



## Riggers' Sub-Committee

Thursday 4 June 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)  
George Panagopoulos (RE)  
Bill Sharp (RE)  
Iain Anderson (PRv)  
Dave Major (AR)  
Ray Armstrong (AR)  
Noel Purcell (PRv)  
Paul Stockwell (PRv)  
Kim Newton (RE) – *from item 4*

**Key:**

RE = Rigger Examiner

AR = Advanced Rigger

PR(v) = Parachute Rigger (voting)

PR(nv) = Parachute Rigger (non voting)

**Apologies:** John Curtis, David Gould, Pete Sizer.

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

**Observers:** Alex Busby-Hicks, Philip Wayper, Hans Donner, Rob Spour,  
Gary Stevens, Jim White.

---

### 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 2 APRIL 2015**

**Page 1, Item 2 – Next & Next Century Tandem Systems.**

This item was taken out of Agenda order, as Kim Newton had been unavoidably delayed.

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 stated that she was still trialling prototype pilot chute and had encountered no further issues to date.

**Page 2, Item 2. – To develop a system for integrating Non-BPA rated Riggers & Packers into the BPA system.** The Chair reported that he was still progressing this item.

**Page 2, Item 2 – Basic Rigger Training.** At the previous meeting it had been agreed to set up a small Working Group, to look at the BR training methods and any other issues in relation to packer/rigger training. The Chair reported that this item was still ongoing.

**Page 3, Item 5 – BPA Equipment Inspection Policies Working Group.** Rick Boardman stated that he had nothing further to add at this time.

There being no further matters arising, it was proposed by Noel Purcell and seconded by Rick Boardman that the Riggers' Sub-Committee Meeting of 2 April 2015 be accepted as a true record.

**Carried Unanimously**

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 2 APRIL 2015**

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

**4. TANDEM HARNESS & CONTAINER SYSTEM – INITIAL CLEARANCE**

A proposal from Rick Boardman together with supporting paperwork had been circulated with the Agenda requesting that the Ex-military UPT Vector 2 Tandem TV14 Container (serial no: 35845) with the UPT MVTC-3R (421) reserve canopy (serial no: VR-421-005445) be accepted for use. Rick had stated that Nicky Johnston was the independent Advanced Rigger who had endorsed the application.

Rick Boardman gave the meeting further details of his request and the equipment concerned was made available for inspection.

It was pointed out that the above canopies were currently grounded by BPA Safety Notice 02/2014.

The Chair reported that correspondence from Mark Procos of UPT regarding the use of the MVTC-3R reserve had been tabled to those present, together with an e-mail from Chris Gilmore who had pointed out that the MVTC-3R, which was a non-TSO'd 421 sqft Ex-Military Reserve canopy had not been accepted for sport parachuting in the UK.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that the Student harness as presented be used with this specific combination of equipment, providing it was given an identification mark. Rick Boardman agreed to undertake this task.

Following further consideration, it was proposed by Rick Boardman and seconded by Nicky Johnston (proxy) that the Tandem container and reserve canopy (with serial numbers as stated above), which are currently grounded by BPA safety notice (SN 2/14) have their groundings individually lifted and that they be accepted for use together with the UPT Vector 2 Student harness as presented.

For: 8                      Against: 1 (Kim Newton)                      Abstentions: 0

**Carried**

**5. DISCUSSION ON RSL SETUPS**

This item was taken out of Agenda order, as Kim Newton had been unavoidably delayed.

Kim Newton had asked the Riggers' Sub-Committee to discuss the safety aspects of certain RSL setups where there may be a possibility of the RSL lanyard ring hanging up on the reserve ripcord housing. Kim stated that she believed along with her colleagues at Chatteris that there was a distinct possibility of this happening on Velocity Infinity containers, as they had seen two examples on this container where they believed that this situation could arise.

Correspondence from Velocity, manufacturer of the Infinity container (dated 10 July 2014) clarifying the RSL and its placement had also been circulated with the Agenda.

Also tabled was e-mail correspondence between Chris Gilmore and Velocity, which had also concerned reserve ripcord housings/RSL set-ups on the Infinity container.

Correspondence had also been received from Karen Saunders, which had been tabled for information.

Karen Saunders had stated that she also expressed similar concerns with regard to the Infinity container and the possibility of a hang-up. Karen also had concerns regarding the RSLs on Wings containers, and that she had also seen numerous RSL's on both containers that have become dislodged and have been routed over the housing of the reserve deployment system following transportation. It had only been because of thorough gear checks that this has been noticed.

Kim presented an Infinity container to those present. A number of other rigs were also made available for inspection.

Kim explained her concerns to the Committee and described a number of scenarios where she believed the RSL could hang-up.

The Chair reported that in correspondence from Velocity, they had asserted that the RSL on the Infinity container could not get into these positions as the reserve cover flap would always prevent this happening.

Discussion then took place with regard to the tacking of the reserve ripcord housing, near the pin. The Chair reported that the manufacturers had advised against this, as having the housing mobile was in their opinion beneficial during RSL activations where the ability of the housing end to flex eliminates the possibility of the RSL ring hanging up on the end of the housing. This can also reduce the amount of kinking and wear the ripcord cable is exposed to.

Following further consideration, it was the consensus of the Riggers Committee after taking on board Kim Newton's comments and those of the manufacturer, that the probability of the RSL getting into the various positions on the Infinity container as identified by Kim Newton would be extremely rare.

Kim stated that it was still her opinion that in certain scenarios she believed this could happen and that she felt the consequences were too severe.

## **6. ADVANCED PACKER COURSE REPORTS**

- i) An Advanced Packers Training Course had been held at Netheravon from the 30 March to 2 April 2015. The Course was attended by Tom Blakey and Christopher White. Both candidates were advised to attend the Examination phase of the Course following a number of supervised pack jobs.

George Panagopoulos had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had been tabled for information.

- ii) An Advanced Packers Examination Course had taken place at Skydive Headcorn from the 26 – 27 May 2015. The Course was attended by Robert Swainson.

Pete Sizer had submitted a Course Report, a copy of which had been tabled for information.

Pete had reported that that Robert Swainson had qualified as a Rigger in the USA in 1987 and had packed over 1300 reserves. He was now resident in the UK and wished to convert to the BPA system in order to pack his own rigs. Prior to the Course Robert had been studying the relevant literature.

Over the Course Robert had covered all the key elements of the BPA AP syllabus and conducted 4 packing evaluations. At the end of the Course, Robert was awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

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

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

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

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

9. **A.O.B.**

- i) The Chair reported on an incident that had been brought to his notice where the Aerodyne soft links on a main and reserve canopy had been incorrectly assembled as per the manufacturers drawing. He stated that he was dealing with this particular incident and the packer concerned. However, he wished to bring to the attention to Riggers and Packers that if an Aerodyne link had been tacked in place, they were extremely difficult to see if they are routed correctly. Paul stated that it was up to the individual packer to satisfy themselves that the links are routed correctly as per the manufacturers spec.

Discussion then ensued with regard to packing incidents in general and to ensuring that cases were dealt with consistently and fairly across the board. This also applied to any disciplinary action being considered.

The COO pointed out that in this particular instance, the Chair was simply providing the meeting with a summary of an incident and his actions taken to date. He stated that it was within the remit of the Committee to request that a Panel of Inquiry be formed if they believed that further action be taken against individual packers or riggers.

ii) **Incident Reports**

- a) A Tandem Incident/Malfunction Deployment Problem Report had been received, where the same Tandem canopy had suffered a number of malfunctions.

The Chair reported that the CI of the PTO concerned had now taken this particular canopy out of service.

- b) Another incident involved a Tandem Instructor who was carrying out a currency jump with a 'C' Licence jumper. Once the canopy had deployed it was noticed that the top right hook was undone. This was reconnected and the pair landed safely. From the pictures taken in the aircraft it appeared that the hook was done up. Statements from the Instructor, the 'C' Licence jumper and other Instructors all confirmed that the hooks were attached in the aircraft. The Tandem pair made an unstable exit, which may have caused the hook to become unattached.

The CI of the PTO concerned provided further details of this incident and presented the equipment involved to those present. He stated that after examining the equipment, he could not find no evidence or a reason why this had occurred. However, he would now be videoing all currency jumps.

The COO reported that this incident would also be brought to the attention of STC this evening. He stated that it was his intention to suggest to CIs that a working group be established to look at all aspects of Tandem, including how Tandem Instructors should behave with their students. i.e. aircraft drills, types of exits, canopy rides, landings etc.

iii) **Icarus Reserve Canopies.**

An e-mail from Kim Newton had been received, a copy of which had been tabled to those present concerning Icarus reserve canopies.

Kim reported that the manufacturers of the Icarus state in their manual for their reserve canopies that it is permissible to substitute connector links as long as they are compatible with the container. All four connector links are of the same type, and they are all certified for use under TSO C23d to operational limits exceeding the operational limits of the reserve parachute. If substitute links are used, they need to be installed in accordance with the instructions of the manufacturer of the links.

Kim stated that it was BPA policy to only pack reserves with connector links with the manufacturer's links, unless other links are allowed by the manufacturer. This statement by Icarus appeared to give this permission.

Kim stated that she wished to put connector links manufactured by Performance Designs on to an Icarus reserve canopy.

Following consideration, the Committee could see no problem with this, as Kim had followed the instructions of the reserve manufacturer regarding the use of substitute connector links.

iv) At the Riggers Sub-Committee meeting of 5 February 2015, the Committee had given guidance to an experienced parachutist (Philip Wayper) with regard to a 9 cell Ram Air canopy that he has manufactured, and which he wished to jump.

Following consideration at this meeting, the Committee had advised Philip Wayper that it was within the remit of any experienced parachutist to jump a ram-air type main canopy, but they had advised him to consider conducting his first jump with a cutaway rig and with the guidance of his CI.

However, it had since been pointed out that Section 6, Para 1.2 in the BPA Operations Manual states the following:

*'Parachutes may only be used if they are manufactured for Sport Parachutists or Military Parachutists, by recognised parachute equipment manufacturers or riggers with the necessary qualifications.'*

The Committee were advised that Philip Wayper had taken his canopy to Elsinore where an experienced jumper from the DZ had made a number of jumps on it as had Philip himself. Philip provided the meeting with further details, together with a number of photographs, which had been tabled for information.

The Chair reported that Alex Busby-Hicks had also asked STC to clarify if they could, what constitutes being a 'recognised' parachute manufacturer, as Philip Wayper had plans to construct further canopies in the future and would like to be able to carry out test jumps on them.

The Committee gave this matter some consideration. Although the Association had no set standard as such, it usually 'recognised' a parachute manufacturer, generally on the basis that their equipment met minimum industry standards, covering design, manufacture and testing etc.

The Committee noted that there was an abundance of equipment coming into to the UK that may not be from a 'recognised' manufacturer, and may not have been tested to the levels of standards that were expected.

It was felt by those present that further clarity was required on this subject, but they would await until STC had considered this item at their meeting this evening.

- v) Rick Boardman reported that he would be arranging another tour of the facility at the Parachute Engineering Sqn at Brize Norton on 15 September 2015. Anyone who was interested in attending this tour was asked to contact Rick Boardman direct.

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

15 June 2015

**PAPERWORK REQUIRING CIRCULATION WITH THE NEXT AGENDA MUST REACH THE BPA OFFICE BY MONDAY 13 JULY 2015**

**Distribution:**

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