



Riggers' Subcommittee

Thursday 19 November 2015 at 1600

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

Present: Paul Applegate (AR) - Riggers' Subcommittee Chair
Rick Boardman (AR)
Noel Purcell (PRv)
Andy Shaw (AR)
Kim Newton (RE)
Dave Major (AR)
Ray Armstrong (AR) – *from item 6*

Key:

RE = Rigger Examiner

AR = Advanced Rigger

PR(v) = Parachute Rigger (voting)

PR(nv) = Parachute Rigger (non voting)

Apologies: Tony Butler, John Curtis, George Panagopoulos, Pete Sizer

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

Observers: John Harding, Jack Bradford, Andy Guest, Gary Stevens.

Lofty Thomas

The Committee was sad to note that Lofty Thomas, a former BPA Chairman, BPA Rigger Examiner, stalwart and true gentleman of the skydiving community, had passed away. The Chair & Committee members send their condolences to Lofty's family and friends.

ITEM

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE RIGGERS' SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING OF THE 24 SEPTEMBER 2015

Page 1, Item 2 – Next & Next Century Tandem Systems. Kim Newton gave a progress report on the WG formed on the 31 of July 2014 to collate and investigate the information reported with reference to the damage found on some Next & Next Century Tandem reserve closure loops. Kim stated that although Paratec were continuing to look at various issues that will help reduce the wear on the reserve loops and that they were currently trialing a new pilot chute, she had received no further communication from them regarding their progress to date.

Kim stated that now that after sufficient time and evidence gained, the WG felt that it was perhaps time for the Committee to consider recommending that the inspection of the reserve closure loop be extended to 100 jump intervals between inspections. Obviously, if any marks or damage were found on these closure loops, then the inspection intervals would revert back to the 50 jump inspection.

Kim stated that any damaged loops should still be returned to the WG, but they no longer required the ones found in good condition. Kim stated that she would still like to keep gathering information on the number of container checks being carried out, and asked that packers provide her with this information periodically by e-mail and whether all good etc.

Following further discussion, it was proposed by Kim Newton and seconded by Andy Shaw that the inspection of the reserve closure loop on Next & Next Century Tandem reserve closure loops be extended to 100 jump intervals between inspections. If at the time of inspection any damage or marks are found, then the inspection interval is to revert back to the 50 jump inspection. Any closure loops which are found to be in good condition are no longer required to be sent to the WG as evidence, although Packers are advised to keep these on record as this was seen as good practice.

Carried Unanimously

Page 2, Item 2. – The Chair reported that Rigger Examiners were continuing their work on developing a system for integrating Non-BPA rated Riggers & Packers into the BPA system.

Page 2, Item 2 – Basic Rigger Training. The Chair reported that Rigger Examiners were also looking at the BR training methods and any other issues in relation to packer/rigger training.

Page 2, Item 2 – Equipment Maintenance Record Cards (Parachute Equipment Logbook). This item was on the main Agenda.

There being no further matters arising, it was proposed by Dave Major and seconded by Rick Boardman that the Minutes of the Riggers Subcommittee Meeting of 24 September 2015 be accepted as a true record.

Carried Unanimously

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE STC MEETING OF THE 24 SEPTEMBER 2015

There were no matters arising from the previous meeting.

4. BPA RIGGERS' SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIR FOR 2016

The Chair of STC took the 'Chair' for this item. He reported that at the last meeting of each year, Riggers' Subcommittee would report to STC on nominations for Riggers' Subcommittee Chair so that STC may formally elect their Chair for the following year.

The Chair of STC asked for nominations.

Kim Newton nominated Paul Applegate as Riggers' Subcommittee Chair for 2016.

Paul Applegate stated that he was willing to accept the nomination. The Chair of STC asked if there were any other nominees, and there were none.

It was proposed by Kim Newton and seconded by Noel Purcell that the Committee recommend to STC that Paul Applegate be re-elected for the post of Riggers' Subcommittee Chair for 2016.

Carried Unanimously

The Chair of STC stated that the Riggers' Subcommittee nominated Chair would be notified to STC that evening.

Paul Applegate then resumed his position as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

5. PARACHUTE EQUIPMENT LOG BOOK

A finalised version of the proposed data card (Parachute Equipment Logbook) had been circulated with the Agenda. A Mock-up of the proposed Logbook had been produced, which was made available for inspection.

The Chair reported that the idea of the equipment Logbook is that a maintenance record card is introduced for each individual component part of a parachute system, i.e. AAD, reserve canopy, main canopy, harness & container. This card then accompanies the equipment and any work carried out would then be noted on the individual card(s). He stated that the cards would stay with their respective pieces of equipment for their service life and that they would give a full record of repairs, modifications, service bulletin compliance etc. and should the components be sold on separately, each item would go to the next owner with its complete history intact.

The Chair stated that the Logbooks were not compulsorily, but were initially a 'voluntary' introduction for equipment already in use and would run alongside the existing BPA Record of Inspection/Check List.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Rick Boardman and seconded by Dave Major that the finalised version of the proposed Parachute Equipment Logbook, as tabled be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

The Chair and Committee expressed their thanks to Phill Elston and all those involved, for the work they had undertaken on this project.

The Chair reported that the Logbook mock-up would also be presented to STC that evening.

6. EQUIPMENT PROPOSAL

A proposal from Ray Armstrong together with supporting paperwork had been circulated with the Agenda requesting that ex-military MTVC-3R (421) Tandem reserve canopies be accepted for general use in the sport parachuting role with the same approvals and limitations as that of the sport 421 Tandem canopy that it was based upon. He stated that it was identical in construction to the standard sport 421 canopy with the only differences being aesthetic (colour) and the serial number prefix/model number.

Following consideration, it was proposed by Ray Armstrong and seconded by Noel Purcell that the above request be accepted.

For: 5 Against: 1 (Kim Newton) Abstention: 0

Carried

7. PROPOSAL REGARDING JOHN HARDING'S LAPSED PARACHUTE RIGGERS RATING

A proposal from Kim Newton had been circulated with the Agenda regarding John Harding's lapsed Parachute Riggers rating, which had lapsed at the end of March 2006.

Kim had requested that to enable John Harding to regain his Parachute Rigger qualification, he firstly gains an Advanced Packers (S) qualification prior to then attending a Parachute Riggers Course at a BPA approved rigging facility run by 2 Rigger Examiners.

Kim stated that the intention was that John would work under Kim's supervision to enable him to regain currency in rigging and current practices.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Kim Newton and seconded by Ray Armstrong that the above request be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

Kim asked the Committee whether they had any objection to John Harding being examined by herself in respect of his AP (S) qualification. There were no objections raised by those present to Kim's request.

8. REQUEST TO HOST TWO BPA RIGGERS COURSES

A request for permission to run a two BPA Rigging Course at Skydive Buzz (Dunkeswell) had been received from George Panagopoulos, a copy of which had been circulated with the agenda. The proposed dates were as follows:

18 – 22 December 2015
2 – 6 January 2016

Following discussion, it was proposed by George Panagopoulos (proxy) and seconded by Kim Newton that the above request be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

9. BPA RIGGERS' SUBCOMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE (BPA FORM 194) ANNUAL REVIEW

The Chair reported that at the last meeting of each year, the BPA Rigger's Subcommittee Terms of Reference would be reviewed and any proposed variations shall be subject to approval by the Safety & Training Committee and ratification by Council to maintain consistency across Committees as applicable. A copy of the current BPA Riggers' Subcommittee Terms of Reference had been circulated the Agenda for information.

Following consideration, the Committee were content with the current Riggers' Subcommittee Terms of Reference.

10. EQUIPMENT PROPOSAL REQUEST

A request from Noel Purcell for the initial acceptance for reserves used in Student equipment, as detailed below had been circulated with the Agenda. The Advanced Riggers supporting this request were Chris Thomas and Nicky Johnston.

Icarus Reserve Canopy

The canopy is a standard 7 cell design of F111 material.
The suspension lines are 725lb Spectra, with the lower steering lines made of 1000lb Spectra.
The reserves are cleared to TSO C23d in the US and ETSO C23c for EASA.

Icarus NANO Reserve Canopy

The canopy is a standard 7 cell design. This is low pack volume version of the Icarus Reserve. The suspension lines are 725 lb Spectra, with the lower steering lines made of 1000 lb Spectra. The reserves are cleared to TSO C23d in the US and ETSO C23c for EASA.

Noel had stated that both reserve canopies are supplied with either Hard or soft links. The manuals state that alternative manufacturer's soft links can be used as long as they are TSOd and meet the container manufacturer's requirements.

Noel had noted that there was no BPA form for the initial clearance for reserves to be used in Student equipment. Therefore, the COO had drafted a form for possible future use, which has been tabled for perusal.

A lengthy discussion then ensued. The Committee considered that if they were to accept Noel Purcell's request, some thought would then be required in regard to other Student main and reserve canopies that had not been 'accepted' for use via the Riggers' Subcommittee, as we do not currently hold a list of every canopy presently in use. The BPA Operations Manual currently states that "All equipment, other than main parachutes used by Student Parachutists must be acceptable to the BPA (via Riggers' Committee and STC)."

Following further consideration, it was felt by those present that the Committee should start looking into producing a list of accepted student mains and reserve canopies, as we had recently started for Tandem reserves. However, it was felt by those present that this would be an onerous task, and that it would be more practicable to perhaps look at compiling a list of manufacturers who were recognized by the BPA for manufacturing Student main and reserve canopies. Ray Armstrong agreed to make a start with producing a list.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Noel Purcell and seconded by Andy Shaw that the above equipment request be accepted.

Carried Unanimously

11. PERMISSIONS

A letter from Andy Page had been circulated with the Agenda requesting that Javi Centeno Gomez be given an exemption against the requirement of having held BPA membership for 18 months to enable him to attend an Advanced Packers Course. At this time Javi had only been a BPA member for 8 months.

Andy Page had also stated that Javi Centeno Gomez had held a USPA main packer cert for 19 months and a BPA approved packing cert for 8 months. He had also worked at UK Parachuting (Beccles) for 8 months and he had carried out some reserve packing practice with Andy who considered him to be an excellent packer.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Andy Page (proxy) and seconded by Ray Armstrong that the above request be accepted.

For: 5 Against: 0 Abstention: 1 (Andy Shaw)

Carried

12. ADVANCED PACKER COURSE REPORTS

- i) An Advanced Packers Training Course had been held at Netheravon from the 28 Sept – 1 Oct 2015.

The Course had been attended by Justinas Kubilinskas who had then subsequently attended the Advanced Packers Examination phase of the Course at Netheravon from the 9 – 10 November 2015. Justinas was successful and awarded his Advanced Packer (Grade S) rating.

The two Course Reports had been submitted by George Panagopoulos and had been tabled in advance for information.

- ii) An Advanced Packers Training Course had been held at Netheravon from the 19 – 22 Oct 2015. George Panagopoulos had sent in a Course Report, which had been tabled in advance for information.

The Course had been attended by Paul Hudson and Brian Gardner, both of whom were advised to attend the Examination phase of the Course following a number of supervised pack jobs.

- iii) An Advanced Packers Examination Course had been held at Netheravon from the 28 – 29 Oct 2015. George Panagopoulos had sent in a Course Report, which had been tabled in advance for information.

Richard Kimber had successfully attended the Course and was awarded Advanced Packer (Grade S) status.

- iv) An Advanced Packers Training Course had been held at UK Parachuting Beccles from the 3 – 6 November 2015. Andy Page had sent in a Course Report, a copy of which had been tabled in advance for information.

The Course had been attended by Yolande Lee who was been advised to attend the Examination phase of the Course following a number of supervised pack jobs.

13. BPA SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

A BPA Safety Information Bulletin (4/15) had been issued concerning Connector Links. This had been issued to publicise the decision at the Riggers Subcommittee meeting of 30 July 2015 that only connector links (soft or metal) approved by the canopy manufacturer may be used on reserve canopies.

14. MANUFACTURERS' SAFETY NOTICES/INFORMATION BULLETINS

The Committee discussed a Product Service Bulletin issued by Advanced Aerospace Designs on 9 of November 2015. This followed their concerns that some Vigil unit loop cutters, manufactured between March 2015 and July 2015, could have rough edges inside which may damage the reserve closure loop. Any cutters found to be affected by PSB 01-2015 must be sent back to Advanced Aerospace Designs for a manufacturer's inspection. Additionally any reserve container closure loops in containers that have used affected cutters must be replaced.

In the "Compliance Time Limits" section of Advanced Aerospace Designs PSB 01-2015, a distinction is made between required timings of actions depending on where the cutter is located in a rig.

Following discussion, the Committee felt that any of the cutters affected in this bulletin should be replaced immediately wherever the cutter is located.

It was therefore, agreed to recommend to STC that for any equipment affected by Advanced Aerospace Designs PSB 01-2015, compliance is immediate, and independent of where the cutter is located in a rig, and that affected cutters should be replaced prior to the next jump, and that a BPA Safety Notice be issued accordingly.

15. A.O.B.

- i) Noel Purcell reported that the FAA had updated the Riggers handbook, which was available to download from the FAA website.
- ii) The Committee heard a report from Noel Purcell of an incident in Spain where two jumpers who were on a tracking dive (towards the bottom end) where they collided, and subsequently one of them was knocked unconscious and was falling towards the ground on his back, the AAD fired and he only had a few seconds of reserve canopy deployment before impacting on the ground resulting in the jumper being badly injured.

Noel Purcell reported that the jumper concerned had been jumping a 'Wings' container. However, the reserve canopy was not classed as being of a small size i.e. a biggish container, but he was back to earth, which it was believed may have slowed down the opening sequence of the reserve canopy.

Noel Purcell had expressed concern about increasing the firing height on the AAD to suit the type of descent to be carried out and should be compatible with the main canopy opening height. However, his only concern was that with increasing heights was educating jumpers that they have to pull higher and also reminding them to read their AAD manual.

Following discussion, the Committee felt that consideration should be given to perhaps producing an article for inclusion in the BPA magazine and/or designing a poster highlighting the various issues.

iii) **Packing Incident**

This item was held 'in camera'.

The Chair reported that the office had been notified of a number of packing problems that had been found on a reserve canopy that had been repacked shortly after an the person concerned had qualified as an Advanced Packer (S).

The Rigger Examiner who had qualified the AP concerned had advised them not to pack any more reserves until he had sought the advice of the BPA.

The COO had subsequently written to the AP involved stating that he was satisfied with the actions taken by the RE concerned and had advised them that this matter would be discussed at the next Riggers Subcommittee meeting. The COO had asked the AP involved to attend the meeting and invited their comments, and that in the meantime they should not carry out any of the privileges of the AP (S) qualification until this matter had been discussed at that meeting.

The AP concerned had responded, and the COO had indicated that he was content with their response to the alleged incident. However, the AP concerned had indicated that they would be unable to attend this particular meeting due work commitments taking them out of the country.

The COO had suggested that as the RE concerned had qualified the AP involved and it was they who picked up the packing errors, that they reassess the AP concerned and once they were satisfied, then then the AP concerned could continue packing under their AP (S) qualification.

The Committee supported the COOs suggestion.

The Chair stated that he would also write to the AP concerned reminding them of their responsibilities, a copy of which would be kept on file.

Date of next Meeting: Thursday 4 February 2016 at 4pm at the BPA Offices,
Glen Parva, Leicester

30 November 2015

PAPERWORK REQUIRING CIRCULATION WITH THE NEXT AGENDA MUST REACH THE BPA OFFICE BY MONDAY 11 JANUARY 2016

Distribution:

Chairperson Riggers' Subcommittee, All CIs, All Riggers, Advanced Packers, Council, CAA
Editor – Skydive