

No.160 Squadron, Royal Air Force

AD LIB

("The Chota Coggage" for Survivors)

S.S.O.s and D.R.O.s

Reunion Organiser

Despite a few last minute cancellations, the 1999 reunion was a very happy event. The food was excellent and plentiful. There was no doubt about the happy family atmosphere that prevails at our 160 Reunions was again present over dinner on the Saturday :right - one could tell by the animated talking at the tables. Any problems that did occur were very quickly dealt with. Long may our reunions continue!!! A letter of appreciation has been sent to the hotel manageress, Petra Billson. Some of my trials and tribulations as your Reunion Organiser are sent out on the enclosed A4 paper.

E. H. (Ted) Daines, 45 Randolph Road, NORWICH, Norfolk, NR1 2RU

(01-603-660514)

Compiler of 'AD LIB'

I was extremely sorry that my deteriorating physical condition precluded my attendance at the 1999 reunion and am most appreciative of the goodwill communications I have received subsequently.

It will not have escaped notice that, from time-to-time, I add comments to contributions from our members. I do this, as I type up the entry, only when I am able to add to, or amplify, the entry from personal knowledge or the contents of my library. I would like readers to feel free to contribute their own additions, amplifications or corrections. As AD LB will eventually find its way to the RAF. Museum, it is important that its contents are as accurate as possible.

F. W. (Bill) Cooper, 37 Oakdene, Lansdown Road, CHELTENHAM, Glos., GUI 6PX

(01-242-255119)

Subscriptions

Do you like receiving AD LIB? You do - well, this is the last copy you will receive if your subscription is not now paid in accordance with the particulars given in AD LIB 10.

Reunion 2000

This will be held on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of September, 2000, at the Falcon Hotel. Stratford-upon-Avon.

RIP

Walter Norfolk, a member of Laurie Jones' crew, advises that their Australian Navigator, Bob Bonham. passed away a few years ago.,

R.S.E.Groves, of Saham Toney, passed away in April 1999 after a short illness. He was an aircrew member of the squadron:

Allan "Scottie" Adam passed away in London, Ontario on the 18th February 1999 He had been Warrant Officer Second pilot to F/Lt Roy Schroeder, RCAF, and emigrated to Canada just after the war. They, and their wives, had both been visited by a member of Roy's crew, Australian Bill Stubbs. and his wife, as recently as June of 1998.

Cyril Wilde of Guisborough, and a Fitter IIE, passed away, on 18th July 1999. He is survived by a daughter who wishes to continue to receive our literature. In order to fulfil this wish, she is being enrolled as an Honorary Member by Ted Dames. This is Ted's usual practice in such cases.

WHAT OUR READERS SAY

Geoff Wyle writes to say:

"With reference to the 'deceased' list which came with AD LIB 8. and the lose of BZ 950; aboard this aircraft was sin 'oppo' of mine -Frankie Sage. He had been a member of the ground crew for this aircraft when it went on a previous flight to Akyab. BZ 950 was being serviced for another operation. and other 'erks' were trying to get a trip to Akyab for 3 or 4 days. By agreement with the Corporal, I had arranged to take his place. However, Frankie came back from the dhobi and altered the arrangement, saying he had seen a gift in a boutique in Akyab for which he hadn't got the cash at the time., and wanted to go back for it. Other ground crew were similarly involved in swaps. 'There but for the grace of God go I.'

(Geoff Wyle)

(A little bird informs us that 'Doc' Cousins ought to tell us about returning to base from Ratmalana.)

Bill Stubbs, a relatively new member, wrote from Australia to say:

"I sent a copy of AD LIB No.2 to Roy Schroeder, in Canada because his crew, of which I was a member, received a mention in paras 3 & 4. However, there is an error in the story about the mine-laying mission to Singapore on 30th April, 1945. F/Lt. Schroeder and crew did complete a successful mission and returned safely to base after 22 hours 25 minutes in the air. (This is taken from my log book and confirmed by Roy Schroeder. Additionally, details of this minion to Singapore are written on page 897 of "The Burma Bombers".)

"I do remember this particular trip because on the return flight to base, the Skipper and F/Engineer were concerned about the fuel supply and about midway across the Bay of Bengal it was decided to jettison 'anything and everything' that was movable from the rear of the aircraft. A little later, all the crew at the rear of the bomb bay were moved on to the flight deck."

I am grateful for the correction - it was W/O Ken Westcott in "T" who had to return to base. FWC)

THE WRITTEN WORD

"They like to call me 'old timer'.
"Well, I am getting older, I guess.
"But I hate all these changes,
"Cause I saw it all at its best."

Waylon Jennings

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD...

Characters (1)

Lots of squadron groundcrew and H.Q. staff will readily recall our time at Thurleigh with its winter snows and windowless billets; our daily roll-call by W/O Cook and Sergeants to check the personnel arriving to form the Squadron. Each day '001 Rock' was called with no response. After almost a week came the response, 'Here, Sergeant!' Consternation and incredulity appeared on the face of the Sergeant as he faced the assembled throng and said, 'Did you hear that, lads? 001 Rock has arrived.' Indeed, that soft-spoken Scot from Edinburgh had graced us with his presence at long last.

Remember the cook, Big Jack Graham, a Scouser, who entertained us with his pugilistic skills in the boxing ring on board s.s. "CUBA"
(Hank Illingworth)

It pays to watch what you are doing!

As air supporters of Force 136, 160 Squadron was committed to dropping jungle guerilla types into Japanese occupied Malaya. At Minneriya it was not unusual to see personnel running around the flight-lines on mini-folding-motorcycles, or testing other supplies before they were loaded into containers to be 'dropped'. On one occasion we ran into trouble, which prevented us achieving both our primary and secondary targets. It was essential that we jettisoned our load in order that we would have the fuel to return to Ceylon, so down it went into the Straits of Malacca. Next day, I was informed by our Sergeant Armourer that we had dropped 500 watches into the 'drink! As usual, our main concern had been to find the precise DZ without knowing what the contents of the containers were. I still felt sick for weeks afterwards when someone asked me the time."
(Jack Burgess)

The Flame of Love

I was the unfortunate recipient of a Dear John' letter from my temporary girlfriend back home. My pride was severely wounded to be told that I had been rejected in favour of a Corporal stationed at Croydon. I wrote back an indignant letter stating that, here was I, stationed in the jungle fighting the Japanese for King and Country, and I didn't deserve such treatment. Anyway, what had the Corporal got that I hadn't?' Her reply was brief and to the point, 'Nothing, really, but he's got it here.'

I pinned the letter to the Mess notice board for all to read and add their comments. Some were sympathetic; others not so, and some were quite unprintable. When all had said their piece, following tradition, I set fire to the letter. This was a stupid thing to do in view of the Cadjan backing to the notice board and in a short time this began to burn. Having no fire extinguisher handy, I yelled for help. The noble lads of 160 rushed to my aid and jettisoned their glasses of lime and lemonade (alcohol was frowned upon at lunchtimes) on to the Cadjan and doused the flames.

I got off lightly with a round of drinks and a few rupees for the damage to the Cadjan.

(Dave Flett)

More 'Jeeping'

A 'Jeeping' session took place on Christmas Day, 1944, when Wingco Stacey and F/Lt. Davidson came to 'B' Flight billet after lunch to wish us a Merry Christmas. After some few drinks Mr Stacey was persuaded to give a few of us a ride on his Jeep. These included George Ilsley, 'Darkie' Martin and myself. We were all at the 1998 reunion. Also involved were Al Caine, Harry Foster and Len Perry - the last two no longer with us. Len Perry, who had served with Wingate's expedition behind Jap lines in Burma, passed away about three years ago. Harry Foster passed away at the very young age of 42, leaving a wife and small family.

To say the 'Jeeping' was hair-raising is an understatement - the Wingco, with a 'tankful', sure could drive. At one point, Len Perry, drunk as a Lord, was rolling about on the bonnet as we veered from side-to-side along the K.K.S. runway. A great time was had by all!!!

(Hank Illingworth)

We joined the navy

When the Royal Australian Navy approached No.222 Group for two Coastal Command types to travel on one of their corvettes on an anti-submarine patrol for liaison purposes, 160 Squadron was informed. Leo Davidson and myself were afforded the opportunity and, as it would count as additional local leave, we jumped at the chance. We boarded our vessel in Colombo and much gin was consumed in the Wardroom before the drinks cupboard was locked for the duration of the voyage, which was to consist of a ten-day round trip to Addu Atoll.

I'm sorry to say that I lost face, and let the squadron down, by losing the contents of my stomach on the first day at sea. This was much to the amusement of the Australian crew. However, the sea sir soon put me right and sleeping in a cot on deck was a delight during the balmy nights under the stars.

In the lagoon at Addu Atoll we were joined by an Australian corvette which was on passage to Australia. It quickly became apparent that the purpose of this meeting was the handover of mail to the homeward-bound vessel. The 'mail-boat' weighed anchor and departed, with the usual exchange of ribald comments and rude gestures by both crews.

Although it had been said that there was nothing at Addu Atoll, this was not quite true. In the makeshift harbour lay beached a damaged cargo-ship with an interesting history. It had been torpedoed in the Madagascan harbour of Diego Suarez whilst en route to Calcutta. It was not dear to me whether it had been repaired and sailed to Addu Atoll, or towed I do know that it was not a lucky ship because while at Addu Atoll it was again torpedoed by a Japanese submarine.

Sailing back to Colombo we received news of an attack on a U-Boat off the Horn of Africa by a Wellington based at Masira Island. We were hoping to be ordered to search for it, but it was not to be. Back in Colombo, the Captain asked us if there were any differences in naval and air anti-submarine procedures. The only thing I could think of was that we were not sick in the air!

(Doug Flett)

The American Way!

When in India, looking for spares, I did the usual check on landing at a USAF base and discovered that the tyre on the nose-wheel had moved on the rim. Upon reporting to the American Flight Office, I was told that a replacement would be supplied. After waiting by the aircraft for some 30 minutes, a jeep arrived with fitters and a nose-wheel. After a quick change, I asked for the requisite form to sign. as per RAF Procedure. "None required, Bud. You've got a wheel - we've got a wheel. O.K.?"

(Tom Stevens)

The Japs weren't the only enemy!!!

Swimming at Mount Lavinia had its moments for me. I had never swum in tropical waters and knew nothing about Portuguese Men of War. I was swimming a fair way out when I got badly stung. The pain was intense, quite weakening, and I had difficulty in getting back to the beach. My plight was seen by the 'Banana Lil Girls', who came into the shallows to get me out. The usual crowd gathered round, offering much advice; most of it pretty useless. The girls sent for their Headman who, on seeing the now very painful and swollen arm and its red weals from finger tips to shoulder, despatched the girls to bring certain leaves. These he pounded into a pulp in a rusty old Players cigarette tin, much to the concern of the British contingent, who would have me tell him to go a long way off! By now I was in no mood to be squeamish and I let him administer the potion. He then advised me to go back to camp after I had taken a short rest. On getting back to camp, I went to the Sick Bay where the Orderly, on looking at my arm and hearing my story, told me to come back in the morning if I was still alive! I did see the M.O. the next day, but with some misgivings for the arm appeared to be perfectly normal. I thought I would be in for a rocket for wasting his time and made an apology. Quite

the contrary - he said that he wished he knew what potion the Headman had given me, as he had two other airmen in the Sick Bay who had also been stung and his treatment seemed to be making them worse!
(Lea Warrell)

The risks we took living in cadjan bashas.

On 8th June 1945, the cadjan NAAFI at Minneriya was completely gutted by fire in 5 minutes. A new, brick-built, NAAFI was opened at 17.55 hrs on Monday, 24th December 1945.
Geoff Wyle)

Was this a compliment?

One of our colleagues phoned me recently to obtain our worthy Organiser's address. On it being pointed out to him that this regularly appears under S.R.O.s and D.R.O.s, he said, 'I never read all that admin stuff - I go straight to the meat!'

(Bill Cooper)

Designed and typeset in Cheltenham by ADASTRAPRINT -free, gratis and for nothing!