



Riggers' Sub-Committee

Thursday 2 April 2015 at 1600

at the BPA Office, 5 Wharf Way, Glen Parva, Leicester LE2 9TF

Present: Paul Applegate (AR) - Riggers' Sub-Committee Chair
Rick Boardman (AR)
Pete Sizer (AR)
Noel Purcell (PRv)
Kim Newton (RE)

Key:

RE = Rigger Examiner

AR = Advanced Rigger

PR(v) = Parachute Rigger (voting)

PR(nv) = Parachute Rigger (non voting)

Apologies: Tony Butler (COO), who was attending the PIA Meeting in USA,
John Curtis, Andrew Hilton, Bill Sharp, George Panagopoulos,
Phill Elston.

In Attendance: John Hitchen - Chair STC
Jeff Montgomery - Safety & Technical Officer
Trudy Kemp - Assistant to COO/STO

Observers: Billy Steele.

ITEM

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair invited declarations of interested relating to items on the agenda for this meeting. None were stated.

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS' SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE 5 FEBRUARY 2015

Page 1, Item 2 – Next & Next Century Tandem Systems. Kim Newton gave a progress report on the WG set up to look at the various issues surrounding reserve loops on Next and Next Century Tandem Systems.

Kim Newton reported that she had received a good response from PTOs regarding completed questionnaires that had been returned, to which Kim had acknowledged her thanks. Kim stated that she had received no further reports of damaged loops.

Kim asked whether the Committee wished to consider the possibility of allowing longer intervals between loop inspections, dependent on whether there had been 2 consecutive good loop inspections after the 50 jump check on the individual Tandem container.

The Committee gave this some consideration, but agreed to continue with the 50 jump inspection for the immediate future.

Kim reported that Paratec were continuing to look at various issues that will help reduce the wear on the reserve loops. She then presented a prototype of a new pilot chute that Paratec were currently trialling.

Kim stated that If anyone had a Next Tandem container with grommets that are damaged then Paratec or Thomas Defence Systems will replace these grommets free of charge (Shipping will be at owners cost).

Page 4, Item 9 – Tandem Reserves, Markings & Containers. The new BPA Form 290 (Tandem Reserves, Markings & Containers) had been produced and uploaded onto the BPA website and had also been sent to Advanced Packers (Tandem) for information.

Page 4, Item 10 – BPA Equipment Inspection Policies Working Group. This item was on the main Agenda.

Page 5, Item 11 – To Review the Current System with Dealing with Initial Equipment Clearance Requests. BPA Forms 258 (Student Harness & Container System – Initial Clearance) and 258a (Tandem Harness & Container System – Initial Clearance) had been updated and uploaded onto the BPA website.

Page 7, Item 17 – AOB (i) – AAD Firing. An incident where an AAD (Vigil) fired whilst a jumper was turning downwind at 1,200ft was reported at the last meeting. The AAD had been sent back to the manufacturer who stated that the AAD had been set in the 'Student' mode.

Page 7, Item 17 AOB (iv). – The Chair was currently looking into the possibility of developing a system for integrating Non-BPA rated Riggers & Packers into the BPA system.

Page 7, Item 17 – AOB (v) – Basic Rigger Training. At the last Riggers' Sub -Committee meeting, discussion had taken place regarding Basic Rigger training via 'Method 2' where a candidate may qualify to attend a Parachute Rigger (PR) course by carrying out 200 hours training under the supervision of a PR or above, who has held his/her rating for at least two years and is prepared to supervise the candidate during the training period using the training syllabus for the BR course. Those present at the meeting believed that the training (Method 2) could be carried out outside the BPA environment, i.e. in the USA.

However, it has since been pointed out that Method 2 should still be regarded as a Rigger training course even though the training is spread over at least 200 hours and not over a one week period (Method 1). It has long been BPA policy that Rigging Courses may only be conducted in the UK or at UK sovereign bases overseas (BPA Council Minutes 21 October 2003).

A paper from the COO together with a draft of BPA Forms 138 (Basic Rigger Application) and 199 (Basic Rigger Course Syllabus) had been circulated with the Agenda suggesting that these forms be amended to clarify BPA policy.

Tabled to the Committee was correspondence from Bill Sharp and Andrew Hilton, which included their comments on the COO's suggestion, which were noted by those present.

From the discussion that then followed, a number of 'grey' areas were identified by those present that required clarification, particularly in regard to the current wording in the Rigging section of the BPA Operations Manual and the BR Syllabus, which the Committee believed were open to misinterpretation.

It was agreed to set up a small Working Group, which the Chair would organise to look at the BR training methods and any other issues in relation to packer/rigger training.

The Committee wished to clarify the rules as they currently stood regarding a BR registered under Method 2 training, and that it is the responsibility of the registered BRs supervising Rigger for inspecting and signing off the BRs rigging work throughout their training period. This in effect, meant that the registered BR cannot conduct part of their training elsewhere and have their work signed off by another Rigger.

Following further consideration, there was no support from those present who supported the COOs suggestion to amend the Basic Rigger application and BR Syllabus.

The Chair said that he would contact Derek Thomas in the USA to advise him of the Committee's current policy on BR training.

Page 7, Item 17 – AOB (vii). The BPA wished to thank Wng Cdr Wayne Loxton and his staff at RAF Brize Norton Airborne Delivery Wing for the recent visit to their facility by the BPA COO and STO together with a number of Riggers/Packers, which had been organised by Rick Boardman.

There being no further matters arising, it was proposed by Rick Boardman and seconded by Pete Sizer that the Riggers' Sub-Committee Meeting of 5 February 2015 be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 5 FEBRUARY 2015

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

4. PROPOSAL BY GEORGE PANAGOPOULOS

A proposal from George Panagopoulos to amend BPA Form 169 (Advanced Packer Course Syllabus) had been circulated with the Agenda.

George had pointed out that after someone had completed an Advanced Packer (S) Course, there was no time frame stated on the Syllabus for when the Examination phase should take place. At the moment it could take place the very next day or it could be 1 or 2 years later.

George had therefore proposed that the Examination Course following the AP Training Course must take place within 6 calendar months from the end of the Training Course.

A counter proposal from Pete Sizer had been tabled to those present proposing that the AP Syllabus is brought into line with other 'basic' ratings, ie a Basic Instructor and BR Method 1, and that it has a 12 month time period attached to it.

Pete Sizer stated that he felt that AP candidates packing a reserve under supervision each and every week following their Course was onerous, particularly for a non-staff member who may only be at the drop zone one or two weekends a month.

It was also the general feeling amongst those Riggers present that attaching a 6 month time limit was unrealistic.

Following further consideration, Pete Sizer's counter-proposal (above), seconded by Noel Purcell was voted on first and carried unanimously.

Carried Unanimously

5. BPA EQUIPMENT INSPECTION POLICIES WORKING GROUP

Rick Boardman had produced a report on the previous WG meeting, which had been circulated in advance.

Rick then reported on the meeting held earlier this afternoon and stated that Committee are to follow up on correspondence from the USPA and FAA, regarding manufacturer's lifing policies. He stated that in the long term, the WG are looking to seek some empirical evidence from a possible research facility regarding materials and actually how they degrade, which was more relevant to the sport.

The WG would also be looking at enhancing the documentation and paperwork that accompanied each set of equipment to reflect all component parts rather than just the reserve, and possibly trialling a system similar to the one that operates in Germany.

6. ADVANCED PACKER COURSE REPORTS

- i) An Advanced Packers Tandem upgrade Course had been held at Netheravon from the 13 – 14 March 2015.

The Course was attended by Martin Cole and Josh Clark. Both candidates fulfilled the requirements of the Course and were awarded Advanced Packer (Grade T) status. George Panagopoulos had submitted a Course report, a copy of which had been tabled to those present in advance.

7. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

A BPA Safety Information Bulletin (1/15) had been issued so that everyone was aware that the two serial numbered Relative Workshop Ex-military Tandem Vector II Wonderhog Dual Containers (#43482/#43491) had now had their grounding (SN 2/14) individually lifted by the Riggers' Sub-Committee.

At present all other ex-military (grey) Vector containers remain grounded by SN 2/14 until presented with the appropriate documentation the Riggers' Sub-Committee for acceptance.

8. MANUFACTURERS' SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

A Service Bulletin had been previously circulated concerning all harness/containers single and dual manufactured by Parachutes de France.

The subject concerned hydrolyze phenomena of the cordura fabric used for the reserve container in extreme conditions of temperature and humidity - the coating of fabric can become sticky and disrupt the opening of the reserve container or extraction of POD.

If it has become sticky or tacky, applying dusting powder (talc) or spray silicon to the affected area maybe necessary.

Jumpers should be aware of the problems that can be caused due to storing equipment in high temperatures.

9. A.O.B.

- i) At the July Riggers' meeting last year there was a report of a Vigil AAD firing at approximately 500ft whilst a jumper was preparing to land. The AAD was sent back to the manufacturer for investigation. Their report has now been received and they conclude that there is a probability that the pressure sensor of this unit has generated faulty information. Vigil consider this to have been 'an exceptional case'.

- ii) Pete Sizer referred to correspondence from UPT regarding the use of the MVTC-3R, which was a non-TSO'd 421 sqft Military Reserve canopy, which the manufacturer states can be fitted into both a Tandem Vector 2 and Sigma reserve container.

Pete Sizer stated that at this time, this specific canopy had not been accepted for use in the UK.

- iii) Since the last meeting, Pete Sizer had registered Mary Barratt as a 'Method 2' Basic Rigger.

Date of next Meetings: Thursdays, 4 June, 30 July, 24 Sept, 19 Nov 2015 at 4pm at the BPA
Offices, Glen Parva, Leicester

13 April 2015

**PAPERWORK REQUIRING CIRCULATION WITH THE NEXT AGENDA MUST REACH THE BPA
OFFICE BY MONDAY 18 MAY 2015**

Distribution:

Chairperson Riggers' Sub-Committee, All CIs, All Riggers, Advanced Packers, Council, CAA
Editor – Skydive