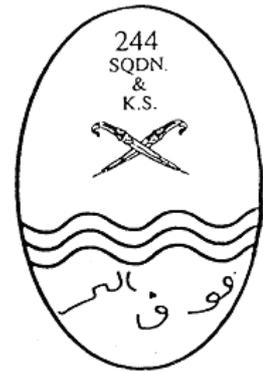




244 SQUADRON & KINDRED SPIRITS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter No. 4

Squadron Badge

As we have been refused an official Squadron badge by M.O.D., we will have one of our own! The design opposite is one based on a design offered to the Air Ministry in 1944. As we know, action on this was allowed to lapse. Details are: An oval, background sand; superimposed two kunja knives (black) in saltire; below, the waves (azure); below; our motto "Over the Sea" (in Arabic characters); at top of oval, "244 Squadron and K.S." We are having this design reproduced in both lapel badge and wall-plaque form. Enquiries to Jim.

New Members (since those listed in Newsletter No. 2)

G. M. Walker, D.F.C.	Gloucester	W. J. Allen	Australia
Rev. W Kelly	Newport	S. Taylor	Australia
G. G. Trotter	Sunderland	R. Hosich	Australia
S. Randall	Australia	W. T. Wix	Lowestoft
R. Robson	Australia	P. Stonelake	Torquay
E. Allen	Isle of Wight	E. J. Dolby	Hailsham
P. Main	Australia	J. B. Fitzgerald	Australia
T. Tubbenhaur	Australia	L. Folkhard	Bexhill
J. Swann	Wolverhampton	H. Holdsworth	Horsham
P. Hall	Liverpool	J. Edwards	Cumbria
A. Sharing	Cumbria	A. Johnston	Australia
D. Hutchinson	Australia	G. Hampton	Australia
J. Quantreil	Alford	D. Temple	Chepstow

Jim Says

At last progress has been made over the Squadron badge, and I must say the badge, mounted on a plaque, is really something (but not inexpensive! !!!). As you can see, from new membership above, we have had quite a number of applications from "Down Under". This is because someone unknown (I suspect Phil Watson, New South Wales) placed letters in various Australian flying periodicals, advertising the fact that we were in being. Hence, 11 new lads, to make our Australian representation up to 13. Hopefully, some of these will do a "Phil Watson", and turn up in Southport in '93. Most of these chaps were contemporary with Don (our treasurer) in '42 at Sharjah. So Don, at last has someone he can relate to!

I have had a recent approach from a F/Lt. Andy Thomas (Navigator) from 8 Squadron at Waddington. This gentleman is currently doing "write-ups" on little-known R.A.F. squadrons for "Aviation News". Guess what? We have been chosen! We have loaned F/Lt. Thomas photo negatives of our operational aircraft i.e. Vincent, Bisley and Wellington XIII. We will receive copies of the magazine when published.

Don's Report

Here we are again. How time flies! Our bank balance is a healthy £406. This is because we underestimated the response for membership. A few of the lads have yet to pay their 91/92 subs. This is our last appeal. If no response, we will sadly have to remove them from our roll. Seven others have either resigned or died. Our net membership now stands at 107. Which I think is a wonderful response in under 18 months.

We are now beginning to organise our 1993 Reunion. Our next Newsletter will give arrangements in detail. Let us know if you are coming (we have already had early bookings). Those of you who attended the 1991 "do", will remember the Sunday evening in the Isherwood Suite (which was a huge success!). This room has been booked for both nights in '93. The snag is that we have to guarantee a minimum of 100 people. Please bring your partners. Also, what about my old mates from "Oz"?

Those Shaibah Blues (our Squadron Anthem)

R.A.F. station Shaibah was established in the 1920's on the Persian Gulf, in the Shatt-el-Arab. "Those Shaibah Blues" is an expression that came to be synonymous with home-sickness among airmen. Sung especially by 70, 84 and 244 squadrons. The verse goes to the tune "A Little Bit of Heaven," but the chorus is an original dirge.

A little piece of heaven fell out the sky one day,
And it fell into the ocean on a spot not far away,
And when the Air Force saw it, it looked so bleak and bare,
They said that's what we're looking for — we'll put our squadron there!
So — they sent out the river gun-boats, armoured cars and S.H.Q.
And they sent the famous 244 into the _____ blue
And peechi, we'll be going to a land that's far remote,
Until that day you'll hear me say "Roll on that _____ boat!"
Chorus: I've got those Shaibah Blues, Shaibah Blues,
I'm fed up, and I'm cheesed off and I'm blue.
I've tried to learn the lingo, but it's fairly got my goat.
The only thing that I can say's "Roll on that _____ boat!"
I've got those Shaibah Blues, Shaibah Blues,
I'm fed up, and I'm cheesed off, and I'm blue.

Insight on Masirah

In 1943 a group of airmen built the monument on the North-East tip of Masirah near the airfield. It commemorates the massacre of the captain and 21 crew of S.S. Innerdale, a vessel of 3,340 tons, that had run aground on the Kuria Murile islands on 2nd August, 1904. The party left their lifeboat seeking help, and probably thought they had landed on the mainland. A tragic misunderstanding with the natives resulted in the deaths of captain and crew. The ship's boy was the only survivor. The ringleaders were later executed by the Sultan of Muscat's forces. The inscription on the monument was misspelt "Inverdale", and seems to add a unique touch to an unusual piece of history. Although the vessel was refloated, ten years later it was in collision with the steamer "African Monarch" and sank in the Red Sea.

Monsoons and shallow waters have brought a virtual graveyard of wrecks around the island. The most spectacular probably being the tanker "World Jury", which ran aground off the southern tip of the island in 1961. Difficulties with the monsoon and looting plagued the salvage efforts. The vessel eventually broke in two and was abandoned. A near neighbour of mine told me that he worked as catering staff in Masirah in the early fifties. He helped with work on a wreck, and was surprised and delighted to receive a substantial cheque from the salvage authorities!

(Next time: The Masirah State Railway). Tom Hazell — Saltford, Bristol

May Don and Jim wish all our members, and their families, a Very Merry Xmas, and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year

Jim Heslop.

Don James