



160 SQUADRON, ROYAL AIR FORCE

The Chota Coggage for survivors



WINTER 2002
Number 23

Life President:	F.W. (Bill) Cooper, 37 Oakdene, Lansdown Road, Cheltenham, Glos:GL51 6PX Tel: 0124 2255119 Email: cooperbill@freeuk.com
Reunion Organiser & Vice President:	E.H. (Ted) Daines, 45 Randolph Road, Norwich, Norfolk: NR1 2RU Tel: 0160 3660514 Email: ted@160squadron.freeserve.co.uk
Editor:	Les Crawley, 10, Cleasby Gardens, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear: NE9 5HL Tel: 0191 4878734 Email: lescrawley@lineone.net

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

1. S.S.O's and D.R.O's
2. Now it can be told: Tom Kellock & Les Dawson contribute
3. A very scared JAP diarist
4. Rescue and tragedy
5. Ted's Battlefield Tour

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

Pay-up time. This is a special plea to those members who have not yet paid their subs for this year - due on 1st September. Quite a number are in default and whilst Ted is not yet desperate we need to know how we stand. Please respond to this reminder and, should you have decided not to continue membership, it would be helpful for budgeting purposes if you would advise Ted. Subs are £5, plus £3 if you take 'AD LIB'.

Thurleigh. Like to go to a party? Ralph Franklin, just back from a 306 Group USA reunion, gives advance notice (and an invitation) for what should be a marvellous celebration on or about 8th June 2003. Bar-B-Q, entertainment in the style of a 40's big band, WWII military vehicle display and maybe a small flying display. Details to follow in due course.

Awards List. This is being compiled and thanks to those who have added names to the list that is now up to 24. Jim Jackson thinks that Wing Co. Brady received an OBE at the end of his tour. Can anyone confirm? The list will be published in due course. Interesting that the first awards appear to have been to Aussies Sgt W J Wilson DFM 29/10/42 and F/O E A Duplex DFC 1/1/43 in the Middle East and the last (?) to another Aussie F/Lt L R Jones DFC on 30/10/45.

Ground Crew. Robert Quirk would like to have the names of as many ground crew as we can muster for his web site. More about this later - help will be needed.

Books. 'Pilot's Manual for B 24 Liberator': £11.95.

'Warburton' series re history, development and variants of the B24 Liberator, 100 pp. soft back £5.99.

Both from Midland Counties, 4 Watling Drive, Hinckley, Leics. LE10 3EV. Tel: 01455 254 450.

'Prisoner of Nippon' by Ray W Stubbs, and 'Tales by Japanese Soldiers'. See items in this newsletter.

OBITUARY. Sadly we have to report the death of Roy Wedlake, a widower and one of our regulars as well as a contributor to AD LIB. See his escapades as an armourer in No.17. Roy died when going to France for an operation. We send our deepest sympathy to his family and friends.

MAKING CONTACT. News, old colleagues & help.

BBC Remembrance Project. Ted has been invited to a meeting of organisations to help contribute to a new interactive website which aims to enable people across the UK to piece together personal stories of their relatives' service in WWII. There are to be meetings around the country.

Forthcoming Publication on British, American & Allied Personnel/Airfields at Alconbury, Deenethorpe, Grafton, Underwood, King's Cliffe, Molesworth, Polebrook, Spanhoes, Wittering or their satellite, 'mock' or decoy sites. If you have memories/photographs to pass on to Margaret Winham, BA, the compiler, please contact Ted for details. He has already contributed for Molesworth.

S/Ldr Edgar Cooray, Retired, Sri Lanka Air Force, having joined the Royal Ceylon Air Force at its inception (and an ex Halton 'brat') has sent us his greetings. Apparently, China Bay, Koggala, Minneriya, Sigirya and Vavuniya are very active SLAF flying stations and Ratmalana has become the hub of domestic aviation with 3 airlines operating passenger services to KKS. Edgar would be delighted to assist any member who would like news or other information. E-mail address available.

Bubble Sextant. This appeal for help was made in AD LIB for Autumn 2001 and a chap from Wisconsin has made contact. We have come up with something eventually but what about the Goolie Chit!

Bomber Command Assoc. Newsletter Sept.2001. In an extract from an article in their newsletter 160's role alongside 120 Sqn is mentioned in the fight against the 'U' boat with details of how our first casualty (Sgt. Thomas O'Shea 1/6/42) was sustained after an 'own goal' from convoy SL110.

World Resistance Veterans Assoc. Denmark. Ted has been sent a copy of a book by the Danish Resistance Veterans Movement, as have another 17 representatives of other RAF squadrons. It would seem that this is an acknowledgement of the role played by 160 Sqn on special duties as very briefly referred to in books such as 'Flights of the Forgotten - Special Duties Operations in World War Two'.

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD.

Tom Kellock with tales of the 'big wigs' and how he lit up the local scene.

"At KKS word was received that Lord Mountbatten was going to pay a visit. Several of my fellow airmen were "volunteered" for the guard of honour and spent a couple or three weeks practising (drills and parades were not our speciality). On the big day, the guard of honour was down at the (sea) end of the runway all very smart and tidy. I was at the other end of the runway tending the crude but effective distilled water plant. Half a dozen other lads were around, all of us in scruffy shorts, no shirts or socks. Lord Mountbatten's small aircraft landed in about a quarter of the runway at our end, turned round and taxied towards us. As it neared us we more or less stood to "semi" attention, no salutes. The aircraft stopped opposite and the great man got out and came over to us. Someone said, "Sir, the guard of honour is at the other end of the airfield". He replied, "They will catch up with us". For the next ten minutes until the guard of honour arrived all hot and bothered he gave us a general run down about the war in Europe coming to an end and what he thought would happen in the Far East. He thanked us for our contribution to the war effort and left to do his official duties.

34 years later I was sifting outside my hotel near Dubrovnik on the second week of my holiday when a new batch of holidaymakers arrived. One of them gave me his British paper and the headline was "Mountbatten Murdered". I felt numb for the rest of the day.

When the squadron moved from KKS to Minneriya our group in the armoury section organised a flight on one of the aircraft. We opened the bomb doors and stacked our kit bags in the catwalk between both bomb bays. When the bomb doors were closed most of us sat on them for the full length of the flight. Today's health and safety officials would have a fit. Anyway there was about a 2-inch gap in the door where I was so I saw a lot of runway and green trees on the way. Alls well that ends well and it was better than going by road.

At Minneriya the green flashing beacon was on a hill in the jungle and to reach it was via a swamp and in the dark there was lots of grunting, croaking and screeching. On my way there on my first night as duty electrician the M/T driver said that he felt scared every time he did this run. I wasn't a bit bothered until I got there to find about 100 locals (Tamils) grouped around the beacon. In the dark all I could see were the whites of their eyes...now I knew how the driver felt. I changed the Morse plates to the code of the day and started the beacon flashing. During this time the locals

had just been standing there not saying or doing anything. The fluorescent tubes on the beacon were flashed by a high frequency Tesla unit via a wire and a spring clip attached to the glass of the tube. An electrician's party trick was to remove the clip, hold it in the left hand and touch the tube with the right hand and flash it on and off. I demonstrated this and there were lots of oohs and aahs. Next I invited one of the youngest boys to hold my right hand and touch the tube on and off. There was lots of clapping and everyone had a go. The six remaining nights went without a hitch".
(Tom Kellock)

AND THE REAL LES DAWSON tells us about his move from Salbani to Ceylon and thereafter.

8th April. Our party left Salbani for Calcutta at 0800 hrs by gharry and we left there, by train, at 1500 hrs heading for Madras with our usual sleeping arrangements.

9th April. Next day I scrounged a lift, all day, on the footplate of the engine still going south on a track that was almost dead straight. I recall that there was a large flywheel at the back of the cab, which was quite noisy, but it was a very enjoyable.

10th April. We arrived at Madras at 1200 hrs, where we had to wait 7 hours to cross over to a narrow gauge track for the Indo-Ceylon train.

This gave us a chance to have a walk around Madras, but we weren't impressed. Boarded the Ceylon train at 2000 hrs which was very crowded but we soon had our sleeping places organised

11th April. Woke next morning at TRICHINOPOLY, the country is much cleaner than up North.

Arrived at RAMANATHAPURAM at 1700 hrs and crossed the ADAMS BRIDGE to our point of embarkation. There we boarded the ferryboat "ERWINE" at 2100 hrs. disembarking at 2350 hrs.

12th April. We boarded a train that left about 0300 hrs arriving at Colombo at 1200 hrs, and from there to RATMALANA Airport, which is now the International Airport, and which had 7 Liberators awaiting us.

13th April. Reported to the S.W.O's Office (W.O Cook) where I was detailed to work as a clerk.

Was it here that "Pineapple Lill" used to come round selling us fresh pineapples at a rupee each? I get confused!!

17th April. Managed to get to the Galle Face Hotel and to Mt. Lavinia, where I enjoyed the first swim since Egypt.

6th May. One of 84 Sqdn's kites crash-landed in the swamp at the far end of the Drome this morning

23rd May. Ops from Sigiriya.

24th May. "B" came back after photo recon flight of 16.1/2 hrs.

2nd. June. "B" on air test couldn't get landing gear down. F/O Moody decided to pancake, but one of the ground crew that was on board managed to fix the problem. Panic over.

15th. June. S/Ldr. Brady arrived in "P"

23rd June. Another aircraft arrived.

17th July. Fighter affiliation over the Drome. F/O Brodigan did some shoot-ups and dog fights with some Hurricanes. It ended up with the Lib and Hurricane hitting each other's wing tips. The Hurricane had to crash land in the marshes.

The pilot was not impressed as he had his cockpit hood open and was covered in mud. The story goes that the "Blood Wagon" crew wouldn't let him into their clean ambulance and he came back sitting on the front wing.

3rd. August. 0750 hrs. Left Ratmalana, by road, for SIGIRIYA. Arrived 1330 hrs after travelling the 120 miles to be faced with thick jungle with some roads and a runway that had been cleared.

The huts were larger than usual holding 40 men to each and, at night, animal noises could be heard out side but, as it was very dark, I don't think anyone went to investigate.

One hazard however, was that one had to walk under a canopy of trees to get to the cookhouse and, if it had been raining and, if the leaves were very wet, you sometimes had monkeys jumping around the branches, consequently you would get soaked from the deluge that came down.

12th August. Had a Mobile Cinema arrive showing the film 'Son of Monte Christo'. Much hissing and booing for the villain.

23rd. August. "B" overdue.

25th August. Sigiriya Rock was close by to the Drome and today we climbed to the top and also saw the frescos.

15th/16thSept. Visited Kandy on a 48-hour pass. Stayed at the Kings Hotel. Saw the Temple of the Tooth.

4th. October. 2130 hrs Left Sigiriya for a 10-day rest leave at a tea plantation at Nuwara Eliya. We missed the train and had to wait until 0330 hrs for the next one.

Whilst we were waiting we saw a native who had been attacked by an animal. We were told that it was a bear. However, he wasn't too badly hurt.

15th October. Arrived at POCHLEWALL at midday, next train to NAN U OYA (RADELLA) was at 2000 hrs. Arrived 0400 hrs, then by truck up a very winding road to our destination which was only 100 miles from Sigiriya but had taken 36 hours.

The weather at this height is much cooler and the food very good indeed. In fact we had waiter service at table in the mess.

Spent most of our time playing football, walking in the hills, doing some shooting practice and seeing how tea is picked and dried before being graded into various qualities.

16th October. Back to Sigiriya and that and the 48 at Kandy was all the time that I had off during the whole of my tour.

7th December. 'L' crashed on take off killing all the crew including my friend 'Fergie'. We went to the crash site to help with the bodies and live ammo was exploding all around us and the depth charges were still smouldering. Funerals took place the next day.

13th December. Informed that the Code and Cipher Course that I had applied for had come through and that I had to report to Secunderabad by 25th December – of all days.

22nd December. Left the squadron to go back to India for the cipher course, which I passed reasonably well and then, onward to postings to numerous stations in Bengal/Burma area ending up at Jessore from whence I was repatriated by air in November 1945. *(Les Dawson)*

THE JAPS ALSO KEPT DIARIES.

"We must hide in the jungle scared by enemy bombing"

Thanks to Ted Daines we are able to print a copy of an article from an R A F Regiment newsletter being from a diary kept by a Jap soldier in Burma in 1945. If ever confirmation was needed on the effect of air attacks on the Japs, this gives it.

15th and 16th January. The order to go to Meiktila was cancelled and we camped in the area 18 km from Seilon village. Attacked by enemy aircraft every day in this area.

21st January. Advanced towards Hngetaik under the command of 2nd Lt.Niizuma and on the way was attacked four times by enemy aircraft. Left for the area about 1.5 km from Yamethin with bullock carts.

25th January. Still in the Yindaw village 3 Art'y Coy, 020 Butai and Field Art'y Bn H Q arrived. Attacked by aircraft but no damage.

28th January. Left at 2300 hrs for an area 160 Km from Thabaung.

31st January. Left Thabaung at 2000 hrs and proceeded on the Myingyang Road by car. Attacked by aircraft three times.

1st February. Arrived at Nampan village. Attacked night and day. Butai could not move.

24th February. Were bombed and shelled intensively near our position. The ground near the infantry liaison post was bombed. A meeting of the unit OC's with Lt Yamaguchi held at the time resulted in Lt Sasaki being wounded.

25th February. There was heavy artillery fire from both sides. The general attack failed, resulting in 50 casualties.

5th March. It was reported that the enemy was near the Meiktila – Myingyang area. Enemy ground and air attacks become more severe.

11th March. The situation in Central Burma is getting worse and Isami Heidan enveloped by the enemy in Myohta, Meiktila. Butai and HQ moved to Kontha.

13th March. O2 Butai withdrawing from the front.

20th March. There was a large-scale air attack near 3 Art'y Coy gun positions. Was ordered to move out suddenly at night.

21st March. Left at 0300 hrs with the enemy on four sides. Took strict precautionary measures and proceeded. Took cover in Nakuto village.

23rd March. Moved to a point 4 km south of Natogyi by road. Here we were informed that 9 Art'y Coy and the OP were over-run by enemy tanks.

27th March. Battalion HQ arrive here.

29th March. At 1600 hrs attacked by enemy aircraft. Lost two trucks in the first wave and three in the second. Butai proceeded to Pyoipoi.

1st April. Proceeded quietly across the enemy area.

3rd April. As the enemy and their aircraft could not detect our plans, we advanced smoothly but after marching only 2 km stopped Dahato village because the rear unit was not following. The unit advanced eastward through four enemy positions 2km away going across the hills, valleys and bridges avoiding the good road.

5th April. Still safe but scared to death by the shelling from enemy tank guns and artillery. As what was to have been next bivouac area was occupied by the enemy, bivouacked in the jungle 4 km from there together with Yumi Butai.

10th April. Attacked by aircraft and shelled by artillery all day long.

11th April. Being surrounded by the enemy for two months we were completely isolated from the world situation. We have no aircraft, no tanks, no ammunition and no rations.

Enemy mechanised forces attack us at will day and night. We must hide in the jungles and are scared by the heavy bombing and concentrated artillery fire and yet we are still fighting to destroy the enemy.

Where are our aircraft? Today we are going to launch a general attack.

(Reprinted from S E A T I C Bulletin No. 1735)

There is a book "Tales by Japanese soldiers" by Kazuo Tamayama and John Nunneley (Cassell Military Paperbacks £6.99) which is quite a good read. Of 305000 Japanese soldiers who fought in Burma 180000 - nearly 60% - of them died. Editor.

'PRISONER OF NIPPON' By Ray W Stubbs.

'Tragedy on a day of triumph'

I came across this book whilst browsing in the local library and found it quite a moving read especially in the final chapters when the prisoners in Sumatra were heartened by the sight of Liberators flying over their camp after their long period of captivity with no hopeful signs of rescue.

Although 160 is not mentioned they no doubt would see some of our Libs. Their first supply drops were apparently by 99 and 356 Sqdns and there is an eyewitness account of the crash near their camp of Lib KL491 of 99 Sqdn. It happened when doing a low level very steep turn resulting in the death of all the crew who had also dropped some magazines as well as a hand written note of encouragement.

As the reader can imagine it would be a tragedy especially difficult to come to terms with in those circumstances.

The notes were reproduced in the book and the contents were as follows:

The first note reads:

ATOLL GREETINGS

99 & 356 SQUADRONS

COCOS ISLANDS 30.9.45

Hello there! All ranks of all services.

This is a greeting from your comrades in arms in the RAF and RCAF and with it we send you a few of the odd comforts without which you have been for so long. We also send you our best wishes for a speedy return home, and our sincere thanks for the part you have played in defeating the common enemy - the Jap.

These small tokens of our appreciation have been donated by every man in every Army and Air Force unit on these islands. We intend to continue these supplies so long as our stocks hold out.

If you receive these goods in good condition put out a + (plus sign) in white strips when our aircraft fly over. If you do not receive them in good condition put out a - (minus sign). We shall be on the lookout for your signals.

As you probably know by this time, the war is over and we have won. Till the next time - the very best of luck.

THE BOYS OF 99 AND 356 SQUADRON

AND the hand written note from the crew of KL491 in an Air Mail envelope is addressed:

To all you P.O.W.'s. Bless You.

Hello boys,

Just a few papers from us lads in the RAF. Chins up! You'll be home very soon and the best of luck to you all - now and always from

DAVID I and II, Eric, Gly, Ervine, Jack, Stan and Tom.

The author, a naval rating, writes

'We knew there was nothing we could do. The intense heat of that funeral pyre forced us back, to stand mute, near to tears, that such a dreadful tragedy should be the culmination of this day of triumph'.

The crew are named as

F/O D Steele, P/O D Pearson, F/O E Manktelow, F/S G Newton, Sgt E Martin, F/S J Parkes, Sgt S. Bowden and F/S T Ryalls.

They are buried in a collective grave in Jakarta.

(Les Crawley)

SEVERAL STEPS BACK TO THE PAST A Battlefield Tour

I had always been pleased to holiday in Belgium - very friendly and not too far to travel. My late father often told me about such places like Ypres. He was badly wounded in that area resulting in being confined to a wheelchair for the remainder of his days.

As we sped through the Flanders countryside we often passed reminders of that period, either by the side of the road or in the near or far distance were these War Cemeteries. Also, the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate had always intrigued me: every night since it was first inaugurated, this ceremony takes place.

A few weeks ago I had and took the chance to do a European Battlefield Tour. The first day we were in the area of Ypres and visited Sanctuary Wood where 7,000 are buried. The wood itself still retained some of the trenches. We drifted on from there and the stories started to unfold. Tyne Cot the largest of the British War Cemeteries with 11,000 bodies buried: then Essex Farm with the youngest a lad of just fifteen: it was here we came across a winner of the Victoria cross; then the bunkers where the medical operations were carried out under intense fire.

There are still some 73,000 missing in Flanders - translated this means bog. It is therefore not too difficult to imagine where the missing rest. Place upon place unfolded the same stories: the scenes of carnage: the undoubted deeds of heroism.

Battalions known as the Pals because large groups of men, neighbours all from the same area, joined up together and died together. I could write on and on but it would be pure repetition - stories like the Devonshires wiped out almost to a man: another case where some 10,000 died before breakfast. Each large cemetery also had its own wall full of names of the missing.

It is nice to write that the cemeteries were magnificently kept: graves with their Portland stone headstones all in straight lines. The grass, one could safely say not a blade out of place - a great credit to the men who look after them.

The Menin Gate Ceremony was a must for me. Duly at about a quarter to eight we arrived at this impressive building with the names of some fifty thousand of the missing engraved on its stones. It was really full with people including some five hundred children and the noise was terrific. However, when the trumpeters appeared the noise was cut as though it had been turned off. To say it was emotional is an understatement. People, including children, were openly weeping. This was something I have always wanted to attend and I am very pleased that at long last I have succeeded.

I cannot leave this writing without a mention of the magnificent memorial to the Canadians, that of Vimy

Ridge. Not only the memorial, but also the whole lay out with its preserved front line and trenches surrounded by shell holes and mortar craters.

I did go to the Ypres Area in Belgium and also the Somme in France. Also on this trip to the past, I did meet some delightful people. *(Ted Daines)*

ON A LIGHTER NOTE

Crazy Signs

In a launderette

Automatic washing machine: Please remove all your clothes when the light goes out.

In a London Department Store

Bargain basement upstairs

In an office

Would the person who took the step ladder yesterday please bring it back or further steps will be taken.

Outside a second hand shop

We exchange anything -
Bicycles, Washing machines etc.

Why not bring your wife along and get a wonderful bargain?

HERE ARE A COUPLE OF NOTICES THAT ARE NOT SO CRAZY.

NEXT ISSUE:

In AD LIBS 8, 9 and 10 there are items about Liberators having to make emergency landings in Japanese occupied Malaysia.

Read a fuller account of one of the incidents and more facts in next AD LIB.

This a good article but we are beginning to run short of material (particularly topical NEWS items) so - 'get some in' !

(Editor)

ANOTHER REMINDER:

IF YOU WANT TO READ THE NEXT
NEWSLETTER, OR EVEN IF YOU DON'T,
PLEASE SEND OFF YOUR SUBS - IF YOU
HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO

AND, FINALLY, AS THIS IS THE LAST ISSUE
FOR 2002,

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY
NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS,
WITH GOOD HEALTH TO ENJOY IT.