President's Update

Dear Members, I must first pay tribute to all those members who have worked tirelessly leading up the vote on the merger of the AEA and the REA(A). I know that this has been a subject that has been debated endlessly over the years. However, at last, after much work and many hours put in by committee members, drafting and redrafting documents a successful path was found and the members were able to vote on the merger. In summary 296 members voted, from which the break down was 230 voted yes and 66 voted no. Further details are in the Journal. Of course, there is still much work to do to satisfy the Executive committee as we move forward towards a full merger. Again, as this develops the association will be kept abreast of things.

Secondly I must apologise again, for my absence at the AGM and Gala dinner, an event that I know a lot of Branch members commit themselves to organise and run. I remember the last one at Hull (Then the city of culture). But from what I hear Craig Gadd and his team did another unbelievable job of organising this year's function and Lin and I were sad to miss the Gala Dinner. I am sure all will join me in thanking Craig and his team for the huge effort they put into the weekend.

Also, the summer events always draw members to the annual gatherings such as Arnhem and the 80th celebrations of D Day. It was great that the Association was able to assist financially so that some members from all of the branches were able to attend these events.

The wonder of technology and use of Phones to receive and pass on events instantly, always amaze me. Thank goodness they were not around in our youth. Although, we still managed to grab photos now and then and I am always appreciative of some of our members who produce these snapshots of our past, Pat Neal, Derek Broadbent, Jasper Harratt, Arthur Askey and Tony Fry to mention a few, and really good quality. I was lucky enough to visit 23 Regt in the Summer and 9 Sqn's office, they very kindly got out the old albums with some great Black and Whites. As I have said before if you do get a chance to visit Woodbridge on an open day, take it. The Barracks is expanding, with 70 Gurkha Airborne Sqn and a new Regt. With this expansion of barracks and accommodation being built it's becoming a Sapper Stronghold.

The Summer in the UK was as busy as ever with our events across the country. I was able again to attend the Double Hills ceremony this year, which is probably going to be the last formal one. Peter Yeates has done a fantastic job in organising and running the event all these years. The ceremony has grown annually, not just in numbers but also across the breadth of the attendance. Old friends were there and it's always a wonderful occasion to see the volunteers who are there assisting, not just with tractors and trailers to move spectators across the fields, the Bowls club who provide changing rooms and tea and biscuits before the event. The Football club opening its doors for tea and sandwiches and the odd beer or two. Also great to see Chris Chambers and his daughter and son in law, maintaining that connection with Paulton and Aldershot. Who can forget Jan Chambers, who for many years was another force in ensuring the event was a total success. A big thank you from all Sqn men who have taken part in not just Double Hills but the many other events that volunteers organise for us to attend to pay our respects annually.

This year has been more challenging in many ways. Our erstwhile Chairman, Steve Wallis made the comment at the 2023 AGM that it was time to once again revisit the amalgamation of the REA with the AEA. This was a challenge that I and Phil Taylor discussed over a beer and many emails. Draft upon draft of documents were produced, reviewed and amended between us both. Yes we did take time off now and then for it to settle, many members were asked their opinions and changes were made on a regular basis. Long calls to Ken Kirk the CEO of the REA, from France in Phil's case, to put forward our proposals. Ken in turn delivered our views and papers to the REA Committee, which were met with positive views. From these documents, a Memorandum of Understanding was produced and discussed, including, what I believe was a fantastic document, namely the Frequently Asked Questions. The Committee can claim the responsibility at this stage in taking it all forward. Steve as Chair and Mick as the Secretary kept the Association abreast of things. Now with the vote results the next stage is to move forward into a new bright future, engaging with all Airborne Engineers and under the umbrella of the REA.

However, with all good news there is always sad news. The Chatham Branch has for some years now suffered with membership. Although, events are always successful the core Association numbers supporting the events are very few, as an example we can expect up to 70 attending the Christmas function but only 6 members attending meetings. We are blessed with fantastic support from Widows, families and friends but for the few who are required to organise and run these events it is a large effort even to share with the few members we have. With this in mind the Branch will have a meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January to finally decide on the way ahead.

The branch had another very successful Christmas lunch, Steve and Mel were the guests of the Branch and it was appreciated that they took time from their busy schedule to visit.

Before I sign off, can I once again say well done to all those involved in the merger process. A long and particularly difficult process but one I think that was necessary to allow the members of the association their say on its future.

Lin and I wish all members and their families the very best for the Christmas period and I hope to see some of you in 2025.

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## Chairman's Update

As we come up to Christmas its time to reflect back on what has been a busy year.

Mel and I have once again had a busy time with social and commemorative events culminating in the AGM at Hull and the National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph in London.

Craig Gadd and his team did a fantastic Job of organising the AGM and my thanks go out to him and the 299 Association for providing such a wonderful weekend.

This year at the Cenotaph we were allocated 42 places, the largest allocation the association has ever had, many were attending for the first time and have said how poignant the event is.

During my time as the association Chairman Mel and I have tried to visit every branch for at least one social event, and I am pleased to say that we have managed to visit all of the branches on their own turf.

The last event of the year for us was the Chatham Branch Christmas Lunch. The event was well attended which belied the problems that have beset the Branch over attracting and retaining members. This has now reached the stage where the remaining members have decided that the branch is no longer viable, and they have reluctantly taken the decision to close the branch. This is indeed a sad event for the branch and for the association.

Our difficulties in attracting and retaining members is brought into sharp vision as we ponder the closure of a Branch and also consider that we only attracted two new members in the last year, and it was with this in mind that I reopened the debate on the relationship between the AEA and REA. The current round of this debate has been going on for the last two years and culminated in the Vote of members as to whether we should merge with the REA(A) Branch, you will all know by now that the result of the Vote was a massive majority in favour of the merger.

For those not aware, 296 Association members voted and there were 230 in favour and 66 against. The Executive committee will now engage with the REA to arrange a smooth transition to the AEA becoming a National Branch of the REA. I realise that there are strong feelings over this subject and that not all of you will be happy with the outcome. However, we must now all work together, accepting the view of the clear majority and taking the association forward.

I will work with the committee on the merger, but it is also a sad time for myself as I have taken the decision to stand down as National Chairman at the next AGM. It has been an Honour and a Privilege to have been the Chairman of the Association for the last 7 years, but I feel that it is now time for someone else to take up the reins.

It only remains for me and Mel to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous new year.

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## Cromwell Lock Memorial Service 2024



The annual Cromwell Lock service was held on Saturday 28th September to remember the 10 soldiers from 300Tp, 131 Indep Para Sqn RE (V) who died there after the assault boat they were navigating went over the weir in September 1975.

A good number of people attended with representatives from the Airborne Engineers Association Branches, Capt Olaf Dudley representing 131 Cdo Sqn, Newark and neighbouring Parachute Regimental Associations, the Riders of Respect and the Royal British Legion.

The memorial was in good condition thanks to the efforts of members of 299 association and the Birmingham Branch who have regularly conducted maintenance work over the past year or so and our thanks go out to them.

A retired local vicar, The Rev'd Georgie Hadley conducted a short service and wreaths were laid by the representatives from 131 Cdo Sqn, the Birmingham and 299 Association Branches of the AEA and from the PRA Branches.

After the service the attendees retired to neighbouring hostelrys for refreshments and a chance to renew old friendships.

Next year will be the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this sad event and it is expected that there will be high turnout to remember the 10 lads of 131 who lost their lives on Ex. Trent Chase.



## Double Hills 2024



Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024, dawned an overcast day with dark clouds looming over the Mendip Hills and was the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Double Hills memorial service at Paulton to remember the first casualties of Operation Market Garden. It was also the last commemoration that Peter Yeates and the current team will organise, having run the event since its inception in 1979.

The service followed the traditional pattern that has evolved over those 45 years with a welcome, prayers and address prior to the laying of wreaths and the playing of the Last post and Reveille by buglers from The Rifles. It was conducted by the Rev. Adam Pitt, Vicar of Paulton, Farrington Gurney and High Littleton and the address was given by the president of Double Hills the Rt Hon Sir Jacob Rees-Mogg.

A detachment from 9 Para Sqn RE under the command of Maj Chris Swanwick and SSM Arun Cofax MBE was in attendance with members from the Army Air Corps. The Guest of Honour was Brig Ian McGill and the AEA Standard was carried by John Ferry. Wreaths from the AEA were laid by the President, Lt Col (Ret'd) 'Baz' Bassett and Lt Col (Ret'd) John Lee.

Peter Yeates explained that the two statues on the memorial which were created in 2007 are now too fragile to withstand the Mendip Hills weather and will be replaced by replacement statues depicting a Glider Pilot and a Sapper from 9<sup>th</sup> Fd Coy RE. It is hoped that these replacements will be in place for next year's anniversary.

We all owe Peter Yeates a huge thank you for organising this moving event over the last 45 years and he will still be responsible for the fabric of the memorial so he will not be hanging up his boots quite yet!

A reception was held at Paulton Rovers Football Club after the service but unfortunately just as it ended it started to rain, and by the time most people got back to the football field the heavens opened and those lucky enough to get inside avoided a thorough soaking. Sadly, I was marooned in the club car park and decided discretion was better than getting soaked and decided to leave a very wet Paulton, however, there is always next year!

John Lee



Chris and Kelly Chambers



Paying his respects

## A Collage of Photos from Across the Years



Preparing for the last commemoration service, here is a picture collage which will feature in the 2024 programme.

After 45 years Double Hills Arnhem Commemoration event will be the last.

It will take place at Paulton Nr Bath, Sunday 1st September 2024. Muster 1315, commence 1400.

To commemorate 21 Airborne Sappers and 2 Glider Pilots, all killed when their Glider crashed into Double Hills meadow on Sunday 17th September 1944 when I (Peter Yeates) was a kid.

En-route to the "Bridge Too Far." They were the first casualties of Arnhem.

## Colchester Airborne Soldier Statue

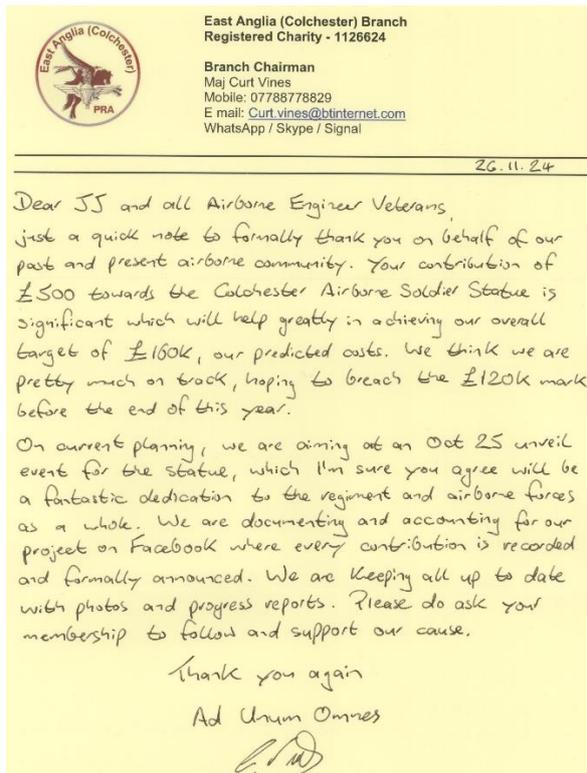
Below is the official Thank You letter from the PRA East Anglia Branch, for the £500 we sent to them towards the Paratrooper Statue Appeal. They are still £60,000 short and have asked us to advertise the attached poster within our Association, for those who wish to donate privately.

To make a personal donation to this project:

Natwest Bank, The Colchester Airborne Soldier Statue, sort code 60-05-33, Account Number 23857692

Or

PayPal, Colchester Airborne Soldier Statue@ColchesterABSoldier **But please use the friends & family option to save the charges!**



## Sublime Shock Troops – The 1<sup>st</sup> Parachute Squadron RE

In 1941 The 1<sup>st</sup> Air Troop Royal Engineers was formed to support the nascent British Parachute force. In early 1942 a section from the Troop took part in the brilliantly successful raid at Bruneval and, shortly after this, it expanded to become the 1<sup>st</sup> Parachute Squadron RE to provide engineer support for the 1<sup>st</sup> Parachute Brigade with which it deployed to North Africa in late 1942. In the winter campaign in Tunisia, the Squadron was to the fore throughout and, with its fellow paratroopers, earned the honour title of *Red Devils* from their German opponents. The Commanding officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Parachute Battalion in North Africa in Sicily and at Arnhem, Lieutenant Colonel John Frost, was moved to say *my Sappers were the best infantry I had. They were intelligent, very fit and they fought like tigers*. The price was high, though. In the battles in North Africa and Sicily 32 officers and men were killed and many were injured.

In unveiling the RE Memorial at Driel many years later, Major General John Frost (as he had become) said, “As usual, the men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Parachute Squadron Royal Engineers fought to the last. We of the Parachute Regiment thought that it was a waste to use them as Sappers when they were so good at killing the enemy. They were, without doubt, Shock troops in the full, sublime sense of the words.”

Returning to England in December 1943, The Squadron was billeted in Donington, Lincolnshire, where there was time for re-equipping, concentrated training and the formation of life-long friendships with the residents.



On 17<sup>th</sup> September 1944 the Squadron departed for the famous *Bridge Too Far* battle of Arnhem and fought with honour at the bridge and in the Oosterbeek Perimeter. Of 130 Squadron men who parachuted into battle, 24 were killed in action. Of those who survived, a few escaped back to Allied lines but most, many of them wounded, spent the following eight months suffering privations as prisoners of war. The memory of Donington was precious in the minds of the survivors. Some men returned to marry sweethearts they had met in the village and the surrounding area.

Many others returned every September for almost 70 years, for a Reunion and Memorial Service at *St Mary's and the Holy Rood*. Inevitably, over the years, the ranks thinned and finally, in April 2024, the last surviving veteran passed away. However, the memory of the men who served in the 1<sup>st</sup> Parachute Squadron is revered in the village and, annually, villagers, families of those who served and other, more recent veterans, gather to pay their respects to the Fallen and to those who served, on the last Sunday in September.

In 2024, the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle of Arnhem, more than 100 people attended the Memorial Service in the church and, then, laid wreaths at The Squadron Memorial Stone, under The Arnhem Oak, in the churchyard. It was significant that, of those who attended, twelve were ex-9 Parachute Squadron and veterans of later conflicts; eight were Falklands veterans and the current OC of 9 Parachute Squadron (Major Chris Swanwick) and SSM (WO2 Arun Corfax) were also present. It was a heart-warming demonstration, if it were ever needed, that THE SQUADRON spirit lives on.



**WHOA MOHAMMED!**

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## 299 Association – Arnhem Visit

Last month 299 Association took 47 members to Arnhem, with 2 dropping out last minute, one due to illness and one falling foul, to the 10-year ruling on his passport form date of issue, despite his passport expiry still saying it was in date. However, despite this setback the rest of us had a great trip, sorry Dave and thanks for leaving your packed lunch for the lads to share!!

We arrived Friday morning and stopped off in Nijmegen across lunch time for a few light refreshments and to explore the local culture. After a couple of hours stop off, we hopped (pardon the pun) back on the bus onward to our hotel.

After getting everyone checked and getting settled in, we had an evening meal with association members. After dinner a few members went into Arnhem to check out a few local bars and also the concert on the bridge, with the others checking out the entertainment in the hotel.

Saturday saw us travel to the Ginkle Heath to watch the guys jumping onto the DZ, then afterwards a few more light refreshments at the Cock Inn with members catching up with old friends from different units etc and watching the aircraft do some low passes. Later in the day we travelled onto the Driel Memorial for a service there which was well attended. We returned to the hotel for another evening meal, with some of the guys going to Ede, checking out the night life and for even more light refreshments.

Sunday is the culmination of the weekend and why we travel to Arnhem, to attend the service at Oosterbeek cemetery. For many a year we had our very own Arnhem veteran Les Ransom who took part in Operation Market Garden. Les was eventually captured by the Germans and lived out the rest of the war as a POW. Les survived the war and returned to Arnhem with the Association many times. It was a real honour to walk along with Les in the cemetery as he would look for his comrades laid there, reciting several stories, some fond and some all too sad. Sadly, Les passed away in 2021 just before his 99th birthday, but he is always in our thoughts especially when we travel to Arnhem. It's always a very sombre service made all the more special with the flower children laying the flowers on the soldier's graves and whispering the soldier's names who lay in the cemetery

After the service we hastily head back to the ferry port via Gorinchem for you guessed it, a few more light refreshments. With a quiet night on the ferry before returning home.

Below is a link to a YouTube video filmed by a good friend of 299 Association, Steve Hignett. Steve now works for the BBC after doing a combat cameraman course whilst in the marines. Steve used to be on the training team when we used to go to CTCRM Lympstone back in the day.

<https://youtu.be/tqeeikYaFr8?si=70kF9xS9GWwuS-xv>

Yours Aye,

**Gaddy**

Craig Gadd  
Vice Chairman & Acting Secretary 299 Association

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## The Operation Freshman Project

The following was received via email from Dr Bruce Tocher. It includes links to the talk he gave recently at the Royal Engineers Museum, and related LinkedIn post.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KAUwsBen7Kg>



[Operation Freshman: War crimes investigations and trials, was justice done?](#)

Operation Freshman: War crimes investigations and trials, was justice done? Operation Freshman was the codename given to a British airborne operation conducted in November 1942 during World War II. It was the first British airborne operation conducted using Airspeed Horsa gliders, and its target was the Vemork Norsk Hydro hydrogen electrolysis ...

[www.youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7272666532202098688/>



[Dr Bruce A. Tocher on LinkedIn: REMEMBERING THE HEROES OF OPERATION FRESHMAN Following the early November...](#)

REMEMBERING THE HEROES OF OPERATION FRESHMAN  
Following the early November lectures and Commemoration  
Events in Norway, I travelled to the UK for another series...

[www.linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com)

Very best regards,

Bruce

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**THE OPERATION FRESHMAN PROJECT**

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## 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment

### Ex RATTLESNAKE 24



In August, Sappers from 51 Parachute Squadron deployed to Fort Johnson, Louisiana, alongside members of 70 Gurkha Parachute Squadron, and elements of 35 EOD&S, 42 GEO and 28 C-CBRN. They took part in Exercise RATTLESNAKE, a validation exercise that saw 2 PARA Battlegroup working alongside 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Combat Team (BCT) from the 82<sup>nd</sup> (US) Airborne Division. This was the first time in close to 20 years that a British battlegroup has deployed in a brigade context, and the exercise played a vital part in maintaining a state of high readiness as well as fostering positive relationships with US forces.

The exercise was orchestrated by the Joint Readiness Training Centre (JRTC), a US Army operations group dedicated to providing realistic wartime scenarios and testing combined arms training in their main exercise area which they lovingly call “The Box.”



The scenario was centred around a large-scale peer-on-peer conflict and was designed to be as close as possible to realistic warfighting. The OPFOR was played by an American infantry regiment known as ‘Geronimo,’ a unit solely dedicated to providing enemy forces during combat exercises. They represented a thinking enemy and created a complex trial for the battlegroup to overcome, which in turn provided plenty of engineering challenges to the members of 51 Para Squadron. Each of the rifle companies had a section of sappers attached to them to provide close support in the form of obstacle breaching, explosive methods of entry and hasty defensive action capabilities. An additional section was also tasked off with maintaining a position on the drop zone to conduct Airfield Damage Repair (ADR) taskings.

The deployment began with half of the Squadron travelling to Fort Liberty, North Carolina to complete parachute conversion training onto US air platforms. After a week of ground training and jumps they were awarded their US parachute wings and all set to jump into the exercise.



The exercise began with a Joint Forcible Entry (Airborne) that saw thousands of troops insert into the box. After rallying on the drop zone with their respective rifle companies, the Airfield Damage Repair section immediately got to work consolidating the Ultra-Light ADR equipment, while the engineer sections attached to 2 PARA's rifle companies faced the gruelling challenge of tabbing through dense Louisiana forest in order to breach a built-up enemy trench position. Despite the

high temperatures, humidity and variety of biting wildlife, the engineers managed to make short work of the obstacles waiting at the trench system and clear the position of any enemy presence.

The successful raid on the trench system marked the end of initial offensive operations and the beginning of the defensive phase, which is the engineer's bread and butter. Each field section was tasked with the construction of obstacles to slow an enemy approach towards the trench system, which in turn was to be transformed into a stronghold and possible fall-back location for the battlegroup. The sappers showcased their skills by creating anti-personnel and anti-vehicle obstacles, utilising any and all defensive stores that could be found.





With little time to admire the defensive positions they had built, the battlegroup then conducted a 48-hour advance to contact, again relying on the sappers to breach obstacles and establish hasty defences once positions had been taken. After a back-breaking two days of tabbing through the dense undergrowth, the enemy forces were defeated, and the force-on-force phase was over.

Despite the best efforts of the OPFOR, unforgiving terrain and the biting wildlife, the determination and grit of 51 Parachute Squadron ensured that every mission of 2 PARA BG was successful with engineering support of the highest standard.

**Lt J Godley**  
**Field Troop Commander**  
**51 Parachute Squadron**  
**23 Parachute Engineer Regiment**

**1**

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## The Life of a 23 Year Old Lieutenant – By Patrick Pronk

The idea for this article came to mind after being in contact, through a friend of mine, Gary Bainbridge, with a family member of Lt. Timmins, Pete Riley, who is a great nephew to Lt. Timmins.

### Childhood :

Roy Edward John Willetts Timmins was born on the 8<sup>th</sup> of February 1921 as the only son of John William Timmins who was a retired army Captain and his mother Amelia. Later, John and Amelia had a baby daughter and named her Yvonne. The four of them lived in the Ecclesall Bierlow district close to Sheffield. Sometime after the birth of Yvonne the family moved to Jacksdale, Nottinghamshire as father John ran the Portland Arms Hotel there at Pye Hill Road.



As a teenager Roy attend the Henry Mellish Grammar School at Bulwell, Nottingham which was founded as a boys' grammar school in 1929 and named after Eton-educated, Henry Mellish a British Army Colonel and local councillor. After this he went to Nottingham University and obtained a degree in mining surveying which they still teach to this day. After finishing his education he served in the Survey Department of Messrs James Oakes and Co (Riddings Collieries) Ltd, a Pye Bridge based company.

**Roy Timmins (on the left) with two friends**

### Army :

Although exempt from military service, he volunteered along with his best friend Barry Hardwick for the Sherwood Foresters at the age of 19 years. Roy then joined the Royal Engineers, as a Sapper, on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 1940, but on the 30<sup>th</sup> July 1942 he is sent to 141 Officer Cadet Training Unit, as a cadet, to undertake officer training. He was granted a commission, as a Second Lieutenant, in the Royal Engineers on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1943, and was then posted to the 2nd Parachute Squadron, R.E., stationed at Bulford, on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 1943.



Having volunteered for Airborne Forces and completing the selection process at Hardwick Hall, (25<sup>th</sup> January to 7<sup>th</sup> February) Lieut. Roy Timmins was sent to R.A.F. Ringway to undertake Parachute Course No 50. This ran from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1943, and was to provide reinforcements for the Parachute Brigades. To qualify as an Army Parachutist he had to carry out two balloon descents by day, five descents from a Whitley aircraft by day, and for the first time the introduction of a night descent from the balloon. His Parachute Instructors remarks state: 'Good leader. Has done very well. Good conduct throughout'. Upon completion he proceeded on two weeks leave, before rejoining the Squadron, where he took up his post as a Section Commander.

**Lt. Roy Timmins in 1943 just after he had received his parachute qualification wings**

## North Africa :

On the 14<sup>th</sup> April 1943 the 2<sup>nd</sup> Parachute Squadron, R.E., along with the rest of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Parachute Brigade units embarked on a troopship at Gourrock in Scotland to sail to North Africa. They landed at Oran, in Algeria, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April and were then transported to a U.S. Army P.O.W. Camp at Tizi. They remained at this temporary camp until the 7<sup>th</sup> May, when they moved with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Parachute Brigade Group to Theirsville, also in Algeria. Here they were made responsible for the camp construction for the Brigade Group.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> May there was a Brigade exercise, with the Squadron Headquarters, 'A' and 'B' Troop's taking part. Although Squadron Headquarters and 'A' Troop were dropped okay, at 0405 hours and 0500 hours respectively, 'B' Troop were accidentally dropped at Oran. There were casualties from this mis-drop, with one broken ankle and a severe concussion reported. Unfortunately, no names or other details are given in the War Diary, but from the 28<sup>th</sup> May Lieut. Roy Timmins was put on Rear Party. He was promoted to War Substantive Lieutenant on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1943.

The War Diary of the 9<sup>th</sup> (AB) Field Company, RE has the following entry on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 1943: 'P. 256841 Lieut. R.E.J. Timmins, R.E. joins Company as 1<sup>st</sup> Reinforcement Officer'.

At the 1<sup>st</sup> of September the 9<sup>th</sup> (AB) Field Company, RE were still at their base in North Africa, with 1 Platoon training the Divisional Artillery in demolitions and mine warfare, 2 Platoon on infantry training and under the instruction of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, the Border Regiment and 3 Platoon at the Divisional rest camp at Hammamet, just south east of Tunis. Only five days later they got the order to get ready and move to Bizerta, just north of Tunis, for Operation Slapstick. Operation Slapstick, planned on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September was the code name for a British landing from the sea at the Italian port of Taranto. The operation, one of three landings during September 1943, was undertaken by troops of the British 1<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, commanded by Maj General George Hopkinson. Before leaving Tunisia, the 1<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division was divided into two-halves. The first half, consisting of the divisional headquarters, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> (AB) Field Company, RE and boarded the Royal Navy ships at Bizerta. On the 8<sup>th</sup> around 1000 hours the Company moved in bits and pieces to the docks where it embarked on the U.S.S. Boise, she was a light cruiser of the *Brooklyn* class in the United States Navy. The ships departed at 17:00 on 8<sup>th</sup> of September, their decks loaded with the division's vehicles and stores.

## Italy :

What the men of the Company were told was that an armistice was about to be declared between Great Britain and Italy, and that the Division would be going to secure Taranto. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of September the U.S.S. Boise arrived as the first ship at the port of Taranto. Captain Heggie and his 3 Platoon took charge of the unloading operations in the outer harbour. During the morning of the 11<sup>th</sup> the Company received the news that the Divisional Commander, Major General G.F. Hopkinson had died of wounds received in action. For the next few days all Platoons were involved in unloading and construction work. On the 17<sup>th</sup> there was a fire at the train station of Taranto where seven of the Company's Sappers were injured. During the 22<sup>nd</sup> the whole Company less 1 Platoon commenced clearing nine road blocks between Taranto, Motola, Gioia, Bari and the Adriatic which took them about 1.5 days to clear. On the 25<sup>th</sup> the whole Company less 1 Platoon moved to a location just north of Trani, southern Italy under the command of the C.R.E. 78<sup>th</sup> Division.

A day later, on the 26<sup>th</sup> the Company moved to a clearer atmosphere 0.5 mile away due to the previous night's mosquito attacks. The same day 2 and 3 Platoons, with Italian labour commenced clearing road blocks between Trani and Molfetta, just south of Trani and swept for mines at demolished bridges between Ofanto and Barletta.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> the Company received the order from the CRE 78<sup>th</sup> Division to move to Canosa. By this time the Company was becoming quite adapt at moving with minimum of transport. The Company maintained and improved two fords at Ofanto and Canosa.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> the news was received of the award of Military Cross to Lieutenant E.C. O'Callaghan for his work during the Sicily campaign. During the past month the Company had done much hard operational work, a thing

it had been waiting for a long time to do. General Alexander had congratulated the Division on the work it had done. There was also a message received from the Chief Royal Engineer congratulating the Divisional R.E. on the work done in Sicily.



Officers and NCO's of the Company on there mules with Lt. Timmins on the far left.

During the first days of October the Company set up camp at Noci, just south of Bari. On the 4th the whole Company had a 15 mile (24 km) route march. On the 10th of November the War Dairy had the entry that 31 mules with their Italian drivers arrived at the Company's camp for an animal management course. The course was run by Lieuts Steel and Legge both of the 2nd Parachute Squadron, RE with four other ranks of the 9th (AB) Field

Company, RE as instructors. This course lasted for one week. About ten men per Section of the Company took the course and learnt how to groom, harness, drive and ride their mules. Roy was one of the Officers who took this course.



While serving in Italy on the 29th October 1943 a local newspaper back in England ran an interesting article about Roy and his good friend from school Barry Hardwick, who had moved through the ranks and had become a Lieutenant in the Sherwood Foresters. The two officers were great friends and met up whilst in Italy and the story relates that Roy, on hearing of his friend's whereabouts in Italy, travelled 400 miles (about 645 km) on a motor cycle in search of him, enquiring at various camps on the way, until he found him.

A local newspaper cutting about the meeting between the two friends back in Italy.



The young officers were only able to spend about two hours together but were filled with joy to see each other again after a year's separation. Their connection went beyond friendship, as Lieutenant Hardwick was engaged to Roy's sister Yvonne. Both got married just after the war on the 10th of September 1945 at the St. Margaret's Church, Aspley Nottingham and had one child, a baby girl.

**The wedding photo of Roy's sister Yvonne with his best friend Lt. Barry Hardwick. The man on the right is most likely Mr.J.W.Timmins, father of Roy and Yvonne.**

For Lieutenant Timmins and the other Officers of the Company horses were obtained on the 15th, and they went for a 3 hour ride in the area. On the 18th November the Company prepared to go home and left in 15 ton lorries for Taranto and around 1200 hours the Company boarded an American L.S.T and sailed from Taranto about at 1400 hours that day and landed at Bizerta, Tunisia on the 22nd. From there they travelled by train to Philipville, Algeria, where they boarded the HMT Duchess of Bedford and set sail for Gibraltar and arrived at Liverpool, England on the 28th November.

#### England :



In the first month of the new year the Company set up camp around Tattershall and Coningsby, two small villages in Lincolnshire. On the 21st the War Diary mentions the inspection of the Company by Major General Urquhart. While being based here H.M. The King George visited the Company on the 16th of March.

**HM The King's visit on the 16th March 1944.**

Four months later on the 4th of April Roy and fifteen other ranks attended a seven-day course in water proofing of motor transport under direction of Lieutenant D. V. Storrs, who came from the Divisional Headquarters, Royal Engineers.



On the 10th and the following weeks the Company made preparations and carried out training for several exercises like Exercise Cotton and Exercise Mush to name a few.

**A part of Number 2 Platoon during a exercise on the 22-24 of April 1944 with Captain E. O'Callaghan on the most right.**

On the 29th Roy and two other ranks proceeded for two days on another course dealing with Mine detector repair and maintenance. During the last day of the month on the 30th the Company held a Church parade in Tatterhall Church.

On the 28th of July the Company had a new Commanding Officer, Major J.C. Winchester who took over command from Major R.A. McNeile.

On the 31st of August the whole Company, less a small rear party moved to RAF Blakehill transit camp to prepare for Operation Linnet. The month of September started with loading and un-loading the Horsa gliders for Operation Linnet, which was cancelled the next day. The Company's War Dairy had the following entry on the 5th of September that Captain R.Binyon, Captain E.O'Callaghan and Captain M.Heggie with two Lieutenants R.Timmins and E.G.Wise and all the Platoon Sergeants moved to Moor Park for Major Winchester's 'O' group (Order Group) there. All were briefed for the next operation, Operation Comet. On the 7th of September Lieutenant Timmins and the rest of 2 Platoon moved to RAF Broadwell transit camp. A day later, on the 8th Operation Comet was postponed for 48 hours. Two days later, on the 10th Operation Comet was cancelled and the Horsa gliders were unloaded. On the 12th the whole Company moved to RAF Keevil transit camp and three days later the Horsa Gliders were loaded for Operation Market. On the 16th all Officers and other ranks were briefed again for Operation Market. This time for real.

### Arnhem :

During the morning of the 17th of September 1944 the 9th (AB) Field Company, RE including No.2 Platoon under the command of Capt Eric O'Callaghan with Lt Roy Timmins as his 2 i/c prepared for Operation Market Garden. It was the task of Captain O'Callaghan and Lt Timmins with their Sappers to link up with the men of the 2nd Parachute Battalion to get as fast as possible to the Arnhem railway bridge and remove any of the German mines and explosives which were attached to the bridge. Due to a glider crash with men of No.1 Platoon of the Company back in England, near Double Hills, that same morning Capt O'Callaghan got the order from Major Winchester, the Company's Commanding Officer, just after landing on Landing Zone Z near Wolfheze, to leave behind a section of his No.2 Platoon. Just after that order Capt O'Callaghan told Lt Timmins to get some men (one Section), amongst whom were Driver C.Rimes, Sprs Eric Thorne, W. B. Sykes, A.Graydon, Driver Pines, Spr W.H.Knight and Driver C.S. Green from HQ Platoon, and stay at the Company's rendezvous point. Around 1500 hours Capt O'Callaghan left the R.V. with the rest of his Platoon (three Sections) to meet up with the 2nd Parachute Battalion on the Lion route and capture the railway bridge.

## The Attack on Wolfheze Hotel :



A period post card of Hotel Wolfhezen.

At 1510 hours Captain R. Binyon less one Section, (the one who that crashed back in England), and Lt Timmins with his Section were despatched to capture the Hotel Wolfheze, which had been appointed as the future Company's Head Quarters. 20 minutes later at 1530 hours Head Quarters Platoon and Number 3 Platoon under the command of Captain Heggie

left the rendezvous point for Hotel Wolfheze. At around 1730 hours Major Winchester received a message from Capt Binyon to the effect that he and Lt Timmins were meeting strong opposition.

Just after Capt Binyon sent that message to Major Winchester he gave Lt Timmins and his Section the order to make a right flank attack on Hotel Wolfheze. Around 1800 hours while crossing a sand path in the woods Timmins was hit in the chest by a burst of enemy machine gun fire and died a few moments later. Around 1930 hours in the evening, about two hours after the attack on the Hotel began Capt Binyon ordered his party and that of the remainder of Lt Timmins' Section to withdraw to the main Company's position in the woods just west of Hotel Wolfheze.

### Sapper E. Thorne:

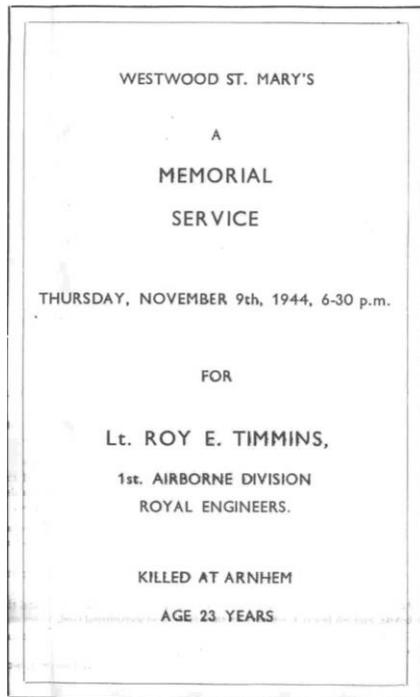
*In the afternoon we were under command of Lt. Timmins and were sent away to recce the route to the hotel in Wolfheze through the woods. I was walking ahead, Lt. Timmins behind me and another scout on the right of me, the rest of the section was behind Lt. Timmins. We had turned left as we came near a crossing point. At the moment we turned left a German machine-gun opened fire. When I heard the machine-gun I dropped to the ground and saw Timmins was shot through the chest and fell to the ground. He told me 'Get back if you can, Get back!' The other scout knew there was no need to come up and had gone back to the rest of the Company, the rest of the section had already got back. I was left there on my own and spent the night in the woods. The next morning, I met a Royal Artillery Officer and we decided to bury Lieutenant Timmins at the place where he was killed.*



According to the Commonwealth War Grave Commission field burial report of 19th of September 1945, just a year after he was killed Lieutenant Timmins got his final resting place in grave 26.A.7 on the Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery.

The author at the grave of Lt. Timmins.

To Commemorate :



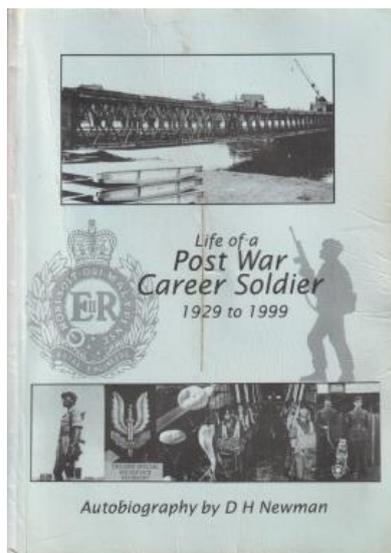
This article will be not the first and last attempt to commemorate the life of 23 year old Lieutenant Roy Timmins. As early as 9th of November 1944, 53 days after he was killed, a memorial service was held at the St. Mary's church at Westwood, close to his home town of Jacksdale. A table within the St. Mary's church is dedicated to Roy's memory. There is also a wooden plaque of remembrance including Roy's name at the Christ church, Ironville. Also, numerous paper articles have been published just after the war about Roy and his death at Arnhem. Since I have been coming to Oosterbeek as a young lad of 16 for the commemorations in September I have been visiting the graves of those who gave their lives, including that of Lieutenant Roy Timmins for our freedom today.

**A copy of the memorial service programme held on the 9th November 1944 at the St.Mary's church at Westwood.**

Hereby I want to say a word of thanks to those who have helped me to write this article. Bob Hilton, Peter Vrolijk and Pete Riley.

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## Don Newman's Autobiography



We extend a very sincere thank you to Andy Dye for sharing with us his copy of Don Newman's self-published autobiography. The document was given to Andy by Don when Andy was living in Australia.

This very unique document covers Don's childhood, his military service, including two tours with 9 Squadron, and post military service family life in Australia

We have now digitised the document, which you can view as follows:

1. Don's obituary page on the AEA website  
<https://www.airbornesappers.org.uk/rollofhonour/N/donnewman.htm>
2. The Books panel on the AEA website Home page  
<https://www.airbornesappers.org.uk/books.htm>
3. The Airborne Sappers Library page on the AEA development website (this site is still a work in progress)  
<https://www.airbornesappers.org.uk/test/library.html>

We hope you find this document to be of interest and welcome any feedback you may have

Thank you Andy!

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## Sgt Pepper Meets a Beatle

**Every picture tells a story**

*THIS regular picture feature in the Daily Mail Readers' Letters page offers you the chance to submit your photographs. They can be previously unseen, of interesting features and events, fascinating insights into famous people or occasions, or a little bit of history you were able to witness, for publication here.*

**WHILE** serving with 131 Parachute Engineer Regiment in 1963, we gave a parachute display. Beatles drummer Ringo Starr attended, along with the young, then heir, to the Dukedom of Woburn Abbey. The heir invited a comrade and I to join them both on a visit to the house for a meal. Ringo, on learning my rank and name, laughed. Some years later, I realised why.

*Stan Pepper (ex-sergeant),  
Garston, Herts.*

■ **SEND** your pictures, with full details of who and what they depict, as far as you know it, to Picture Panel, Daily Mail, 2 Derry Street, London W8 5TT. Enclose an SAE if you want your picture returned.



*One for the album: Sergeant Stan Pepper (right) meets Beatle Ringo Starr*

## Yorkshire Branch Christmas Function



This year we combined our evening Christmas function with a 299 Para Sqn Wakefield training Weekend. This hosting arrangement kept costs down to the absolute minimum while being in a great environment amongst the Airborne Family.

The evening was planned around bringing our own 'pies and puddings' and preparing them on a self-help basis, along with master chef Tomo stepping up to the plate. However, in true Army Reserve style a soldier (civvy street chef) turned to and took on our meal having

just fed the 299 lads. It left Tomo and Denise to serve Morecambe's best pies, peas, and gravy with sticky toffee pudding and cream, washed down with a donation of red wine. After the meal we were made very welcome in the unit bar. At about 10 the bar tab had run out so Wakefield Saturday night life was sampled. Great laugh was had by all.



### Upcoming Yorkshire Branch Social Events:

1st Mar - Next Branch meeting / Social Grand Raffle. 1700hrs meeting followed by food and bar.

14th June Bridlington weekend meeting and evening Dinner in County hotel.

All AEA members are welcome to attend a Yorkshire Branch Social

Phil Taylor 07904 953995

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## Minutes of the AEA AGM



### *Airborne Engineers Association*

*Registered Charity Number: 1009201*

~

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#### **MINUTES OF THE AIRBORNE ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 12 OCTOBER 2024**

##### **1. Opening.**

###### **1.1. Prelims and Members Present**

The National Secretary explained that copies of the agenda are on seats along with copies of the Pathway document and a letter from the Commanding Officer 23 Engineer Regiment Dave Crosbie.

Apologies Received: Baz Bassett (Phil Taylor standing in as President), Bob Matthews, Jonny B Nichols, Dave Pace Attendance list – The National Secretary stated that an attendance list form is being circulated and requested that all attending members to complete.

###### **1.2. Opening address**

The Chairman gave the exaltation and led the 2-minute silence in memory of fallen comrades.

The Chairman welcomed all those attending and opened the meeting at 10:05 am.

##### **2. Minutes of the previous AGM and OGM.**

The minutes of the previous AGM and OGM have been produced, circulated and included on the website.

There were no comments from the floor the Chairman asked for a proposer and seconder that the minutes as recorded be accepted.

**Proposer:** Arthur Askey **Secunder:** Dave Leibrick **Vote:** Carried

### **3. Presidents Statement**

The Chairman stated that the National President could not attend this AGM. However, he submitted a prepared a statement. This was read out by Phil Taylor and is attached to these minutes.

### **4. Treasurers Report.**

The associations treasurer Lt Col (Retd) Bob Matthews provided a written summary of accounts. This report read out by the National Secretary is appended to these minutes.

Total Assets are £24,317.35 which includes £5,873.35 in stock in the shop There were no further comments from the floor.

The Chairman requested a proposer and seconder that the Treasurers Report, subject to annual audit, in November is accepted as presented.

**Proposer:** Dave Rutter **Seconder:** Brian Spivey **Vote:** Carried.

### **5. Association Shop Report.**

- The Association shop report was prepared by JB Nichols was outlined by The Chairman.
- Total Income 1/9/23 to 30/9/24 - £5,534.41
- Total Fund Available to AEA - £1050.93

**Proposer:** Paul Moore **Seconder:** Arthur Askey **Vote:** Carried

Question from the floor regarding stock available and that the most popular colour is blue but not always available. The Chairman stated that the stock is automatically replaced and updated.

The Chairman stated that we will ask JBN to come back to us on this.

It was also noted that as JBN was not able to attend this weekend, there will be no shop available during the weekend as per most AGM weekends. However, as always, the online shop is always open.

### **6. Journal – Editor’s Report.**

In the absence of Dave Pace and a report, the Chairman presented the update as provided by Dave Pace prior to the meeting.

The website is being continuously updated and further developed. If anyone has any suggestions for improvement, by all means contact Dave Pace directly.

Dave is digitising all AEA Journals. the Chairman stated that this is a wonderful archive for the association and is now on the platform.

Dave Pace asked for all members to update their contact details on the AEA Database and by all means reach out to Dave directly who will assist. The Chairman stated that we have over 1000 members on the database 548 that we know work. This will be critical when organising national votes like the Pathway document.

We also need more articles for putting in the eJournal.

The report is appended to these minutes.

The National Secretary stated that Dave Pace does a great deal of work behind the scenes maintaining the membership database, assisting with the shop, production of the Journal, archiving,

maintaining the website etc. This was reinforced by the Chairman who once again asked for a volunteer to assist Dave with the Journal.

From the floor – a request from Joe Houlston for members not to use the various FB pages for political opinions. The Chairman stated that other than the AEA National page these FB pages are not formally associated with the AEA and would be difficult to influence.

From the floor - contact details of members, there are many without emails addresses. The Chairman stated it is up to members to ensure that their contact details are correct. We can only include what they give us.

## **7. Membership Report.**

The membership report was presented by Steve (Billy) Morris Total membership since conception - 1581 Less those departed to the final DZ - 475 Giving a running membership of - 1106 Only 2 new members joined last year Billy urged everyone to go and look at the book at the back of the room to update your details.

If the merger goes ahead then there are around 400 members of the REA (A) Branch that will come across and join as a single entity.

## **8. Welfare Liaison Officer's Report.**

Maj (Retd) Paul Moore stated that there have been no welfare issues or request since the last AGM. It appears to be the case that any issues are being dealt with by the branches.

There were comments from the floor bringing to members attention that two of our members are under treatment for cancer.

There were no further comments from the floor on welfare.

## **9. Presidents Awards/Commendations.**

No details were given at the meeting as they will be announced during the gala ball.. However, for the record the following are to receive Presidents commendations · Glen Ratten – 299 Branch · Craig Gadd - 299 Branch The Chairman stated that Phil Taylor will be standing in as National President to present the awards at the gala dinner.

The Chairman also stated that if any member wants to recommend anyone for a President's award, nomination's should be sent to the national Secretary for the presidents consideration. If a branch nominated someone for an award the is generally accepted by the National President.

## **10. Proposed AEA & REA (A) Merger - Project Pathway**

**10.1** The Chairman opened this agenda item stating that it is an emotive subject for some. Phil Taylor will outline the process so far, with Steve outlining the next step, followed by questions and discussion.

**10.2** The Chairman also stated that if there are questions that are already included in the FAQ's you will be referred to the FAQ's responses. For questions not on the FAQ's it is requested that these are put to the National Secretary in writing for the committee to review and consider, answers will be included in the FAQ's. We will not make policy on this subject on the hoof.

**10.3** Phil Taylor went through the main points in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and some of the FAQ's and not repeated in these minutes.

**10.4** The Chairman made reference to the current Pathway document. The national Secretary put it up on the screen.

**10.5** He outlined that the last time a merger was considered in 2009 the decision was not to merge it was also decided that the subject would not be considered again for a further 10 year. That was 15 years ago. He also mentioned that there are strong feelings on both sides of the argument, but now is the time to reconsider the proposal.

**10.6** The MOU is an agreement with the REA of what the relationship would look like if it is agreed by the members of the AEA, and voted on.

**10.7** Going forward, there will not be a vote of hands here today. We are offering a series of consultation zoom meetings so that members can discuss the proposal and associated questions, this will include those who are not members of branches. The National Secretary will organise such meetings.

**10.8** These will be followed by a national ballot; we don't know what form this will be in at this time but could be a hybrid of IT based and postal voting. It is recognised that the constitution mentions "postal voting," however, this was written in 1987 before the current advances in IT technology and associated access.

**10.9** Dave Pace is exploring a secure online voting system, where members will be sent a link which will asked whether you support the proposal or otherwise. There are still outstanding questions around verification and governance which we hope to resolve and feedback in due course.

**10.10** For those that are not technical or would otherwise prefer a postal option, this is also being explored. However, if we just use the postal voting option it will cost the association in excess of £2,000 with the reduced likelihood in getting a good response from members. There is a proposal to amend the voting wording in the constitution form just postal, to include other means in and agreed form. This is subject to a vote later in this meeting's agenda.

**10.11** When the ballot is complete, the results will be collated and validated, with the aim to complete the process by Christmas. However, if we don't, no problem as it is important that the process is correct and everyone's concerns are addressed. Once the ballot is complete, it does not mean that we will instantly be merged, this process will take some time thereafter.

**10.12** It is to be an individual vote and a majority decision.

**10.13** As Joe Houlston is the founder of the association the Chairman gave him the first opportunity to comment. Joe firstly congratulated the Executive team on doing a fantastic job in pulling all this information together and driving the process, with compelling arguments since the association's formation 36 years ago. He went on to remind everyone what the objective of the associated are

- To promote and maintain contact between and with former members of current and former units of the Royal Engineers.
- Therefore, to foster mutual friendship and support."

He rhetorically asked; "Are we doing this by not allowing members of 23 Regt to not be part of our organisation?" That is for the members to decide. He went on and stated that in the early years there was a lot of bad feeling between the AEA and the REA. However, this proposed merger is the best

thing for the association and urged the members to read the documents and be careful about your decision and not just use emotion in that process.

**10.14** The chairman then asked for comments from the floor.

Q1. Postage is expensive £2000 from our existing funds, can the Corps contribute to any postal costs if the ballot is predominantly postal.

Q2. Comment from Paul Moore stated that as a former Director of British skydiving, that organisation used an electronic voting system every year. It was not expensive (£70.00) and was set up with two factor authorisation and based on membership number. British Skydiving uses it every year and it works very well.

Q3. Tim VDK asked 'will the Regt RSM automatically be the association Secretary.' Phil Taylor answered - no, the secretary will be voted in by members and that the RSM could be away and not able to fully fulfil the requirement of the appointment.

Q4. Tim VDK stated that we potentially have 500 members coming across for REA(A).

When we joined the AEA we paid £25.00, will they be required to pay such a joining fee. Phil Taylor answered no - as all people coming across will do so at no additional cost as they are already members of the REA by virtue of the day's pay scheme, so effectively they have already paid it,. The Chairman added that likewise there is no cost to any of us as we are already members of the REA. Any new member will be asked to pay a joining fee.

Q5. Dave Rutter asked about the ringfencing of our finances and that there could be addition income from the REA such as PRI. The Chairman stated that the Regt PRI will be separate for the current ARA shop. If we sell products originating from the Regt PRI but purchase through the AEA shop, the AEA will receive a handling fee. The AEA will just provide a platform for the PRI through the AEA site.

Q6. Mike Ellery stated that with reference to the current 500 members in the RE(A). the Scotland branch is aware of former airborne engineers of our generation in and around the Glasgow area who are only interested in coming together for a few beers. What is the difference to these younger guys and do they have the same attitude. The Chairman stated that firstly he is not that naive to think that all 500 members will come across and be active in the merged AEA; however, if there are only 20-30 active members, then that could be a difference between a branch remaining open or closing. There is also potential of forming another branch in Woodbridge. Mike went on to question the view that we will have more members as a result of the merger.

There was a general discussion with various contributors on the challenges around recruitment and membership of the AEA. Chairman stated that currently there is a disconnect between the generations in this room and other younger former airborne engineers and serving members, despite the efforts of Billy, Tim VDK, Baz Bassett and other members of the AEA.

Q7. Bob Prosser stated that many years ago they organised an AGM with 400 attendees, this year we have circa 150, He wished to bring to our attention the historical change that is happening to our wonderful family and we are dying. 10 people die, 2 people join, this is not sustainable and that if we continue as we are our association will die.

After 25 minutes on this agenda item, the Chairman closed the discussion with closing comments that with the questions being asked at this meeting and in the last few weeks, it is clear that many members are not reading the Pathway document and associated FAQ's., he urged members to read

the document before any ballot. He went on to state that the decision is an individual vote, and the decision will be by majority,

### **11. Election of Officers**

Baz Basset stated in his statement that he is standing down as President after two years; however, he will continue to work on the Pathway document until such time as the ballot has been concluded.

Consequently, the association needs someone to step up and apply for the role, John Brennan is the vice president.

The Chairman stated that he will also be standing down at the next AGM in Scotland and once again urged member to consider putting themselves forward for the role he reminded everyone that he spent a great deal of time convincing other members of the committee to join him and help run the association. If people don't step forward, we won't have a President, we won't have a Chairman, so potentially we would not have an association.

The Secretary also mentioned that due to personal circumstance there is a 50/50 chance that he may have to step down before the next AGM.

### **12. Branch Reports.**

The following Branch Reports were outlined by the following:

**299 Association** – presented by Craig Gadd

**Aldershot Branch** – presented by Dave Rutter

J Ferry added that in reference to the talk he did at Aldershot ceremony he stated that it was about education, a key point he raised was that unbeknown to many people, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission only look after graves placed before 1946 and that they do not look after graves of those that have passed away in conflicts after WW2.

**Birmingham Branch** – presented Tom Smith

**Yorkshire Branch** – Presented by Phil Taylor

**Scotland Branch** – Presented by Mike Ellery

Included a briefing on next year's AGM and Gala Dinner – Joining instructions will be distributed in January 2025.

**Wales and West** – Presented by Dave Leibrick

**Chatham Branch** – Presented by Tim van der Kran

Copies of the Branch report are at attached to these minutes.

### **13. Matter Arising from Previous Minutes**

**No comments**

## 14. Item from Members

### 14.1 Amendments to Constitution from Amend Constitution

It is proposed that article 10c of the constitution be amended as follow;

From

**Current Wording:** “The Council shall have the power to call for a postal vote of all registered Members should the need arise.”

To

**Proposed Amended Wording:** “The Council shall have the power to call for a **national vote in a format to be agreed** of all registered Members should the need arise.”

Joe Houlston as the original drafter of the constitution was given the opportunity to outline his views. He stated that he agreed with the wording but still to include postal voting. The Chairman stated that a hybrid that include electronic means would provide greater flexibility and not be constrained by only one method.

**Proposer:** Craig Gadd    **Seconder:** Arther Askey    **Vote:** Carried

### 14.2 Applications for funding for AEA events

The Chairman mentioned that we currently have around £18,000 (not including shop stock) in our national account. If branches are holding events of national significance, we will look at the association supporting the branch with national association funds. However, generally for branch functions, it will not be agreed to support such functions financially unless there are extenuating circumstances, and these events should be self-funding. This decision has not been formally agreed yet.

Dave Rutter gave a compelling example of how the Aldershot Branch has made a request for financial support for their spring lunch. The majority of the fund are as a result of the shop managers over the years raising considerable amount of cash for the national account. Also Ray Colman raised several thousand pounds for the national account. A former Aldershot member also donated a considerable amount of money in his last will and testament; consequently, Dave is of the opinion that on this occasion a donation of £500.00 for offsetting the cost of the branch spring lunch is not unreasonable.

### 14.3 Airborne Statue

John Ferry explained that former members of the Parachute Regiment are raising money for a Paratrooper statue similar to the one in Aldershot for Colchester town centre. They have currently raised £60,000 and the full cost is around £75,000. JF proposed that a sum of £500.00 be donated from the AEA National account.

**Proposer:** J Ferry    **Seconder:** Arther Askey    **Vote:** Carried

### 14.4 Christmas Cards to Widows of former members

It was proposed that that widows of former members of the association be sent Christmas Cards from the AEA. The Chairman stated that this should be a matter for the branches which was agreed.

## **15. Remembrance Events and Services.**

**15.1** The following major events have been attended by members of our Association since the AGM in October 2023 (The look back):

- Squadron Falklands wreath laying at Aldershot Military Cemetery – Saturday 15th June meeting at 10.30hrs.
- Hardwick Hall – Saturday 11th May.
- Double Hills – Sunday 1st Sept.
- Arnhem 80th Anniversary Commemorations – 20th-22nd Sept.
- Cromwell Lock – Saturday 28th Sept.
- 1st Para Sqn Remembrance Service – Donnington – 29th Sept

**15.2** The following major events (Look Forward) will be attended by members of our Association between now and the AGM in October

- National Service of Remembrance at the Cenotaph Sunday 10th November 2024 – The Chairman outlined arrangements with 42 places allocated and is all attend notwithstanding a couple of people that have had to pull out will have the largest Airborne Engineer presence ever. National Rail have stated that there is free travel for veterans on the day.
- Falkland Service of Remembrance, The Falklands Chapel, Pangbourne School - Sunday 15 June 2025
- Squadron Falklands wreath laying at Aldershot 15 June? 2025 at Aldershot Military Cemetery.
- Hardwick Hall Saturday -17 May 2025
- Double Hills Family Service - 7 Sept 2025
- Cromwell Lock Sunday 28 Sept at Cromwell Lock (50th anniversary – Possible TV Coverage)
- Falkland Ride of Respect – 7/8 June 2025

## **16. AGM and GALA Ball.**

Craig Gadd outlined the event around the Gala Ball Steve added the Chris Davis has kindly donated a bottle of Port as an auction item. He was presented the bottle along with a presentation box. What makes it special is that the bottle is inscribed with wings and 9 Parachute Squadron RE. It was suggested that 50% of the proceeds go to a charity nominated by Chris Davis and the rest goes to 299 Sqn's chosen charity. Craig chipped in and stated that he is happy for all the proceeds to go to the Aldershot branch, or the charity nominated by Chris.

## **17. Any Other Business**

No points raised

Phil Taylor mentioned that although we won't necessarily have new members engage straight away, we will have their data link for them to join at a later date. He also stated that if the merger does go ahead, we can bid for cash from the REA.

J. Ferry mention the book about John Humphries "The Last Paratrooper" by Stuart Tootal published by Penguin Books will be an auction item tonight.

## **18. National Chairman's Points**

The Chairman reiterated that for the potential merger, to look at the facts, read the pathway document and vote accordingly.

**19. Next Meeting National Meeting Date:**

OGM in April via Zoom

The meeting was closed in good order at 12.08 hrs.

Attachments

- Treasures Report
- Branch reports
- National President Statement (deliver by Phil Taylor in his absence)
- AEA Webmasters/Journal report
- Shop Report
- Attendance list.

## Treasurer's Report

### AIRBORNE ENGINEERS ASSOCIATION

#### STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

AS AT 05 OCT 2024

#### ASSETS

Cash in Hand	Nil
Cash at Bank	£ 3332.98
Deposit Account	£15111.63
Shop Stock	£ 5873.35
<b><u>TOTAL ASSETS</u></b>	<b><u>£24317.96</u></b>

#### LIABILITIES

Nil

**TOTAL LIABILITIES** Nil

#### WORKING CAPITAL

Assets	£24317.96
Minus Liabilities	£0.00
<b><u>TOTAL WORKING CAPITAL</u></b>	<b><u>£24317.96</u></b>

Points:

Audit completed on the 05 OCT 24

## 299 Association Branch Report

### Gents

As ever, 299 remains an active and very supportive membership. 299's Committee currently consist of Chris Shillito as our Chairman myself as Vice Chairman and acting secretary. Glenn Ratten as Treasurer, Tony Irwin as Archivist and Dave Hinze as Web Master.

We have a very active membership with around 60 active members, with about 90 on the books and an average turnout of about 30 or so per meeting.

After last year's AGM and dinner, this saw us prepare for remembrance with a great turn out of around 36 on parade but many more coming back (with families etc) to the Minerva for the usual post parade celebrations and buffet that was paid for through our raffle with prizes donated by our members.

December saw a social gathering with no formal meeting.

Our first meeting of the year kicked off in February, due to the Christmas celebrations, as we don't have a January meeting. This was a great turn out by its members and a visit from the Officers and SNCO's of 299 Para Sqn RE which made for a great evening.

May saw our AGM which had a great turn out with around 44 members with 4 former troop commanders in attendance. The committee all stood down and was re-elected for another year as no one fancied the prospect of joining the committee. The Les Ransom Shield (named after our former Arnhem Veteran) was presented to our resident photographer and member Tony Foster for all the dedicated work he does for our Association.

We did try to organise a trip to Normandy for this year but that fell through due to lack of numbers, as Arnhem was our main effort. However, there is a keen interest for next year instead of Arnhem.

Although we haven't had a significant event during the year, as our main effort has been the 80th celebrations at Arnhem, and the AGM Gala Dinner, the Association along with the Birmingham branch, have maintained the Cromwell Lock memorial with the 50th anniversary coming up next year 2025

Last month we had 47 members booked for Arnhem with 2 dropping out last minute, one due to illness and one falling foul, to the 10yr ruling on his passport form date of issue, despite his passport expiry actually still saying it was in date. However despite this setback the rest of us had a great trip, sorry Dave!

We also attended the Cromwell Lock Anniversary the weekend after Arnhem, with a good turn out from 299 Association along with the rest of the Airborne community. Next year we definitely need some coordination between the veteran community and the serving ranks, so not to have some random guy who thinks he can march us down in some random tick tock fashion. I suggest this be someone of RE cab badge, as this was

131 taking part in Ex Trent Chase back in 1975. I know 131 Commando Sqn RE are making it their main effort next year and hopefully so will 299 Para Sqn RE as this is now part of their history also.

299 Association lost two men during this period, Martin Hall who lost his battle to leukaemia in January, who went fair to early and Frank Pougher in June due to pneumonia.

NFTR.

### Presidents Commendations

The Chairman would like to nominate Glenn Ratten our treasurer. I will forward a citation

Yours Aye,

Gaddy

Craig Gadd Vice Chairman & Acting Secretary 299 Association

## Aldershot Branch Annual Report.

Our meetings are held bi-monthly in what appears to be an ever changing location. Having been moved on from Potters International Hotel following the Home Office decision to house 'others' within the hotel, we moved to the nearby Brewers Fayre in Aldershot which offered (free of charge) a location for our Sunday morning meetings plus a Sunday lunch carvery.

Unfortunately, one week prior to our July 2024 meeting we were notified that the Aldershot Brewers Fayre had been closed following its sale to Premier Inn. Panic stations resulted but after a frantic search we discovered that the management of Brewers Fayre in Southwood (Cove) could provide with all our needs. The ladies in particular found our new location far more pleasing than that of the Aldershot facility. Ambience, comfort and food quality were much more appealing to all members. However, while attending the branch October meeting we were given warning that the Southwood Brewers Fayre was also on the shortlist for closure! We're hoping that we'll at least be able to hold our scheduled December meeting before they too will be taken over.

On the entertainment subject, Chris Davies has come to the fore by organising the following events:

The Branch Spring Luncheon which was held at the Bush Hotel, Farnham on Saturday 24 February. Thirty five members and guests were in attendance and judging by the positive comments and later feedback it proved to be a resounding success. So much so, that we will be returning to the Bush Hotel again next February.

Not resting on his laurels, Chris was later to organise a guided tour of the facilities associated with the Farnborough Air Science Trust. First on the list was a guided tour of the Farnborough Aircraft museum then on to the Wind Tunnel facilities that were used to assess in the design of aircraft when undergoing varying high wind pressures on the wings and general aspects of their construction.

In June we again joined Chris with a visit and guided tour of the Centrifuge. This was the first machine in Britain able to test human subjects and their equipment under the effects of High G-force.

Each of these events were well attended by branch members plus wives and guests.

Interspersed with Chris Davies's program, John Ferry gave an extremely interesting guided tour of the Aldershot Military Cemetery. I believe John was quite surprised to see how many were in attendance which also included several wives. First describing the past history of the cemetery which included the previous unknown fact that the cemetery supported a small herd of deer that took advantage of the real flower tributes that were placed on the final resting place of the deceased!

John gave our group the history relating to the varying designs of the headstones and pointed out the final resting places of 3 individuals awarded the Victoria Cross.

Membership recruitment into the branch was strengthened by the inclusion of Dave Ford & John Foran MM plus the payment for full membership by Dave Leibrick. It's great to have them on-board.

## AEA Birmingham Branch Report

Steve Brown.

### **1. MEETINGS.**

The branch has a potential membership of 45 with around 15 to 22 members attending monthly meetings.

There are currently a lot of members who do not respond to branch mail or contribute anything to the branch running.

The meeting venue is always welcoming and will allow the branch to try different timings to try and retain members which is obviously our prime concern.

Last winter the branch trialled breakfast/lunch time meetings where members could partake in a breakfast prior to the meeting start time of 12:00hrs. These meetings proved popular and gave a chance for members who are reluctant to drive in the darker months a chance to attend meetings.

The Branch held its AGM in April 2024 which was well supported but like other branches members are reluctant to take on any of the key committee posts so it falls on the few existing branch committee members to take the load. Some of the current committee members hold several posts on the committee which is not ideal and puts pressure on these individuals.

Recruitment of new members remains difficult and with an aging membership this is a concern along with some members being in poor health.

We have gained 2 new members with Pat Saunders and Lt. Col. (Retd) Mark Harrison.

The 'Project Joint Pathway' has been debated at meetings and queries submitted to the executive committee.

### **2. BRANCH SOCIAL EVENTS.**

The branch continues, on a regular basis, to have a more social side, meeting up for restaurant meals with wives, family, etc. and also Breakfast Club meetings and also brings the wives in the equation.

The Branch held its Christmas Dinner on the 2nd December 2023 which was another branch success and well attended but we be better if more branch members came along.

A branch trip to RAF Cosford is being organised and a suitable date is to be confirmed.

The main event for the Branch is the Christmas Dinner on the 7th December 2024 which should see the year out on another positive and festive note. If members from any other branch would like to attend, please get in touch. Great entertainment, 4 course dinner with wine on the table, Port for the toast, discounted beer prices and all for only £30.00 per person.

Hotel rooms available at a discounted price.

### **3. MEMORIAL SERVICES.**

Branch members continue to support Airborne and PRA events and Services with members attending Hardwick Hall in May, PRA service at NMA in July, Double Hills and Cromwell Lock services in September.

Members are attending the Remembrance Parade at the Cenotaph.

The planning and organising of the 50th Cromwell Lock Anniversary in September 2025 is being discussed and a plan put forward.

The Birmingham branch along with 299 Association continues to maintain the garden and memorial at Cromwell Lock in good condition and ready for the annual services. Some extra work is required next year.

Some of our members have independently attended the 80th anniversary at Arnhem this year.

#### **4. WELFARE.**

The branch lost our Branch President, **George Barrett** who was a long - standing AEA member in February 2024. His funeral was well attended by branch members. **Terry Disley** who was a good friend to the Birmingham Branch passed away in September 2024. **Dot Parkes** widow of **Dennis Parkes** recently passed away.

Our Welfare member, **Tony Higgins**, keeps the branch updated at the monthly meetings.

## Chatham Update and Briefing

First my apologies for absence and many thanks for Tim, to present this at the AGM.

Since the last AGM, the Branch has run its 2 main events i.e. Christmas and John Rock Lunch and members have continued to attend AEA events where they can with availability of course the main issue. Tim vdK, continues to organise the Mcilvenny Memorial Service, this year Col (Retd) Chris Davies was in attendance and separately of course the Ride of Respect visited the Mac's Headstone in the Summer, again organised by Tim vdK. Baz attended Double hills, which may well be the last formal one.

You will have noted over the last 3 years that the Branch decided to cancel its monthly meetings, COVID restrictions did not help.

Where the strength of the Branch was the old and bold, which included wives, but unfortunately as they passed away these numbers dropped. This was workable but 3 or 4 members with 3 wives for a meeting was not really sustainable. The 4 events we ran per year again was also not sustainable and after having to cancel our Curry Lunch held at 36 Engr Regt due to COVID followed by the contractor driving up costs the Branch settled on two events a year, The John Rock and Christmas Lunch's. May I say that both these events used to attract very good numbers and was a good opportunity to catch up with others including wives and widows.

We can all look back on successful Lunches and Dinners with large attendances. However, numbers have slowly dropped and when you review the attendees from 40 there were only 6 members in attendance. This is or was not an issue as the committee continued to organise the events for the benefit of others.

Sadly, this committee, which consists of the same names that have been organising the branch for many, many years has reached its sell by date and there are no other members coming forward to take over. Although the monthly meetings were cancelled there were regular meetings at 'Bassetts Kitchen' for a Bacon Butty & Brew to plan and discuss AEA matters. With Baz, standing down and Peter Kershaw, also standing down, this would only leave Tim vdK, on the committee. The Cttee have discussed a way ahead with options and Baz (President and Chair of the Branch) has circulated to members options and their concerns.

Because of this a series of emails have been sent to the members (16) requesting their input.

Following from the responses an extraordinary General meeting has been called on the 6th of November. The Branch has two options, replacement of the current posts and or close down.

The National committee will be informed of the Agenda and the results of the meeting.

The annual Christmas lunch is going ahead and will not be affected by the various meetings, the results as I said will be passed to the National Secretary ad committee.

I realise that this is a busy meeting and I, have kept this short so it does not detract from the General Meeting Tim, is willing to discuss the difficult decisions we have had to make. But I would point out that, this is branch business and therefore decisions are branch decisions based on branch matters.

Baz

## Wales and West Branch Update.

1. Branch Members – 74 on the books.
  - a. Many of those shown on the database do not respond to emails, letters or attend meetings.  
No change
2. Meetings:
  - a. Meetings are taking place on a quarterly basis
  - b. The last meeting was held on 27 September 24 with 10 in attendance. The next meeting is scheduled for 05 October 24.
3. Charity:
  - a. The branch has elected to support to Hereford Veterans Support Centre and donated an average of £30-40 per meeting. We also presented them with a cheque for £2000.00 following the AGM in Malvern.
  - b. Everest Climb. On 24 October 2023, Kez Watters and his daughter Ellie made an ascent of mount Everest to the Base Camp to raise money for the 'Boulder Barn' charity which was founded by Brummie Stokes and is an Adventure Centre set up for the underprivileged to be able to benefit from challenging activities in a safe environment. A JustGiving page has been set up to help raise funds. They raised £1830.00. Kez produced an article for the Journal in May 2024.
4. Welfare:
  - a. In the past 12 months, our President, Clive Lee has undergone Hip Replacement Surgery and suffered a minor stroke and is recovering well
5. Walking Group:
  - a. The branch has set up a walking group which we hoped to get off the ground properly in the New Year. But have not so far managed any events.
6. Cromwell Locke and Double hills. Several members of the branch visited both events
7. Membership
  - a. New members are coming in dribs and drabs
  - b. The branch has reached out to serving members of 23 on several occasions, but so far there has been no uptake
8. Branch Secretary  
Dave leibrick took over as Branch Secretary as a temporary measure to ensure that the AGM was given the impetus it needed. Now considering whether it is viable to continue with current workload. This will be discussed at the next meeting in October.

## Yorkshire Branch Annual Report

1. This year we haven't lost any members. We have Dave Mellors, John Parker both 92 years old not well enough to attend meetings but we keep in touch and they both send their regards.
2. **Hosted.** We continue to be well hosted by 299 Para Sqn in Wakefield, the PSAO Capt Al Wilde will come to our Nov Meet.
3. **Bill Rudd's legacy** lives on and we are still guided in Arnhem by Ed Van Der Lann and his friend Ton. Ed is attending the dinner tonight and Yorkshire Branch have picked up the dinner and his accommodation bill on behalf of the AEA as he helped not just the Yorkshire branch this year but he was great support to other AEA branches. On the Arnhem trip you voted £500 last year which we spent Euros 450 on a mini buss and diesel. The remaining money we put towards tonight to help offset Eds accommodation. Public thankyou to the Ubiquitous Dave Grimbley for picking up Friday night and picking Ed up from Manchester Airport.
4. **Finance Bid**  
The branch would like to bid for £700 for next year for 2 mini buses. Or a larger bus, driver dependant. We would also like to bid for sufficient funds to cover Ed's dinner and accommodation next year.
5. **Meetings .** We have 3 meetings a year with 2 in Wakefield and the summer one in Bridlington , We generally stay overnight and Baz Henderson organises a meal and venue He bobs around on his mobility scooter sorts it all out. We put food on at the two Wakefield meetings even if it's a Dominoes delivery.
6. Active membership is steady state a total of 44 of which 20 are paid up. At the present moment we are just keeping our heads above water. Bolstered by our new member Mad Frank who does run a good Raffle.

## National President's Statement

AGM BRIEF FOR MEMBERS 12 OCT

Good morning and first my apologies for non-attendance. Lin has organised a party and for some strange reason I need to be there. However, with the committee suffering a reduction in numbers I have asked Phil at short notice to stand in and support Steve at this years AGM.

Although I think a thank you will be given later by the Chairman can I first personally thank Craig and his team for organising what I am sure will be a great event. I was looking forward to visiting the Museum for trawlers and Fishermen, which I did when I was here last, those were hard men.

Can I also thank those of you for supporting the AGM and the Gala Dinner for the annual bash, please enjoy and I look forward to the photos.

One of the key points last year was that the Chairman, Steve, raised the issue of the amalgamation with the REA. As you all know this question regularly gets reviewed and the last time was about 10 / 15 years ago. I offered to take this forward during the year and to keep the Chairman and committee informed. It was a slow start as information needed to be drawn together. It did not help that in December I had a small health scare, which slowed down things.

However, by the new year Phil Taylor and myself had started to work on a series on MoUs. Again, Phil's holiday home in France needed to be sorted and I buggered off for 6 weeks abroad.

However, in the sidelines work on the MoU was progressing and various members were asked for their opinions in drawing this together. Late spring early summer found Phil and me in regular conversation with Ken Kirk, the Chief Executive of the REA. I would say now that both Phil and Ken spent a lot of time dealing with the small print on the MoU, Ken attended meetings with the Council and cleared a number of our concerns with the REA and with ourselves. I would at this stage, state yet again PLEASE READ THE MoU AND THE FAQs as clearly a lot of members are not reading these documents and not grasping A. what we are trying to achieve and B What is on offer. As they say the devil is in the detail, your council, i.e. myself, Phil Steve, Mick, Bobby, Jon and Dave. (definitely sounds like a 70s band) have gone through the documents and all the small print and are totally satisfied there are no traps. The REA is not trying to trip anyone up, in fact whatever we have asked for in the MoU has been offered to us.

You will have seen the results of their very hard work in drawing together the numerous concerns from members who have raised them, and the answers the committee have presented to you. Remember this an individual questionnaire asking for your opinion not a group response. It wants to know what you personally are concerned why we should not amalgamate.

I think at this stage it may be worth mentioning the problems that the National committee have in running the association. Please look around and see if you can identify who you think can replace the committee in front of you. Look at your branch, if you are a member of one, who will run that branch and if so for how long. Sadly, I fear that the Chatham branch will have to close as we face the same problem as there are no working members able to step up into the key positions.

It is to the future that the Association must look and your council have looked at how the Association can move forward with support from others, the MOU explains the method we can use to engage while maintain our Airborne spirit and more importantly engage with the serving members at the same time importantly offering those veterans and those who are discharged a focus. Look closely at the MoU and the FAQs and you will see that this is not a sideways step it

is a continuing journey in our direction, and we can take along on the journey new members. For those who have not visited Woodbridge and 23 Regt, it is a modern, vibrant and exciting group of individuals. Rather like we were when we were young, the AEA gave us something to be proud of after we left and to continue with our branch

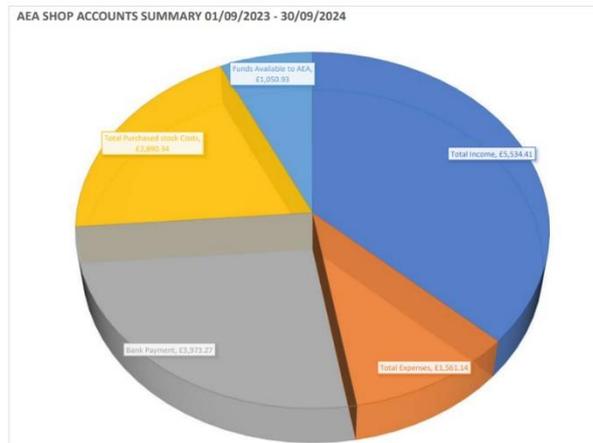
events and the Annual Gala Dinner and Dance. I would dearly hope that we can continue as an Association and provide a solid airborne structure for those young men I have seen at Woodbridge who when they leave the forces know that they are still very much in the airborne family.

Baz Bassett BEM  
AEA National President

## AEA AGM 2024 Shop Report

	01/09/2023 - 31/12/23	01/01/2024 - 30/09/2024	01/09/2023 - 30/09/2024
Total Income	2461.56	3072.85	£5,534.41
Total Expenses	887.47	673.67	£1,561.14
Bank Payment	1574.09	2399.18	£3,973.27
Total Purchased stock Costs	805.79	2084.55	£2,890.34
<b>Funds Available to AEA</b>	736.3	314.63	<b>£1,050.93</b>

**Present Stock Value in shop at cost price 10/10/2024 £5,808.95**



## 2024 AGM – Webmaster/Journal Report

1. Redesign of AEA website is underway, simple uncluttered, modern design which can be viewed at

<https://www.airbornesappers.org.uk/test/>

Responsive layout. This means the layout will adapt to the device being used, whether it's a large screen monitor, tablet or phone All feedback welcome

2. Digitising AEA Journals and Newsletters into PDF files. Current progress on this can be viewed via the development site URL above I must express my thanks to Tony Winn for loaning me 15 of the 16 editions of the AEA Journal I didn't have, as well as 14 editions of the AEA Newsletter (the Journal's predecessor) which I didn't even know existed.

Thank you also to Dave Rutter for the loan of the final edition of the Journal not in my possession.

3. As mentioned in the June 2024 edition of the eJournal, I have been contacted regarding Don Newman's self-published autobiography. I am in the process of digitising this to PDF and will keep you up to date via the Journal and website

4. Please contact me by any of the following means to confirm your contact information we have in the membership database:

By phone on 01304 373933 or 07977 282620

By Email on [contactaeawebmaster@gmail.com](mailto:contactaeawebmaster@gmail.com)

5. The future of the Journal – Its becoming increasingly difficult to get content for the Journal, or the eJournal as it is now. If you want it to continue it needs someone who can chase for the content. I'm happy to help with production and distribution, the problem is getting the content.

Dave Pace

# Join the Airborne Engineers Association

## Eligibility

The Airborne Engineers Association (AEA) was formed in 1989 and is open to all personnel who have served, or are still serving, on the strength of any Airborne Engineer Unit.

This also includes parachute trained Royal Engineers who have served, or are presently serving with any Regular or TA unit, which has in its order of battle a parachuting capability.

Membership may also be given to any person who in the opinion of the Executive Committee has rendered special service to the Airborne Engineers.

The Association currently has seven branches:

Aldershot, Birmingham, Chatham, 299 Association (Hull), Scotland, Wales and West & Yorkshire.

Life membership of the Association costs just £25.00

Unsure if you're eligible to join the AEA or have any other questions? Get in touch via our [Contact](#) page or via email [contactaeawebmaster@gmail.com](mailto:contactaeawebmaster@gmail.com)

Apply for membership via [web form](#)

or print, complete and post the following PDF documents

[Membership Application Form & Gift Aid Declaration](#)

General Data Protection Regulations - [Personal Data Consent Form](#)

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