



160 SQUADRON, ROYAL AIR FORCE

The Chota Coggage for survivors



AUTUMN 2006
Number 35

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, 36 Stone Road, Norwich, Norfolk: NR3 2JZ Tel: 0160 3485950 Email: ted@160squadron.freeserve.co.uk
Editor:	Les Crawley, 10, Cleasby Gardens, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear: NE9 5H Tel: 0191 4878734 Email: lescrawley@lineone.net

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SSO's and DRO's

SICK PARADE:

Ted Daines:

Most will know that Ted has been very quiet for the past few weeks and must have guessed that he must be taking a rest. We heard from his son Mick that Ted has in fact been recuperating at a re-enablement centre and steadily improving. Latest update is that Ted is now back 'on air' sounding bright and breezy. He has moved house to more suitable accommodation after a short spell at home and as you will see his new address and telephone number are shown in the address panel above.

Just to prove the point and just in case we all thought where do we go from here – see 2007 reunion.

Bill Cooper:

Glynn Williams has recently visited our other leader Bill Cooper and reports:

"I'm pleased to be able to say that Bill is back home because his wife is also home having been in hospital only 3 days.

I must say that when I visited him at the end of Sept. it sounded as if his wife's stay in hospital after a fall could merit a much longer stay. Bill had been moved to the Sue Ryder Care home in Cheltenham and I found him sharing a room with two RAF bods. They were not old enough to have war service but seemed to be good company for Bill. I had some time with him and showed him the leaflets I shared with you at Stratford. He recalled several of the names of squadron personnel who were collecting Gongs. He remembered some with whom he had flown. It follows he was

OBITUARIES

We were sad to hear from Fred Salt of the death on 8th October of Len Pocock, a cook with the Squadron. Len was a widower. We send our deepest sympathies to his daughter Dawn and to his relatives and friends.

NIMROD MR2 CRASH IN AFGHANISTAN 2ND SEPTEMBER:

Spare a thought for the families and colleagues of the 12 crew members who were killed in this accident. The aircraft was based at Kinloss, Scotland, from 120 Squadron. 120 Squadron is of course 160 Squadron living on – 160 was never actually disbanded – it was *renumbered* 120 Squadron and "its metal number plate was handed over to 160 on 1st October, 1946". Previously, 120 Squadron had been disbanded on 4th June, 1945.

very pleased to see me and it was good to find him joking with a nurse at lunchtime who was trying to feed him soup. It follows he is unable to do so for himself.

When I phoned his home this morning it was good to have his wife Margaret answer sounding very bright and delighted I had contacted Bill.

It would be good if any squadron members were passing through Cheltenham and could pop in for a quick visit. I can assure you it would be so very much appreciated. Who knows, we might be desirous of such a visit someday! His address is Oakdene, 37 Lansdown Road CHELTENHAM GL51 6PX and his phone-01242 255119
Regards to all readers"

(GLYN (Williams) Armourer in Chief. YMCA and Bar)

Frank Green:

We missed our usually ever present Frank Green (and his family) at the reunion and, in speaking to Frank, whilst he owns up to not being able to attend, he is O K considering his vintage and is cheerily taking life as it comes.

2006 Reunion: It seems that we are always able to guarantee good weather for our Stratford weekend and this was no exception. Although one or two of our regulars were missing, there was still a good turnout and there seems little doubt that all enjoyed the weather, the food and surroundings and, of course, the company. We were very pleased to have Rev.(ex armourer) Glynn Williams back with us again and grateful for his contribution in setting the tone with grace at the meal and then in winding up the proceedings in an enjoyable and amusing after dinner nostalgic bit of our history.

2007 Reunion: *Ted, being positive and realistic plus still full of the happy memories of the 'Heroes Return', is thinking we should consider having something different (or even additional) to The Falcon and Stratford Upon Avon for 2007. Might we venture somewhere nice and warm again as a group? If 2007 could be our last then let's go out with a 'bang': then again if we do have another year we could then have a bigger 'bang' and so on or might we be kidding ourselves?*

No harm in testing the water so, please read the questionnaire enclosed with this issue and send the Editor your replies.

INTERNET: New RAFA initiative

Members of RAFA are being invited to add their details free to a new database for RAF people so that old comrades may make contact with each other via the internet/e-mail. You can register by going online (if necessary via a family member) at www.raf-comrade-contact.co.uk - it is FREE. The site, as well as giving the latest news and details of events, will provide a 'meeting place' for all ex RAF but as you will appreciate it will only be really successful if everyone does take the trouble to register.

Why not at least look up the RAFA sites at www.rafa.org.uk and www.comrade-contact.co.uk?

Google Earth: Another site well worth a visit to see your own area from the air as well as say, KKS and Sigiriya airfields from a bird's eye view – not quite recognisable but still interesting.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/> An on line, free, reader involved encyclopaedia which, in particular, has interesting WWII articles about the Japanese occupation of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Takes a little patience to find items but good reading.

EMAILS: SPECIAL REQUEST: It has proved very useful and convenient to have our own emailing list and in fact we do have an e-mail contact for a lot of our members. If you do have an email contact address not already on the record please email the editor and this will automatically make it available to us. You will not be troubled by begging letters!

BOOKS:

Here's one the family may want to buy you for Christmas: **The R A F Handbook** - 'The definitive MOD Guide' "An essential book for anyone wanting to know everything about the RAF": £14.99 – hardback.

From Anova Books, 151 Freston Road, London W10 6TH
Lost Voices of the R A F: Max Arthur: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd. Reprint 2005: Looks like a good read with stories from the Far East including 99 and 159 squadrons. Hope to obtain permission to print extracts for 'Ad Lib'.

Listed at £8.99 but available on 'Amazon' for £4.50 plus P & P.

AWARDS: With 159 Squadron records now available to us and also with Robert Quirk's input, we are finding additional names of 160 crew members who were honoured when serving 'jointly' with 159 in the Middle East days so the list is still not complete. Also, we have found that Wing Co. G R Brady, our old squadron C O,

must have been awarded an O B E (via a copy article re awards from Glyn Williams). By the way, you may not know that Wing Co. Brady was Station C O at KKS as at January, 1946.

SOUVENIR D R O's: The National Archives' records for 160 do not include any copy D R O's (whereas 159 records do). Did anyone ever 'borrow' and keep a copy off the notice boards? If so, the editor would be grateful for a loan copy to pass on some of the nostalgic thoughts they may inspire. We have a copy of 292 Sqdn (Libs – Jessore) D R O's where the adjutant appears to have displayed a sense of humour and which we may be able to reproduce when translated - they are almost impossible to read clearly but they are being worked on.

MAKING CONTACT, news, old colleagues and HELP.

NORMAN HALL: Welcome aboard to Norman, Navigator RAAF, member of Crawley's crew and also flew occasional trips with David Flett and J (?) Gibson. He remembers his days from joining the squadron at Sigiriya. Believes he may have outlived the rest of his crew – unless anyone out there knows different. Has had contact briefly in Australia with near locals and fellow navigators Murray Livingstone and Jim Burley. Picked up our details from 'Intercom' (?) where one of our reunions was mentioned.

POST WAR OPERATIONS: As many will know, Robert Quirk has, over a considerable hard working period, been able to transcribe almost all 160 operational records, of which I have draft copies kindly provided by him, in addition to records for 159, 178, 200, 215 and 354 Squadrons. He is a never ending source of historical information for which I am most grateful.

He is now on the last lap covering the post August, 1945 period when, unfortunately, the operational records of the squadron give the barest of details and he is disappointed that this means, from the aspect of aircraft and the make up of crews, our records are less than complete. "Transport" flights are merely noted without the names of crews or aircraft used.

Robert asks if any of the crews on these flights could provide him with the data from their flying log books including aircraft used, crews and nature of the duty, times etc., for this post war period. If you are able to help you can do so either direct or through the editor – hope you can!

Bubble Sextant Mark IX: Roger Harris is our latest correspondent via the internet to seek help with regard to setting up his sextant and as this request does seem to recur regularly I have set about compiling a set of instructions which are now available. So anyone out there with lack of bubble – I can help. *Les Crawley*

Colin Burningham: Ad Lib 33: Colin Has had no response to his request for information of crews etc. who flew in the first Liberators for 160 Squadron for the book he is writing. He can be contacted at colinburningham@hotmail.com or telephone 01935 873219.

F/Sgt DAVID ALEXANDER DONALDSON RAAF: K I A 28/10/42 in AL548 "R": We are grateful to Robert Quirk for a copy photograph via RAAF archives of David Donaldson which is reproduced here. Aircraft "R" was reported missing at Maleme but all 8 crew are in fact buried in Greece. As yet, we do not have the story behind this loss.



F/Sgt David Alexander Donaldson, RAAF.

Sgt DANIEL THOMAS JONES, RAFVR. K I A 23/8/42 in aircraft AL537.

Although Daniel Jones is not presently included in the 160 Roll of Honour, the facts are that he, and the rest of the crew, were 160 air crew and were killed when flying an operation with 159 Squadron being shot down over Crete.

The other 7 crew are listed on the El Alamein memorial but Daniel Jones is buried at Knightsbridge Cemetery, Acroma, Libya.

According to Air History Branch only the body of Daniel Jones was recovered, the others remain missing. We are grateful to Maria Lucking, for sending the copy photo of the gravestone with the thought that there may be relatives who would like more information and would appreciate such a photograph which is reproduced here.



Daniel Jones grave: Knightsbridge cemetery, Acroma, Libya

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD:

V J DAY: A Japanese leaflet to prisoners:

'Oss' Luce was a Canadian Radar Operator who arrived in Singapore on 5th February, 1942 and in trying to make his way to Australia was eventually captured in Java and after various terrible experiences ended up in Kranji, Singapore.

From his story printed in "Canadians on Radar", (*See AD LIB's Nos 25 and 30*) it is possible to read of these experiences and we reproduce here the leaflet which

was handed out to prisoners by the Japanese Colonel-in-Charge at the Took area:

"I beg to inform you of the stoppage of Military Warfare on 18th August 1945.

You have, doubtless, had to go through much trouble and agony, due to your detention as Prisoners of War, but you have overcome them.

The day which you have longed for day and night, the day on which you can return to your dear homeland where your beloved wife, children and Mothers are eagerly awaiting you, has become a fact and is probably your supreme joy.

I would like to extend to you my sincere congratulations but at the same time I sympathise most deeply with those who due to illness or unfortunate causes have been unable to meet this glorious day. Before this, we, the Camp Staff, have done all in our power towards your nourishment and welfare, but owing to the destitute state and unnatural conditions here, we regret that we were unable to do half of what we hoped to do for you.

I trust in your great understanding on this point. Several days ago in one camp the ex-prisoners presented the Camp Staff with part of their valuable relief foodstuffs and personal belongings. I know this to be an expression of your personal understanding. Until you are transferred to Allied hands and sent to a port to be designated later, you will have to wait at this camp. Therefore I sincerely wish that you will wait quietly until the day you can return to your homeland, behaving according to Camp Regulations and holding fast your pride and honour as becoming people of so great a nation.

21st August. Year of Shows XX, (1945")

MEANWHILE, WHAT ABOUT THE PEACE CELEBRATIONS FOR 160?

The Squadron was too busy to celebrate on V J day, 15th August, 1945, as can be seen from the following extract from Flying Details for 13/8/45.

"It must be obvious to everyone that the nature of our operational commitments would prohibit any form of organised celebration should peace be declared in the immediate future.

However, air crew and ground crew alike are reminded that our customers would go awfully hungry should we pack up on a "Victory in Japan Day" which isn't very fair. We would probably be just as annoyed if the Merchant Marine decided to "ground" all boats for a week to celebrate the same occasion"

BUT...COME VJ Day + 44.

When able to do so, the squadron did have its more formal "do" for VJ Day on 28th September, 1945, when No. 1 Airmen's Mess, Minneriya, put on the following spread. .

MENU

BREAKFAST

Cornflakes – Porridge – Milk
Grilled Bacon & Fried Egg
Tomatoes- on – toast
Tea – Bread – Butter – Jam

LUNCH

Salmon Fish Cakes
Parsley Sauce
Chipped Potatoes - Garden Peas
Fruit Salad and Custard Sauce
Tea - Bread - Butter - Jam

DINNER

Cream of Tomato Soup
Cold York Ham and Roast Chicken
Brisket of Beef
Russian Salad, Lettuce
Tomatoes - Beetroot - Game Chips
Apple Pie and Cream
Bread - Butter - Cheese
Coffee
Rum Cigarettes

Could it get better? - it did for the first peacetime Christmas, 1945, at KKS
The programme shows:

Christmas Eve

1600 hrs Soccer match: Airmen vs Officers & Sgts
1755 hrs Grand Opening ceremony at new NAAFI
1830 hrs Kristmas Kracker Show at Phoenix Cinema
2100 hrs Phoenix Cinema, *see* Film programme
2100 hrs Smoking Concert in NEW NAAFI

Christmas Day

0715 - 0815 hrs Special Christmas Breakfast
1100 hrs Soccer match 203 Sqdn, 7203 & A S R
vs 160, 7160 and S H Q at Keith Park
1300 hrs Christmas Dinner (Officers & N C O's in attendance)

MENU

Cream of Tomato Soup
Roast Turkey, Dressing, Baked Ham with Sage & Onion Stuffing
Braised Parsnips, Marrowfat Peas
Roast & Creamed Potatoes and Brown Sauce
Christmas Pudding and Brandy Sauce
Biscuits, Cheese, Nuts and Raisins
Beer, Minerals and Cigarettes
1830 hrs Kristmas Kracker Show at Phoenix Cinema
2100 hrs Phoenix Cinema. *See* Film Programme
2100 hrs Smoking Concert at New NAAFI.

THE C O 's Christmas Message: G/Capt. JJD Collier
"For the majority of you this will be your last Christmas in the Service. We are all most anxious, therefore, that this should be a good Christmas and one that will bring back pleasant memories. To make it as enjoyable as possible for you, a number of officers N C O's and airmen have assisted in making the arrangements, providing music and entertainments etc., which I am sure you will enjoy and appreciate. On your behalf I should like to take this opportunity of thanking them for their efforts. A Happy Christmas to you all."

AND, about the NEW NAAFI and staff

Was it like this for you? It's a topsy turvy world



(Yes, I know, whichever way you look at it, we were never this lucky - Editor)

At the reunion Tudor Morris volunteered that he was the Entertainments Officer - clearly he put on a great show - except maybe not everyone got 10 pints?

Hope it brings back happy memories of one of the better days.

MINE LAYING: Continued.

The request for more articles for AD LIB has brought in more facts and background to this important part of 160's history

Beginning with -

Appendix 50 ¼ (copied from the actual document)

"It was intended to include this as Appendix to F.540 for January but, this being overlooked, it is included this month.

Mining Squadron Organization for Operating From Advance Base

Top Secret

General

Owing to the distances involved, aircraft will be operating and doing their final take-off from Minneriya, although maintenance, servicing and arming will continue to be done at Kankesanturai.

Aircraft will leave Kankesanturai fully equipped for their sortie but final briefing and collection of target data will be done at Minneriya.

Prior to K.K.S. Departure

Normally aircraft will leave K.K.S. for Minneriya at 15.00 hours the day before they take-off on their sortie. At 10.00 hours crews will report to the old Intelligence Library, where transport will be waiting, and collect jungle kits, then go to the parachute section to collect parachutes, wireless section to collect headsets and microphones, equipment section for boots, armoury for collection of sten guns and ammunition (and revolvers if so desired) then to the aircraft where all this equipment is to be stowed. Jungle suits on personal charge are also to be stowed aboard aircraft at this time.

Personal kit sufficient for one night is to be taken but a maximum weight of 10 lbs per person is not to be exceeded.

An hour and a half before time of take-off transport is to leave the Sergeants' Mess, proceed via the Officers' Mess - where it is to pick up officer aircrew - and then go to the Operations Room. In the Operations Room the following items are to be collected:-

(a) Escape Aids.

(b) Stop Watches.

- (c) G.R. Wallets. (d) Wireless Gen.
 (e) Torches. (f) Navigators' Charts.

Note:-

It is emphasised that Captains are wholly responsible for their aircraft being fully equipped and operationally serviceable in all respects.

Minneriya.

On arrival at Minneriya all equipment will be left in the aircraft with the exception of the following:-

- (i) Personal Kit. (ii) Navigators' Charts.
 (iii) G.R. Wallets. (iv) Wireless Gen.
 (v) Escape Aids.

Escape aids will be handed to the Intelligence Officer and re-issued before final briefing.

Crews will be informed by the Squadron Intelligence Officer the time of final briefing on the day of take-off.

Flying rations will be collected at Minneriya.

Crews are warned that there will be a 'pocket turnout' both at Kankasanturai and Minneriya.

Fuel permitting aircraft will land at K.K.S. for de-briefing.

Wing Commander, Commanding,

No. 160 Squadron. 19-1-45. Eof 1067c362

(From Robert Quirk)

Next issue we have two more very interesting articles to look forward to - from Jack Burgess and Jim Jackson - don't miss them!

R A F CHERHILL: For a welcome change, something for our wireless operators:

In AD LIBS 28 and 29 we included articles re Henry Deeny and the loss of "M" with a mention that not much seemed to be known about R A F Cherhill. David Clarke, a relative of Henry has responded and writes:

"Sorry to learn from the latest AD LIB that Hank Illingworth recently passed away. His moving account of "M"'s last flight remains a fitting memorial to him.

In Ad Lib 29 you enquired if anybody knew anything about Cherhill. I believe I have the answer. Not long ago I was reading a book by Bruce Lewis, an ex Wop/AG with Bomber Command, entitled "Aircrew". In it he recounted his training as a wireless operator at Blackpool and Radio School 1 at Compton Bassett, near Calne, Wiltshire. Referring to it on the internet I came across the Yatesbury Association. According to their website RAF Yatesbury and RAF Compton Bassett were major Radio and Radar Training Schools during WWII.

Harry Deeny probably trained as a W/Op at one of them. Do any other W/Ops with the squadron remember training at either of those establishments? AND nearby, was 27 Group H Q Technical Training Command at RAF Cherhill".

David then mentions that Sigiriya figures in articles in recent times, first with regard to the making of the film "The Purple Plain" (1954) which starred Gregory Peck and there were two readers' letters from members of the crew of the Mosquito used in the flying sequences mentioning that they used an old wartime disused airfield at Sigiriya and with a picture showing Gregory Peck with 4 crew standing in front of the Mosquito.

Sigiriya Rock was featured in the Dan Cruickshank BBC series "80 Treasures of the World" often repeated on "UK TV History" channel.

As further information regarding wireless operators' training, here is the extract from the Bruce Lewis book "Aircrew"

At Woolworth's Building, Blackpool, when the author was on Guard Duty by himself, he writes,

"I fought to penetrate the gloom of the vast interior. In diminishing return, as they faded away into the shadows, the parallel rows of bakelite knobs reflected back the light. As I contemplated these objects, so familiar to me during the day, my mind started to dwell on the hundreds of hands that must have pressed those silent keys. How many of those hands now lay immobile in death? Before long I was 'seeing' those keys moving up and down in unison. Horrified, unable to turn my back as these noiseless messages were being transmitted from another world, I sat transfixed until dawn. Then, when I glanced in a mirror, I saw my face had turned a sickly green. Group Captain Leonard Cheshire once said that aircrew were better off without too much imagination!

After three months, those of us fortunate enough to complete the course participated in a grand parade. As we marched along the promenade, toting our heavy First World War Lee Enfield rifles, the salute was taken by Sir Archibald Sinclair, complete with morning coat and winged collar. He was the Minister for Air. 'I suppose you know him,' whispered Pete Bishop. 'No,' I replied, 'and considering how little he knows about aviation, I wouldn't want to.'

One might have supposed, with all the fuss, that this was the culmination of something important. In fact it was only the beginning. The wireless operator's course was longer than any other in aircrew. Still only Aircraftmen 2nd class, we proceeded to No 1 Signals School at Compton Bassett, near Calne, in Wiltshire. In a matter of months we had to try to absorb all the technicalities of radio, virtually double our Morse sending/receiving speed to twenty-two words per minute, and cover related subjects including navigation, beam approach, aircraft recognition and radar. Such a course would have been spread over three years in peacetime.

Pete Bishop and I looked at each other with grins of satisfaction when, at the end of it all, we sewed our 'sparks' on our right sleeves. Nothing that we achieved subsequently meant quite as much to us as those 'sparks'. They represented months of unremitting study, and only about a third of our original intake had made it. There was no outward sign of an increase in rank, but an appreciative RAF turned us into Aircraftmen 1st class".

(Extract from "Aircrew" by Bruce Lewis 1991. ISBN 0 85052 4474) David Clarke

A message from the editor (and staff)

We send our very best wishes for a Merry Christmas, forget your aches and pains, and look forward to a Happy and Healthy New Year.

AND from Debs

Always remember to forget the troubles that pass your way;

BUT NEVER forget the blessings that come each day. Did you know - the four ages of man?

1. You believe in Santa Claus
2. You don't believe in Santa Claus
3. You are Santa Claus
4. You look like Santa Claus

2007 REUNION.

This is being kept brief since we do not have much to go on at the moment.

Are you interested in a more adventurous 2007 reunion taking place in, for example, Madeira or Malta, or wherever?

If **NO** - advise Les Crawley (we would like to know and to have any comments you might wish to make)

If **YES** – read on.

- a) You do understand that this would NOT be a Heroes Return subsidised trip?
- b) Would you be able to obtain Medical Insurance?
- c) If you need a carer do you have one, bearing in mind that the carer will have to pay and that, this time, we are not likely to have a pool of carers?
- d) Is it likely that other members of your family/friends would like to swell the numbers?
- e) As there are flights from provincial airports, for both the Madeira and Malta suggestions, would you want to be able to make your own flying arrangements? There may of course be possibilities to link up via a particular airline or travel agent with what could be the same package.
- f) We will need someone to organise the venture. (As a recently retired volunteer travel agent I know I cannot do it but I would be prepared to give what help I can). We possibly may already have a volunteer available.
- g) So as not to disappoint non interested members (and others) who could possibly miss out on our reunion for 2007 as a result (depending on timing - or whatever), would you be happy about still having the Stratford (or other??) U K reunion and still do this one off extra?

Please reply to LES CRAWLEY as quickly as possible – just briefly with a NO, or YES, and/or comment for each question and remember this is purely exploratory at this stage.