



244 SQUADRON & KINDRED SPIRITS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter No. 13

Secretary's Report. Things go on apace with regard to October's big 'do'. A meeting of the Committee was held on 18th April. Bert Hartley (Bolton), John Edwards (Cumbria), Don and myself were in attendance. Also present was Langton Moore (Preston). Langton was able to add his contribution to the discussion, and now holds the position of Supplies Officer. Any future orders for our goods (e.g. Plaques (£20 and £9.50), ties (£10), blazer badges (£15), Lapel badges (£2.25) and bookmarks (Vincent, Bisley and Wellington at £2.50) should be sent to Langton at 12, Leadale, Lea, Fylde PR2. 1YU (01772 721977).

For members bringing their ladies, could you inform me (or Don) of their Christian names? Needed for their Reunion badges. Also, quite a number of you have failed to complete and return the proforma, requesting your Gulf details of Service. We need this to bring our Nominal Roll up to date (for Reunion)

Members still come in. We have now reached 213 (160 active). Not bad after nearly four years of operation. Don and I mean to make Reunion 3 the best one yet. So rally round !

Treasurer's Report. As regards our Reunion, so far we have 98 booked in and deposits paid. Several other members have indicated their interest and we await their deposits. In fact, quite a few of the lads have paid in full for the week-end. For which, many thanks, as this enables us to purchase items for the Reunion.

On the subject of Subs. I'm afraid that 22 of you have not yet paid for the current year. As you know, each Newsletter costs over £60 to produce and send. We cannot afford to send out Newsletters to non-payers indefinitely.

When sending Subs., (£5), don't forget to enclose your membership card. Sorry about the moan, but this is a 'perk' of the Treasurer !

Back to the Reunion. As usual, payment of the balance due for our week-end, should be made as follows:- 50% of balance due payable by 30th June, and remainder to be paid by 31st August. If in any doubt, give me a ring.

Wherrever ye gan yer aalways find a Geordie (Tyneside song)

These are two excerpts from letters which arrived within days of each other.

When I arrived on Masirah in Oct/Nov., 1951, the native clerk was one Norman Abdul, who spoke perfect English, albeit with an accent. For a long time I mused over this accent. Was it American, Canadian, Australian, or even South African ? Finally, I enquired, "Norman, where did you learn to speak English?" His answer floored me ! "Whae man, aa was born in South Shields " Euff said!

(from Bob Bolton. Mem. No. 87).

"I duly arrived on Masirah in March, 1961. My most abiding recollection is of the Arab interpreter, perfectly dressed in Arab clothes, and who spoke English with a Geordie accent! On later talks, it transpired that his mother came from Newcastle-on-Tyne, and his father came from Muscat! His name was Norman Bin Ghalil, and he proved very good at his job. In fact, he proved most excellent in handling the local "black economy" !!

(from Mem. No.153)

Arabien Outpost: (Masirah – in 1944/45)

The wall newspaper which was displayed outside H.Q. and other areas consisted of a main core and variable news items and gossip which was changed on a regular basis. (We have copies of this newspaper on our memorabilia boards at the Reunion).

The Editorial staff was made up of:-Pat. Bolan (Glasgow) Sgt. Orderly Room - EDITOR (now deceased) Sam Harrison(Glasgow) Cpl./Sgt. Squadron Sigs. - Reporter, Sub Editor, Typist, Teamaker. Joe Dooley (London) A/c Squadron Sigs. - Film Correspondent. 'Dagwood' Swift (Geordie) A/c Squadron Sigs. - Artist, Cartoonist. He received notoriety by touring the gulf as a Carl Levis Discovery, playing his accordion. He was mentioned in a book by the impresario as an unforgettable character. Whether by accident or intent he was missing for several weeks up the Gulf and was reported as being seen in a variety of Transit Camps including Habbaniya and Isfahan. Informed opinion was that the transit buses left too early in the morning !

Sam Harrison (Mem. No. 176)

Uneducated Senior N.C.O.s

One incident I remember occurred at Margil in January 1942. We were preparing the hangars ready to commence an assembly line for Boston's destined for the Russian front. I found a "Chiefy" with a piece of cast-iron wedged in the hangar door stop and he had half a dozen airmen doing 'two-six' on the hangar door, at speed, in an attempt to bend the cast-iron into a right-angle bracket. I drew him aside and explained that cast-iron will not bend and was told in a Scot's accent, "Y'know Corporal, ya no bad but ar canna call ye exactly good, unless ye can make a bracket fo me". This reminded me of another Flight Sergeant who asked an airman, "Where's yo rat". On being told it was in the tent he said, "Well go and get it, and get an aircut". The same one once told us we should "walk around the diameter, not across the perimeter". On that tented camp we had a captured 'ltie' generator driven by a diesel engine with a native mechanic in charge, it supplied electric lights. I was in the guardroom (tent) when the fights went out. Chiefie came rushing in at the same time as the native mechanic appeared and he asked the mechanic, "Ashenay mafeesh lights", the mechanic replied, "Diesel Mushquoise". Chiefie turned to me and said, "I know what mushquoise means but what's diesel" I told him it meant engine oil and he thought he'd learned a new Arabic word.

Alan Summerbell (Mem. No. 134)

All in a Day's Work.

6th May 1944. F/Sgt. Jones and crew are on detachment to 621 Sqdn. at Khormaksar, We are enjoying a swim in the pool. Suddenly, we are ordered to briefing. Our orders are to fly to Scuisiban (Italian Somalialand) to collect 12 submarine prisoners (Masirah is a Metropolis up to 'Scuis' - Ed.). We will be accompanied by three armed airmen, with fixed bayonets (could these threaten the fabric of Wimpey ?)

Our opinion is that the prisoners could be Japanese. (Shades of Hari-Kari on the aircraft!) Imagine our relief that, on arrival the POWs turn out to be German!

On 2nd May '44, two Wellingtons from 611 sqdn., had attacked and damaged U .852 off the Somali coast. Despite attacks from other aircraft and naval craft, the submarine was not sunk. It eventually beached on the shore. The Navy took off most of the crew, but twelve survivors came ashore and made their way inland. They were captured by an army patrol, and taken to Scuisiban.

For the flight back to Khormaksar the prisoners had their hands tied behind their backs. Can you imagine loading these fellows into the Wimpey, up the nose ladder? I was asked to give a receipt for twelve POW's by the Army Major !

With 21 people on board, the take-off was rough. Our German visitors were placed forward of the main-spar, which meant me settling down in the nose. It was later decreed (following an accident) that only a maximum of nine people should be carried in a Wellington. During the flight we had been ordered to cover the Radar, and also to pull curtains when we approached Aden. This was in order that the enemy should not have sight of our warships in Aden harbour! On unloading, our prisoners were driven off in a lorry. They has a splendid view of the assembled ships! So much for security!

On leaving the aircraft, the prisoners hands were untied. They then were subjected to a blast of fumigator from a stirrup-pump apparatus. They thought they were being gassed, and panic ensued! In fact, they were lined up for photograph with the Provost-Marshall and team.

I learned later that, after the prisoners had been interrogated their story was that U852 had sailed from Hamburg via the Shetlands. Through the Bay of Biscay, down past West Africa, and round into the Indian Ocean. On their journey they sighted constant air patrols. This meant they were submerged most of the time.

It was subsequently discovered that, on its journey to the Gulf of Aden, U852. had sunk a merchant vessel. The crew had machine-gunned the survivors on their rafts. The submarine commander, and two of his officers, were found guilty by a war crimes tribunal. They were hanged in Hamburg in 1947.

'Pat' ex 244 (Mem. No. 159)

"SEE YOU IN OCTOBER," !

Hon. Secretary: Jim Heslop Hon. Treasurer: Don James