



160 SQUADRON, ROYAL AIR FORCE

The Chota Coggage

for survivors



WINTER 2001
Number 19

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

Annual Subs: A reminder - have you paid your subs? A number have not yet paid for this year and, whilst we will send the current newsletter, we need to know if membership is being kept up. £5 is the membership fee plus £3 if AD LIB is also required.

Cheques should be payable to me "E.H.Daines".

Reunion 2001: Numbers at 54 (after late cancellations) were down slightly this year but it was most enjoyable and we were well looked after. In the short proceedings before dinner a proposal to elect Ted Daines as Honorary Vice President, in recognition of all the work he puts in on our behalf, was carried with acclamation.

Diamond Jubilee: 16/1/42 was the date of the reforming of the squadron so next year is the 60th anniversary of this event. Why not make a special effort to attend the 2002 reunion - there may not be too many more. Any ideas on how we might make it extra special this time will be welcome. The dates for your diary are Friday 30/8/02 to Sunday 1/9/02 with the offer of an extra night on special terms. You can book for one, two or three nights or just for the dinner.

Books: News of books of interest.

Lambs in Blue: Rebecca Barnett: Wartime lives & loves of WAAF's in Ceylon (*When/where did this happen?*). £9.95

Bawdy Ballads & Dirty Ditties of the wartime RAF: Harold Bennett. (*Extreme caution/parental guidance needed!*) £9.95

Air Chief Marshall Sir Keith Park, Biography: Vincent Orange. Includes his time as C.in C. South East Asia. Reissue in paperback £12.99.

RAF Sqdns: 2nd - updated edition. W/Co.C.G.Jefford. £40 (Amazon £32).

The above 4 titles should be available from Amazon or Midland Counties Publications: Hinckley. Tel: 01455 254450.

Member John Nutter also tells us of another book where 160 has a mention - **Operation Pharos and the Cocos (Kealing) Islands:** Ken Rosam. ISBN: 1 - 873203 - 58 - 6.

An apology - for the delay in issuing this edition.

OBITUARIES:

We regret having to advise of the death of two of our old mates. **Eddie Cooper**, of Royston, who will be remembered as being very active at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford airfield.

Doug Jones, of Newport, who was with 160 from Thurleigh through to Sigirya where he left to join the Mountbatten flight.

We send our deepest sympathies to both wives and families.

We have also heard from Matt Poole, through Robert Quirk, of the death of **Stan Sampson**, secretary (for 40 years) of the 159 Sqdn Association.

As yet we have not heard if anyone has taken over Stan's role but we sincerely hope that we will be able to stay in touch with 159 since the squadrons have been very close from the early days.

MAKING CONTACT - old colleagues and 'Help':

We are still being noticed on the internet and elsewhere!

"V" is back again. A request from Diane Schultz, Ontario, asking if anyone can advise where a replica of FL 936 "V" can be obtained. I have put her in touch with Jim Jackson who supplied the article in 'AD LIB' No.17 but have not heard if the search has been successful. It is actually wanted in UK for one of our member's grandsons. If anyone does know of a source in UK I am sure that others would like to buy the model. ("Airfix" apparently have a kit)

Sergeant D.Lumley (610301 - Flight Engineer): Mrs C.Lloyd (nee Lumley but not directly related) of Gwynedd recently sent an article to our local 'Evening Chronicle' stating that she had been given a photo of Derek Lumley's war grave in Sri Lanka and wondered if there was a relative in the Tyne & Wear area. He was actually from Bradford and I have passed on some details but if anyone can add anything please let me know. Derek, who had just joined the squadron died on his first operational transit flight in "H" BZ850 on 9/6/45 in the tragic accident when 19 were killed.

150 Sqdn Liberators: Ian Cruttenden writes concerning the article about Middle East S.O.E. flights in 'AD LIB' No.18. His specific interest is 150 overseas activities and he would be interested to hear from anyone who was with 150 squadron during the period November 1941 to January 1942 to discover their experiences with the Liberator. The introduction of the Lib to this Wellington squadron was apparently short lived - possibly because the Libs were in very short supply. AL506, AL509, AL511 and AL516 arrived on the squadron but were taken away - were any air crew converted and did they go with them as well?

Special Flights - 'AD LIB' 18 - the WATCHES: I missed the programme 'Churchill's Secret Army' repeated on Channel 4 last month. It told the story of the watches. Did anyone see it and did it gel with the ditching of 500 watches on the 160 special op?

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD

Salbani Airfield during the period 1942 – 1943

"Ad Lib" No.16 told us about the movement of part of the squadron from Quetta to Salbani and now Ted Daines picks up the story with more of his experiences on the defence flight:

"One task that I had to perform during this period was as Guard I/C of a rice train standing all one night in the sidings at Salbani Railway Station. This was in the time of a great famine. Strange to say however there was plenty of food of a type to be had, but alas a chronic shortage of rice, this of course is the staple diet of the native population. Being attached to 159squadron for a short time, we seemed to get plenty of this type of job. It was pitiful to see the nearby villagers trying to pick up the grains of rice that dribbled out of the trucks' doors. This was too much for the guards, they managed to prise the door open a trifle further to allow a little flow of rice into the dhotis of those waiting. Better this way we thought than allowing it to be drafted into the hands of the Black Marketers. This episode was only the start of the famine for me.

I was posted to Fort Belvedere to attend a signals course for about a fortnight, this of course was held at Group H.Q. During our free time we were allowed to go into Calcutta; it was here that we saw the true effects of the famine. People were indeed just dropping dead in the streets, to be thrown onto an open wagon that was moving up and down the streets just for that purpose. Calcutta as you may or may not know has plenty of people who do sleep on the pavements during the day or night, one had to be careful not to follow the dead onto these collecting wagons.

This also was a period for Jai-Hind the quit India wallahs - you know the non-violence group. They did not think twice about derailing troop-trains by loosening the fish plates of the lines and it didn't seem to matter if they killed a few of their own people in the process.

They used to hold meetings on the Calcutta maidan. To start with all was cheerful and friendly, then up would roll a few taxis filled with agitators. It wasn't long before the peaceful crowd was turned into a raging mob, duly broken up by the Lathi wielding police.

At times I have seen it happen in the cinemas. I believe it was in the Metro, the film was in progress when uproar occurred, the lights went on to show up a tremendous fight in the front seats. On further thought I seem to remember it was better than the film that was being shown. It wasn't long before a curfew was imposed on Calcutta, something like midnight I believe. If moving after midnight one had to have a pass.

The day the defence flight was posted to 180 Wing on the Indo-Burma border we ran into such a fracas outside the station at Dum-Dum, a horde of these followers of Jai-Hind attacked our engine driver and his stoker with stones and lumps of coal bringing the train to a standstill. What they didn't account for was that there were fifty well-armed troops aboard the train. As they ran past they got a severe rap on the head with the butt of a rifle or Sten gun. Soon they were in flight and, as for us, we were not as bored as we were, as we continued on our way".

(Ted Daines)

AND, WHILST ON ABOUT THE DEFENCE FLIGHT

Les Jewitt an old Defence Flight mate of Ted Daines' has recently made contact and tells of the time spent at Quetta.

"Quetta was my favourite place" he says "and there was always something of interest each day". (*With things as they are today in Quetta it does not seem to have changed, Ed*). He goes on: -

"ROUTE MARCH": this was always the time-honoured standby for the powers in charge when they did not know what to do with us. The march I remembered clearest was the one when we went East, past Matheson Baths for a few miles and were then halted for a ten minutes break; smoking was allowed but Welchy bustled to and fro warning everybody not to touch water bottles!

He need not have bothered, as most of them were so rusty inside that drinking from them was not on. After the break, we marched on in the same direction, coming to a reservoir in the hills where we fell out for a longer break during which the Pilot Officer I/C drew his revolver and fired a number of shots at some target in the reservoir. Tom Bonnick took a couple of photos of this place and of a few different bods. Afterwards, we struck out in single file North into the hills, swinging West and eventually coming out onto a dusty, sandy plain where there was a single line rail track and we were almost back home: very tired, very thirsty and very dusty.

Another version of the route march was when a senior NCO would be detailed to take us around the immediate area. Remember Sergeant "X" from "XX"? ... should never have had his tapes..... we used to draw him into the ranks and take the mickie most shamefully, particularly on swimming parade, when he would be carried bodily into the pool area and thrown in fully dressed.

Remember W/O Fletcher? Remember how the same Sgt "X" was arraigned in front of the C/O reduced to Corporal and posted and how on arrival at Quetta station the train had gone so he rather unwisely went back to camp? On the way down to the station the transport had passed W/O Fletcher walking to town and "X" could not resist the temptation to scream a few abuses at him and let him know what he thought about him. Well, on his return to camp, where he intended to spend the night. "X" was spotted by Fletcher, who came down on him like a ton of bricks, and "X" ended up being posted as LAC.

ORB'S SHOW THE ACTIVITIES IN SEPTEMBER 1942 AS;

1st to 30th: Disciplinary training – all personnel – including P.T.,
Foot and Arms drill, Route Marches (with and without packs). Junior NCOs instruction, respirator drill. Daily lectures given to all tradesmen.

ORB'S Continued

- 1st 1st Squadron boxing tournament held at East Camp Quetta.
- 7th 1st short "Backers-up" course commenced,
- 12th Squadron athletics tournament held at Fusiliers Sports Ground, Quetta. (50 airmen took part)
- 14th Eliminating contests of Inter-Unit Athletic Championships at Fusiliers Sports Ground Quetta. (19 airmen of 160 Squadron took part)
- 19th Inter-Unit Athletics championships took place at Fusiliers Sports Ground, Quetta. (6 airmen of 160 Squadron took part).
- 20th 2nd short "Backers-up" course commenced.
- 30th 4th Squadron Concert held at East Camp, Quetta. *(Editor)*

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

In 'AD LIB' No.18 Frank Green brought the movement of the Squadron up to arrival at Quetta and in 'AD LIB' No.16 we have already covered the movement of the main party from Quetta to Salbani. Frank is busy completing his story of the advance party from Quetta to Ratmalana but meantime we can get up to date on the main party and what happened in Salbani when the day came for 160 to make its final moves and the surprise that awaited the Defence Flight.

160 SQUADRON DEFENCE FLIGHT BY TED DAINES

The day dawned quickly and very noisily as it usually did. We had guarded the train at the sidings at Salbani all night; it had a certain amount of kit already on it, for this was the day of the departure of 160 Squadron to Ceylon. The Defence Flight, whose kit was already on, received a shock on being relieved from guard duty. Although still under the heading of 160 Squadron they were being attached to 180 wing at present in the forward areas of Assam, right on the Indo-Burma border. Our first job was to remove our kit from the train that we had been guarding for the last twelve hours and pack it on another one standing in the sidings. We were told that there was no need of us in Ceylon. We were disappointed to say the least.

We were to proceed to Calcutta, then cross this large sprawling city to the narrow gauge rails of Sealdar Station. To make matters worse we had just been issued with the Sten gun, the early version that went off when knocked on its own. No sooner had we placed our gear on the train than we were off. Although nothing was said, we guessed that this was indeed the parting of the ways from 160 and so it turned out that way. We duly arrived at Howrah, Calcutta, with all our kit, and proceeded to shift it to the other side of the city; transport was laid on to do this. We learned on arriving at Sealdar that our train's departure was not till the early hours of the morning. We would be going to the

riverhead, where we would change to a large flat-bottomed riverboat.

We split into two sections while waiting for this boat train; half went into Calcutta and changed round on return. This, as you might imagine, was very acceptable to us - our Sergeant was not given to moments of generosity! The time came to board the train and it drew slowly out of Sealdar Station towards our first stop at Dum-Dum station. As we left we were involved in a fracas with Jai-Hind, the quit India wallahs who stoned our driver and stoker, bringing the train to a halt. Leaning out of the windows we attacked this unruly mob bruising a few heads with the butt of a Sten gun, soon putting them to flight. After attending to the driver and his mate we proceeded on our way, certainly not as unhappy as before.

Arriving at the Brahmaputra riverhead we quickly loaded our kit on to the large antiquated craft that plied between here and the railhead many hours upstream. This turned out to be a very pleasant and relaxing journey, very different from the usual and certainly a nice surprise. Food was available too on the boat - this made it even better. I believe our rations were of the "K" type. Reaching the railhead we had to quickly load our gear again on to the train. No sooner was this done than we pulled away. We were now in Assam where the green grass was very lush, although the soil was still a red colour, and we were climbing slowly towards some distant hills.

We now learned of our first destination: it was to be Silchar, not on the airfield but to occupy a disused school. Once again we had nothing to do - were we ever going to get a job? After a month here we got one - we were moving to an airstrip called Feni that was just a grass field with billets one side and Admin on the other. It housed a Blenheim Squadron that operated frequently. But again, why did they post us here as they already had a Defence Unit? I was given the task of testing the Sten guns with which we had been provided. Three blew up in my face. I spent a few hours in the Sick Quarters having pieces of metal removed from me. After changing bits and pieces over we eventually got some decent guns. I had a Mk3 with a Mk1 Butt which turned out to be a very good weapon.

At last we were posted to Khumbrigamm an airstrip running through a tea plantation. The whole area was under the jurisdiction of a Chinese Colonel and it was here that I did a job in a listening post. The nearby hills surrounded this airfield and it was us on one side and the Japs on the other. We were billeted in a house on the airfield, just about our best to date. Better still, we had a night out in nearby Silchar, the town of many Chinese dentists.

There were however a few shops and at least one restaurant. It was here that one of our chaps, with the help of a grant, bought a gramophone and records. However, we were soon destined to be on our way again, this time to Secunderabad (Deccan) to help form the R.A.F. Regiment. They held the train up for us to catch, so great was the hurry, in fact some were still trying to board when the train was moving away.

Thus after some eighteen months we were severed from our parent unit of 160 Squadron.

On arrival at Secunderabad we were separated further, sadly we were no longer known as the 160 Defence Flight. It was also very sad that all did not return to the U.K. some by illness and some by enemy action in the resulting re-conquest of Burma.

It was about half way down the central front that I ran into most of the old Defence Flight: it was at an airfield named Sadaung and I spent an hour or two conversing with old friends. Sadaung was about the last airfield before Mandalay on this front. Before this large city there was however the Irrawaddy to cross. I also met Tony Haggitt the chap who transported the gramophone down the Burma trail. Those who attend the reunion knew him as a member but sadly he passed on two Xmas's ago. He was however credited with shooting down a Japanese aircraft during the 'Battle of the Imphal Plain Plateau'. The majority of the Defence Flight was still together as an anti-aircraft flight armed with 20mm Hispano Cannon on a Capstan type mounting.
(Ted Daines)

TED HORTON MEMORIES

Ted wrote to us in July and we reported with regard to Jim Jackson's novel. In his letter he tells of some of his memories:

"I just checked my log book and 56 years ago yesterday (14/7/45) myself, Chas Wray, Ron, Chuck, Ed, Derek and Brownie proceeded to Kuala Lipis and dropped supplies at the appropriate DZ. On our return, the smoke and/or fog was above the hills so I had to go up to 7000 feet and hope we were high enough to miss the mountains. We DID!! How's that for an opening?

I had my first contact with Derek (Collins) since the war and what a pleasant surprise. When I last heard of him he had fallen down a gangplank and was always covered in gentian violet (heat rash?). Now he has become a nuclear scientist or equivalent – you just never know! He did make one mistake when he came up as we were returning to Ceylon on one of our long trips and said he thought we were one hour short of fuel! So, we cut it right back and coasted right in, only to find the next morning at the flight line that he had made a one-hour mistake in his log. Thank goodness!

The name of my first navigator was George Riley. He lived in Winnipeg but when I tried to contact him in 1988 at a reunion I was not successful. He was hurt in the same truck accident as myself but I was able to carry on".

Ted goes on to tell of a coincidence on a visit to Farnham UK to a Jane Pelling (who is connected with 273 Fighter Sqdn Assoc): -

"Here's one for the books. One trip over Sabang we took a Dutch captain (**) along as an observer – didn't know his name or much about him, but about 1975 my wife and I visited Jane and guess who was sitting in the back-yard – the Dutch captain. He gave me a copy of the book he had translated into English and endorsed it with "Thanks Ted for the ride so many years ago". It was about Dachau". *(ORB's show 18/7/45 –(**) S/L Moll – Editor)*

At the age of 83 Ted, living near a golf course right on the waters of Georgian Bay at Owen Sound, despite his diabetes, plays golf almost every day to keep fit.

MY BRIDGE PARTNER - BY GERRY BOYLE

On Monday, March 15, 1944; we were the strike crew at RAF 160 Squadron, based at Sigiriya, Ceylon. The Strike Crew had to be ready to take off in 30 minutes. In number two position on the Strike Crew list was the crew captained by Pilot Officer D. G. Jock Davie. Jock was 23 years of age and a typical dour Scotsman. We had been together since Nassau and, like us, he and his crew had flown a B-24 from England to Ceylon. Beginning in Nassau, Jack and I had been bridge partners. I was a novice player, but Jock was a real pro at the game. He had a low tolerance for poor bidding and bonehead plays and as a result, I took many tongue-lashings from him. This did however, have a considerable effect on improving my play.

Life on 160 squadron could be described as long periods of boredom interrupted by brief periods of excitement. In those long periods of boredom, we played a lot of bridge. Gambling for small stakes was permitted in an RAF Officers Mess, but no money could be placed on the table, or change hands publicly. A book was kept in every Mess and winnings and losses were entered in it. Every pay period, this book was given to the Paymaster and one's winnings or losses were added or deducted from one's pay. Very civilized!

On this Monday morning, we were informed that two aircraft were to take off after midnight. As the flights were normally 12 to 16 hours in endurance, the crews usually took it easy during the day, snoozing in their bunks in the afternoon or after dinner, as they knew that they were not going to get any sleep that night. This is what I did. As take-off time was to be at 1.30 a.m. on Tuesday, March 14, the briefing was scheduled for midnight. At that time both crews assembled in the Operations Room.

We learned that we were going to carry out a "Stronghold" patrol over the Bay of Bengal searching for Japanese submarines, clearing out the area in advance of the British Far Eastern Fleet, which was leaving its base at Trincomalee, Ceylon, for some destination unknown to us. All the details of the mission were explained to us. There was a problem with the weather. At our base it was pouring down a monsoon rain. Visibility was very poor and the ceiling was only 200 feet. We were told that this layer of cloud was only about 5,000 feet thick and that once we got above it, the weather would be clear and the air smooth. Our aircraft was to take off first, followed by Jock Davie.

Wing Commander Brady, the commanding officer was at the briefing. When the briefing was finished, he came over to me and told me privately, to taxi out to the end of the runway and wait for the weather to lift a little and that if there was no improvement to taxi back and cancel the trip. We climbed into the back of a canvas-covered truck and were driven to our plane in the dispersal area. It was pouring rain. We all

boarded the aircraft. I started up the engines and taxied to the end of the runway. Little Dick and I ran up and tested the engines and waited for the weather to clear a little. After 20 minutes, the engines were getting hot. There was no improvement in the weather conditions. I had to decide now, either to take off or cancel. I was torn between two concerns. The first was whether we could get off safely in these conditions. The second was, the effect on my reputation if I taxied back. I decided to go and we roared down the runway.

At lift off, we were immediately enveloped in cloud. Visibility was zero. The turbulence was severe. Rain pelted the windshield. We were heavily buffeted. I placed my total concentration on the artificial horizon, struggling to keep the aircraft level and at the proper climb and airspeed rate. It took all my strength to hold it on course. After an interminable time (only a few minutes) we broke out of the cloud. What a relief. The air was smooth. The moon was out. It was quite bright. The difference in conditions was hard to believe.

We set course over Elephant Point. I looked at my watch to see what time it was. The watch was gone. The strap broke, I thought, and that's the end of that watch. Ten hours later, we completed the mission. It had been uneventful. We set course for home, four hours away. Fourteen hours and fifteen minutes after taking off we were back, landed and taxied to the dispersal area. We parked, shut down the engines, got out and walked around. It was mid afternoon. It felt good to stretch our legs. The truck was waiting to take us back to the Operations Room for de-briefing. The driver had my watch! He had found it in the back of the truck. I was pleased.

Then he told us the bad news. Jock Davie's plane had taken off a couple of minutes after us and had crashed in the jungle only a mile or two away. All aboard, eight of them had been killed instantly. What a shock! Our crew knew the Davie crew very well. The navigator was a Canadian from London, Ont., Ken Pereira, who was a good friend of mine. And Jock Davie was one of my best friends and my bridge partner. It weighed heavily on all of us. I felt at least partly responsible, because once I had taken off, I left Jock no alternative but to do the same. The turbulence had spun them into the ground.

But all of us had been forced by now to get callous. We could not allow ourselves to dwell on it. Davie was not the first one to crash taking off. And he would not be the last. I had lost a darn good bridge partner. Jock and I were the best pair on the squadron and now I would never get one as good. I had to settle for Ken "Shorty George" Landick, an Englishman from the Isle of Jersey and a good guy. I was right about Jock. "Shorty George" and I did not win much after that.

All that day, at the crash site, volunteers from the squadron gathered up the crew. It was a grisly job. No one could be identified. The remains were distributed among eight rough wooden caskets. The next day, two trucks, one carrying the coffins and the other some members of the squadron, drove the 60 miles to the military cemetery in Kandy. I was a pallbearer and helped unload the coffins from the truck and carry them to the graveside. It was a hot day and the stench was

bad. My coffin was dripping. In a brief ceremony, the padre said some prayers, a three man honour guard fired their rifles, the coffins were lowered into the grave and we drove back to Sigiriya.

I decided that I would never again go to a funeral of crash victims. There were more of them, but I never went again.

(From Jack Fudge – member of G.Boyle's crew)

222 GROUP, CEYLON, A SHORT HISTORY

Reprint of an article from the Ceylon Times 2/11/45 written by an RAF officer, part one. *(From Frank Green)*

A few days ago No 222 Group of the RAF whose headquarters have been in Ceylon for the past 4 years, ceased to exist, on paper at any rate. Many of those who have formed its staff will, of course, remain in this island for some time yet, for one cannot close down an entire RAF Group in one fell swoop. But as Air Headquarters, Ceylon, takes over from the old 222 Group there will come many changes, changes which will indicate that the days of war have now past and that the RAF on this island has assumed its peacetime status.

It's never an easy thing to say good-bye and in saying good-bye to their Colombo association many of 222's staff know that they are leaving behind friends of many months standing. In saying good bye to 222 Group the people of Ceylon, in their turn, will recall how the last four years saw the building up of an island aircraft carrier from the jungles and forest lands of their country.

FALL OF SINGAPORE

222 Group came to Ceylon soon after the fall of Singapore. Before that there was a permanent base at China Bay. There was a civil airport at Ratmalana that soon became a station for fighters. The racecourse in Colombo itself was taken over and fighters installed there. Experts went out to survey the jungle and select sites for new airfields. They are there today: Sigiriya, Minneriya and Vavuniya. At Koggala, a lake and the swampy ground had just been turned into an RAF base which was soon to become the largest flying boat base in the east.

THE CATALINA SQUADRONS

While preparations were still in hand, Japan's threat became more apparent. Catalina squadrons arrived at Koggala and began to search the seas. Their exploits have been told time and time again and I've no desire to dwell on them again. But let us never forget the tough assignments they carried out, varying from the shadowing of the Japanese Carrier Task Force, which attacked the island in Easter, 1942, to racing the enemy to destroy stores left on the Nicobar Islands, from a bombing raid from Sabang - at that time the longest bombing mission of the war - to anti-invasion patrols off the Andaman Islands.

The number of aircraft at our disposal in those days was pitifully small, but they carried out their jobs to such effect that the Japanese thrust in the direction of Africa was halted

DEFENSIVE WORK.

The last six months of 1942 and most of the following two years were spent on defensive work. True, the Japanese never again attempted a large scale frontal assault, but odd aircraft did sneak over Ceylon's coast.

By then we had our Radar stations at various points on the coastline and even 5000 feet up among the hills. They gave warning of the enemy's approach and then fighters were ready for the intruders by the time they reached our shores.

SEVERAL ENEMY PLANES SHOT DOWN

Several were shot down, including a large flying boat that was sighted off Negombo early last year. But for the most part 222 Group's function was that of general reconnaissance work.

PATROLS EXTENDED

More and later types of planes joined the Catalinas and the range of patrols was extended. Even so, it was still necessary to carry out defensive rather than offensive operations. As the time went on it became more and more obvious that if general reconnaissance work in the Indian Ocean was going to be really successful it was necessary that all flying boat and other squadrons should be placed under one operational control and in April of last year this came into force.

General reconnaissance aircraft of the Aden and East African Commands were placed under the operational control of 222 Group. Liaison was also established with squadrons of the South African Air Force engaged on similar duties. This new foundation was given the cumbersome title of Indian Ocean General Reconnaissance Operations, or, to use one of those abbreviated terms coined by the services, IOGROPS.

So far as area was concerned it was easily the largest operational formation in the war. The Indian Ocean covers an area of 6,500,000 square miles and was the territory for which IOGROPS was responsible. It wasn't long before successes were gained. Wellingtons from Aden chased and sank a German U-boat that was operating off the coast of Italian Somaliland. A further U-boat was reported off Madagascar and a combined chase by ships of the then Eastern Fleet and aircraft from East Africa, the Seychelles and Ceylon resulted in the raider being destroyed off the Japanese submarine base at Penang, on the Malayan coast. The hunt lasted for six days and nights, one of the longest of the war.

NOT SO PLEASANT

There were other happenings that were not quite so pleasant. Often enough, the first indication that a submarine was operating came with the news of an attack on a merchant ship.

Late July and August of last year saw submarine warfare in the Indian Ocean reach its highest peak. At that time Catalinas from the remote bases among the Maldives and Diego Garcia as well as from Ceylon, flew hundreds of hours in order to maintain contacts with life boats packed with survivors and divert rescue vessels to pick them up. Such searches went on for days at a time and more than 150 survivors were located by flying boats.

Since the outbreak of war flying boats of 222 Group have been responsible for saving over five thousand survivors in the Indian Ocean. The hours of patrol continued to mount up, but towards the end of last year the submarine menace in the Indian Ocean was mastered. The Royal Navy and the RAF controlled the approaches to the East.

(To be continued - telling the story of Liberators and liberation))

IN VIEW OF GERRY BOYLE'S STORY AND THE 222 GROUP HISTORY IN THIS ISSUE, IT SEEMS AN APPROPRIATE TIME TO INCLUDE A SHORT EXTRACT FROM THE RAF HISTORY, VOLUME 3. SENT IN BY MEMBER R.CARMAN.

**"The Fight is won" by Hilary St.George Sanders
When writing of the final days of the War in South East Asia.**

"So let this History end, after the fire and fury of the battle, the gallantry and the fighting, on a note of peace and healing. To the ears of men who served for three long years and more, had starved and sweated without news of family or home, often brutally tormented, naked to the burning sun or the drenching rain, never at ease, surrounded by comrades less robust who died before their eyes – to the ears of these men there came the sound of aircraft engines. They lifted haggard faces to see above them the widespread wings of bombers bearing the roundel of the Royal Air Force. Surely these aircraft never deserved the name of LIBERATOR more than they did on that supreme moment".

GREETINGS

**A Merry Christmas and
A
Happy New Year
to all our readers**

**Coupled with good health
to enjoy it to the full**