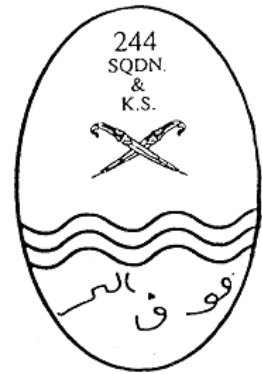




244 SQUADRON & KINDRED SPIRITS ASSOCIATION



Newsletter No. 14

Secretary's Report.

My records show that Don and I met on 23rd May '91, and decided we should attempt to organize a Reunion. 1991 (64 attended), 1993 (86 arrived) and now we come to Reunion '95 (102 already booked in!). As you can imagine, we are now in high gear in preparation for the big event.

Programme detail's are below, BUT, Jim says Friday - jaw, jaw, jaw, with your old mates (and new found friends), interspersed with a buffet, and a few competitions. This time, in addition, there will be an illustrated talk (approx 30 mins) about Habbaniya, given by Dr. Chris Morris (Mem No. 191).

Saturday Informal Dinner, followed by all singing, dancing programme!

Treasurer's Report.

Here we are, the last Newsletter before our 1995 Reunion. From all the letters we have had, it is obvious that everyone is looking forward to October. We are doing our best to live up to our previous 'do's. A number of our newer members have enquired about 'dress' for the two evenings. This is a "family affair", and is most informal. Friday should be blazers or suit's. Saturday should be suits (our old hands know the form!).

Many thanks for all the prompt payments received, especially those early payers in full. This is a great help. As usual we would need some help (possibly Thursday, but certainly Friday) in unloading and setting up our displays. By the way, this year There will be a 244 K K.S. Shop. On sale will be our Association 'goodies'. To close, please, always make cheques payable to '244 Sqdn & Kindred Spirits Assn'. It is time consuming to have them made out in any other way.

Programme Reunion Weekend.

Thursday 5th October. For those travelling on the 5th, meet in Lounge Bar, Scarisbrick Hotel for pre-dinner drink. Say 5.30 pm onwards.

Friday 6th October. For those booked in at Scarisbrick, Carlton or Talbot, your personal envelopes (with all details) await your arrival. Those members booked elsewhere, pick up your personal envelopes on arrival at the Isherwood Suite (Scarisbrick Hotel). Reception in Isherwood Suite at 6pm onwards. (Bar open 6pm to 12pm). Buffet served 8pm approx. (Bar for residents after midnight in Resident's Lounge).

Saturday 7th October Bi-ennial General Meeting, Scarisbrick Hotel at 10.00hrs. (Room to be announced later). This will be followed by a talk on 'Masirah Island' by S/Ldr. Colin Richardson - a long time Islander (mem No 125). Informal Dinner in Isherwood Suite. Sherry Reception at 6pm. (Bar open 6pm to Midnight). Afterwards, Resident's Lounge (as per Friday). Dinner served approx. 7.30pm. Music laid on.

THE SEIGE OF HABBANIYA MAY 1941

T'WAS ON AN APRIL MORNING, IN NINETEEN FORTY ONE,
THE STATION SIREN SOUNDED, THE "DO" HAS JUST BEGUN,
FROM COSY "CHARPS" WE HURRIED, ONTO THE TARMAC BARE,
BUT NO-ONE REALLY WORRIED, WE SAW NO DANGER THERE.

THEN ONE BRIGHT FLYING OFFICER, POINTED TO THE SOUTH PLATEAU,
THA'RS MEN AND GUNS IN THEM THAR HILLS, BUT ARE THEY FRIEND, OR FOE,?
IN ANY CASE THEY CAN'T REMAIN, WE'LL HAVE TO SCARE THEM OUT,
TH'O NOT A KITE WAS STARTED UP, THERE STILL REMAINED A DOUBT.

IN DIPLOMATIC CIRCLES, AL RASHID HAD BEEN UNTRUE,
IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE TREATY, HE'D AGREED TO LET THE TROOPS THROUGH,
BUT HIS ARMY TOOK POSITION, "DUG IN" THE HILLS SO NEAR,
AND ULTIMATUMS WERE THE RULE, - ALI WANTED HABBANIYA.

WITH NO IMMEDIATE ACTION, TWO DAYS WE JUST "STOOD BY",
AND NONE COULD TELL THE REASON, THE WHEN - THE WHERE - OR WHY,
THE "POWERS THAT BE" HAD ALL THE GEN, BUT KEPT EVENTS SO TIGHT,
TWO THOUSAND (?) AIRMEN KNOWING NOW'T BUT SPOILING FOR A FIGHT.

WITH MAY 2nd DAWNING, FIVE WIMPYS HOVE IN SIGHT,
THEY'D JOURNEYED UP FROM SHAIBAH, BEEN TRAVELLING HALF THE NIGHT,
WATCH OFFICE MORSE WAS RACING, THE WIMPY'S MADE THE TURN,
WITH TRACER BULLETS CHASING, THEY DIVED IN LINE ASTERN.

EIGHTEEN TWO FIFTY POUNDERS, HAD EACH OF THESE ON BOARD,
AND THEY LAID THEM VERY NEATLY, AMIDST THE IRAQI HORDES
WHILST IN THE SHALLOW TRENCHES, INSIDE THE WIRE FENCE,
THE AIRMEN CHEERED THEM LOUDLY, WE'LL TEACH THE W.O.G'S SOME SENSE.

THEN MUCH TO OUR DISCOMFORTURE, CAME WHISTLES OVERHEAD,
AND 3.7s AND 4.5s A CHOTA (SMALL) PANIC SPREAD,
FOR, THE LADS OF HABBANIYA, BUT FEW OF THEM HAD KNOWN,
THE TERROR OF EXPLODING SHELLS, - A SCREAM, A THUD - A MOAN.

THEN REACTION SET IN QUICKLY, EACH HAD A PART TO PLAY,
TWENTY ODD GUNS TO SILENCE, BEFORE THE CLOSE OF PLAY,
SO UP WENT OUR OLD GORDON'S - MUSEUM PIECES THESE,
AND WITH OUR "HART" AND "AUDAX", BROUGHT ALI TO HIS KNEES.

BUT, NOT BEFORE WE'D LOST SOME LADS - WE STOPPED A SHELL OR TWO,
THEY GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR FREEDOM, THEY DIED FOR ME AND YOU,
REVENGEFUL LEVIES SOME OF THEM, AND OTHERS FRIENDS OF MINE,
EACH DID HIS SHARE, WE'RE GRATEFUL, AND MAY HIS LIGHT SO SHINE.

THE IRAQI AIR FORCE DID ITS BEST TO SHAKE US FROM OUR STANCE,
BUT WHEN IT CAME TO COMBAT, THEY DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE,
CO'S WE HAD BLENHEIMS ON THE JOB, LONG NOSED MARK I.V. PLANES
AND WHEN "PEGGY" AUDAX PAID A CALL, HE WAS SHOT DOWN FOR HIS PAINS.

THEN ALI CALLED IN JERRY'S AID, WELL, WE EXPECTED THIS,
THREE HEINKELS' MADE A TRIPLE RUN, AND BARELY SCORED A MISS,
WERE WE PUT OUT?, WELL, JUST A BIT, WE LOST A FEW MORE MATES,
THEN HURRICANES' WERE ON THE SCENE, THE KITE THAT JERRY HATES.

FOR DAYS THE "SPOTTERS" WERE ON THE EDGE, THE STATION SIREN LAGGED,
IRAQI'S DROPPED AN EGG OR TWO, AND THEN THE AIR BLITZ FLAGGED,
MEANWHILE, THE "KINGS OWN RIFLES", LEVIES, AND GHURK'AS FEW,
WERE ADVANCING ON FALLUJAH, THE "WRENKS" WERE WITH THEM TOO.

THEY BOMBED AND BLITZED THAT VILLAGE, FOR TAINT MUCH MORE THAN SUCH,
WE HEARD THEM IN BANIYA' AND WE WERE'NT HAPPY - NOT MUCH!!,
SO ONTO BAGHDAD, NONSTOP A LEAFLET RAID THIS TIME,
WE WOULD'NT BOMB THAT CITY, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A CRIME.

RAMADI CAUGHT THE NEXT LOT, ALL DAY WE LET THEM DROP,
AND JUST A FEW DAYS LATER, SOME LADS WENT THERE TO SHOP,
FOR FOOD STUFF WAS SHORT AT HABBANIYA, BEER AND BACCY' TOO
AND BULLY BEEF AND BISCUITS IS POOR STUFF ON THE BLUE.

WE TOOK A TRIP TO MOSUL, WRECKED HEINKELS ON THE GROUND,
OUR GLAD MET CR42s, WHICH DID'NT HANG AROUND
BUT B.B.C. KEPT RATHER MUM' THE CLAIMS WE MADE WERE SMALL
AND LISTENING TO LORD HAW-HAW, WE'DE SHOT NONE DOWN AT ALL.

THE REBEL LEADER DID A BOLT, TO IRAN SMART WENT HE,
THOUGH RUMOUR SAYS HE DID'NT STAY, BUT MADE FOR GERMANY,
IT TOOK A MONTH TO WIN THIS WAR, A MONTH OF SHOT AND SHELL,
THE REBEL LEADERS DONE A BUNK, I HOPE HE'S GONE TO H---

ALTHOUGH THE PANIC IS OVER, AT LEAST FOR HALF A MO!
THE BLACKOUT'S STILL ENFORCED HERE, BUT WE SEE A PICTURE SHOW,
THEY WORK US SEVEN DAYS A WEEK, TO "NORMAL" IS THE CRY,
NO FOOTBALL, CRICKET, TENNIS, SQUASH, - TO NORMAL WORK - MY EYE!

THE REBELS ARE DISBANDED, THEIR LESSON HAS BEEN LEARNED,
4F.T.S. A TRAINING SCHOOL, THE TIDES OF FORTUNE TURNED,
SO HERE'S TO THOSE TWO THOUSAND (?) FOR EACH MAN HAD A SHARE,
IN THE VICTORY OF THOSE UNTRAINED MEN, HERO'S OF HABBANIYA.

BEFORE MY STORY IS ENDED, THERE'S ONE CHOTA' BLEAT
WHY DON'T THEY BUILD US DUG-OUTS, WE NEED A SAFE RETREAT,
THE MORAL MUST BE KEPT UP, IT'S ESSENTIAL IN THE MOB',
SO WHY NOT GIVE THE LADS A BREAK, AND "WORKS AND BRICKS" A JOB.

Follow up to 'ALL in a days work' (See Newsletter No 13)

Extract from article (Picture Post, circa 1945)

My account of the killing of German submarine U852, whose commander, Capt. Heinz Eck, Navat Surgeon Walter Pfennig, and Lt August Homan were sentenced to death by a Military Court in October, for the murder of British and Allied seamen from the steamer Peleus. U852 met her doom in the Indian Ocean two months after the crimes were committed.

At the beginning of May, 1944, I was on board HMS Falmouth, taking a convoy from Mombasa to Aden. A message was picked up, saying that an aircraft had sighted a U-boat in our vicinity. The next message stated that the aircraft had straddled her with bombs, causing so much damage that she was unable to submerge.

Shortly afterwards we were instructed to leave the convoy, and give chase to the U-boat, which was still capable of 14 knots on the surface. For two days and nights the chase went on. Finally, as we were gaining on her, altered course and made for land. At dawn we sighted her off Bendar Biela (Italian Somaliland). Evidently the U-boat had sighted us too, as she was immediately scuttled, causing little damage, as we ascertained later.

A report was sent out from HMS Falmouth, and within an hour we had word back that the Camel Corps was speeding to Bendar Biela, and other ships were on their way to pick up the U-boat crew. Aircraft made escape by Land impossible.

A boat landing party from HMS Falmouth made its way cautiously towards the scuttled ship. Caution wasn't necessary, as the crew of U852 were grouped on the beach, arms above their heads! As a great number were wounded, our doctor went ashore, and patched them up as best he could. Among them was Lt August Hoffman.

Altogether 37 men, including Captain Eck and Naval Surgeon Pfennig were brought on board, where the wounded received further medical attention. The U-boat officers were looked after in the Wardroom. Those of the crew not wounded were billeted in a large room and allowed on deck. Men of the Falmouth gave them cigarettes, chocolate and biscuits. All were treated very well.

via Doug Enzer (mem No 58)

Comm. flight '42

I was sidetracked on my way to Sharjah, spending over two month's with Communication's Flight at Habbaniya. Clambered into an old Valentia (an aircraft designed by a committee I always reckoned!) on 9th March '42. Bound for Heliopotis (via H3 - Lydda)

I was sitting back, cruising at 500 feet, following the road and pipeline, pushing a 20 knot headwind, not making a lot of knots over the ground, when I sighted a dustcloud on the road behind us. Looked again a little later, and saw to our mortification that it was a big American car, and the damn thing was about to overhaul us! There was nothing we could do. I guess the driven was Laughing his head off as he passed us, leaving us his dust! Still, we got our revenge when we reached the coast, and dropped down to nought feet. Up ahead we sighted an Arab on a camel, headed the same direction as we were, unaware of the approaching monster. With wheels brushing the sand we held the Valentia down until the last moment, then zoomed close over the riders head! Looking back, I reckon the camel was at least 200 feet in the air, with the Arab beside him, but certainty not in the saddle! For more than 50 years I have wondered, did he even catch that camel?

Tony Tubbenhaver (mem No112)

Won't be long now!

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