

No.160 Squadron, Royal Air Force

AD LIB

("The Chota Coggage" for survivors)

No.14 Reunion Edition

Autumn 2000

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

REUNION ORGANISER

You are read that subscriptions are due on receipt of this edition of AD LIB. These are unchanged at £5 for annual membership plus £3 if you wish to receive AD LIB. Please send them to me, Tad Daines, before the reunion in order that I can have more free time to socialise with you all at that event.

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COMPILER OF 'AD LIB'

My Multiple Sclerosis has steadily taken its toll, over twenty-three years, to the extent that I have, with much regret, asked Ted Daines to find a new compiler for AD LIB.

I send best wishes to my loyal and supportive readers and the good folks who have sent me contributions over the past three-and-a-half years. It has been a great joy to work with, and for, you all.

Margot and I extend an invitation to 'drop in for a Cuppa', if you are in the area. We ask only that you phone first to check that I will be vertical!!

F.W. (Bill) Cooper, 37 Oakdene, Lansdown Road, CHELTENHAM, Glos., GL51 6PX (01-242 255119)

2000 REUNION

Falcon Hotel. Stratford-upon-Avon, over the weekend of 1st, 2nd & 3rd September.

THE SQUADRON CREST

Copies of the squadron crest, in full colour, with or without dedication (£3 inc. p & p), will again be available when the member who arranges such things is settled at his new base.

IN MEMORIAM

We have been privileged to see full details of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Commemoration to Flight Sergeant Dennis Kirk, WOP/AG, 160 Squadron, who is marked on Grave Reference/Panel Number 2.8.6. in Kandy War Cemetery, Sri Lanka. He died on Tuesday, 7th December 1943. Age 21). (Ted Daines)

Phil (Darle) Martins. (Rigger), front Penarth, and Herbert Brand, aircrew, from Weston Longville, Norfolk, are both reported as having been posted to higher spheres.

Frank Green advises the passing of Corporal Norman Moncur, i/c Parachute Section. He is remembered as always having a cigarette hanging from the corner of his mouth, having a ready laugh and seeming to see the humorous side of almost everything. He was quite a close friend of Cpls Arthur Evans and Bert Nicholls. It is likely that our aircrew members will remember him. Frank is informed that Norman died in hospital in Scotland of a stroke last February.

Roll of Honour

Thank you to the members who responded to my request for information about casualties. The information I received has proved very helpful and I have been able to dear up a number of points. It has been particularly helpful to have access to 160's Operational Record Book through Mr. Robert Quirk, (Associate Member, Canada). Until I had Robert's input, I thought that the roll was more-or-less complete. but I now realise that I still have a couple of queries. These I am variously following-up. Although I do not yet have a finalised version. if anyone would like a copy of the roll as so far updated, please send me a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Alternatively, I can send a copy by email - free, gratis, etc.

Besides input from Robert Quirk and our own members (particularly Ted Daines) I have to acknowledge the considerable help I received from The War Graves Commission, Air Historical Branch R.A.F., R.A.A.F. Department of Defence, RNZAF Museum, R.C.A.F Records and even former members of other squadrons - 99 and 159.

Robert Quirk is a graduate engineer employed by the National Research Council of Canada and, arising out of his hobby of building plastic model aircraft, he has researched Liberators, particularly their use in SEAC (primarily because there seemed to be so little knowledge of such use). His records includes a complete list of all Liberators used in the Far East and their ultimate 'fate'. For anyone on the internet. his web mite is worth a visit at www.mbnet.mb.ca/~quirk: there is material about 160 Squadron an the site.

Robert Quirk has installed the Roll of Honour on his Web Site at:

www.mbnet.mb.ca/~quirk/160.htm1

Photograph

Thanks to Group Captain Butler, I have a group Photograph of 160 Squadron Officers. It has set me thinking that maybe I should attempt putting names to the faces, especially as with modern technology all sans of possibilities open up. I do not expect that I will be able to get together a complete 'montage', but if I can get a copy of a group photograph of the Sergeants' Mess, this would give me another good starter. Also, I am sure that from the wealth of scrape which members possess, other individuals could be included. All contributions in this way would be gratefully received.

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THE WRITTEN WORD

(Intelligence Officer Flying Officer Andrew Boggan writes about his flight on 26th February 1945 in 'N', BZ 752 with the C.O., Wing Commander J. N. Stacey as captain. Taken from Appendix No. 49/45, pages 269, 270, 271, of an unknown, but official, source. Two things will no doubt spring to the mind of the reader. First, why did the Squadron C.O. run the risk of his Intelligence Officer being captured. Second, the account was obviously written more than: a little bit 'tongue-in-cheek - no doubt to relieve the tedium of lying in a hospital bed.)

The I.O. takes a dim view of the Kra Peninsular

Anyone reading this and thinking that it is a load of bull is right except that the broad outline is true.

Eleven aircraft of 160 Squadron set off on the afternoon of 26th Feb. in two waves, three minutes between aircraft, to block the dripping routes to Jumborn (Chumphon) in the gulf of Slam. The trip there and back was 2350 Nautical Miles.

Now, I've been asked to write my impressions of this trip, "Well," says you, "How could I when I wasn't there?" "Ah ses me, "I was, I seen it with my own eyes, dimmed though I admit they know are with Cassino and this or that."

So here goes.

On the morning of 26th Feb. I rose bright and early to attend the briefing of these "ere eleven crews. "Why?" see you, but - well let that pass.

It was quite a successful briefing and the church was packed to capacity - that's where we held it - in the church. You see, the lights failed and I couldn't show on the epidiascope the drawings I had done of what I thought the place looked like. As we had no maps bigger than the "Ceylon Review", everyone had to rely on imaginative pictures painted by the honeyed words of myself and the Winco. I've only put myself down first because I spoke first, so if the Winco reads this and wants to know why I'm mentioned first, you can tell him I'm in dock with a fifth dose of malaria.

As I wanted to know why our squadron's high percentage of success was not lower, I went with them.

I took the only serviceable torches there were and gave them to our crew (after all we were leading the way, although the Winco has to admit that 'Pranger Netherton' got to the target first). I also saw to it that our crew had more than their fair share of Indian money which we would use in Siam as a substitute for their currency (I, myself, took six bags of it) and we got into the aircraft and were soon at the end of the strip, ready for takeoff with a string of Ceylon-Thai buses lined up behind us.

When Ivor Tamer, the Flight Engineer, had worked the engines into a frenzie, someone released the brakes and the Liberator shot along the runway so fast it become airborne. This rather surprised me as I had been absolutely certain this trip would last about twenty-three seconds.

After we had been at sea sometime, I went to see my friend Skinner, the tail gunner. Now, Skinner and I get on fine on trips because we have an arrangement by which no-one knows where the chocolate goes except ourselves. Now, this time. although the brick smelt like chocolate, we couldn't break it so, taking a natty looking sandwich in the centre of which the cook had inadvertently placed an oblong piece of the Times of Ceylon in mistake for corned beef (someone must have been finger-in it - the Times I mean, not the beef). I left Skinner wailing and looking-up words in his pocket dictionary (despite the fact that I had told him not to bring it as it gave a clue to his possible nationality) arid nattering about his luck with flying rations throughout his tour.

Light began to fade so, regretfully. I got down "The Child's Guide" and idly wondered whether there was an adult's guide to this seemingly difficult Admin system in the R.A.F. Incidentally, I wondered, whether the Child's Guide in its lucid but withering tone was helping the war any, but then, I suppose a bloke in an aircraft the function of which was to drop mines in the Gulf of Siam shouldn't be thinking about these "P" matters.

Over the intercom (I had inadvertently put on the earphones, thinking perhaps they provided music on these trips) a natter started about where we were. Eventually, it transpired that we were within 15 miles of Car Nicobar. How we got there I don't know, for I hadn't told them to go there this morning - as a matter of fact I had only heard of the place from some Group Equipment types who kept up with the war situation. The Winco asked us all to be on the alert, and in naming me specifically, I'm not sure whether he meant I should be doubly alert or only that I should make a big effort to see something which wasn't there.

However, nothing happened except that in my excitement I accidentally dropped the "Child's Guide" out of the window, whereas it was intended to go out later with leaflets, as I thought a good childish admin system should be in full swing in Siam ready for the allies eventually moving in.

Time wore on broken only by stifling fumes and occasional showers of petrol which Ivor, the engineer, created by his effort to transfer sufficient petrol for my lighter. I must add of course that we smoked during fuel transfers to show that these stories of accidents one hears are all hooey.

The Winco had put in George, so he, Geoff Guy (the second pilot). Burley (the navigator) and myself had a nice evening playing knock rummy. Taffy, the S/E op, could have played too, but, he had been confined to duty for accidentally pushing the newspaper stoppers in the bottles of water they supplied us with, down into the bottles thus giving the water a taste like KKS soup. As I say, there was Taffy. He suddenly said there was land on the S/E so from that time onward we were all attentive. I gazed down a little later at my 1:250,000 to find any island which might look like the ones on my map. There seemed to be a hell of a lot of islands south of Victoria Point all looking as desolate as anything, but the problem did not dismay me as I had coped with ones like it when I nearly passed my Obs. Radio Board in the younger years of the war and incidentally my life.

A lot of intercom chatter started and eventually it was decided that we were on the right track as the island just in front looked exactly like a suitable one on the map which lay east of the larger one which the cartographer had evidently forgotten to include. Perhaps it wasn't important at that time - at any rate I don't know why it wasn't on -that's the trouble with these maps we get.

Now, the Winco said, we are going to climb to cross the Kra mountains. It got cold. I wish he had mentioned this in the briefing, then Buck Ryan and I could have brought thicker shirts.

We had been airborne a good few hours now and were approaching the targets so I thought I'd clean my teeth for, I argued, better be tossed out of aircraft to wander in the jungles of Kra with clean teeth than the reverse.

Underneath the cloud lay the Isthmus and, between cloud I saw lights, so to help the Winco avoid any possible trouble (you can't be too careful the Winco always says, but you can be too careless - once, and only once). I told him that there were the lights of Khao Hun Gang (Khao Lyang) bearing 090 port and that as there were lights there would be people and (I deduced) they might, being on enemy territory, have guns. The Winco thanked me, but he didn't sound too grateful I thought - perhaps he was thinking of something else at the time.

When we came out of the cloud there lay the Gulf of Siam. I'll bet not many white men living have seen that coast -no. honest, I'll bet they haven't. In daytime I should imagine it's all very pretty and the coasts dotted with pagodas and things and twine (?) bathing but it just looked a couple of shades less dark than the land. As a matter of fact we descended to have a closer look at it and (as it occurred to me a minute or two later) to commence our minning run.

It's queer at 350 feet, things go rushing by. I saw large rocks towering like something fantastic sketched on a backcloth for the ghost scene in a pantomime. My, what rocks, perpendicular from the sea as if they had been there since the esotoic (mesozoic/exothermic?) days. I also saw a ship flash by so I threw a bunch of leaflets at it - after all someone aboard could perhaps read Chinese.

A small jagged island came into view so we set course by it. This was the datum I had briefed on but I didn't know it looked like this. Good job I came as I shall know how to describe it next time.

After the run we turned back, mainly because we had got as far as we wanted to go. We climbed again over some horrid-looking jungle, but not before we got an excellent sight of the Siam railway route 'F' on which I threw a further bunch of leaflets with remarkable precision. Ivor, at the other beam window, thought he had thrown out his Engineer's log with some leaflets but we later found that he had used it to wrap the caffeine tablets in. Some of my leaflets which I threw

out came back and got mixed up with the Times of Ceylon sandwiches. but in the main we got rid of the lot and so helped the inhabitants to keep as near in touch with the latest war news as a month back at any rate.

We saw Rajkrud and, although I knew they were really blast furnaces I let the crew intercom and 'er-rojah!' to each other as they successively made up their minds that the lights were a flare-path and secondly that they were jungle fires. As however, the intense light from the furnaces came from a bare plateau. I don't know how they came to that conclusion. Partridge, Skinner and Taffy were now chafing, so I got out my Li-lo, blew it up and found a nice space between the flare chute and Partridge's boots. I kept the headphones on, in case as I thought, the Winco might need any briefing on the return trip. Needless to say, he didn't beat the I.O. has to be ever ready to give whatever help he can.

Suddenly, I heard a voice saying, 'Captain to beam, if instead of chafing you'll keep a sharper look-out I'd be obliged. We are approaching Nancowrie.' In my sleepy confusion I replied, " I'm afraid she's not here." - then I remembered how silly a thing that was to say so I hastily corrected myself and realising that the Winco was an old boat pilot. I said, "Aye, aye, air", and made a shrill whistling sound with two fingers pressed into the back of my mouth.

After a time, it appeared we had passed Nancowry and I was told I needn't keep watch any more, but Skinner had to keep watch in the turret. so I took Skinner's section of the floor and got down to it. To get into the right atmosphere for further sleep I thought on some lines I had read in the late lauded 'Child's Guide' and was soon dozing off.

The aircraft had driven into a siding when I awoke in full daylight, and so I made my way to the old section to debrief the other crews whom were fast arriving home. I will say, not having a clerk, I found the next few hours exceedingly Thai-ing. Still, it was a damned good trip, and we did what we had to do. So did the others. All of them. We laid 59 mines in their correct places that night. If their names never get into print bigger than IOGROPS (IO/GR/OPS?) Review, I'm going to see they do now - Knowles, Davidson (I remember this trip well - we had to circle three times to get the last mine off! FWC), Westcott, Hughes, Waterfield, Stacey, Horton. Joy. Waddy, Trotter, Netherton - and I wish I could put all their crews in too. Morale has never been as high on the squadron as now, and if this trip had been in the West, it would have made front-page news on distance alone.

(With acknowledgements to PRO/Air 27: Document 1067.)

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD...

The 160 Squadron Sailing Club

Who remembers 160 Squadron Yachting/Sailing Club? As a 'gash' member off 160 Squadron, with no specific aircraft to indulge my tender mercies on, I was enrolled in the Sailing Club to organise the building of pram dinghies and obtain any other sailing/boating craft which could be scrounged. The pram dinghies were constructed from the waterproof plywood cases in which replacement fuel tanks were delivered. The construction took place at Minneriya and, when we moved to KKS, they were ferried up in the bomb bays of the Libs. Amongst the Sailing Clubs possessions was an Air/Sea Rescue launch of the type fastened to the underside of ASR Wellingtons in the UK. We were also in possession of two ocean-going canoes. both two-seaters. I believe that these originally belonged to Force 136.

The sailing, etc., took place at weekends South of Jaffna, from a creek at Tundiamara near Point Pedro. Rations were obtained from the relevant messes. We did not have the services of R.A.F. cooks and the cooking was done by a rota of the bods, two at a time. Cooling was by means of a 5-gallon drum filled with sea-sand on which 100 octane fuel was poured and ignited. This made a great cooker! On one occasion, when I was the Chief Cook and Bottle-washer, my cobbler and I unfortunately dropped the chops in the sand as we were taking them to the tables. I thought, 'Oh, that's gained something?'. We dusted off the sand and served-up. A salty/bitty meal resulted. Everybody complained about the bits of shell and wished they had stayed back at the ranch'. where the food was better than our presentation. It is true to say that a good time was had by all.

We also had a Camera Club at K.K.S. and Minneriya. Most cameras were 120 and 127 film-size. The spools were retained and rewound in the Dark Room with Air Ministry film which had been cut to size. However, the water temperatures around the Station during the day were too high (85°F) for development to be done by amateurs so developing and printing took place around 23.00 hrs. (Geoff Wyle)

More early tales from Sigirya - A case of Gin versus a case of Malaria.

Before explaining this title; a few words to put the matter in context. In the early part of 1943, Sigirya was in the hands of care and maintenance personnel. A small group of officers and airmen were responsible for the security of the station. The officer establishment called for a C.O.; Adjutant; M.O. and an Engineering Officer. Additionally, I was detached from 160 Squadron for operational purposes. The C.O., S/Ldr Kirby, had contracted hepatitis by the time I arrived. He was 'invalided out', leaving the Adjutant, F/Lt 'Dickie' Dixon as acting C.O. The posts of M.O. and Engineering Officer had never been filled, leaving Dickie and I as the sole officer complement. Now, to get to the point.

N.A.A.F.I. H.Q., in Colombo. was accountable for supplying us with our monthly liquor ration. Beer was unobtainable due to a shortage of shipping space - but an ample supply of spirits was available. According to N.A.A.F.I. records there were five officers stationed at Sigirya and the monthly ration catered for that number. We decided not to cause confusion by asking for this figure to be amended, but rather to enjoy the bonus provided by a generous Air Force I

The monthly ration usually consisted of a variety of bottles of dubious spirits, prominent among them being Parry's gin, a lethal concoction distilled in Madras. This had its uses - it could be used for lighting fires or pouring into the primitive toilets as an aid to hygiene. If all else, failed you could even drink it! Dickie and I spent many an evenings sitting outside our hut, knocking back gin by the light of hurricane lamps and listening to the nocturnal sounds of the jungle.

Although we were stationed in a high-risk malarial area, the Air Force, in their wisdom, deemed it unnecessary to post an M.O. to cater for such a small number of personnel. Instead, we had a medical orderly with a first-aid box full of Gentian Violet and cotton wool for the treatment of Prickly Heat, but very little else. Anti-malarial prophylactics, such as Mepacrin and Paludrin, were conspicuous by their absence.

One day, to our great surprise, a young M.O appeared on the scene. Fresh from Edinburgh University, where he had obtained his degree in medicine, he joined the RAF. and was immediately posted to India to attend a month's course in anti-malarial procedures. Dickie and I both had misgivings about the effect that an additional mouth might have on our liquor ration, but when discovered that the new arrival was teetotal we made him very welcome.

The enthusiasm of the new M.O. knew no bounds. Each day he would set off with the orderly, loaded up with spray guns and tins of insecticide, to wage war against our resident mozzies breeding in their stagnant pools. He said he would have the area cleared within a month. Unfortunately for him, the mozzies had other ideas. Within three weeks of his arrival, he contracted malaria and was invalided out. 222 Group did not replace him because their diminishing stock of M.O.'s was reaching crisis level.

Shortly after the unexpected departure of our young M.O.. Dickie and I were indulging in our nocturnal ritual of downing a few gins. As we did so, we pondered as to why neither of us had suffered a single bite from the malaria-carrying female anopheles mosquito, while others were being carried-off to hospital.

'Dickie', I said, 'its obvious., its the Parry's gin coursing through our vein' is giving us immunity. I mean, no self-respecting lady mosquito would dream of biting us in case she caught something nasty !'

'Don't suppose the medical profession would agree, Dave.'

"Wadda they know. Dickie. That poor bloody M.O. - never had a drop of gin past his tonsils and look what happened to him. What the Air Force should do is dump all that Paludrin crap in the sea and issue everyone with bottles of Parry's gin. That'd put the kibosh on malaria for ever."

In the cold light of day, this radical solution for the elimination of malaria in Ceylon was never put to higher authority in case questions were asked which might well have resulted in a drastic reduction in our liquor ration.

(Dave Flert)

160 Squadron returns to the U.K.

From the end of October, 1945, the squadron had been based at K.K.S. mainly flying supply and 'trooping' missions into the Cocos Islands and India.; there was even the occasional trip to Australia. including, in the absence of civilian airlines at that time, the return of an Aussie cricket team who had been playing in India. We were still flying some of the older types of Lib but were re-equipped with Mk.VIII's from about January 1946. However, it was becoming clear that the military role of the squadron would soon end and rumours were rife that we were to be disbanded. In the event, we were to receive the surprising news that 160. lock, stock and barrel, was to return by air to the U.K. Well not quite that because. although the aircraft, aircrews, some servicing personnel and essential admin staff were to fly home, all other ground staff were to remain in Ceylon.

I believe the repatriation actually commenced at the beginning of June. I don't recall which aircraft and crews were in the first batch but I do remember that they carried the admin staff so that they could arrange leave for us as soon as we arrived! Our skipper, Ken Richards, was due for demob before the rest of us and left in March or April. This left the crew a little concerned that we might miss out on a flight home. We needn't have worried because we flew supernumerary with other crews. My own return is a story in itself; suffice to say, we left on 15th June and didn't arrive in the U.K until the 27th! And that arrival was not at Leuchars but at Blackbusk. nursing a very sick aeroplane which was not supposed to fly again until it had received a 'major'. We organised our own few days of leave before taking the Lib on to Leuchars on 1st July. (After 'missing the boat'. I wangled a passage home as supernumerary Flight Engineer on a Sunderland flying boat from Koggala. It took us six weeks due to crew, and aircraft, sickness!! FWC.)

We were still 160 Squadron and continued to fly Liberators, but this was not to be for much longer. From time-to-time we were to ferry our virtually new aircraft to Lichfield for disposal. It was heartbreaking to discover that they would never be flown again! Britain could not afford the dollars for spares to keep them in the air. We were due to convert to Lancasters - not the best maritime aircraft but better than a Lib for carrying an airborne lifeboat. I went up to 6(C) O.T.U. at Kinloss for a conversion course, which I completed on 4th September. However, back at Leuchars we were still flying Liberators as 160 Squadron certainly up to the end of September. My last flight with the squadron was an ASR search on the 27th.

All that effectively happened then was the re-numbering of the squadron from 160 to 120 on 30th September 1946. There was no 'merger' - No 120 Squadron having been stood down in Northern Ireland on 4th June 1945. My flying log shows three flights in October with 120 Squadron and still in Liberators. I have seen it reported that Lancasters started to arrive on the squadron at the end of August, but I don't believe they were operational before the re-numbering. The Lanc was,

I am sure, a very fine bomber but nothing like as pleasant to fly as the Lib. I am certainly not sorry that my last memory of flying in the R.A.F. - an 23rd October - was in one of our beloved '160' Libs.
(Peter Knee)

Thurleigh to Ratmalana - Part Six

The 'New Amsterdam' slowed to a stop and dropped anchor. We had arrived at Port Tewfick and, once again, had safely passed through dangerous waters. Through the heat haze, one could see quite lovely buildings standing amid areas of yellow sand and coarse green grass, All this turned out to be a gross optical illusion! Too large to dock, the liner stood off from the land; so to disembark meant making a rather hazardous descent down steps that were suspended down the side of the vessel and then stepping across to a tender that was bobbing up and down about two feet distant from the bottom step. This was made even more awkward by the requirement to carry all our kit with us. The secret. was to lay our kitbag on top of our back-pack. leaving our hands free to grab anything, or anybody, within reach wires taking the death-defying leap from the steps on to the tender. One false step at this stage and it could well have been 'Davy Jones' locker; here I come!', but I'm pleased to report that everyone made it O.K.

We were welcomed to Egypt by flies - not just by one air two, but what seemed to be hordes of them. Where the hell they came from, God only knows, but they certainly know where to find us! We were taken by wagon to Kasfareet. in the Canal Zone, and unloaded at a so called camp at Fayid, Genefa . This was merely a collection of tents at the side of the road that ran through the area. Out washing facility was just a stand pipe (shades of Thurleigh, except that this one wasn't frozen). The tap was approximately four feet high, which meant that for an all-over wash one did it in the kneeling position. Most undignified! One of the first things we did was to throw water over our tent, with sand then thrown over the wet canvas (I am still trying to figure out 'Why?')

On our first night, here was an air raid warning BLACK On enquiring what this signified, we were told that, happily for us. it came no nearer than Kabrit, just up the road, from our camp. We heard that there were some casualties. The raid was, I believe, by Italian aircraft. During the raid there was quite an amusing incident. We were all standing watching things from a safe distance. when the S.W.O.. little Joe Cook, shouted at us. "Stop acting like bloody fools and get in your tents under cover!" He certainly had more confidence in the strength of our tents than I had, but that was Joe Cook at his best.

We were informed that up the road a way there was a cinema called Shaftos; this being the name of the Australian owner. I believe. I never got there myself but was told that it wasn't an exceptionally large place. For daylight performances, it was necessary for the audience to shut the flaps down over the windows to ensure that they could see the film.

Nearby was an Italian P.O.W. camp.. Quite adjacent to our tents, and surrounded by a double barbed-wire fence and guard towers was a German P.O.W. camp, occupied by what we were led to believe were by members of Rommel's Africa Korps. I must admit that I had never before, or since, seen such an immaculately laid-out camp. In the centre of the front row of tents was quite a large statue of a German Eagle, standing on a plinth, approximately three feet square and five foot high, all made of sand. I can't imagine how they made it, but it was quite magnificent.

(There were still Africa Korps prisoners at Kasfareet when the crew I was then with staged through on the way back to Blighty at the commencement of 1947. We couldn't get over seeing bronzed Germans, stripped to the waist, performing cleaning chores in the fenced-off W A A.F.; quarters. FWC)

The Italian prisoners were let out as work parties, working mainly at 107 MU. at Kasfareet, keeping the place tidy, although I did see some being loaded on to a wagon to be taken elsewhere. They had only one guard. I was amused to see this guard hand his rifle up to a prisoner before climbing on board the lorry himself. The prisoner then calmly handed the rifle back to him Somehow, I couldn't quite see this happening had they been Africa Korps prisoners!

The Bitter Lakes were close-by, and handy for the swing enthusiasts. Some times, transport was available; at other times you walked. The Italian prisoners always had transport and, if they were in the water when you arrived, you were required to wait until they had finished and departed, but not before they had asked you for 'a cigarette, please'.

We were kept busy in various ways, one being our renowned `daylight sweeps` ; we formed into a long line and advanced across the camp, supposedly picking up all unsightly refuse in our path We took the easy way out -placing a heel on the unsightly items and pressing them into the sand, thereby giving us a nice clean camp - unto the next wind blew up and gave Joe Cook the excuse for another 'daylight sweep'!

The food was about the worst I experienced during the whole war; bully beef and biscuits plus flies; boiled eggs plus flies for breakfast. The first morning we had eggs, I had ten before getting a good one - even the flies complained?

I was detailed to work, for a short period, in 107 M.U. and spent a pleasant time on the Pegasus line.

One afternoon we were ordered to pack our kit and were then loaded on to a train. Expecting, as usual. to move 'up into the Blue, I settled down and immediately dropped off to sleep. I awoke to find that we were on the Docks again, looking straight up at the 10,000 ton H.M.T.S. Dunera We were informed that we were on our way to India -all free of charge!

(Frank Green, with Ted Daines)

The culinary delight of long-distance flying!

Most of our sorties with 160 Squadron involved low level flying for long distances. Flying times were in the 17 -21 hours range. almost a full day. However, when briefing and de-briefing. and other time, was taken into account, 24 hours or

more would have elapsed since our last meal in the Mess. The Cooks would have provided us with what they considered to be an adequate 'hamper' consisting of a number of slices of bread, covered thinly with ghee and marmalade and pressed together as sandwiches. About half-a dozen such slices would be put in a bag for each each of the crew and all the bags went into a cardboard carton which was stowed at the rear of the aircraft. Drinks consisted of a number of bottles of water, to which was added a small amount of lemon juice.

(Things had marginally improved by my day - we were additionally supplied with a bar of Indian chocolate We believed this to be made with methylated spirits as, when chewed, any liquid immediately evaporated., leaving chocolate powder stuck: cloyingly to our palettes. FWC)

It was the same for every trip. After several hours of exposure to wind whistling up from the bomb-bay roller-doors, the sandwiches were as dry as toast and not very appetising. To vary the menu a little, we occasionally broke open one of the emergency packs. The cubes of chocolate were too rich and were barely touched, but the one-inch cubes of compressed dried mixed fruits were acceptable and satisfying. It was almost amazing how one small cube of dried fruit could satisfy a sizeable hunger.

On reflection, I believe those dried fruit blocks could play an important role in controlling weight-gain in the multitude of people we see today who have a body-weight problem

(Bill Stubbs RAAF)

AN APPEAL !!!

In order to give Ted Daines more time to natter at the Reunion; if you are attending, please send your subscription on receipt of this AD LIB.

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