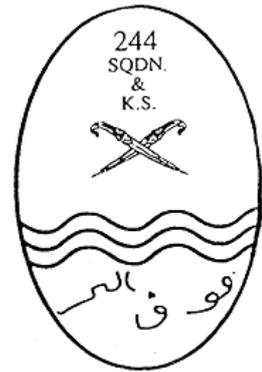




244 SQUADRON & KINDRED SPIRITS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter No. 6

Lowdown from Don & Jim

85 booked in! Only 15 to the hundred! Come on you slow coaches, let's hear from you. The Scarisbrick is nearly full, and only a few rooms left at the New Savola. However, there is plenty accommodation available in ALL PRICE bands. (See your Southport Tourist Guide). Several members have already booked their own billet.

As regards subscriptions for 92/93. The year starts 1st October 1992, (but may be altered at the A.G.M.). There are still 40 of you in arrears for this current year. By the way, many thanks for donations received. They are most welcome.

Ex 244 lads will be glad to know "Fame at last"! The squadron is featured in a four page article (with pictures) in "Aviation News". This a fortnightly magazine (£1.70). The required issue is that dated 26th March. Well worth chasing after! (See your Newsagent).

Our member on Masirah (S/LDR Richardson) is presently in U.K. He has sent me a copy draft of the early pages of his proposed book about the

land, and a very interesting read it is too. I have spoken to him on 'phone. He is currently gathering information about the early R.A.F. presence on the Island (1933 onward). Any information from members would be much appreciated (to Jim please). For instance, why was Jenkins Hill -so called? Were there Regular Imperial Airways landings on the Island ? (you Staging Post types?) Any information on Um Rasass?

We are now making "firm orders from the manufacturers for plaques, blazer badges, ties and lapel badges (see Newsletter No.5). Anyone desiring one or more of these items, should make order on receipt of this Newsletter (cash with order to Don.).

Back to the coming Reunion, further arrangements will be given in our next issue (No.7). Don't forget that second instalments of Reunion fees are due on or before 30th June next.

Extract from 'Egyptian Gazette' Feb 16/1942 RAF Men with Strangest Job (Could this be Sharjah?)

At a tiny outpost in Southern Arabia, their neighbours the most primitive of any Arab Race, a company of RAF men are living the strangest and most lonely existence of the War.

They live on the fringe of a region into which only a handful of white men have ventured. Their supplies can only come by air, or from one of the rare ships which unload off the tiny jetty, which the men have built themselves. On one side they have a mountain range, behind which is unexplored territory, and savage tribes. Only a few miles away is the Indian ocean.

For weeks they were alone, making an airfield out of sandy desolation. Now they have daily visitors, RAF aircrews, who land to refuel, snatch a meal, or spend a night on their way to the Far East battle zone. This little community -sees itself as a link in the chain of supply, which is sending modern aircraft (who were they kidding? - ED) to blast the Japanese out of the Eastern seas (How wrong can you get? - ED)

RAF personnel on this station, were the first foreign troops -seen in this area since a few Portuguese navigators Landed centuries ago, and built a fort. The RAF are now guests of a Sultan who, prewar, was a visitor to the capitals of Europe. His personal bodyguard are responsible for the protection of the RAF unit. [For this protection the Sultan received £2500 per month(in 1942!) - ED] That is why, when an aircraft lands, the visitor will see fierce looking men approach. They carry modern rifles, and wicked looking silver mounted daggers in their belts.

Whenever a member of the RAF goes beyond the airfields barbed wire boundaries, a pass has to be issued by the Sultan, and the airman must be accompanied by a guard. Thus, on bathing parties, a guard rides with the lorry, and stands guard on the beach.

On any excursion to the Arab village nearby, the Sultan has decreed that RAF men must not smoke. Another of the rulers regulations is that no foreign flag must be flown at the camp. This is possibly the only RAF station in the world where the familiar RAF jack will not be seen.

Another stipulation is that between sunset and a half hour after, there shall be no music on the camp. This is the time when the local population is at evening prayer, and the station's one radio set is always silent.

For some time, food was entirely from tins, with hand biscuit as a substitute for bread. However, now that aircraft are passing through, food has improved, and a regular air service brings in fresh fruit and vegetables. Mostly, the men live in huts made of straw matting (home for bugs! - ED) superimposed on a lathe framework. Mosquitoes abound but fortunately are not malarial.

All the best from:- Jim Hestop & Don James