

160 SQUADRON, ROYAL AIR FORCE

The Chota Coggage for survivors



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S S O's and D R O's

"HEROES RETURN": Word has probably already got to you but just to confirm - they DO want us to go back to Sri Lanka but *voluntarily* this time. What is more we can take our wives and, where necessary, a carer AND widows can also make the trip. A pro forma application submitted to the New Opportunities Fund has been approved for a group from 160 Squadron to be funded. It cannot be stressed too strongly that this will need your urgent consideration and action if you wish to make this nostalgic journey. SEE THE SPECIAL PAGE WITH THIS ISSUE AND *PLEASE* - REPLY IMMEDIATELY.

Reunion 2004: Just to remind you that to be sure of one of our reserved places you must book this month a.s.a.p. Don't leave it till the last minute!! (No one will be turned away). Dates 10th 11th and 12th September - Falcon Hotel, Tel: 0870 6096122.

Annual Subs: Seems to come round quicker every year. Yes - they are due on 1st September and for the umpteenth year there is no increase. Is there a better bargain anywhere?

BOOKS: RDFI - Michael Bragg: For you Radar Buffs: This is described as a well researched book as to historical and technical data and will be of very special interest to all who were involved in Radar in one form or another: Hawkshead Publishing, Paisley: Tel: 0141 889 4531. £20.00 post free.

"Jane: A Pin-Up at War": A name to make you think - probably she helped to keep us all sane. Anyway this book has a good write up - a bit risqué in places. Pen & Sword Books, Barnsley: Tel 01226 734222: Not cheap - £19.95 hardback.

"FLYPAST" Magazine, March 2004: Robert Quirk advises that this issue has a photo of a P38 at Lichfield and includes, in the background, photos of 160 Liberators KL 500,561, and 570.

OBITUARIES.

Sad to have to report the death of Jack Fudge who, many will remember, attended our reunion a few years ago with wife Lorraine (making a special journey from Canada). As Editor I have been particularly grateful to Jack for his regular contributions to AD LIB and our frequent exchange of emails

Another regular to reunions was Mrs Hardcastle who died recently and we have also learned of the deaths of Ewfie Cook (previously wrongly reported in Issue 28 - an error much regretted) and F/O Rogerson of 160 Defence Flight at Salbani.

We send our heartfelt sympathies to all their families and friends.

MAKING CONTACT: News, old colleagues and HELP.

Ken Delve: Ken is our liaison contact for the Heroes Return Programme and aside from this he is an historian and author (ex Navigator RAF 1975-1994). He is seeking anecdotes, stories and material connected with war service. Any unit songs would be welcome as would copies of photographic or documentary material. He can copy this and return originals or pass them on to the educational side of Heroes Return which is running an educational programme, connected to the scheme. This will present a unique opportunity for young people to learn from our memories and experiences within the 'Veterans Reunited' programme, called 'Their past, Your future'. This could be a good opportunity to have copies (or originals) of your treasured souvenirs to end up in a permanent 'on the record' home.

Ken can be contacted at 46 Walton Road, Swaffham, Norfolk PE37 8HF: Tel:07795 160451 or email at : ken.delve@avedservices.com.

Loss of "S" 15.1.43: Capt. F/Lt Peter Price KIA: Mr Richard Dolman writes that Peter Price was a pal of his father's (and Richard's Godfather) and he is hoping someone from 160 may remember Peter and can give him any information including any relevant photos of the Middle East period. From the records we have on Robert Quirk's website we have been able to provide some information but we are not hopeful about photos as we have previously dealt with at least three other enquiries about "S" with no feedback. Richard writes that his father and F/Lt Price were trained in Hotel and Catering Management by 'Lyons' of London, playing rugby for them in the '30s. In a letter dated 26.9.1939 to his father who was at that time in Trinidad, Peter Price writes:

"I see your letter is dated 17.8.39. Well that's over a month ago and in that time one or two things have happened. No doubt you have heard that there is a war going on over here and the Lad is now dashing about in the air to the betterment of his health and the detriment of various old ladies, flocks of starlings and eventually, we hope, the Hun. I am not allowed to say where I am but letters to the home address will always get to me. Imelda is staying there no to look after her mother and father and we have let our home in Hampton.

(Cont'd)

CONTACTS: Peter Price, Cont'd

Although we are at war things seem very quiet and apart from sandbags all over the place and the black out at night everything goes on as usual. It seems a quiet sort of war but I expect things will begin to wake up soon and the boys are all ready to get cracking. Jack Marsh is in the Fleet Air Arm, Brookes in the Army, Woodhouse in the Fire Service. My brother Geoff is an ordinary seaman in a destroyer and Weenie is a nurse.

Probably by the time you get this things will be under way and cracking. There is very little flag waving or singing of patriotic songs. Every one feels that we had better fix this thing up and go back to work. I hope you will not do anything daft like joining up. You will be much better off where you are..... I'm pleased the lad (*Richard Dolman*) is well".
(*Richard Dolman*)

(*See photograph in this issue - Editor*)

Laurie Nolan: Through his son, Greg, we have contact with Laurie Nolan who joined the squadron as a F/O (RAAF) in December 1944 and by the long arm of coincidence was a very good friend of Joe Cohen's being a neighbour of Joe's in Melbourne. Laurie was No.2 to F/Lt Trotter and readers of AD LIB will know that Robert Livingstone, an earlier member of the Trotter Crew, has also recently been in touch through his son. (AD LIB No 26). The contact was made through Robert Quirk's web pages for 160.

J E J Waterhouse:DFM: Son Neil Waterhouse asks if anyone remembers his late father who served as an Air Gunner with 160 before training as a pilot and flying with 619 and other Lancaster squadrons.

He flew in the same crew as our 160 members, C H Watford and A Gregson on operations in the Middle East. Contact was from Robert Quirk, again, from the web site www.worldwar2exraf.co.uk – this is worth a look at and may help anyone trying to make contact with old RAF pals. Neil's email address is neiljw@blueyonder.co.uk.

A E (Eric) Tyrell: Eric served with 160 and his son asks if anyone remembers him. From photos he must have been at Minneriya and KKS at the time when the powers that be posted ground crews to 7160 Service Echelon (they did reverse this later) and he was obviously a keen sportsman as included are photos of sports events, one of which shows Lady Mountbatten presenting prizes. Included is a photo of some of the crew of "G". I have the photos from Jamie Tyrell on the CD he sent me. Anyone remember Eric and have any information on his time with the squadron?

W/O.Kenneth Joseph Lock: I have been contacted by the son, Geoffrey, who was fairly sure that his father must have served with 160 as his memoirs include a reference to John Stacey's record breaking mine laying operation to Singapore. Unfortunately, so far, the crew records do not show Kenneth Lock as being with 160 and I wonder if the connection is with 200 Sqdn which did deliver mines to 160 as well as carrying out supply and agent dropping alongside 160. Does anyone know of Kenneth Lock or if there is anyone out there who has any history of 200 Sqdn? Kenneth may also have served with No 8 Sqdn when they took over 200.

Tokens: Sri Lankan Mr Kavan Ratnatunga has advised that he found some tokens in Galle, Sri Lanka, and seeks help in identifying them. He believes they are from WW11 and has written up on them on the web site <http://lakdiva.org/coins/token/amusement.html>. They may have been for British use and possibly for amusement machines. Does anyone have any

information? (*I now know that Exonumia is the technical term for collecting a wide field of coin-like objects which are not strictly currency - Editor*).

159 Squadron: Does anyone have any knowledge of what may have happened to the 159 Sqdn Association or know who can be contacted for information. Mr Mark Hood is trying to find out what he can about S/Ldr Byron Francis Burbridge who he believes was a pilot with 159 in 1944 and the connection is that Sgt Observer Claude L G Hood (grandfather) flew with him on 77 Sqdn in Whitleys in July 1940. As it happens ORB's for 159 show that S/Ldr Burbridge was promoted to Wing/Co and C O of 159 in January, 1945 before being posted to Kolar, India, in April, 1945. Mark also advises that Wing Co. Burbridge has died and is buried at New Brunswick, Canada. So far as we know, when Stan Sampson passed away, no one else took over his role of running the 159 Sqdn Association but does anyone know otherwise?

Ernie Huntley: Since taking over as editor of AD LIB I have had many emotional requests for help and information but this one is extra special and has really brought a lump in my throat. It is clearly a heartfelt plea and is so moving I am printing the text in full.

Ernie writes:

"For many years I have tried to find out more about the 'Sausage Link', its composition and where I might find some. Letters to many of the 'recipe sites' and 'Master Chefs' have all been unsuccessful, most replying they had never heard of such a thing. Then I saw your entry 160 Squadron Newsletter No 25 and lo and behold you mention the Soya Sausage.

I was in North Africa, Support Group (7th Motor Bde) of the 7th Armoured Divisional Signals, prior to and throughout the fighting there as I was a Regular Soldier. I was among the few who rather took to these 'Links' and made great use of them whenever I had the opportunity, for we were at the time on vehicle (or detachment) cooking, in other words we looked after our own meals.

As I have mentioned I have searched since then to find out what they were made of: I'd surely like to have a few here now. I am 85 by the way, hence my reference to the Support Group. Do you have any way you can find out and let me know just how they were made?

Sincerely and Forever Aye, one of the original Desert Rats (Jerboa); Ernie Huntley" (*Canada*)

Such is my concern that an 85 year old has this trauma and need of support that I have sent an email to try to reassure him that we of 160 Squadron, will really pull out the stops.. I have told him:-

"Ernie,

Just to let you know that your heartfelt plea has been taken on board and I have instituted an intensive programme of research into finding the answer. It will be far reaching.

My personal opinion is that the main ingredient was chewed up cardboard (preferably by camel) with just a hint of OXO flavouring but we may find there were other variations. Hang in there - we are going to try our best.

Cheers, Les Crawley"

I defy anyone to deny that this does bring a lump in their throat – or am I confusing the feeling with regurgitating? One cannot imagine just how desperate he must be feeling. Even if we do not find the answer, he now knows that his call has not gone unheeded and though he already mentions he has his Support Group he can also rely on the support 160 will give him (as long as he wears it at all times).
Editor.

FEEDBACK:

Jim Jackson writes to Robert Quirk:

"Squadron records"

Robert, if you are responsible for translating those operational records into the readable form shown on your website you are to be most enthusiastically congratulated. A great job!

However it's interesting how history, at least in the small details, gets confused. I may have told you some time ago that Gwynne-Timothy's great two-volume "Burma Liberators" records that on one of my minelaying adventures, on 21 March 45, all the mines dropped together because the release mechanism failed. In fact the mechanism refused to release the mines, period, and we had to make several runs over the datum, with Bert Crumbie, our flight engineer, releasing one on each run with a screwdriver.

Now I see that those newly accessible operational records have me as being intercepted by a Japanese fighter on 24 May 44 AFTER we had discovered that airfield at Troemon on Sumatra, and escaping from it in cloud. In fact we were approaching Sumatra, very early in the morning and still miles outside what we were told was fighter range, when this Japanese aircraft appeared ahead of us. Most of the crew were still asleep and Athol Beck, our rear gunner was asleep on the flight deck. Afterwards he remembered hearing the alarm, and being in the rear turret, but nothing of waking and streaking through the bomb bay encumbered by Mae West and parachute harness.

There was a lot of cloud around, and actually the Japanese pilot went into the cloud before we did. We went into the same cloud behind him, and I guess we should have claimed we were pursuing him, but the truth was that it seemed the best way to prevent him circling round on us. We saw nothing more of him, but the possibility he'd given warning of our approach gave the climb to altitude an excitement only exceeded when we found ourselves right over an airfield no one had told us about.

Cheers, Jim.

AIRFLOW: Many thanks to our President Bill Cooper for sending me, on loan, six copies of 'Airflow' in bound form. We have one item in this AD LIB and I will use more material for future issues.

Henry Deeny: We have a letter from Mr David Clarke on behalf of his family thanking us (and Hank Illingworth especially re Ad Lib No.28) for the information we were able to give the family concerning the loss of "M" on 22nd September 1943. They have recently come across the telegram notifying the family of his death and some photographs enabling us to include Henry's photo in this issue.

The photograph actually shows Henry undergoing training at Cherhill, Wiltshire, and includes a group of other aircrew - will try to follow up whether any of them also came to 160 though it does seem unlikely. Does anyone know anything about Cherhill? It is not included in the airfield lists I have seen.

David, in sending his best wishes, says he looks forward to reading future Ad Libs and hopes we will be able to continue with them for some time in the future.



F/Lt Peter Price and F/Sgt Henry Deeny

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD:

Les Jewitt writes

For the last few months I have been in touch with Trevor Stokes a former member of 160 Squadron, with whom I was a member of the water polo team at Quetta. Trevor sent me a few photos which brought back many happy memories and I am very grateful to him for this. He also informed me that on board the 'Cuba' he had a daily job for the length of the voyage, for which he was paid! Better to be born lucky than rich! Incidentally, I remember as the 'Cuba' was entering Durban harbour, there was a rush of bods to the side of the ship on which the lady was singing us in, that the ship started to keel over and N/CO's had to move a lot of bods very quickly over to the other side to avoid capsizing.

Remember those freshly-baked bread rolls or loaves on the 'Cuba' and how they were all heavily infested with weevils? Most of that bread was thrown overboard as few of us could face eating it: then when we got out of camp and into Durban, we discovered that the locals would have paid us our own price for any kind of white bread (weevils and all, presumably) as they only had brown bread.

I remember vividly staying behind at Clairwood one Saturday, to do my laundry, whilst my mates went off into Durban. With laundry completed and put out to dry, I then set off to town to try catch up with the gang, but soon found myself doing a sort of pub crawl as I searched here and there unavailingly. One bar I went into must have been out of bounds or something, for, as I left the place, a bull-necked, barrel-chested bloke followed me out and bellowed "I'm going to kill you, English" or words to that effect. He had all sorts of reasons but, fundamentally, he was a Boer and hated all English people. Nothing developed though and I cadged a Springbok cigarette off him before we parted. I've often wondered what he told his mates back in the bar afterwards - how he explained his lack of action.

(Les Jewitt)

MOON MEN. (Remember them?)

Some moon men came to join us
They were so white and frail
Having travelled o'er the ocean
And landed with the mail.
They came to swell our numbers
Replacing repat' men
Their rosy-cheeked complexions

So flushed and lit with gen!
 With high topped boots –
 Alabaster knees
 They are not hard to find
 And all agree that Blighly
 Is just a cruel bind!
 But you and I, my jungle men
 Are sceptic - and design
 To storm that "cruel" Island
 With its women and its wine.

(N P Nicholls – "Airflow")

A JAPANESE CALLING CARD

A tale from the RAF Regiment
Yet another heinous war crime.

Even though the Japs had suffered a decisive defeat at Kohima, their activities to regain control in the valley did not lessen. The need for continuous alertness was highlighted when on 3rd July a Jap patrol eluded the RAF Regiment guards (Sqdn 2942) and sneaked through the perimeter fences at Palel. Using limpet mines they blew up three Spitfires of 152 Squadron, two Hurricanes of 113 Squadron and two Harvards used as communication aircraft.

To add insult to injury they also broke into the office of Sqdn Ldr Courtney, the C O of 113 Squadron and defecated on his desk.

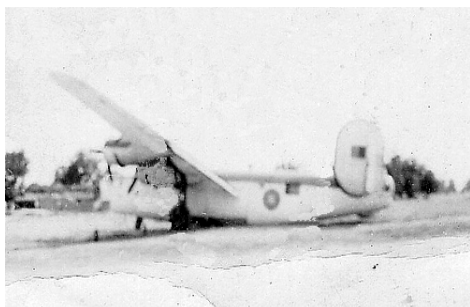
Major Teddy Kennington, the Army Liaison Officer of 113 Squadron recalls the entourage of VIP's from 221 Group who descended to view the damage and the words of Gp Capt. Henry Goddard who summed up the visiting card on the C O's desk by announcing, "I think the damage incurred is commensurate with the missile employed".

It left everyone speechless.

(Reprinted from a magazine – not stated. A mine was also left in the W/T tent).

THE 160 LIB THAT NEVER FLEW WITH THE SQUADRON.

Here are the facts regarding the 'pranging' of EV819 at Allahabad. We have talked about this one without really knowing (or remembering) what actually happened.



This is Liberator GR V1 EV819 pranged at Allahabad on 12th June 1944.

On posting to 160 Sqn, the Trotter crew was allotted this aircraft to deliver to the squadron at Kankesurantai. (The squadron was actually at Sigiriya at this time – Editor). On take-off from Allahabad at 07.45, they hit a truck full of Indians who crossed the runway against a red from the tower, killed a number of them, and damaged the starboard main undercarriage and No.4 prop.

There was an almighty "Bang!" as they hit the truck, and Trotter said, "What the hell was that?" My father, who was standing between the pilots during the take-off (against

regulations) had a better view and said, "We must have hit that truck." "What truck?" said Trotter, who had seen nothing.

The upshot was that they had a load of fuel and no dumping facilities, passengers, mines in the bomb bay, undercarriage partially retracted and only three engines. They flew around India for hours looking for somewhere to crash-land while burning off fuel, but were bluntly told, "You're not cluttering up our airfield with a broken aircraft - go somewhere else."

Before attempting a crash-landing, the mines had to be jettisoned. My father was aft with the passengers when he was called to the flight deck. He was in the middle of the bomb-bay, balancing on the catwalk, when suddenly the doors rolled up and the mines fell away either side of him; Trotter had pulled the jettison lever and the doors could not be closed. Dad inched his way along the catwalk with the ground some thousands of feet below and reported to the flight deck.

By the time he arrived Trotter had realised what had happened, and his laconic comment was simply, "Clean underpants when we get back, I suppose?"

They eventually returned to Allahabad and crash landed there after four and half hours flight time with the pictured results. The only casualties were to the passengers; Trotter forgot to throw the safety switches on the retracted belly radar and the destruct charges blew the radar up, filling the backside of one poor unfortunate, who had braced himself on the "dustbin", with glass and mica. Another was concussed when the large earthenware jar carried on SEAC flights fell on him. This jar was filled with water which would freeze at altitude and provide a welcome cool drink while it melted after the flight.

Poor old EV819 never flew again, being salvaged some time later, probably after being used as a spares source.

The Trotter crew were given leave and finally flew EV858 - another GR.VI to Sigiriya on 24th June, 44 where it joined 160 Squadron as "C"

(Reprinted with permission from Gary Fowkes site www.acseac.co.uk)

Photo and information courtesy of Bob Livingstone)

Some facts about the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Size: 65,525 Sq.Km: **Population:** 19 million made up of: 74% Sinhalese:18% Tamil: 8% Burghers and others.

Languages: Sinhala & Tamil (English is widely spoken and understood).

Main Religion: 70% are Buddhists

Government: It is a free and independent sovereign state with an elected Parliament and an elected President who exercises executive powers

Capital: Sri Jayewardenepura.

Currency: Sri Lankan Rupee: (About 168 rupees to the £1)

Banks are open 9 am to 1 pm or 3 pm Monday to Saturday

Climate: MAXIMUM daily average temperatures vary little through the year from about 29 to 31 degrees.(NB MAXIMUM) some guide books give 27 deg. as more the norm.(81 Deg.Fahr)

There are two monsoons: The North & East from about November to January and the South & West from May to July. They say - it is cooler when it rains and the timing of the monsoons seems to depend upon which book you read and the place they base figures upon.

Flying time on a direct flight to Colombo is about 11 hours.

AND (not many people know this)

In a recent poll by one of the holiday programmes, Sri Lanka was voted second top of 20 holiday islands.