



'EASTWARD'

The newsletter of the
RAF Butterworth & Penang Association



Chairman: Tony Parrini Treasurer: Len Wood Secretary: Rowly Christopher
(Formed: 30th August 1996 at the Casuarina Hotel, Batu Ferringhi, Penang Island)

CHRISTMAS 2010

The Association aims to establish and maintain contact with personnel and their dependants who served at Butterworth or Penang by means of annual reunions in the UK and the circulation of a membership list. The Association may also arrange holidays in Malaysia from time to time.



Father Christmas salutes the RAAF in the traditional RAF manner

Issue 28



'EASTWARD'

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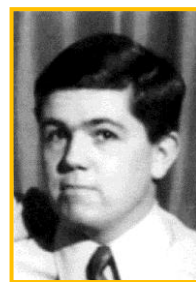
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CHAIRMAN'S CORNER



As I write for the newsletter I am involved, as many of you will have been, in this years Poppy Appeal. This is the mother of all our Service Charities and in my opinion the one that deserves the most support. No disrespect to any of the other charities, but it's the RBL that picks up the pieces when the other charities have lost interest or undertaken their limited response to many a tragic circumstance. At the time of writing we are also in the



period of Remembrance – a time when we remember all those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

‘WE WILL REMEMBER THEM’.

On a brighter note, we are also heading towards Christmas and the end of another very active year. This is the time of the year when we say “thank you” to those who serve us in one way or another. Within the RAF Butterworth and Penang Association, I say on your behalf, a BIG “thank you to the team that’s kept the ‘Boogaloo Boat’ afloat for another year. In alphabetical order:

A big thanks to our Secretary, Rowly Christopher, who works behind the scenes to keep the database up to date, produces the ‘welcome’ to new member and conducts all the other secretarial duties with supreme efficiency.

“Thank you” to Dave Croft who works hundreds of hours each year to produce these wonderful Newsletters, archives all the contributions and photographs received from our members, produces presentations for the AGM and Reunion and does another 101 things for the RAF BPA that he fails to mention.

“Thank you” to “mystery man” George Gault, who I’ve never met; he keeps the website up to speed and gets little credit from us at Reunions because he has yet to attend one! One day, George, I’ll buy you the drink I keep promising!

Then there’s our Treasurer Len Wood. Not only does he keep the books straight, but he arranges the printing and postage of the Newsletter, he organises the contact and detailed administration of bookings for the AGM and Reunion and, during 2010, Len was instrumental in arranging the Reunion trip back to Malaysia – “Thank you, Len!”

All this work is done on your behalf on a voluntary basis at very little cost to you as members. Without their dedication our wonderful, friendly association would not exist.

Can I take the opportunity to ask that you be ready to book for the 2011 Reunion and AGM as soon as the forms appear. Len has had to “promise” a good turnout as the hotel wanted to give the booking to another function – but we got our way. Just make sure that when you get your 2011 diary, you make a note of the Reunion weekend on 4th and 5th June 2011. Let’s have a record attendance please.

Anne and I wish you all the best of health, survival of the winter and the recession as we look forward to Christmas and 2011.

Tony Parrini

Chairman, RAF BP



From the Editor

This issue of '*Eastward*' has a change in the layout of two contributors offerings (as an 'experiment') in response to discussing with some members, at the 2010 Reunion as to whether we stay with the present format of the newsletter or introduce columns. I find it more preferable to continue with the present layout but I can also see the advantage in using columns....but time, and patience, will tell!

In the Summer issue of the newsletter George Gault patiently worked on the word document versions of both the newsletter and supplement of photographs of the 2010 Far East visit, changing all to PDF format. To say it went smoothly would be incorrect, but with George's much valued input the end result was ready for sending to Len Wood for printing well ahead of schedule. Of course Sod's Law would rear its head when all had been organised, too late and too minor, to make corrections. I refer of course to page 9 where there was an overrun of text onto the following page, page 26 (close bracket) and page 31 where reference was made to 'the badge below' when it should have referred to the badge (left). Minor but irritating!

During the reunion, Mike Ward told me of his research into a static display Javelin at Gloucestershire Airport. Rod (Curly) Hartley is following up a story of an aircraft seen to be 'resting' in the jungle canopy in 1960's Perak by a colleague and Don Brereton, Steve Hudson, Rob Lewis, Tony Parrini and Bill Staff have all sent in material for inclusion in this newsletter, or a future one. Also at the reunion John Crooks showed a 'RAFBPA' lighter which originally belonged to his father. A unique piece of memorabilia and a picture of it is shown on page 10. Rosemary Fell was the guest speaker at the 2010 Reunion and the transcript of her talk on the formation of the Malayan Volunteers Air Force is featured in this issue. This is to be basis for (hopefully) a feature on the Malayan Volunteer Forces prior to and up to the fall of Singapore in the Easter 2011 issue of '*Eastward*'.

The title photographs for this newsletter are from David (Tug) Wilson who has, it seems, been able to catch Father Christmas on film, something I have aspired to over the years, without success!

Since the reunion, Tam McCrorie has sent e-photographs of 1960's scenes from Penang for the archives. Tam has already made a valuable contribution to our archives and continues to do so, as also John Muter and other members.

The story of Dr McKern and the post-war RAF Leave Centre continues to intrigue some of us. The release of a Pathe News Astra Gazette mini-film (price £50) yet again raises the question of what really happened to Dr McKern. This time the research has been intensive and thorough but as always solving one mystery leads to others. This one is no different! Should anyone wish to research the story further I have a small file of my findings to refer to.

A request from a member for a good quality copy of a photograph or print of a RAF Comet C2 with the following criteria: clean lines without ground equipment clutter, RAF roundel(s) and Royal Air Force Transport Command logo clearly shown...in flight would be great. If you can help, please contact me.

The 2011 Reunion and AGM of the RAFBPA is to be held at the Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Bradford and Bingley, over the weekend 4th and 5th June 2011.

Christmas (2010) is upon us yet once again, the time for celebration and being merry. On behalf of the 'committee' members of the RAF Butterworth & Penang Association, I wish you all the very best for Christmas and the New Year.

Finally, just as this copy of '*Eastward*' was being completed for the printers, the Association welcomed another new member: **Brian Wall**, LAC Supply/Stores EPAS, RAF Butterworth 1954 to 1957. Other 'new' members are introduced on page 8.

The Shrewd Wizard of Oz

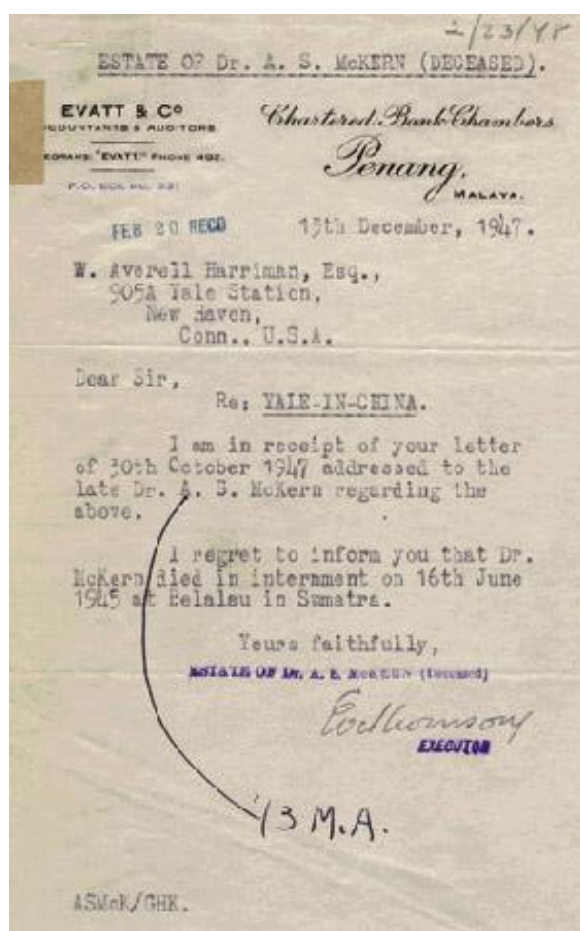
Dr Albert Stanley McKern

In past newsletters we have featured various stories that have speculated the fate of Dr McKern, of *Elysian* fame, the house that became the RAF Leave Centre after the war. Interest was again triggered through a website address sent by Laurie Bean where a Pathe News Astra Gazette mini-news feature from the mid 50's was available for viewing. Four mini-news sequences were shown, the latter one featuring the RAF Leave Centre in Penang, the *Elysian*. The commentator stated that the property was on loan to the RAF from retired Group Captain Dr McKern. It was this statement that started the research again which in turn tracked down the career, capture and death of Dr Albert Stanley McKern whilst interned by the Japanese.

Dr McKern was born in 1885 in Sydney and studied theology at the University of Sydney where he received a bachelor's degree, then to Yale to study for a MA in engineering, finally



Dr A. S. McKern 1937



deciding on a career in medicine and moving to Edinburgh University in 1914 to take up his studies for a medical degree. The shipping list for his journey from Boston to Glasgow on the S. S. Pretoria shows he was accompanied by his wife, Effie, and two sons Eric and Ralph Noel (the initials R. N. are significant to our story later on).

On completing his medical degree in 1917 the family sailed to Penang where the newly qualified Dr McKern set up in practice. He also set about buying land in Georgetown and beachside properties...one later becoming the *Elysian*.

The next part of the story is that of Dr McKern leaving Singapore on the 12th February 1942 on the coastal cargo ship *Mata Hari*, just days before the city fell to the Japanese on the 15th February. The *Mata Hari* surrendered to a Japanese cruiser and destroyer off the mouth of the Moesi River, Sumatra and was escorted to Muntok Bay on Banka island. The captives were imprisoned on Banka Island and on 16th June 1945 Dr McKern died of amoebic dysentery in Belalau internment camp, but not

before he made a will with the assistance of interned lawyers, probably those from the law firm Lean & Co of Penang who were also travelling on board the *Mata Hari*.

Under the terms of the will '*his vacant land [after the war] was to be developed, and property he owned in Penang was to be renovated and rented out. Ten years after the death of his last child, the family's holdings were to be sold and the money divided between the three universities' to be used 'for the sole and special purpose of establishing medical research scholarships....'* His last surviving beneficiary died in December 1997 and the trust was terminated in 2007.

R. N. McKern RAF

This brings us back to the *Elysian*. As stated previously, the property was owned by retired RAF Group Captain McKern. The son of Dr McKern, perhaps? One of the sons of Dr McKern was R. N. McKern! Ralph Noel McKern was born in 1910 and at the age of 20 in 1930 travelled from Penang to London aboard the S. S. City of Mandalay. He was on the passenger list as being a banker.

In 1936/37 Flight Lieutenant R. N. McKern of the Straits Settlements Volunteers Air Force transferred to 36 (TB) Squadron (Vildebeests) at Seletar. Later, according to the 100 Squadron Association history page, based on the account given by a RAAF navigator, he was briefed to navigate a 100 Squadron 'Q' Flight Beaufort back to Australia on the 19th December 1941; *'The orders were that the crews of the Beauforts were to be designated as 'Q' Flight of 100 Squadron (a Vildebeest squadron) and that they*



SSVAF Hawker Hart trainer with 36 Sqn Vildebeests

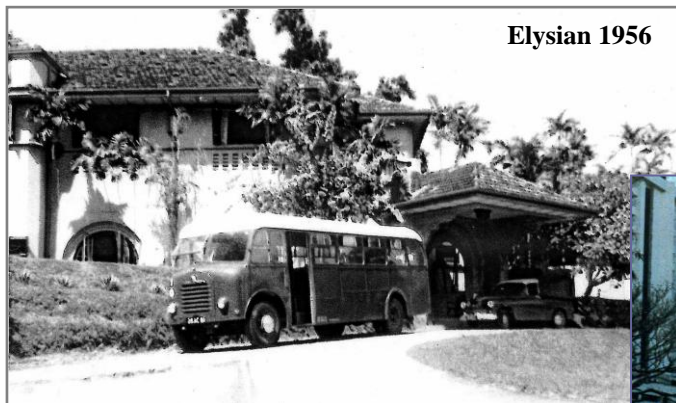


'Q' Flight, 100 Squadron RAF Seletar

would assemble and train crews for Beaufort operations in Australia. Some of the complement were from 100 Squadron (RAF) but the remaining crews were RAAF and RNZAF personnel. The Flight Commander was to be Wg Cdr R. N. McKern, who was also the CO of 100 Squadron at that time'. Wg Cdr McKern flew Beaufort T9544 to Surabaya where the aircraft was damaged on landing and stayed behind for repairs. Around this time Wg Cdr McKern

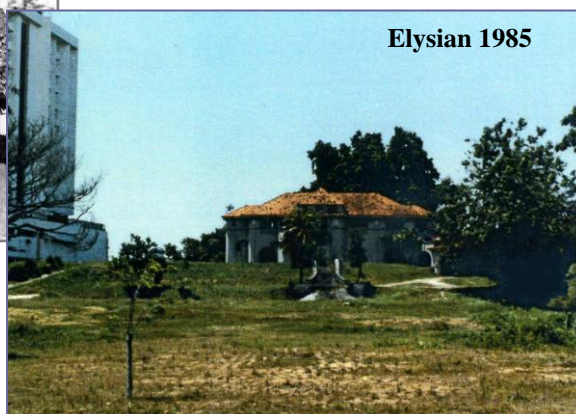
disappeared from the scene, he was not seen on 100 Squadron again and it was rumoured he returned to the UK to take up command of another Beaufort squadron.

The trail goes cold from this point leaving many unanswered questions to date. Was Wg Cdr R. N. McKern the same Flt Lt R. N. McKern of the SSVAF/36 Squadron? Was retired Group Captain McKern, the post war owner of *Elysian*, the same person who was with the SSVAF then 36 (TB) Squadron, later CO of 100 Squadron and Flight Commander of 'Q' Flight before mysteriously disappearing from the Far East scene? A nice research project for someone!



Elysian 1956

Elysian photographs: courtesy of Don Brereton



Elysian 1985

Letter's etc.

Mike Ward has been researching Javelin XH903, on static display at the Jet Age Museum at Staverton (now Gloucestershire) Airport on hearsay that the aircraft was in the markings of No. 60 Squadron, based at RAF Tengah, but detached on a nearly permanent basis to Butterworth during Confrontation with Indonesia (1963 – 1966). Mike's research shows Javelin XH903 was built in 1959, later modified to FAW9 configuration. Further to that he found XH903 was a No.33 Squadron aircraft and did not operate in the Far East. But as he pointed out it was easy to see why his informant thought the aircraft was on the 60 Squadron inventory.



60 Squadron, RAAF Butterworth



33 Squadron markings

A disappointing result for Mike but he reflects *'As I only live two miles away I will be able to keep my eye on XH903.'*

Rod Hartley raised an observation made by an acquaintance prior to the reunion to the effect that in the early '60's he was on patrol with the Aussies some 10-15 miles from the Thai border in Perak when they came across an aircraft in the jungle canopy, probably some 250' high. Interest was shown in identifying it and a start has been made with reports from 656 Squadron newsletters 'The Chinthe' of three Auster crashes in the Malayan Jungle in the early '50's. Of the three crashes the most likely would appear to be that of VF602 which crash landed in trees whilst avoiding a hill on 3rd June 1952. The pilot and passenger *'climbed down from the trees and walked out in the following twelve days,'* The research is still ongoing!

Rob Lewis has written regarding correspondence found in his 'memory box'. The correspondence *'consists of a Christmas card sent to me by S/Ldr V. K. Jacobs, the last Commanding Officer of 45 Sqn when flying Hornet aircraft'* Rob goes on to say *'I contacted him through the Daily Mail occasional series "Every picture tells a story". The text with the Hornets photo tells its own story but the added written matter on the card illustrates the poignancy of the S/Ldr's feelings at the time.'*

S/Ldr Jacobs, in reply, wrote: *'You must have arrived at Butterworth just after I left as 45 (Squadron) was starting to re-equip with Venoms prior to my departure. Our officious Wg Cdr flying instructor, on depriving me of the C O's right to air test the first Venom, in front of a LARGE audience forgot to lower his undercart for landing – Retribution!!...an awful fate for those beautiful aircraft (Hornets), to end up in a junk metal merchants' yard! It hurts to think of it'...* Vincent Jacobs.

Every picture tells a story

THIS regular feature offers you the chance to submit your photographs. They can be previously unseen, of interesting features and events, fascinating insights into famous people or occasions, or a piece of history you witnessed.

THE last operational Spitfire may have been sold to the Royal Thai Air Force, but these de Havilland Hornets, in the air over the Malaysian Peninsula, eventually suffered a far worse fate – being bulldozed into a heap and sold to a Chinese scrap merchant.

The Hornet was designed for the war in the Far East but the Japanese surrender precluded its use as a long-range fighter. It came into its own during the emergency in Malaysia in the Fifties, however, as a splendid ground attack fighter armed with cannon, rockets and bombs on anti-terrorist operations supporting the Army. But in 1955, the magnificent aircraft, the fastest single-seat piston-engine fighter in any air force, developed wing mainspar hairline cracks, and all were grounded. It was decided that each should be flown unaccompanied at 1,000ft down the coast from Butterworth, the last operational



Ideal weapon: Four Hornets in the air over the Malaysian Peninsula

station, to Seletar, the maintenance base where the previous correspondent took his Spitfire photograph. As commanding officer of No 45 Squadron, I flew the last Hornet to meet its fate. It was akin to taking a beloved pet to the vet to have it put down.

■ SEND your pictures, with full details of who and what they depict as far as you know it, to Picture Panel, Daily Mail, 2 Derry Street, London W8 5TT. Enclose an SAE if you want your picture returned.

V. K. Jacobs, Squadron Leader (rtd),
Mulbarton, Norfolk.

John Muter has replied to the piece about ‘erks’ from the last newsletter. John writes ‘Once again I refer to “A Dictionary of Forces Slang” edited by the incomparable Eric Partridge’ where an ‘erk’ is a ‘recruit; an AC2, at no matter what stage of his “apprenticeship”. Hence, loosely: an AC1 or an ACH/GD.’

John continues ‘Not from “air mechanic” as I used to believe, but from *aircraftman*: airc soon became erk. The term may have arisen at the RAF Depot, Uxbridge in 1920, the immediate origin being a song “one of the Aircs” written by Wg Cdr FHH Heading, or that occasion may have hastened its popularity, as I believe. This probably disposes of my own theory but of three others that had gained some currency:

1. that *erk* = *irk* = *irksome* (like his work)
2. that *erk* is a corruption of *erg* “the lowest unit of work or energy”
3. that it comes from “lower deck”, via the old RNAS. Nevertheless ‘*erk*’ did, in 1914 – 18 exist as a lower deck name for a lower deck hand.’

Many thanks to John for this piece of research which sent me off to search through my copy of *The Mint*, written by T. E. Lawrence in the role of 352087 A/c Ross, during basic training at Uxbridge in 1922. At this time the RAF, at 4 years of age, was the Cinderella of the services, her two ugly sisters being the Royal Navy and the Army (the Army being the ugliest!). Members of both services had moved across to this fledgling service to help transform it into an individual, and highly independent, service. ...the Depot at Uxbridge, in terms of discipline and training, was very much Army as *The Mint* so graphically describes. In the book ‘*urk*’ is referred to at least two times with Corporal Jackson (p133 Penguin paperback copy) saying on one occasion (after a poor drill session) “*I won’t take it out of you urks just because...*” At this point I will leave the rest to the readers’ imagination or to search out a copy of *The Mint*.

To complete this session about *erks*, when travelling through York recently I was behind



a vehicle with a number plate ending in the lettering **ERK**. I somehow think the driver of the car might never have been an *erk* but you never know! The same visit to

York had me passing a sandwich bar called Banjos, so I had to photograph it for the newsletter. A coincidence?



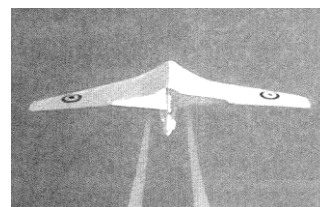
New Members

The Association welcomes three new members. **Trevor Coy**: SAC Armourer, No. 45 Squadron, RAF Butterworth, April 1955 to October 1956, **John Thomas Kearney**: SAC, No. 1 Squadron, LAA, Butterworth, 1963 to 1965 and **Sydney Rogers**: SAC Armourer, Station Armoury, RAF Butterworth 1956 to 1958.

Two of four small puzzles for you to have a think about if you wish, the first two on this page, other two on page 29.

What aircraft is shown here (right)?

On the photograph (lower right) of a pre-war RAF Far East parade *puggarees* are in evidence! What is a *puggaree*?



Perajurit



Towards the end of September, Tony Parini was contacted by Ahmad Syukri (Jeff Ahmad), Defence Writer for the Malaysian Defence magazine ‘Perajurit’, asking to use RAFBPA archive pictures for an article on the post-war history of Butterworth. Over a period of several days a number of photographs were put together and permission sought (in some cases) from various members to use ‘their’ photographs should they be selected for publication prior to being sent to the KL office of Jeff Ahmad. On 1st November, five copies of the Malay language ‘Perajurit’ arrived for the RAFBPA archives.

Over a nine page spread the selected ‘Association’ photographs have been well presented and all that remains is translation of the article.



CHAN KAT

Bill Staff

Sounds like No. 6 on the local Chinese takeaways menu but in reality it was a forward radar station for Butterworth. When Confrontation started it was quickly realised that Penang Island created a blind sector to the west of Butterworth where 114 SU, the Australian C & R unit resided and of course the main direction of the Indonesian threat. Now 114 SU was located alongside the base swimming pool. It was muted that it could move further north or south to give radar cover around the island, but sense prevailed and so remained the only radar I ever worked on where a stint in the Ops room could be immediately followed by a dip in the pool. The solution to the problem was to locate a forward radar 40 miles to the south, of Butterworth.

The site chosen was of course Chan Kat. It was a rather large sandstone hill, or mountain if you had to climb it. A track wound around the hillside, the top was levelled off for the radar and slightly lower down another area was flattened to make a domestic site. The radar for the job must have been found in some forgotten Aussie MU that still had WW2 equipment available because it seldom worked correctly.

It was manned for 24/7 operation with Aussies and some Poms. The airmen did 2 week stints, but quite a number of singles preferred it to Butterworth and went native. The senior resident was the Ops Sgt and he did a week-long stint. Uniform was seldom if ever worn, standard dress being shorts or sarong and flip flops.

My introduction came in early 1965 when I arrived with the supplies, jeep and trailer fully loaded with essentials such as Tiger. Supplies came Mon- Fri, the 9 to 5's of course did not work at weekends. Apart from the 'scopies' and 'techies' the site had a resident Chinese cook who was in charge of the two Malay houseboys who he kicked around with great gusto.

On this occasion, having acquainted

myself with the site, had a good meal and a few 'tinnies' I decided to turn in at about eleven o'clock. All the accommodation was in communal bashes, primitive but comfortable.

By midnight I was sound asleep when without warning my bed, mattress, mossie net and I landed in a tangled heap on the floor to the dulcet tones of some Aussies shouting "No Pommie bar steward sleeps on Anzac day". They must have been prophets or something because it was 24 hours later that I finally fell into my pit. The wildlife was plentiful and varied, snakes, bugs, beetles, insects as well as a pack of feral dogs living in a quarry below. They had been known to raid the kitchen. I have seen a catering size tin of food opened and completely emptied by them. When they got too brazen, night raids were mounted with jeep and spotlight and half a dozen rifles. The big game hunters did not have to account for every round fired or return the empties.

In the living area basha, one end was screened off as the dining area. Two of the large mahogany dining tables fitted end to end across the width of the room. There was a tale of an Aussie sergeant sitting at one of the tables and at the opposite end sat a Pom corporal. Both were sitting on wicker chairs tilted onto two legs with their feet on the tables and 'tinnies' in their



hands. The Cpl. was known as Tiger Tan. Rumour had it that he had never been out in the sun and spent his leisure time in the Hostie. However the Aussie shouted "Don't move quickly Tiger there is a cobra looking at you". Tiger replied "I suppose you want me to move and get you another tinnie". Aussie "No Tiger, that cobra is a big bugger and I wouldn't like to be in your seat". At that Tiger looked around and on seeing the cobra raised alongside him somehow managed to launch himself from his chair and slide down the length of the two tables knocking the Aussie over at the other end. Clothing and bedding was always well shaken before use, scorpions loved to play hide and seek. The toilet

facilities were rather primitive, two corrugated tin cubicles with Elsans. As I said earlier supplies arrived in the afternoon and with them came the UK/Aussie newspapers which were at least three days old. One RAF 'scopie' would never read them when they first arrived but would always wait until after breakfast the following day when he would adjourn with papers to a thunderbox. Once on such an occasion, everyone else on the domestic site was treated to the noise and sight of said 'scopie' appearing at great speed, having knocked the loo door off its hinges, shorts around his ankles, flip flops flailing. It transpired that he had taken his usual stance. Opened his newspaper for a period of contemplation, when he heard a strange noise behind him, turning, he was confronted by a rather large cobra with a frog in its mouth. From a sitting start he completed the one hundred - yard dash in record time.

To get to the radar from the domestic site was by a straight piece of track with a shallow 'monsoony' alongside, this 'monsoony' continued to the base of the hill. Said road however short, about 200 yards, was rather steep, at least a 1 in 4.

Changeovers in the Ops cabin occurred every half hour during sunlight hours owing to the fact that proper air conditioning was not invented when the radar was built. To say that the metal box got rather hot was an understatement.

The changeover occurred with the ongoing 'scopie' driving the jeep up the hill and turning around ready for the relieved rag doll. No matter whether a person had a licence or not, everybody drove. On one occasion an RAF 'scopie' on being relieved jumped into the jeep which failed to start. He got out and tried to push start it but to his surprise it beat him to the bottom, followed the 'monsoony' round away from the domestic site and turned over. The panting sweaty lad arrived on scene and sat down shaking like a leaf. As

he sat he was joined by the duty Aussie Sgt who had rushed out on hearing the crash. The Sgt in attempting to calm the 'scopie' down offered him a 'ciggie', lit it and threw the match over his shoulder which created a rather loud bang and flash as the jeep caught fire. A few days later an Aussie MT WO arrived to evaluate the accident, after a few 'tinnies' he inspected the wreck and declared that it was an obvious electrical fault.

So Chan Kat continued until Western Hill was up and sometimes running. 114 SU packed its bags and departed leaving some of the Aussies behind to enjoy the delights of Penang.

Bill was at Chan Kat and Western Hill from December 1965 – June 1968.



John Crooks RAF Butterworth lighter.

Late news: prior to the newsletter going to print the Association was informed of the death of Andy Andrewartha, stationed at RAF Butterworth from 1951 to 1952. With a number of interesting RAF related photographs, Andy also provided the archives with photographs taken of the 1952 Royal Proclamation of Queen Elizabeth, as officially 'celebrated' in Georgetown!...a superb set of historically interesting photographs. Thank you, Andy.

A child's experience of 3 Years in the Orient by Steve Hudson

In early 1968, I remember my father coming home for one of his fortnightly visits to home (he was stationed at Patrington and we lived in St Helens) and telling my mother that he had been posted to a place called Penang in Malaysia.

In hindsight, it amazes me that there was any discussion as to whether we should accompany him, but there was, and it is to my relief that soon we were preparing to leave St Helens and to travel to the other side of the world. In the 60's very few people travelled by air, certainly we had never flown, so it was with some trepidation that we travelled by train and stayed at Lyneham, before flying by VC10 to Changi, staging through Muharraq and Gan. We stayed at the Changi Creek Hotel for a few days before taking the MSA Fokker F27 to Penang, "Welcome to the Pearl of the Orient!"

We were to live in Island Park, at 29 Pesiaran Tembaga, which was a really nice house, complete with banana tree in the garden. I loved it from the start, it was incredibly new and exciting for an 8 year old.

Our first day in the tropics and Dad's idea of an easy introduction was a trip to Georgetown, and a little walk up and down Chulia Street and Penang Road. We were shattered, and were happy to have lunch in the air conditioned paradise that was the Eden Café, an establishment that saw many visits during the following 3 years.

However, normality in the shape of school reared its head, and whilst my brother went to St John's in Singapore, I went to BACS Minden. New experiences abounded, going to school on a bus, being taught in an open sided classroom, and going to school in shorts and short sleeved shirts, as opposed to long trousers and pullovers.

My recollections of School are that on the whole it was a good time. The teachers I remember are Mr Grindrod, Mr Barnes (whom I met in Kirkham in Lancashire in 1978, small world), and Mr Webb, who was my teacher in my last year at school,

indeed in the *last* year of the school. We played football against the Australian school, on a fairly frequent basis, the first time I played, we had a girl playing for us. Honours were fairly even over the three years, but I remember two matches in particular, one at Minden, when we won 3-2, with yours truly scoring a hat-trick, and beating them at the school in Hillside, with a left foot effort from me sealing the victory. I ended up as captain of the school team, taking over I think from Russell Thompson, when he went back to the UK (another "small world" incident occurred with Russ, when I met him when he was playing cricket for Barrow Grammar School, and I was playing for Kirkham Grammar School!).

One year at Christmas, I along with two others were the "three Kings", singing a solo at the school Christmas carol concert.

Minden was at the centre of much of my life in Malaysia, I arrived in Penang as a non-swimmer, and left in 1971 having attained Gold Personal Survival standard, we were in the pool at Minden as often as we could be.

One of the first things I did was to join the cubs. The Kerbau Cub pack was Australian and met at the Aussie Hostel. We had a great time, trips to the Cameron Highlands were always enjoyable, and I was lucky enough to be picked to take part in an exchange visit with the US scouts in Bangkok as the only Brit on the trip, other than one of the Scout Leaders from Butterworth. That was a brilliant experience, we travelled by train from Butterworth to Bangkok, we visited The Bridge over the River Kwai, and saw the gold plated pagodas in the Royal palace in Bangkok. I completed my time in the cubs as "Senior Sixer" and took part in a going up ceremony at the Hostel.

Looking back I recall the incredible amount of freedom that we had as fairly young children. We spent most of our time outdoors, catching butterflies, going into the bush, and generally having a great time. I remember that close to Island Park there

was a waterfall, which was a superb place to play. I didn't see that many snakes in the wild, I think I only saw 3 or 4 snakes, which given what we did, and where we went, was pretty amazing. I think that someone who lived near Glugor had frequent and very close encounters with some of the more unfriendly inhabitants of the island, including pythons, cobras and assorted other creepy crawlies! We also went into Georgetown travelling mainly in taxis, going shopping and generally wandering about.

Home life was interesting, seeing Christmas in the tropics was unreal, seeing snow scenes depicted in the centre of Penang, with the temperatures in the 90's was quite surreal. I recall that a standard trip to Georgetown, involved standing on the main road outside Island Park, and hailing a taxi. First stop was normally the Standard Chartered Bank, no cashpoints in the 60's! Then a drink at a café close to the bank, which had air-conditioning. I can't remember the name, then up and down Penang Road and Chulia Street (*below*), before getting another taxi back to Island Park.

We used to eat out at the Eden fairly frequently, and had Christmas dinner at the Eden, the Merlin and I think a hotel called the Ambassador (*right*), but I could be wrong on that.

I suspect that most of the children at Minden may remember a cross-bred Alsatian dog called "Jonny", he was owned by a Staff Sergeant who lived at Minden. When he was tour-ex, we inherited the dog, with, I believe the intention of giving him



Photographs: courtesy of John Muter

another year of life. Well of course when it came close to us returning to the UK, we couldn't face leaving him, so he travelled via cargo ship to the UK, and was reunited with us some 6 months later after having been in quarantine. I'm glad to report that he had another 11 years of life, and was a well loved family pet.

Not everything was perfect in paradise, and I remember having Gurkha escorts on the bus home, and being confined to the house during curfews during the period of rioting in 1969. I think in Penang the rioting was fairly limited compared particularly with KL, which saw many people killed

Talking of the Gurkhas, they ran jungle camps where we went into the bush, camped out in bashas, fired weapons, and were generally warlike for the weekend.

All too soon, it was time to return home, and we left Penang, via Singapore in August 1971. Dad remained in Penang for a further month as part of the close down of Western Hill.

I had an excellent time in Malaysia; I loved it, and it has left enduring memories that nearly 40 years later are still vivid. I haven't had the chance to go back, but I will at some point.

Steve is the son of WO Hudson, WO Operations, Western Hill 1968 – 1971.



UNARMED UNESCORTED UNWANTED

The Story of the Malayan Volunteer Air Force

This feature is from the talk given at the 2010 Reunion by our guest speaker: Rosemary Fell

The MVAF may not have been in the front line of air defence – such as it was – in Malaya and Singapore between 1940 and 42, yet it filled an invaluable niche in the area of reconnaissance, communication, and transport of military personnel before and during the short Malayan Campaign, thus relieving the hard pressed Royal Air Force of these duties. However, just as other Volunteer Forces during the Campaign were undervalued and their expertise ignored until it was too late, so, too, was that of the MVAF.

How and when was the MVAF established? To find this out and to understand its background, and composition, one has to go back to the advent of the Flying Clubs.



In 1928, the Singapore Flying Club was established, using light seaplanes as there were no aerodromes or air strips. Later this evolved into the Royal Singapore Flying Club. In October 1930 the first airfield was constructed at Seletar, which was taken over by the RAF Far East Flight.

From 1936 onwards, as aerodromes were constructed on the mainland peninsular of Malaya, flying clubs were formed in Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh (the Perak Club) and Penang. These clubs were subsidised by their respective Governments, but a condition of membership was that all members automatically became liable for active service in Malaya in a time of crisis. Thus the strong tradition of 'Volunteering', which had been first established in 1854 in Singapore, with the enrolment of the Singapore Volunteer Rifles, was to be maintained.

As well as these flying clubs becoming established in Malaya, in 1936 the Straits Settlements Volunteer Air Force (SSVAF) was set up in Singapore at Seletar, at a time when the volunteering movement was again on the increase, as war clouds gathered in Europe. One condition of enrolment in the SSVAF was that all flying personnel had to have training up to civil 'A' licence stage in a flying club before being allowed to join.



Local Singapore accountant Mowbray Garden said, *"My one aim was to get into the SSVAF with a commission. This I did, passing out in the final test in a Gypsy Moth equipped with floats instead of wheels."* Flt. Lt. M. Garden went on to fly for the RAF during the Campaign, and had a very distinguished record.

When war broke out in Europe in September 1939, all suitable personnel from the SSVAF were absorbed into the RAF and the SSVAF was disbanded. The remainder of the personnel was later absorbed into the Malayan Volunteer Air Force which was set up at Kallang in August 1940, as the result of an amendment made by the Straits Settlements Legislative Council, which had established the SSVAF. Other personnel for the MVAF were recruited from the Royal Singapore Flying Club, the Kuala Lumpur Flying Club, the Perak Flying Club, the Penang Flying Club and from a private airline known as Wearnes Air Services.

At the same time, in Singapore in 1940, a Government Flying Training School was initiated, with the newly formed MAAF supplying and maintaining training aircraft and one instructor. Three other instructors were supplied by the RAF. 110 younger men from the Malayan flying clubs, who joined this training school, having passed the RAF medical test and end of course exams, went on to advanced training schools in Canada, South Africa and elsewhere in the world, and became RAF pilots. The older members of the flying clubs and commercial pilots, who for various reasons of age or slight physical defect were not eligible to join the RAF, became the backbone of the MAAF. Between them they had hundreds of hours of flying experience, but before they received their “wings” even they had to go through a course of training.

220 men served in the MAAF, including 40 pilots and their observers. As with the other Volunteer Forces in Malaya, the MAAF included men from all local races and creeds as well as Europeans. There were 42 Chinese, 5 Danes, 14 Malays, 14 Eurasians, 15 Indians/Singhalese. The MAAF was a self-contained force and independently administered - able to maintain its own aircraft with its own fully qualified engineers. Its Commanding Officer was Group Captain R.L. Nunn DSO who in civilian life was Director of the PWD. He was also appointed Director of Civil Aviation, Malaya.

Each of the flying clubs initially became a “Flight” of No.1 Squadron MAAF, with the exception of the Royal Singapore Flying Club, which, by virtue of its size was divided into “A” and “B” Flights:

- Flight Commander of ‘A’ Flight MAAF, based at Kallang, was Flt. Lt. John Caister-Cooke – a senior lecturer in maths at Raffles College in civilian life. On 7th December 1941, he had 9 aircraft under his command – 3 Avro Cadets, 3 Tiger Moths, 1 Moth Minor, 1 Hornet Moth and 1 Whitney Straight.
- ‘B’ Flight MAAF was under F/O Edgar Slight – a former commercial pilot with Wearne’s Air Service. In this flight were 2 Dragon Rapides and 1 Dragonfly, also based at Kallang.
- The Kuala Lumpur Flying Club became ‘C’ Flight MAAF. Flying Officer Stanley was Flight Commander with 2 Tiger Moths, 1 Leopard Moth, 1 Hawk Moth, and 1 Falcon under his command.
- ‘D’ Flight MAAF based at Ipoh, was the original Perak Flying Club. Commanded by Flt. Lt. Henry Dane it consisted of 2 Avro Cadets and 1 Gypsy Avro. Henry Dane won a DSO posthumously. Pre-war, he was the General Manager of the Perak River Hydro-Electric Power Company. Captured in Java, he died as a POW in Tokyo Camp 3.
- The Penang Flying Club formed ‘E’ Flight under the command of F/O Herbert Grant-Watson, who worked for the Asiatic Petroleum Company and the Hong Kong Bank. In this Flight were 5 Moth Majors, and 1 BA Eagle.

All Flights in the MAAF came under the umbrella of the Royal Air Force, Far East Command, ‘A’ and ‘B’ Flights came under Singapore Command, while Flights ‘C’, ‘D’ and ‘E’ were included in Central and Southern Malaya Command.

From September 1940 until mobilization on 1st December 1941, training sessions included experimenting with dive-bombing techniques amongst other things. 2 Avro Cadet aircraft of “A” Flight were fitted with bomb racks and, with Flt. Lt. John Caister-Cooke at the controls, tests were carried out – presumably with Caister-Cooke’s mathematical expertise playing its part in the trials. Further trials using Tiger Moths and a Miles Magister aircraft demonstrated that these light airframes were not structurally robust enough for dive-bombing. Inevitably there were some pre-hostilities casualties with a few MAAF personnel being killed in flying accidents. Flt Lt. Tony Allen of ICI Malaya was killed in a flying accident in May 1941; Cadet George Day of Singapore YMCA fell out of a plane over Singapore because he had not

done up his seat straps; and Pilot Officer Henry Doig of “D” Flight, was killed when he crashed in bad weather.

The MAAF may not have been in the front line of air defence with their light unarmed aircraft, yet the MAAF crews flew over 2,000 hours in hostile skies in the eleven weeks of the Malayan Campaign. Even before the Japanese invaded, the MAAF was busy operating a passenger service which covered the whole of Malaya, and their reconnaissance missions were invaluable to the Campaign. A frequent passenger was Lt. General Percival himself, who realizing how few aeroplanes he controlled, took advantage of this convenient ‘airline’. Wearing goggles and a leather helmet, General Percival was flown over the jungle canopy in the open cockpit of a Tiger Moth to see for himself the conditions on the ground, although trips to view front line troop positions were usually made in either the Dragonfly or one of the Dragon Rapides. He admired the way these amateur pilots could get him around the country in their all too flimsy machines in a way in which the RAF could not do. He was not, however, a confident flyer and confessed to “a feeling of relief when they all arrived back safely”. Major-General Gordon Bennett, Officer Commanding Australian Forces, was another frequent passenger of these MAAF flights.

Before the Japanese invasion, apart from flying military personnel around, the MAAF was also used for anti-aircraft height finding, and searchlight practice. Young Army officers keenly sought air experience via the MAAF to check the state of their camouflage nets during anti-aircraft exercises. Sadly both Australian and British Commanders in the field failed to recognize or take advantage of having camouflaged Moths at their disposal, for air reconnaissance and for checking their positions. Thus, the unique expertise and experience of the MAAF, where each Flight contained pilots who had flown over the surrounding countryside many times and knew the areas backwards, were not really used to full advantage – as with many of the other volunteer units on the ground. For instance, local pilots knew where to look for signs of 5th column activity giving assistance to enemy bombers – as mentioned further on in my talk. It was an important opportunity lost by the Allied Forces, in the disastrous Malayan Campaign. It was, as one report put it, “....a perpetual mystery to MAAF pilots when confronted by sheer complacency”.

A good example of this complacency was exemplified by an incident on the day following the Japanese invasion. Sergeant Pilots Maxey and Harsley of ‘A’ Flight flew an operational sortie, and were ordered to assist the Australian Forces near Kahang in Johore. They were met by a Lt. Col. who viewed their Tiger Moths with scepticism and sent them on a useless 100 mile reconnaissance flight over the China Sea – unarmed, unescorted and unwanted!

On 1st December 1941, the MAAF was fully mobilized and placed at the disposal of the RAF with a liaison officer at A.H.Q. Far East. After hostilities began, the MAAF was used to transport medical supplies; engine and aircraft spares; carry out air and sea searches for lost pilots and military units; drop food supplies; rescue stranded pilots; and carry out coastal and river reconnaissance. Other operational sorties involved flying low over the dense jungle canopy, where they reported seeing primitive devices to assist the Japanese Pilots, such as arrowheads cut into the lallang; tree branches laid out to form arrowheads; and even electric lights strung from trees at night, run by portable generators. Although their aircraft were unarmed and ill-equipped, nevertheless the MAAF filled this important niche in communications and reconnaissance, and ultimately their role came to be appreciated by some of the more astute military commanders.

As already mentioned, the MAAF was made up of a variety of local races and European ex-pats – quite an exotic mix of businessmen, Cadets from well known local schools and wealthy men with their own aircraft. One of the latter was wealthy Chinese Businessman, Flt. Lt. Loke Yaik Foo who owned his own Tiger Moth that he brought with him when he

joined the MVAF. A widower with 3 children, he had sent them to spend their school holidays with their grandmother in Kuala Lumpur when hostilities began and he was allowed to return to the MVAF from detachment to 36 Squadron in northern Malaya. He then made his way from Penang to Singapore, and escaped in his Tiger Moth by island hopping to the Dutch East Indies. From there he flew to Laverton, Victoria in Australia where he joined the RAAF. They flew him to Ceylon in a Catalina flying boat, where he then volunteered to join Force 136 but at 46 years old, he was considered too old to be dropped behind Japanese lines. So he took part in helping with training programmes of air drops and jungle survival. Other Chinese volunteer pilots, trained in England, may have joined the RAF rather than the MVAF. In all 12 members of the MVAF who reached Australia in early 1942 joined the RAAF and 1 joined the AIF.

Other members of 'C' Flight in Kuala Lumpur were the 2 Talalla brothers and their cousin. "Jimmy" and "Sonny" Talalla were the sons of Hewage Talalla of Fletcher Trading KL. Both brothers were educated at the Victoria Institution – a top boys' school in KL. In September 1940 they joined the MVAF and later transferred to the RAF. "Jimmy" achieved the rank of Flt. Lt. and flew with the RAF. Post war he flew for Malayan Airways, eventually becoming its Manager. Brother "Sonny" was killed in action over France on 25th July 1944 aged 24. "Hector" Talalla was cousin to Jimmy and Sonny. Also educated at the V.I., he joined the MVAF, attaining the rank of Sergeant, and survived the war.

There were several casualties of war amongst the members of the MVAF. F/O Patrick Beddel of "C" Flight was shot down by Japanese aircraft while flying a Catalina Flying Boat over the Gulf of Siam on 7th December 1941. Australian Sgt. Vernon Trevethan – formerly RAAF then Wearne Airways – and Flt. Sgt. Herbert Cleaverley of 'B' Flight were victims of friendly fire and Japanese bombing, on 17th December, having landed in Ipoh from Singapore in their Dragon Rapide, carrying spare parts and ammunition. Sqn. Ldr. Richard 'Cyp' Markham of the Malayan Education Department, who learned to fly with the SSVAF but took over RAF 36 Squadron on the 19th December 1941, was killed in action flying a Vildebeest, while attacking Japanese shipping near Endau in January 1942.

As always in a war situation, there were some amusing incidents; some unbelievably irritating ones; and some which had serious implications for the Allies in the whole calamitous campaign. Flt. Lt. Henry Nixon of "E" Flight, who landed his Wearne's Dragon Rapide in Penang on 9th December 1941, almost fell out of his plane in his excitement to tell everyone that Singapore had been bombed. Instead of this news being greeted with incredulity and horror, he was promptly shown the Penang Clubhouse, which had been machine gunned by the Japs 20 minutes earlier. P/O Geoffrey McCall later wrote "..... with regrettable indelicacy the Japs had concentrated their fire on the ladies' retiring room. The hangar received unwelcome attention, and the cars of 2 members were wrecked." Flt. Lt John Caister-Cooke of 'A' Flight was refused permission to land his Tiger Moth at an airfield in Singapore by the Station Commander, despite the fact that he was under strict orders to carry out a dusk patrol. Formerly a local lecturer at Raffles College in Singapore, he knew the island well, so he took the only course open to him, and phoned Singapore HQ to get the ban lifted. Phoning was another hit or miss affair, by today's standards of instant communication and mobile phones. John Caister-Cooke wrote 40 years later "These phone calls were a rather tedious ritual. For all anyone knew, wireless might never have been invented." Even Gen. Percival found that he was often cut off in mid-sentence during a vital phone call of major importance, by a private subscriber ringing the local grocer or fixing a game of golf! In fact, the Australians became so exasperated with the hopelessly inefficient military lines of communication, which kept on breaking down, they resorted to using the ordinary Malayan Post and Telecommunications radio system, which was much more reliable, according to MVG's veteran Volunteer Member, Richard Yardley.

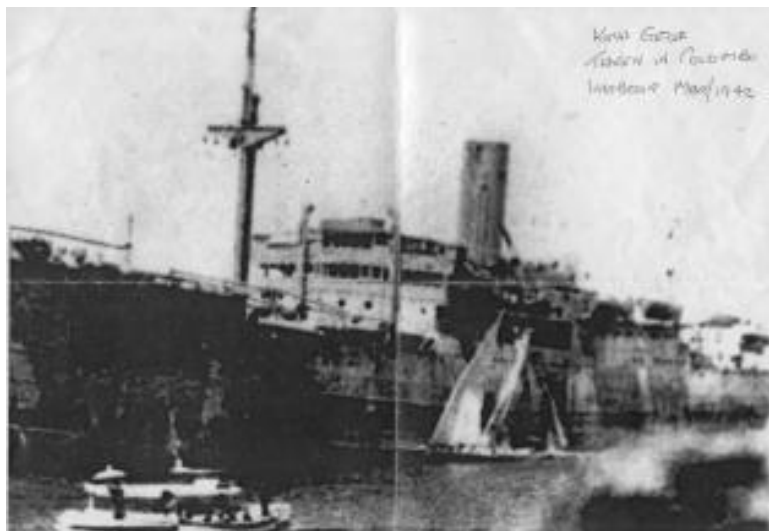
As the Japanese penetrated further south from their landings in Kota Bahru, they pushed the allied forces back all the time, helped by their almost unopposed air superiority. The RAF, with its Brewster Buffaloes, Hudsons, Vildebeests and Blenheims, was no match for the Zero fighters which escorted the long range Japanese bombers. Least of all was the MAAF able to fend off the overwhelming air power of the enemy. Airfield after airfield in the north of Malaya fell to Japanese bombers – Alor Star, Sungei Patani, Butterworth and Bayan Lepas on Penang Island fell in close succession, and were captured by the Japanese on the ground. On Saturday 13th December 1941, with only one serviceable aircraft, which had already left for Ipoh, MAAF personnel of ‘E’ Flight were ordered to check their armaments – which amounted to 12 rifles and 4 pistols, but not one tin hat! – and take their place with the garrison troops in preparation for an anticipated invasion by paratroopers. Later, under cover of darkness, with other troops in the military evacuation of the island, ‘E’ Flight personnel drove southwards to Singapore in a convoy of 10 cars.

After this a very confusing picture emerges as units were evacuated to save as many of the remaining aircraft and pilots as possible. ‘D’ Flight was to evacuate Ipoh, and move to Kahang in Johore, where on 14th December, it first became attached to A.I.F. for river and coastal reconnaissance and other flying duties. At this time the unit was officially designated ‘Detached Flight, MAAF’ under the command of Flt. Lt. Henry Dane. It comprised the 3 Cadets of ‘D’ Flight, the surviving Penang Tiger Moth of ‘E’ Flight, and 3 Moths from K.L. ‘C’ Flight. The rest of ‘C’ Flight moved to Singapore. By Christmas Day 1941, the majority of RAF and RAAF units had been withdrawn from the mainland of Malaya, along with the remnants of the MAAF, which now came under the RAF for administration and operations. At Kallang, only ‘A’ Flight remained, having absorbed ‘B’ Flight, and was under the command of Flt. Lt. Caister-Cooke, with 12 aircraft at its disposal, while Flt. Lt. Henry Dane was still in command of ‘Detached Flight, MAAF’ at Kahang, Johore, with 4 Moths and 3 Cadets. When the A.I. F. moved, ‘Detached Flight’ was seconded to 3rd (Indian) Corps in Johore, before finally being recalled to Bukit Timah racecourse airstrip in Singapore, on 28th January, where ‘A’ Flight was also based, following intensive bombing of Kallang. However, this area was not suitable for night landings (as required by 3rd Corps), and so some land between Paya Lebar and Macpherson Roads was chosen as more suitable – the only drawback being a cow-shed as accommodation for the flight personnel, until a more fragrant bungalow was found!

In the book, ‘Bloody Shambles’ by Shores, Cull and Izawa, there are various incidents mentioned where the MAAF was called upon for reconnaissance work, usually at dusk, and landing after dark by the light of hurricane lamps. They rescued downed RAF pilots who had been forced to ditch their damaged aircraft; and on a dawn mission on 27th January, 2 MAAF Moths were sent out to reconnoitre the Senggarang area to find out what had happened to the 6/15th Indian Brigade. Near the Batu Pahat airstrip, Flt. Lt. Dane in the second Moth, saw a number of Jap troops cycling along the road. This mission resulted in locating nearly 3,000 men cut off west of Rengit so that they could be rescued by gunboats *Dragonfly* and *Scorpion* south of Batu Pahat.

On 31st January 1942, 6 aircraft of MAAF ‘A’ Flight, under Flt.Lt. Cooke withdrew to Palembang, Sumatra. ‘Detached Flight’ with 4 Moths and 2 Cadets with Flt. Lt. Dane remained at Macpherson Road to maintain communications and search for missing aircraft. On the 10th February Flt. Lt Dane and Sgt Nathan in Tiger Moths, carried out their last sorties from Singapore, bombing the Japs with 20lb fragmentation bombs. They were seen by a journalist who wrote: “The Japanese are not completely alone in the skies this morning, for I have just seen 2 biplanes fly low over the enemy positions where they unloaded their bombs” He went on “..... what chance do those lads have of getting back in their antiquated machines....” The next day, 11th February 1942, aircraft of ‘Detached’ Flight were among the last to leave Singapore, flying to Pakan Baroe in Sumatra, where they joined ‘2 Detached Flight’ under Flt. Lt. Nixon. Shortly before Singapore fell, the remaining MAAF personnel,

aircraft and spares still there, were shipped to Batavia, Java, to re-establish the unit under the



RAF administration. But, before this could happen, Sumatra fell and eventually all MAAF personnel were evacuated from Java at different times and to various destinations. The final group left with 2,000 RAF personnel on the *SS Kota Gede* on 27th February, reaching Colombo on 6th March (left). 3 MAAF officers elected to stay with the few remaining serviceable aircraft in Java. They were, Sqn. Ldr. Herbert Chattaway MAAF Admin

Officer; Flt. Lt. Henry Dane and Flt. Lt. Geoffrey Harvey, who were captured by the Japanese and became POWs.

This forgotten air force may have been **UNARMED, UNESCORTED & UNWANTED** but they “worked night and day for weeks, stood firm when others wavered, saw clearly the odds against them but faced them courageously and cheerfully.” If ever brave men earned undying glory, the men of the Malayan Volunteer Air Force certainly rate high in the scale of things.

The Maestro

If you were with me in Batu Ferringhi,
Or pondered longer in Tanjong Bungah,
Every night and morning without too much warning
The ice cream sellers would sing their song.

“Buy my Cornettos, from Italy.
Delicious ice cream, so good for me.
We have choc ices and Magnums too.
But our Cornettos are best for you”.

“Look in my icebox; tell me what you see.
Delicious ice cream from Italy.
We have all flavours, artificial colour free.
So low in calories for all to see.”

Just one Cornetto, give it to me.
Delicious ice cream from Italy.
Tomorrow will be too late.
Just one Cornetto. I just can’t wait.



Tony Parrini sings the Reunion song

THE TRAVELS OF JOHN J. MANNY

ROYAL AIR FORCE
ENGLAND – MALAYA
1957 TO 1959

Voyage of the *Empire Fowey* from Southampton to Singapore
July 18th to August 10th 1957

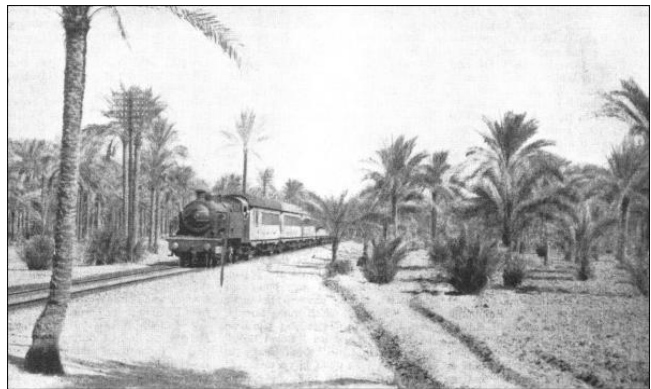
In this issue of 'Eastward' we continue with part 3 of the Travels of **John J. Manny**, from July 18th to August 10th 1957 onboard the troopship 'Empire Fowey'.

Saturday July 27th

Very interesting day, mainly through the Suez Canal. Not as wide as I had anticipated.

6.00am Up on deck to find the ship sailing down the Canal with ships stretching as far aft and forward as we could see. Discovered we had pulled up anchor at 3a.m.

The Canal runs parallel to the railway and road and it was rather amusing to see trains, cars and even bicycles passing us. Desert stretched away on both sides as far as the eye could see. Passed several groups of date palms and camels. Also an occasional mysteriously veiled woman with a gourd upon her head. Noticed several pill-boxes along the canal side.



8.00am Had to go below and miss the sites to start work.

9.00am Town of Ismailia loomed up through the porthole but didn't see much of it.

10.00am Entered Great Bitter Lake. Salt beaches dazzling in sunlight even at this early hour.

Whilst at anchor a north bound convoy passed us.

11.00am When we had anchored I bought a small cross and chain and wallet from one of the traders.

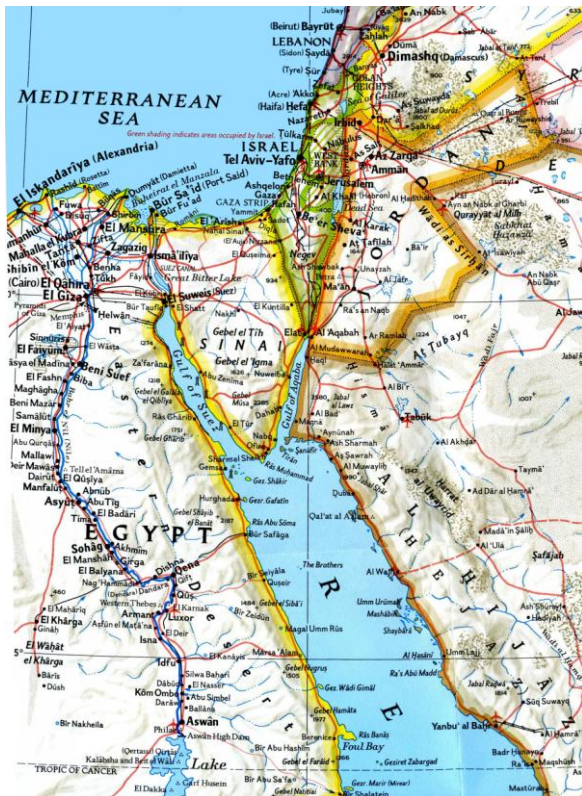
12.00pm Covered 80 miles since noon yesterday.

3.00pm Up anchor and off down second part of the canal. Still surrounded by desert and palm trees. Passed through Little Bitter Lake.

3.15pm Given a demonstration of air power by a formation of 7 M.I.G. fighters which gave us a beat-up.

5.30pm Entered Suez Bay at Port Thewfik and discovered Suez to be 2 miles away from the canal.

6.00pm Passed into the Red Sea as a north bound convoy was beginning to form for the next mornings journey.



We had steamed 20 miles since noon making Suez 3150 miles from Southampton, 2020 from Gibraltar, 1020 miles from Malta and 100 miles from Port Said. Headed down Red Sea with Egypt to Starboard and Arabia to Port. Snow Covered Mt. Sinai looked out of place in the sizzling heat.

9.00pm Out on deck studying stars with a couple of Army lads. Picked out Pole Star, Gt. Bear, Venus and Milky Way which was wonderfully clear.

Conclusions Grateful for an uninterrupted journey through the Canal. Unimpressed by Egyptian Air Force. Preview of Red Sea heat in the evening not very encouraging for next few days.

Sunday July 28th

6.00am Woke up to find myself soaked in perspiration. At that time of the morning it didn't seem possible but the Red Sea seems to be living up to its reputation.

11.00am Up on deck. Arabia still visible to port and Egypt to starboard.

12.00pm Covered 297 miles from Suez making a total of 317 miles since noon yesterday.

1.45pm Passed Daedalus Reef Lighthouse. Built on a little mound just about centre of Red Sea and about 320 miles south of Suez.

2.00pm Two unidentified frigates passed us about four miles south of the lighthouse proceeding north.

Now reached widest part of the Red Sea and the two coastlines have receded until we may as well be in the centre of the Pacific. Saw only a few tankers low in the water during the afternoon.

8.00pm About 400 miles south of Suez we made a rendezvous with H.M.T. Devonshire. Army Observer transferred for return trip through Suez. Much friendly bickering across the waters between outward bound and homeward bound personnel.

10.00pm Turned into bed about the time I estimate we crossed the Tropic of Cancer.

Conclusions Perpetual thirst always nagging at me. Most unpleasant. Sooner we leave Red Sea the better. Think I'd rather be on Fowey than on Devonshire now I've started.

Monday July 29th

Nothing but sea all day. Seemed rather curious with land only a comparatively few miles away in both a westerly and easterly direction.

11.00am First heat casualty. Soldier collapsed on deck and had to be carried below. It's getting me down a bit too.

12.00pm By noon we had covered 382 miles since noon yesterday. Temperature below deck 90° in despite cooling system and 105° on deck despite breeze.

4.00pm Informed that we could sleep on deck if we wished. I decided to stay below because most of the chaps were going on top. Bunk more comfortable and air not too bad with only a few left below.

10.00pm Turned in. Quite reasonable as anticipated only about 28 out of 120 remained below.

Conclusions Rather a boring day with just water and more water. Not one ship all day. My thirst still rages on and I drink endless pints of water. Red Sea much longer than I ever realised. Must be about 1000 miles.

Tuesday, July 30th



More interesting day than yesterday. Saw some land at long last.

6.15am Up on deck to be met with blast of hot air. Took a few moments to adjust breathing.

7.30am Passed Jabal Attar Island - a very desolate looking place.

9.30am Noticed group of islands to port as I paused in my work to look out of porthole. Discovered later that they were Zubair Islands [marked as Jaza'ir az Zubayr on the next map].

10.30am Coast of Eritrea now visible to starboard side.

11.00am Pay parade for shore leave at Aden. Quite looking forward to leaving ship after 13 days cooped up.

12.00pm By noon we had covered 369 miles since noon yesterday.

3.00pm Another large island loomed up out of heat haze. Called Jabal Zugar.

4.00pm Large school of porpoises following us. Many others in distance. The sea an absolute mill-pond.

Coast lines on both sides becoming more firm as we near exit to Red Sea. Weather also seems a little cooler.

10.00pm Passed Perim [Barim] Island at south end of Red Sea and entered Gulf of Aden.

10.30pm Enjoyed drink on deck in cool breeze before turning in.

Conclusions Roll on to-morrow.

Wednesday, July 31st



6.00am Awoken by the sound of the ships anchor being lowered. Discovered we were actually in Aden Harbour.

We had travelled 252 miles since noon yesterday making Aden 4450 miles from Southampton, 3320 from Gibraltar, 2320 miles from Malta, 1400 from Port Said and 1300 from Suez.

7.30am No cleaning this morning so after quick breakfast up on deck in No 6 Dress. No breeze at all and we were stifled in collar and tie. Smell from ashore not very encouraging either.

Makes a change to be on terra firma anyway.

8.00am Went ashore in the boat provided by local firm of shippers.

8.20am Set foot on land again. Most peculiar feeling trying to walk straight for a while. Ground seemed to be swaying.

Numbers of blind, limbless and crippled children amazing. Continually pestered by beggars. Saw one "blind man" stop and pick up a 5 cent piece from the road.

Surprised to find a lack of flies. Must be too hot for them. Everything very cheap and two or three chaps bought a camera or a watch. I nearly got knifed when in a watch shop I suggested the owner give Steve a new watch and £2 for his old one. Tom Young had his cap stolen by a little boy who came up from behind.

I bought a lighter, a fan and a scarf as small souvenirs. Sheep, camels and goats wandered freely around the streets and into the bazaars.

Decided Aden was just a lump of rock baking in the sun and slowly but surely rotting away. Would not like to be stationed here.

Aden is on side of a hill with a chain of mountains surrounding it. Further up the hill people live in caves dug out of the rock.

12.15pm Returned to the Fowey. Glad to get out of my sticky clothes and have a shower.

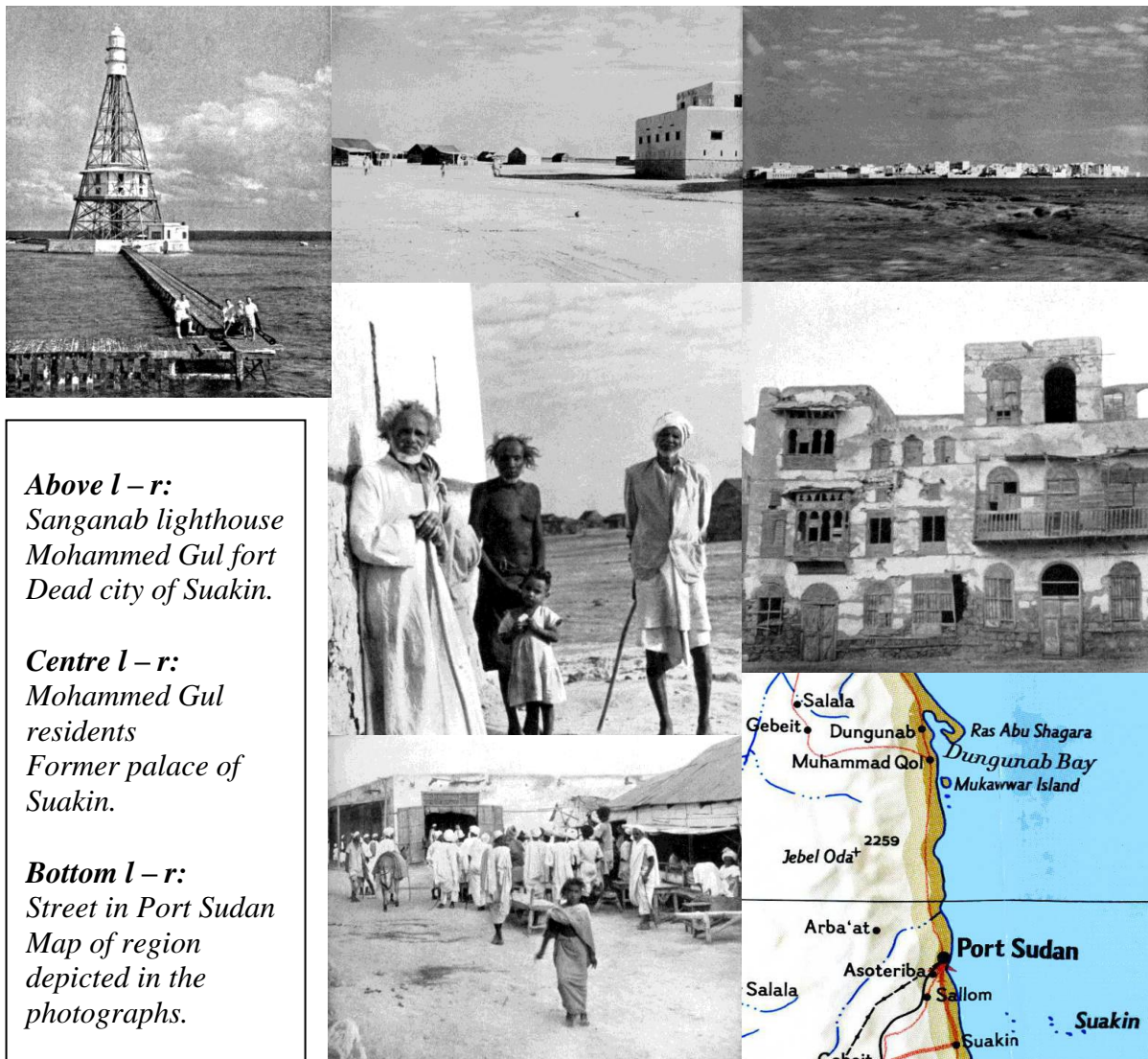
3.00pm Up anchor and started on the longest stretch of the voyage. Over 2000 miles to Ceylon.

Headed South East across the Arabian Sea.

5.00pm Went to see what mail had been brought aboard and found two letters from Nina which were very welcome.

9.00pm Spent a couple of hours on deck then decided to turn in after quite a tiring day.

'Middle East Life' from this part of the route of 'The Voyage'



Above l – r:
*Sanganab lighthouse
Mohammed Gul fort
Dead city of Suakin.*

Centre l – r:
*Mohammed Gul
residents
Former palace of
Suakin.*

Bottom l – r:
*Street in Port Sudan
Map of region
depicted in the
photographs.*

Suakin, at the turn of the 20th century, was a major city in Sudan that became a 'dead' city within fifty years due to the narrow connecting sea channel becoming choked by coral reefs rendering it impassible to larger vessels. Of the many stories told of the origin of the city: *Seven virgins were presented by the King of Abyssinia to the King of Egypt. The valuable consignment was accompanied by a reliable eunuch! One of the nights passed on the journey was spent on the island of what is now Suakin. When the King of Egypt received his present(s) he found none of the seven was still what she should have been. The eunuch swore seven of the island spirits had taken conjugal possession of the women by night. The King sent the women back to the island where the children born of the union with the spirits became the ancestors of the natives of 'Sava Ginn', meaning 'the spirits did it', evolving in time to the name 'Suakin'.*

John Heyes of 656 Squadron Association presents a light-hearted look at how a junior member of the Army Air Corps fared at the hands of the Sergeant Major during Regimental training. This article originally appeared in the 656 Squadron Association newsletter 'The Chinthe' and is reproduced with permission

A sprog goes on his Military Training Class Two course

by John Heyes

I suppose that after spending about six months in Taiping, I was now, technically, not a sprog, but sprogishness is a perception, a state of mind. I still considered myself a sprog in many ways and I'm certain that the 'tiffie' did too. I had also come to the realisation that I had made a serious mistake in choosing 'Airframes and Engines' as a trade. It is fundamental to being a mechanic that necessitates getting fairly dirty from time to time and I had a severe aversion to being dirty. I particularly disliked working on engines, dirty smelly things. By dint of various subterfuges I managed to take over the running of our small stores, the POL accounting, the battery shop, when we had no 'Greenie', and anything else that avoided picking up a spanner. Naturally I was still on the duty crew roster and performed Before, Turnround and Afterflight inspections but since these mostly involved kicking the tyres and counting the wings, no dirt was involved and I didn't mind too much. I quite liked the fabric and painting work and there was plenty of that as the fabric on the Austers would rot quite quickly in the tropical conditions. Our area of responsibility had many landing grounds, from disused airfields and village padangs to straight stretches of road that were unobstructed. Auster paint and fabric seemed to be both attractive and tasty to the local cattle. Leave an aircraft unattended on a village padang or remote field for a few minutes and on return one would find the cows contentedly grazing on the fabric.

'What', I hear you asking 'has all that got to do with the second class military training course?' It soon became obvious to me that the senior NCOs did not get nearly as dirty as the ORs and that the further one looked up the pecking order, the less close involvement in grubbiness pertained, therefore, get promoted!! The only way to get promoted was to obtain the requisite qualifications. I already had the necessary education certificates. I was too inexperienced to get the first class trade test qualification. The only other thing that I could do was to get the 'regimental' bit out of the way. So, off to 40 Base Workshops in Singapore (On the night train again!!) for three weeks of Regimental training. Oh joy!!

The first morning of the training set the scene for the next three weeks. It is an established fact that Sergeants Major regard anything that is slightly different to their conceptions of uniformity as a personal affront. The CSM was, I believe, from Malta and of a definitely Latin temperament. Pale blue berets were rarely seen in those days and the CSM let it be known, by his first order on the morning parade, that they had no place in his world.

"You, in the pouffy blue hat, fall out and take the parade!" He barked out.

This gave me a bit of a clue as to how his Latin temperament would react to anything different from his norm. I came smartly to attention and marched out to the front of the parade. Now this was at the time before the issue of DMS boots. (moulded rubber soled boots). The potential for damage to the aircraft, from size ten boots with studs and heel plates, had been recognised early in the formation of AAC, as had the potential for conflagration caused by the combination of boot studs, sparks and one hundred and thirty octane avgas. In an attempt to avoid these disasters, all aircraft mechanics boots had been resoled and heeled with rubber. Having avoided being singled out for anything on the first parade, the other nine people on the course were now breathing sighs of relief and struggling to control their mirth.

"What have you got on your feet?" A purple faced, twitching and quivering CSM bellowed. He seemed to be hovering about six inches off the ground.

"Boots, Sergeant Major" I replied in a weak voice.

"They....are....not...boots....what are they?" he barked, enunciating each word in a way that only a Sergeant Major can. (I seriously suspect that, at Pirbright, they have a secret instructor, from RADA, to teach this manner of speech.)

"Boots, Sergeant Major" I replied in an even weaker voice.

"They....are....not....boots, they are carpet slippers!! Get off my square!! Gettoff now" he bawled.

I marched smartly to the side of the square and waited in sweating trepidation as he detailed another smirking innocent to take the parade.

The roll having been called and the parade stood at ease, the highly polished, bristling and purple faced CSM marched over to within feeler gauge distance of my nose and roared, **"Go to the quartermaster, at the double, and draw a pair of proper soldiers boots then get back here in ten minutes wearing same. I never want to see those excuses for military footwear ever again."**

I doubled away towards where I thought that the quartermaster's stores might be. 40 Base Workshops was a very large camp on both sides of a fairly busy road. I asked directions from a number of people who were met along the way and was rapidly coming to the conclusion that I had either



entered some kind of time warp or an establishment for the mentally deranged. Everyone asked either had no idea of where a quartermaster's store might be, or they directed me to strangely seedy, apparently disused huts, in disparate parts of the camp, containing the detritus of long forgotten tenants.

I eventually found the stores but my ten minutes grace had long gone. On explaining my dilemma to the corporal in the stores, I once again became convinced that an alien culture existed at 40 Base Workshops. I was told that exchanging the boots was not an option as mine had been improperly modified. Only pristine boots complete with a full set of studs and heel plates could possibly be exchanged. Pleas that the modifications to my boots had official sanction fell on deaf ears. He took my plea to the CQMS who surveyed the offending footwear and declared them proscribed for exchange. The only solution was to purchase a new pair. Naturally, I was broke, having applied the 'Heyes First Law Of Posting or Detachment for Soldiers', i.e., 'Never arrive at any new location with money in the pocket'. I then went through the process of having the cost of the boots deducted from future pay and left clutching stiff new boots. Back at the barrack room, quick application of polish, unwind miles of khaki puttees from ankles, remove laces from old boots, lace up the new boots, don same, rewind miles of puttees and return to the square at a fast hobble.

On arrival on the square, the squad were being marched off to be introduced to the new army rifle, the SLR, which was just being issued to operational units. Unfortunately, 40 Base Workshops training unit was not at the top of the priority list for the issue of the new weapon and had been issued with part of a trial batch of the Belgian FN Rifle. The SLR had been based upon the Belgian design and had been made in the UK but with some significant differences. The cocking handle on the FN was a knob rather than the folding handle on the SLR. The SLR had only two positions on the selector lever, safe or single rounds. There was no position for firing bursts of automatic fire. I can only assume that Belgian soldiers are rotten shots and need to fire bursts. I suppose British soldiers are expected to hit things with a single shot. There were other differences but they were of no real significance at this point.

The rest of the morning was spent learning our way around the new weapon, stripping, cleaning, clearing malfunctions etc. The afternoon was dedicated to learning how the experts at Pirbright had evolved drill for the new weapon. It was at this point that the significance of the non-folding cocking handle began to manifest itself. At Pirbright, they did not go in for wearing shorts on parade too often and the drills had been designed around the SLR with the folding cocking handle. The sergeant drill instructor, highly polished, purple and twitching, (He must have been taking lessons from the CSM), demonstrated how to throw the rifle up the right hand side of the body to get to the Shoulder Arms position. The significance of the fact that he was wearing very nicely tailored long OG trousers and that we were wearing shorts was soon to manifest itself.

OG shorts that had been washed and starched a few times tended to become fairly fragile at the seams. New shorts were considerably tougher. When we attempted the same evolution, throwing the rifle sharply up our right sides, the first thing that happened was that the cocking handle caught in the hem of our shorts, cocking the rifle. Those with the newer shorts lost control of their rifles and sent them clattering to the ground, whilst those with the older shorts found that, whilst their rifles were in approximately the correct position, the transit had been accompanied by the sound of ripping material and their shorts were split from hem to pocket. When the drill instructor finally calmed down he somehow managed to get us all to the 'Shoulder Arms' position. He now demonstrated the 'Order Arms' movement. When we tried it, the significance of the non-folding cocking handle again came in to play. Those with the newer shorts found the cocking handle firmly caught in their pockets, again causing the rifles, once again, to clatter to the ground. Those with already tattered shorts now found that the cocking handle had caught in their pockets and had completed the job of ripping it out, depositing loose change, keys, pocket knives and sundry other unmentionable objects onto the square, leaving their right legs completely exposed. The remainder of the afternoon was taken up in learning the rest of the drills with the new rifle. Half of the squad prancing about with their lower bodies partly covered with what appeared to be a jungle green split skirt and the other half trying to drill with the rifle held about a foot away from their bodies. The evening was dedicated to sewing up our tattered shorts.

After the fiasco of the first day, things could only get better, so I thought. The second day began on learning about the Mills 36 Grenade and how to care for it, prime it, and throw it. The morning was spent in the classroom and all went well. In the afternoon we were taken out to an area of the camp, close to the car park, where we were to take practice throws with an inert grenade. I was about the fourth to throw. Now I have never aspired to being a cricketer and hurling cricket balls had never been my forte. This lack of this fundamental schoolboy expertise chose this moment to manifest itself. I adopted the requisite pose, (My wife tells me I'm an inveterate poser), and hurled my grenade at the stick which represented the target. As we were in Singapore, the humidity was high. My hands were very sweaty, which caused the grenade to exit from the side of my hand. My grenade described a beautiful parabola in the direction of the adjacent car park. It didn't make too much of a dent in the bonnet of the car that it struck and I wasn't too concerned. Let's face it, who in their right mind would let a load of sprogs throw practice grenades in close proximity to a car park? The Sergeant who was supervising the training now adopted the purple visage and the vigorous twitching which had been manifested by the CSM yesterday. I think that he had realised that we were throwing in an area that had been unwisely chosen by him. It was only when the CSM exploded onto the scene,

foaming at the mouth and threatening dire consequences, that we eventually understood the true significance of the errant grenade.....*The dented bonnet belonged to the OC!!*

I found that standing at the back of the squad, adopting the demeanour and look of a tree, didn't protect me from the verbal attentions from the Sergeant and the CSM. It was a pity that the instruction in camouflage was yet to come. That blasted blue beret gave me away I think. After casting a few aspersions on my ancestry and my potential lack of longevity, most of the verbal reaction from our Maltese Sergeant Major was directed at the Sergeant. The majority of his tirade is unrepeatable in polite society.

The next few days went by relatively incident free. We learned the nuances of interpretation of maps, contours, identifying dead ground from the maps and studying features that are generally unhelpful to those trying to pass over them. We were taught how to teach and instruct lesser mortals in the finer arts of drill and weapon training. We studied camouflage but this lesson came too late. I could have done with it before the grenade throwing farrago. I managed to get through the instruction and handling of the Bren gun without reducing my clothing to tatters or damaging any passing or stationary vehicles. I didn't understand why the instructors were reluctant to let us fire the 3.5" rocket launcher or the inerga grenade. They had spent a great deal of time in teaching us how to use and care for them. I suppose the OC was concerned for the safety of the general public passing through the camp on the public road. Perhaps he was worried that his car could be a target again.

The last training morning was spent learning about the .38 revolver, which was still in standard use, and the Browning 9mm pistol. The CSM was the instructor for this part of the course and we learned the safety drills for both weapons as well as how to strip and clean both. Lastly we were taught how to hold, aim and fire them, dry firing them in the classroom. Our CSM was insistent that if one was firing a pistol at the enemy then one must be relatively close to him. Firing had to be reactive as natural instinct would make one hesitant to fire at another human being. We were lined up in two rows, facing each other, and were made to snarl at the man opposite before dry firing the pistol at him. After lunch, we went onto the pistol range again under the direction of the CSM. He loaded a .38 revolver and demonstrated how to fire it in the manner laid down in the training manual. Having emptied the gun at the target he then said,

"That is how the army says how to use this weapon. I will now demonstrate the most effective way to use it."

He emptied the six rounds into his hand, threw them one by one at the target then threw the pistol after them.

"That is the most effective way to use this weapon" he declared, "but you didn't hear that from me."

The rest of the afternoon was spent firing the 9mm pistol from both the approved stance and what the CSM described as the FBI stance i.e., hold in both hands, both eyes open and bend the knees in an unseemly crouch. I found this very satisfying as I cannot hit a barn with a shotgun, even if I'm standing inside it. With the Browning pistol I had great success in actually hitting the target.

At last we came to the testing days and the end was in sight. We were tested in the classroom on all the subjects that we had been taught and I felt confident that I had done reasonably well. The last test was for each of us to take charge of the squad on the parade square and to demonstrate some aspect of rifle drill as an instructor. The CSM's eyes glinted as they alighted on my pale blue beret. He called me out to undertake the first rifle drill instruction.

"Carpet Slippers! Fall out and instruct this shower in the art of shouldering arms with the SLR"

I thought that he might mean me so I marched smartly to the front and took position to instruct. I was a little nervous to say the least. After describing the drill, I then went on to demonstrate with accompanying commentary. Unfortunately, Doctor Spooner had taken charge of my brain and my first instruction went something like,

"With your right hand, fling the rifle up the right side of your body, swing the left arm across and grip the forestock then take a firm grip of the *gristol pip* with your right hand"

I had no idea why the parade had collapsed into fits of mirth, the Spoonerism went unnoticed by me. The CSM reverted to his purple twitching mode and quieted the parade. I was allowed to finish my demonstration which I achieved without ripping any of my lower garments or dropping the rifle. It was only after the testing was over and we had left the square that I was told what I had said.

Unbelievably, I passed my second class military training course and returned to Taiping. I still wonder what the criteria were for passing the course.

From the editor: In his article 'A sprog arrives', featured in the Summer issue of '**Eastward**', John refers to the *RAF as appearing to not having grasped the concept of drill at all*. I am pleased to say that this is 'officially' substantiated by no less a person than John Nichol of Gulf War fame who '*defends RAF traditions –which includes its terrible marching*'- in the Radio Times 14 – 20 August 2010. But the marching by the RAF at the end of the Battle of Britain Sunday service from Westminster Abbey on 19 September (2010) was excellent!

The man who reintroduced head hunting into Borneo – part 2

Tom Harrison DSO

After wartime service during 1945 behind Japanese lines in Borneo, as leader of a 'Z' Special unit, Tom Harrison took on the role of interior administering officer for the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit in post-war Borneo, later as curator of the Sarawak Museum and also played a key role in assisting British Forces during the Brunei revolt and initial stages of Confrontation with Indonesia.

Borneo in 1945

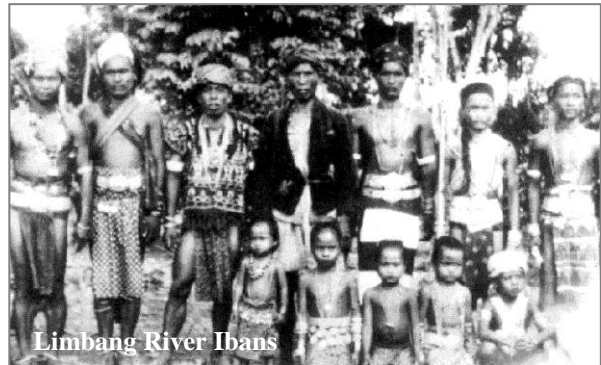
At the end of part 1 (Easter 2010) the story of Tom Harrison concludes with him leaving by Auster from the Belawit (central Borneo) bamboo airstrip bound for Tarakan Island off north east Borneo, then onto Moratai, New Guinea.

While this was going on two of his 'Z' Special unit operatives in Borneo had travelled down the Limbang River to report on inland Japanese positions in preparation for the imminent Australian invasion of Borneo. The operatives' destination was Brunei Town and on the way they met with Ibans, the famed wild men of Borneo, said to be very enthusiastic headhunters! Cooperation with the Ibans was speedily achieved and as guests at the longhouses taught a few of them how to use the automatic weapons they had available. The rest of the Ibans eagerly prepared blowpipe darts and sharpened parangs.....they were legitimately going to war!

June 5th

The 'Z' Special operatives and Iban escort visited a Japanese outpost on a tributary of the Limbang River where Ibans, on the pretext of suffering malaria and seeking help, attacked the Japanese and lopped off two heads. The operative shot at three Japanese, one escaped, two didn't!

At the next outpost, Ibans alerted by drums from the first longhouse, had already captured and tied up four Japanese soldiers. On arrival of the 'guerillas' the prisoners were shot and the Ibans took the heads before the bodies had stopped kicking. Concern was shown by the Australian operatives over the escapee from the first attack in giving warning to the Japanese further downstream, a concern that at the time didn't bother the Ibans!



Limbang River Ibans

June 6th

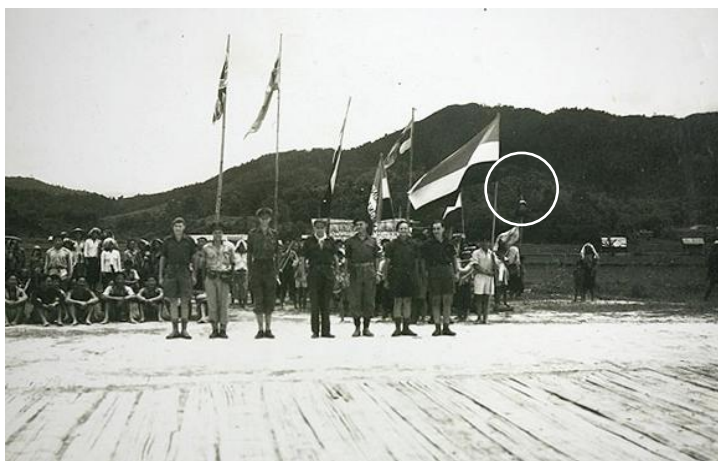
The following morning, at Ukong police station, the escapee was discovered, along with two other Japanese from the post, headless! Head hunting by the Ibans was definitely back in vogue.

A brief note about head hunting in Borneo: the practice had been banned by the first Rajah (James) Brooke and the ban continued under the rule of Charles Brooke and later Charles Vyner Brooke. It is believed some occasional 'traditional style' head hunting took place in the uplands of central Borneo during the time the practice was banned but not confirmed. Whilst not actually involved in person with the killing and taking of Japanese and collaborators heads, nor were his operatives, Tom Harrison, as the officer responsible for his designated area of operations, sanctioned the practice resulting in some 728 Japanese heads being collected by his guerillas (Ibans, Kenyans and Muruts) over the latter months of the occupation. Apparently

Japanese heads were 'prized' by the Ibans for being '*nice round heads with good hair and gold teeth*', ideal for the ceremonial form of 'kick about' enjoyed after a successful attack.

11th June: Japanese police chief heads parade.

On his return to Belawit the Mad Major, as he was known to by his Australian operatives, was brought the head of the Japanese chief police officer of Brunei by an Iban leader. The head had been 'paranged' the previous day by Ibans helping prepare the 'ground' for the Ninth Division's attack on Brunei town on June 10th. The Japanese atrocities aimed at the local people, and also local fear of the Japanese police chief, made him a target for a dawn attack prior to the Australian landings of the 9th Division and subsequently his head was displayed



on a pole for all to see at a parade of 'Z' Force operatives and irregulars at Belawit (*circled above*). The practice of head hunting continued for the remainder of the war.



Harrison's irregulars

Following the Japanese capitulation, the 'Mad Major' returned to Belawit on September 7th and left September 13th for the Kenyah settlement at Long Nawang in Dutch territory. Arriving at Long Nawang he was dazzled by the longhouse art on display and saw, for the first time, the brightly coloured 'Tree of Life' mural painted on a longhouse wall. This was later copied for the Sarawak Museum by a Kenyan artist at the instigation of Tom Harrison.

Unlike the 'upland' peoples he had lived with up to date, he was now living with 'river' people and he spent much time on the rivers advising communities to avoid, but also report, any still active Japanese in the area despite the official surrender of their forces.

There were Japanese stragglers but also an active column known as the *Fujino Tai* (Captain *Fujino* being the officer leading the column, *Tai*, a company of soldiers) still at war. Being highly mobile and often lost, it was believed that the unit didn't exist by the occupying Australian military HQ. Eventually, after much arguing Major Harrison was given permission to persuade his remaining operatives and irregulars to locate and attack the *Fujino Tai* to prevent it moving onto the Plain of Bah. Also during this intense period he persuaded the BBKAU (British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit) to accept him as a Civil Affairs Unit Officer after completing the task in hand, and at the same time he discovered the incumbent Sarawak Museum curator, E Banks, on release from a POW camp near Kuching had had enough and wished to return to England at the earliest opportunity. Tom Harrison became the post-war curator of the Sarawak Museum.

On October 28th 1945, after skirmishes throughout the month, the *Fujino Tai* surrendered and Captain Fujino duly signed for peace! Tom Harrison, the 'Mad Major' was now in a position to take up his civil duties within Borneo....*to be continued*.

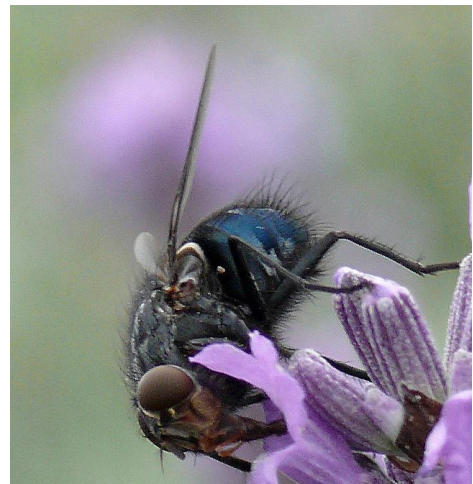
RAF Chief Tech puts Aussies in their place!



Qantas Lockheed Super G Constellation, 'Southern Sun' arriving at Butterworth with RAAF dependants during May 1958. In the early days of RAAF Butterworth there was a daily service to bring in fresh fruit, vegetables and meat. Apparently the RAF catering wasn't up to much.



Just for fun, another two Christmas questions for you...



1. What is the aircraft featured above?
2. How does a fly land on a ceiling?



Answers in the Easter issue of '**Eastward**', if I remember (editor)!

End of 31-year old RAF ties

PENANG, Sat. — The Royal Air Force today ended its 31-year-old ties with Malaysia when it handed over its last property, the administrative block of the RAF station in Glugor, to the Malaysian Ministry of Defence, under the Dudley Agreement.

The handing over was performed at a simple ceremony this morning, at which transfer documents were signed.

The last of the Commanding Officers of the RAF Flt. Lt. E. D. Johncock signed the transfer papers on behalf of the British Armed Forces, while Inche Anwaruddin bin Ahmad Osman, Assistant Secretary (Lands) of the Ministry of Defence and Supt. K. Rodrigo, representing the Ministry of Home Affairs as well as the Inspector General of Police, signed on behalf of Malaysia.

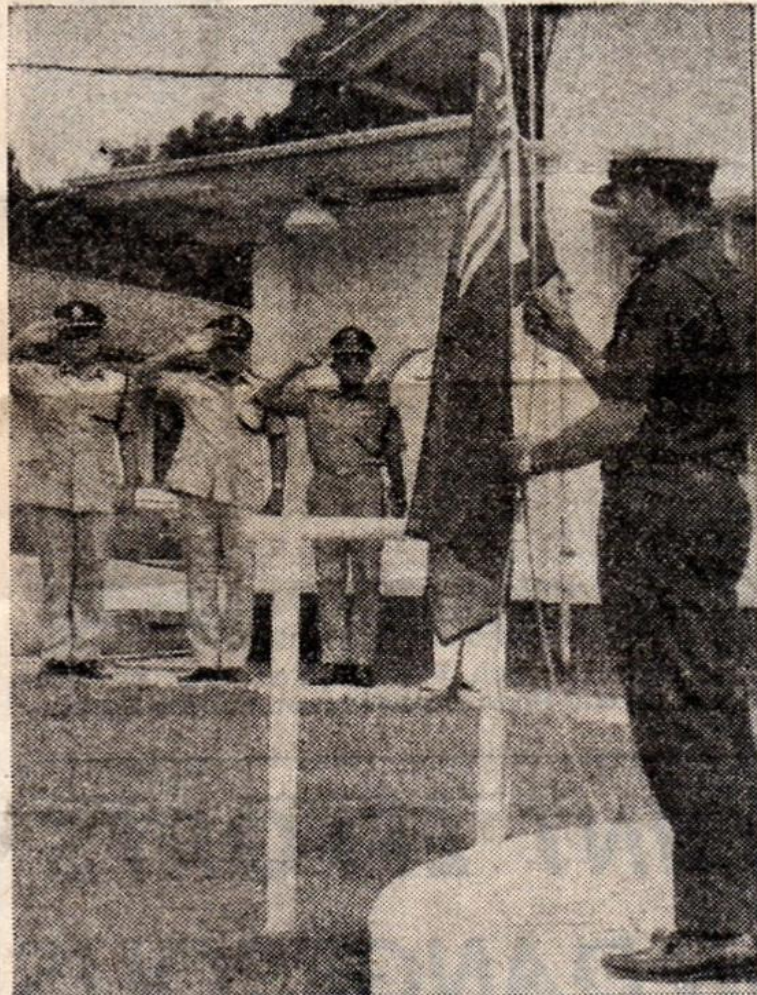
The complex was then handed over to Chief Police Officer, Penang, Mr. Tan Ghim Kheng. It will be mainly used as a Marine Police base.

ENSIGN HOISTED

Immediately after taking over, the Royal Malaysian Marine Police Ensign was hoisted.

Ft. Lt. Johncock said that the Union Jack was lowered at the base at a simple ceremony last evening in the presence of Flying Officer A. Parrini.

The RAF officials present then went on a round of farewell handshakes before Ft. Lt. Johncock presented a letter of appreciation to Inche Hussein bin Md. Noor, a head labourer, for his long service with the



Cpl. Hussain bin Yusoff of the Marine Police hoisting the Marine Police ensign. Saluting the flag are (from left) the C.P.O. Mr. Tan Ghim Kheng, Supt. K. Rodrigo and DSP Haji Ahmad Mydin.—(Gazettepic).

RAF. He joins the RAAF at Butterworth tomorrow.

The RAF Ensign which had been lowered earlier yesterday will be taken to England by Ft. Lt. Johncock.

"I will be keeping it as a souvenir," he said.

The last six RAF officials—Ft. Officer Parrini, Ft. Lt. Johncock, Sgt. B. Peacock, Sgt. J. Osborne, Sgt. G. Jackson and Cpl. J. Scully — left Penang in the afternoon by MSA to Singapore enroute to London.



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