



# 244 SQUADRON & KINDRED SPIRITS ASSOCIATION



## Newsletter No. 2

### Additions to our Nominal Role:-

W.J. Eddy      V.D. Webb      R. McDonald(M/T)      J.S. Phillips (Elect II)  
W. Savage (Wop/Ag)      R. Godden (F. II. E.)      R. Bolton (WT)      L. Jackson (F. II. A.)      J. Showell (Wop/Ag)

### Reunions

As you know, the date of the next reunion is firmly fixed for 1st/2nd October 1993. We have booked the Scarisbrick Hotel for these dates. Also, we have obtained the Isherwood Suite (the big room) on the understanding that we can provide an attendance of at least 100 (Another worry for Jim and Don!). However, we have received many letters requesting some sort of a function for 1992. In order to keep up the interest, we have decided to have an informal get-together (at the Scarisbrick) in this current year. This would not be a full reunion, but a chance to give the lads an opportunity to meet once again over a few beers and a meal. If you wish to take part, contact Jim (0704/26995) as soon as you read this. Numbers will have to be limited to the first 30 members plus ladies. (it will be the Barker Suite again). It would be a Fri/Sat or Sat/Sun weekend. Dates to be obtained.

PLEASE REPLY BY RETURN!

### Treasurer's Report (31.1.92)

A happy, healthy New Year to you all! Very many thanks for the letters and cards to Jim and myself. You can realise we couldn't answer them all. Now, to business. Our bank balance stands at £347.60. This sounds a lot, but inroads will soon be made when each newsletter costs £53 plus. Yes, we now have nearly 100 members, but, alas only 45 have paid their £5 subs. So, all you non-payers (including the Kindred Spirits), let me have a cheque, payable to 'D. E. James', 18 Wicks Green, Formby, L37 1PR. We made a reunion profit of 172.50. This was because of an under estimate of the numbers attending the function. Other items include £25.14 interest on monies received, and also £33.50 in donations from members. Many thanks!

### Squadron Badge

We took this matter up with the Ministry of Defence. After lengthy correspondence (they were most helpful), our request for an official Squadron Badge was turned down. The grounds for refusal was that such an approach should have been made within five years of the Squadron disbandment. We are told that a Squadron Badge was indeed put up for acceptance in 1944. However, the procedure was allowed to lapse. The suggested design at that time was "Two Arabian daggers in saltire" (crossed). We must have further discussion about an unofficial badge for the unit. (Other Squadrons, in our situation, have adopted unofficial designs). Any other suggestions?

### Membership Cards

A number of lads have asked if we could have membership cards. This is one of the items we are looking into. Please bear with us. We will do what we can.

## **Increasing Membership**

Another advert has been placed on TV (Channel 4 'Link-Up'). Currently this has produced another five members. A similar advert is to appear in 'Air Mail' (RAFA magazine). Hopefully, we will have a good response.. Our present membership is now 90!

## **Insight on Masirah Island**

Author Hammond Innes wrote in "A Harvest of Journies" - Masirah, A strange deserted hangover of W.W.2. Everything is an advanced state of decay and disintegration. Railway lines, steel jetty, acres of old fuel drums, rusted like a scrap-dealer's nightmare. A few natives clung in squalor in a petrol can village that had once been a barracks. Recently, I viewed colour slides of No.33 Staging Post Masirah of later times. The neat white chalets and modern facilities, were an amazing contrast to the primitive wartime camp, that has become known as 'Petrol Can Island'. The contrast reflects the changing conditions and variations in status that have characterised the history of the island from the early thirties to the handing over from the RAF to the Omani Air Force in 1977. A primitive flying boat base at Umm Rassas on the south west coast was the first RAF presence, and was also used by Imperial Airways. The airfield known to 244 Squadron operated from Ras Half in the extreme north eastern tip of the island. After the stand-down in early 1945, status soon slid back to Care and maintenance. A few airmen, and rank of commanding officer from group-captain to flying officer. Changes in the political situation in the area, and troubles in the far east, brought new importance to Masirah. Several millions were spent on two extended runways to supersede the single sand take-off. At one time, jet fighters combined with aircraft carriers and helicopters on extensive exercises. An underwater pipeline replaced petrol cans. In future newsletters we hope to trace a brief history of events, with particular reference to the railway, the monument, building two churches, the island turtles, and some humorous stories. Sincere thanks to all who responded to my appeal in 'Intercom' for information for a book on Masirah. In the meantime I hope this feature will prove interesting to all members.

Tommy Hazell, Saltford, Bristol

Hope you found our newsletter of interest. Any comments, suggestions or contributions would be most welcome.

**All the best from: Jim Hislop & Don James**