



# *Eastward*

## *Easter 2021*



*RAF Butterworth & Penang Association*

*Issue 59*



*The RAF Butterworth & Penang Association was formed on the 30<sup>th</sup> August 1996 at the Casuarina Hotel, Batu Ferringhi, Penang Island.*

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**1957**





Our condolences and thoughts go to those who have suffered loss of a loved one through COVID and other causes during the pandemic. I am deeply aware that these losses, coupled with isolation and loneliness have put a heavy toll on those left behind. In addition, I know some of our members have suffered badly from the virus and it has been touch and go as to how well they would be afterwards. Our best wishes go out to them.

Hopefully we are nearing the end of isolation and being remote from family and friends, and also by the time you receive this newsletter, you may have received your second vaccination. Quite what the new normal is going to be like, no one knows, but I sincerely hope we will be allowed gatherings, reunions and AGMs once again.

As many of you know, we discovered that our Reunion/AGM organisers, Isle of Wight Tours (IofWT), ceased trading in early October 2020, and those that had already paid a deposit for the planned 2020 Reunion (cancelled due to lockdown) were refunded by the Association, although the one person who had paid the full amount has received a full refund from the company that bonded IofWT.

**2021 Reunion and AGM.** Over the past few months your committee has met on-line and then with the RAF Changi and RAF Seletar Associations to best decide how to work together to mark the 50th Anniversary of the final withdrawal of the RAF from the Far East and disbandment of HQ FEAF in 1971. In respect of this **dates for your diary are given below, with some quick decision making required, please.**

The **Proposed** Reunion to be held at the **DERBY MICKLEOVER HOTEL**  
on **Fri 15th and Sat 16th October 2021** and the **Proposed** Commemoration of the **50th Anniversary**  
of the withdrawal of the Royal Air Force from the Far East at the National Memorial Arboretum  
on **Sunday 17th October 2021.**

The details are still being sorted out, but our Reunion and AGM will be separate from the other associations, and while Len Wood has volunteered to organise the Reunion and AGM, I will work with the other associations to put together a memorable event at the Arboretum to mark the 50th Anniversary. Your committee has agreed that the Association will subsidise the costs at the NMA and only make a nominal charge for pre-booked tickets for the anniversary event. All the above is conditional on COVID restrictions being eased or lifted completely by October with travel and the size of gatherings being unrestricted.

**Based on the information in the box. Len Wood requires the enclosed booking form to be completed straightaway so that we can liaise with the other associations by giving a reasonable accuracy of numbers in order to book and cost out the facilities and refreshments at the NMA.**

**Future Events.** Whilst Reunions and AGMs will continue for some years to come, the 50th Anniversary event at the Arboretum will be the last formal event with FEAF veterans attending. For this event we can afford to 'push the boat out' as I'm not sure how many will be here to celebrate the 60th or 75th Anniversaries!!

*Tony and Anne Parrini*

## From the Editor

After a tough time experienced by many throughout 2020 we were further saddened to be informed of the passing of **Lily Bean**, wife of our Penang member, **Laurie**, on the 23 January 2021. Both Margaret and I were especially saddened as we met both several times during our visit to Penang on the RAFBPA Far East visit during April 2010. We remember particularly Lily's thoughtful response to hearing of Margaret's birthday during the visit. That kindness has remained with us throughout the years since the visit. Following the RAFBPA trip Laurie and Lily were formally invited to attend the British High Commission celebration reception, held on the 9th June 2010 in KL, to honour the birthday of HM Queen Elizabeth II. Both had a thoroughly enjoyable time. Our thoughts remain with Laurie through this sad time.



**From Geoff and Joyce Morris:** Joyce and I were so sad to hear of Lily's passing. It was lovely to meet Lily on our trip in 2010. So elegant and always smiling, and full of good advice as to where to go and see. We feel for you Laurie.

**From Mike and Pam Ward:** Pam and I are so sad at the passing of dear Lily. On our third holiday in Penang in 2011, Pam and I stayed in an apartment at Eden Fairway. Laurie and Lily, who lived nearby, were very helpful and we enjoyed evening meals with them in the local food hall at Batu Ferringhi. We had previously dined with Laurie and Lily in Penang whilst on our trip with the NMBVA for the Merdeka 50th Anniversary in 2007. Happy memories, with both always in our thoughts. God bless dear Lily.

**From Don and Margaret Donovan:** We are so sorry to hear about Lily. Margaret and I send our best wishes at this sad time in your life. We remember well our three visits to Georgetown with the RAFBPA, and Lily was always a happy part of our visits.

I also remember with great affection our last game of golf at Butterworth (2010) - it rained, heavily!

**From Nadine and Len Wood:** There will be members of the Association who never met Laurie's lovely wife, Lily. She was a beautiful, kind and friendly lady, devoted to Laurie. We spent a lot of time in her company, eating out or in their apartment. Laurie was always on hand to taxi us around during our many visits to Batu Ferringhi. On one of our outings Nadine mentioned a book we had just read called 'The Hungry Ghost' and Lily said she never went near the Cantonese Cemetery on Mount Erskine when the Chinese celebrated Qingming (The Festival of the Dead), which commemorated the ghosts of their ancestors. Laurie has said that Lily's resting place will be the Kek Lok Si Columbarium at Ayer Itam, a beautiful and spiritual place for such a lovely lady.

RIP Lily.

With love from Nadine and Len.

**Les Featherbe:** Just after sending the Easter newsletter copy away for printing, the Association was informed of the death of RAFBPA member Les Featherbe on the 10th February 2021. Les was stationed at RAF Butterworth 1949 to 1950 and then at Glugor 1950 to 1952. When informed of his passing we were told he often spoke of his fondness for his time spent in Malaya. He gave a number of interesting pictures to the Association archive, a number of which will be shown in the Summer issue of 'Eastward.'

**Proof Readers:** In addition to Len and Nadine Wood, RAFBPA member **John Muter** has also offered to proof read future issues of the newsletter. His kind offer has been accepted. Thank you John.

## RAF Correspondence and Stories

**David 'Tug' Wilson:** Following the distribution of the Christmas 2020 issue of 'Eastward' the Association was informed of the death, in 2019, of **'Tug' Wilson**. David was a member of the MT Section, RAF Butterworth 1956 - 1958 and RAF Changi 1968 - 1970. In 1956 he was attached to the Malay Army as a driver and during his time with them learned how to live off the jungle. After leaving Butterworth in 1958 he was posted to St Athan where he became involved with the RAF Mountain Rescue Team (RAFMRT). A detachment to El Adem, also in 1958, involved him in an impromptu (but successful) desert search and rescue of a hunting party of Germans whose vehicle had broken down.

David returned to the Far East (Changi) in 1968 and having undertaken survival training he joined the jungle survival team as a first aider and stretcher carrier. His stories at the annual reunions of his time in the Far East always attracted an audience, at both the reunion dinner and afterwards when there was a gathering of members in the hotel lounge. He was a very popular and supportive member of the RAFBPA.

**David Porter:** The Association has also recently been informed of the death of **David Porter** (SAC Radar Operator 487 Signals Unit, December 1955 to January 1958) in February 2020. His wife, Sonya, said he had enjoyed his time in Penang very much, and he was very proud of his medal awarded for his service in Malaya. Through the Association he was able to relive his time at Butterworth.

**Ronald Calvert** (Eng. Fitt. FETS and Station Flight, Butterworth 1954 - 1956). Died 2 April 2020.

**The Wright Sisters:** In issue 58 (p15) **Don Brereton** mentions the Wright Sisters, Sonia and Pat. Following that story RAFBPA member **Alan Beattie** (PTI at RAF Butterworth, 1954-56) wrote in to say "I am still friendly with Sonia Wright (Williams). I taught Pat to tap dance and both to fence, also including Wing Commander Gundry-White's wife. They are all mentioned in a book being written about my career, which also includes my Malayan experience."

**The Saddle Club:** In a previous email about his time at Butterworth Alan wrote: "I was attached to Flying Wing, my CO being the senior officer as I used to teach aircrew Night Vision Confidence training and organise sports activities, including remedial exercises, through the MO as I had previous experience and training at Headley Court in the early days prior to going to Cosford. I was also instrumental in forming the RAF Butterworth Saddle Club, reporting directly to Wing Commander Gundry-White\* who, apart from his official duties, ran the station rugby and riding clubs. Wg Cdr Gundry-White and family were keen horse enthusiasts." Alan adds that General Templar and Air Vice Marshal Kyle were also horsemen and that General Templar was at the time President of the British Horse Society. Alan was approached for advice on the location for the Saddle Club stables adjacent to the airfield. General Templar, being President of the BHS, 'may have had some influence on the support the Saddle Club received, such as new stables etc'."

Note: The Saddle Club is mentioned in Issue 35 (Easter2013) in respect of a short cine film taken in 1955. This is available on YouTube *RAF Butterworth Horses 1955* and both Sonia Wright and Alan appear in it fleetingly. Sonia was also Secretary to the Pony Club which was started for the children of married families. Of the Saddle Club horses one, called Roman Warrior, was given by a rubber planter - a winner on the race courses at Penang, KL and Singapore, The previous owner could hardly believe it!

\* Wing Commander Gundry-White DFC (1918-1961) was OC Flying Wing at Butterworth and often flew the Station Flight Harvard. He was Chief of Air Staff Ghana Air Force\*\* from September 1960 to March 1961 and died in Princess Mary's RAF hospital, RAF Halton on the 15th September 1961.

\*\* The Ghana Air Force was formed in July 1959 with the first appointed Chief of Air Staff being an Indian Air Force Air Commodore. RAF personnel took on the training role in 1960 and in 1961 had also taken on the administration for the Ghana Air Force.

**Equestrian Medieval Re-enactment:** After his RAF service Alan was involved in services-related courses for those wishing to join the civil and military uniformed services. In his capacity of Commander/Lecturer of the Pre-uniformed Services Course he remained with Teeside Tertiary College from April 1982 to April 2000. In 1987 he was instrumental in setting up the International Jousting Association which later became



properly established after a meeting with Australian and New Zealand representatives. On a visit to New Zealand as a champion rider of the Knights of the Black Phoenix Alan enjoyed a jousting experience with the weapon maker for the Lord of the Rings films - Master Armourer and Sword Smith, **Peter Lyon**, who was also an equestrian medieval re-enactor. With Alan's experience in medieval re-enactment leading to him being hired on occasions to act in films he became a member of Equity, the actor's union, under the name of *Alan of York*. In such a competitive and physical activity there are bound to be injuries and Alan has not escaped the occasional shoulder injury, and a very painful injury when his opponent's (a police sergeant) lance struck him in the pelvis. He

also ended up with a broken bone in his foot when a horse landed on him on one occasion.

On top of all this excitement Alan was also a member of the Honourable Artillery Company (HAC) for 22 years and for a short time joined No. 1 Cavalry Regiment HAC as an RAF veteran. His fascination with horses continued with him looking after the Cleveland Police Mounted Unit horses during summer months when the horses enjoyed a break, usually when their police riders went on leave.

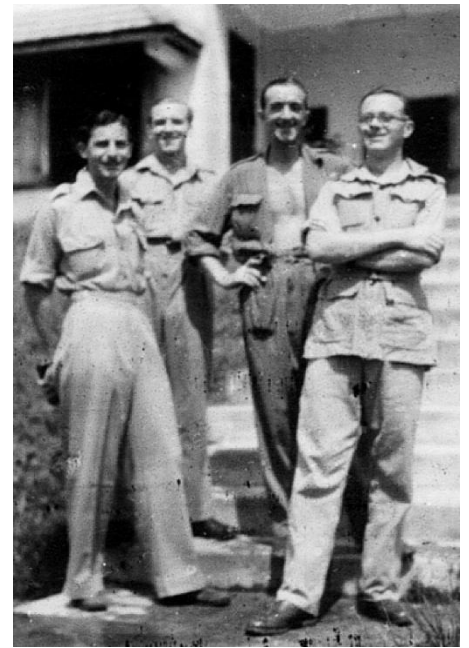
**Films:** When jousting on the set of Lord of the Rings at Harcourt Park on New Zealand's North Island Alan's horse reared up when passing under the only tree on set and his lance went into the tree branches causing him to fall backwards, his helm (jousting helmet) hitting the ground quite hard - "I told the lads it was a controlled parachute role, you can imagine the reply." When making the film Bride and Gloom "the cameras were mounted on a dolly running on a railway track and facing me and the groom, who had not sat on a horse before. I told him to relax. Children and drums were playing on the set when suddenly the music boomed out. At that, my horse, Dixon, thought he was going in to joust and took off, scattering the film crew sideways. He then went on to have a gallop round the perfect lawn much to the dismay of the set manager. The groom turned grey with fear!"



**Dancing:** Having had a life-long fascination with horses and taken the opportunities provided by the RAF where he trained and raced horses, played polo and learned fencing, Alan continued with a life-long enthusiasm for tap dancing. This continues to this day through taking senior citizens into a keep-well life style through dance and exercise classes. As a dancer he reached the pinnacle of his long dancing career in 2017 when invited to appear in ITV's 'Steal the Show' on New Year's Day. This resulted in him being invited to do a solo routine at the 'ExCel (Exhibition Centre

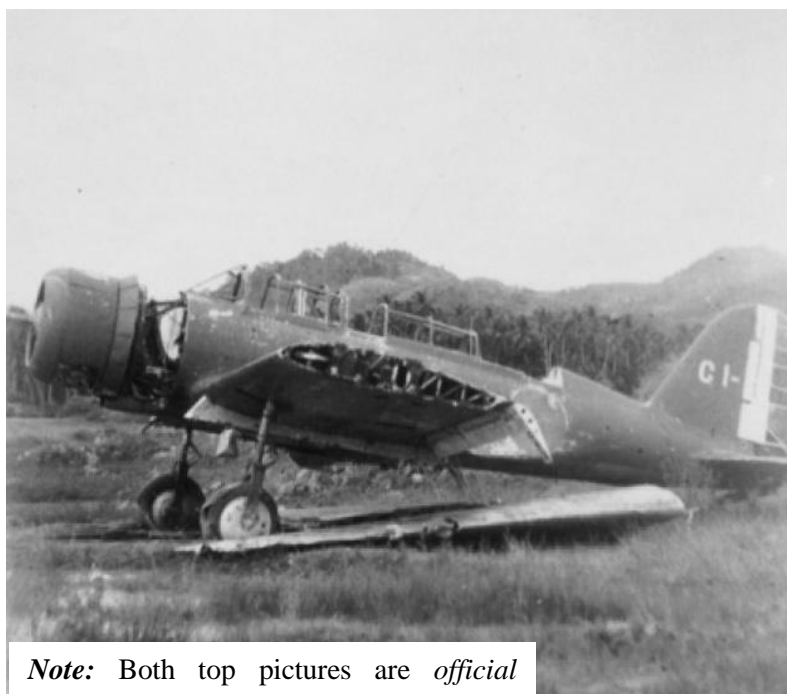
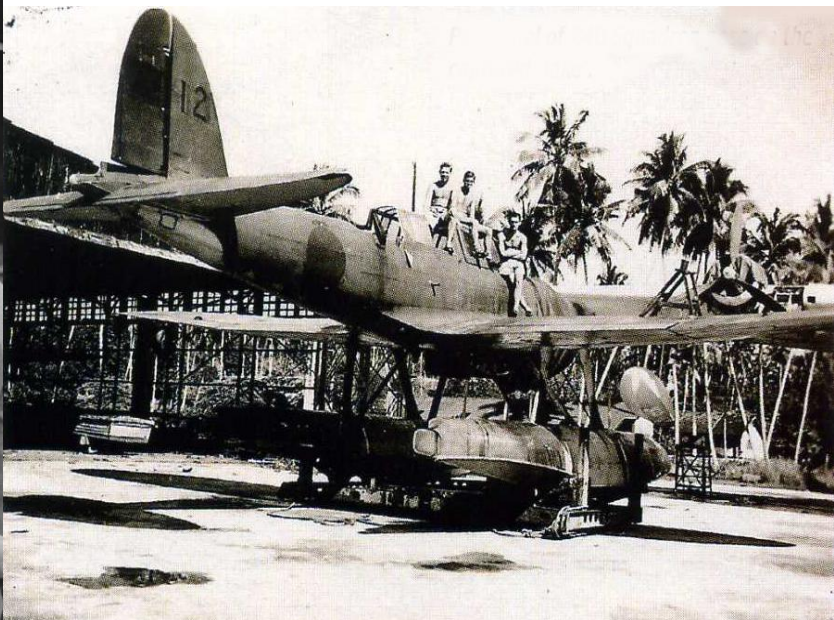
London) 'Move it' event on the 12th March 2017.

**Butterworth and Penang 1945:** In issue 58 mention was made of RAF Butterworth/Glugor related materials from 1945 (PDF copies of photographs and a copy of the Penang Methodist Church Christmas Day Service of Worship) sent to the Association by **Steve Lonsdale**. The originals were owned by his father, Alan Lonsdale, who was a RAF fitter posted to Malaya c1945 as a member of the RAF Glugor Detachment. Alan 'celebrated' his 24th birthday in Penang on December 26 1945.



The above images (*left and centre*) are of Alan. Steve attributes the difference in appearance being due to general *debilitation over a period of time in the Malayan climate*. He wrote that his father found '*Penang was very beautiful but the local bugs were not friendly to him. He was poorly for much of the time.*' The Glugor Detachment (*below*) were housed on the island at Glugor Barracks, later named Minden Barracks. Alan served overseas from the 2nd July 1945 to the 24th April 1946.





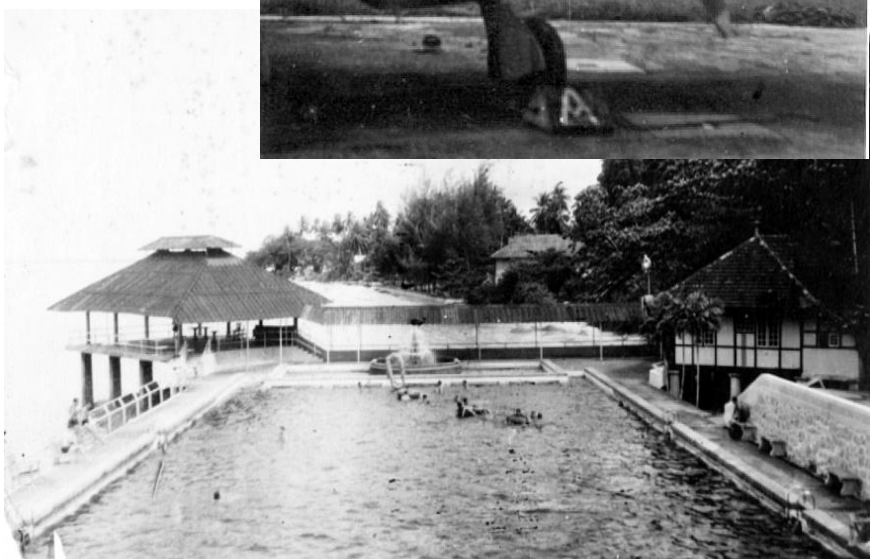
*Note:* Both top pictures are *official* images. The remainder are from Steve Lonsdale.

**Top left:** The Royal Navy accepting the Japanese surrender at Glugor, September 1945

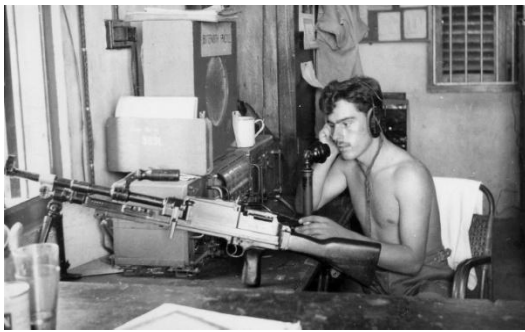
**Top right:** Japanese Navy Aichi E13A reconnaissance seaplane 'Jake', at Glugor following the surrender of Penang.  
**Lower left:** Japanese Navy Nakajima B5N 'Kate' believed to be at Butterworth. It is likely this aircraft was used to search for Allied submarines off the west coast.

**Middle right:** 28 Squadron Spitfire XIV at Bayan Lepas airfield.

**Bottom right:** Time spent off duty at the Penang Swimming Club.



**Norman Harvey Photographs:** A large number of Norman's photographs, taken from his time at Butterworth as a J/T at the Station Armoury 1956 - 1959, were donated last year to the Association by Lill Harvey via RAFBPA Member, Syd Rogers. Our thanks to both and a selection of Norman's photographs are shown below, and unfortunately no details about each picture were given.



If anyone can help with information relating to these images it would be appreciated.



**A Request:** The Newsletter of the 19th Signal Regiment Association (*The Bulletin*) is regularly received by the editor. In the December 2020 issue is an article, *Trials Of Manganese Dioxide-Coated Bombs*, with a general request for helping identify the whereabouts of the ground firing range? As a possible answer, could the range be the **Asahad inland weapons range**, sited on the Malacca, Johor and Negri Sembilan borders region some 70 miles north of Tengah? The range was in use in the '60s and is mentioned in the RAF Historical Society publication *The Canberra in FEAF - Exercise Raven 1964*, 'where the inland range at Asahan was used.'

**Manganese dioxide-coated bombs:** Parts of the article are as follows in case any member can add to the story and/or location of the inland firing range. 'In 1969 the war in Vietnam was in full swing. The American army was holding back the Vietcong, just about. A new phase had begun where the invading (enemy) troops had started to tunnel under the border. This meant they could appear, sometimes behind the American troops, cause havoc, then equally quickly disappear. It didn't take the Americans long to work out what was going on, and to organise a strategy to overcome the problem - 500 lb bombs were to be fitted with delayed action fuses, which meant they did not detonate on impact with the ground, but later. This meant they were more likely to destroy the tunnels and cause casualties among the soldiers in the tunnels.

The only drawback to the plan was that the craters created by the bombs could be covered with a metal lid on which the displaced topsoil could be thrown and within a couple of weeks vegetation would have reappeared over it. Beneath the lid would be a room in which soldiers could treat wounds, hide stores and munitions, and all this courtesy of the USAF. To overcome this situation it was decided that the bombs should be coated with manganese dioxide (MnO<sub>2</sub>), a material that would render the immediate area hazardous for troops to stay around\*.

**Trialling the Theory:** A testing programme was devised to see how far the MnO<sub>2</sub> might spread, and how dense it would be, depending on the amount of MnO<sub>2</sub> used to coat the bombs. Permission was given for the tests to be carried out in remote jungle areas in Malaya, and in co-operation with the USA, Britain also carried out tests, and Ops Troop, 19 Signal Regt, RAF Seletar, sent a detachment of linemen to provide communications for the exercise.

The exercise had three phases. The first was where Canberra bombers dive-bombed a designated area to see how deep the bombs would go. The bombs used were dummies fitted with tracking devices so could be easily located and recovered. The second phase was to repeat the dive-bombing using live bombs. This meant that the craters could be measured to check they were deep enough to cause serious damage to the tunnels. The third phase involved digging holes and inserting MnO<sub>2</sub> painted bombs at the depths indicated at phase 1. Also used in the third phase were mannequin style dummies dressed in uniforms and placed at intervals around the bombs to assess what damage might be expected to people in the tunnels and on the surface. After these bombs had been detonated, the MnO<sub>2</sub> levels were measured at different distances to evaluate the spread of the chemical.'

\* Manganese dioxide is harmful if inhaled and can irritate the eyes, skin and respiratory tract - it can affect the central nervous system and cause influenza type symptoms. *Ed.*

The above account is a part of the article. In addition it mentions that the Canberra aircraft in Singapore at the time were those of No. 45 Squadron, equipped with the B. Mk 15 (an upgraded B6), ground attack version with under-wing hardpoints.

Thanks go to **Alan Lewis**, the author of the article, and **Pat Soward**, Chairman of the 19th Signal Regiment Association for permission to use it. Hopefully, although secret at the time, more about the trials will come to light, adding to story of HM Forces in the Far East.

**Other Communications:** From RAFBPA Member **John Crooks**. Re The Second Man, Eastward Issue 58, Christmas 2020 page 15. 'I was at Butterworth 1956 -58 as a fireman. Whilst on my tour I spent a lot of time on airfield duties, sometimes day and night on crash crew. We were positioned next to the control tower and I remember a few of the lads that Don Brerton named in the Christmas issue. However I do not remember any WO Wright, but do remember one called Payne, who also had a moustache and two daughters. When looking at the photograph (below) in the newsletter, I am convinced that is the man next to SWO Preston. WO Payne I do remember was lovely man, who used to come down to the crash bay and talk to us, His daughters were often seen down at the swimming pool topping their sun tan up. Unfortunately, the lads on my crew, Ken Jordan, Ken Plant and Trevor Pedley are now deceased - they might have remembered him.'



A copy of John's e-mail was forwarded to Don who replied, 'I have tortured myself about the surname of our WO as being either Payne or Wright - my fellow tower personnel couldn't remember. Somehow I always had a doubt that there was a WO Wright in Air Traffic and Air Movements, so at last I am happy it was WO Payne.'

**A request for information:** An e-mail was received from **Bradley Scott**, grandson of **Robert Peter Hewins** who was at RAF Butterworth during the 1950s. "My grandfather, Robert Hewins, was stationed at RAF Butterworth 1956-58 and when speaking to him he remembered a few names: 'Taff' Jones, 'Taff' David, Morris Holesell, George Wood, 'Pop' Wrigley and a SP called Pete Riley. Do you have any information on him, or the others mentioned?" A search through *All Listed Contents*, compiled by Rowland Christopher in 2011 and the RAFBPA membership list brought up two names which were recognised by Robert Hewins...both named airmen being involved with the Mobile Oxygen Plant Section and one being a RAFBPA member.

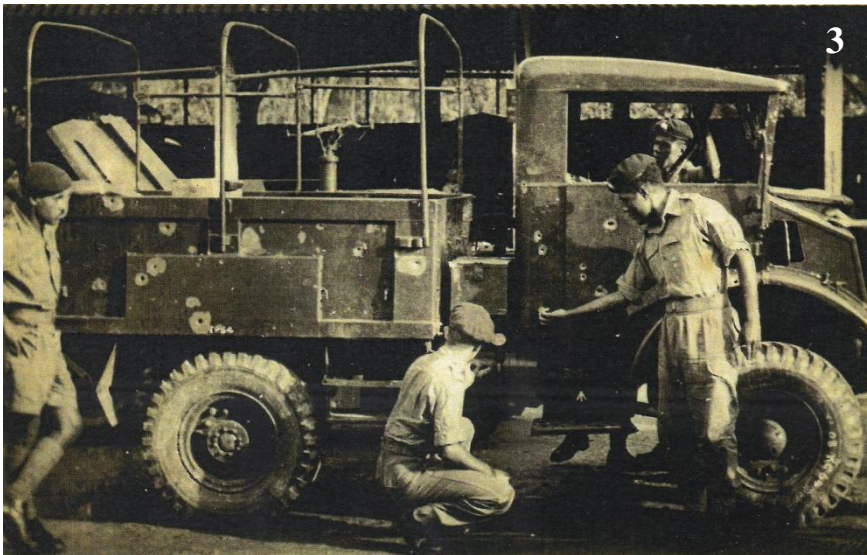
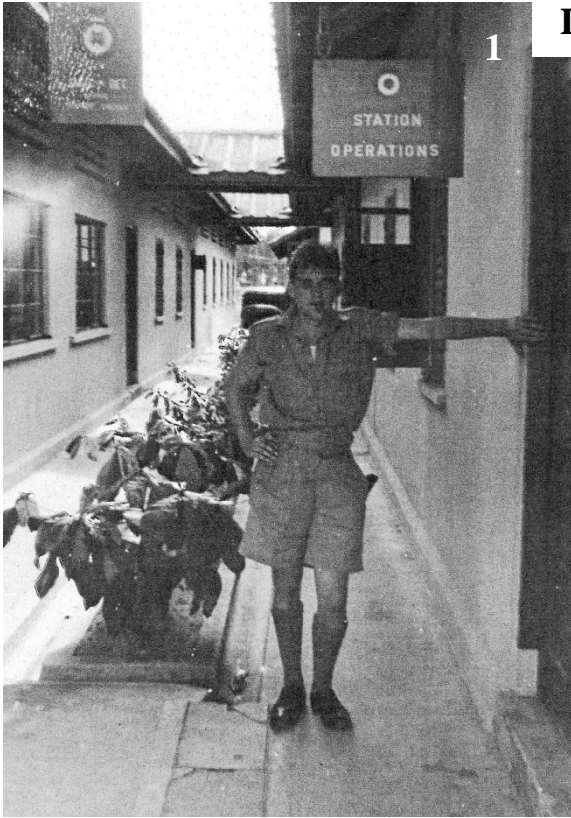
**Later news:** **Pete Hewins** - Junior Tech, Mobile Oxygen Plant, Station Workshop from March 1956 to February 1958) is welcomed as our latest member to the RAFBPA.

**When I was with the Army:** RAFBPA Member **Don Brereton** recounts his time with Station Operations at Butterworth. 'In December 1956, I was posted from Air Traffic Control to Station Operations, with Sqn Ldr Camp and Flt Lt Lawrence being the Officers i/c. Ops worked in liaison with 56 GLS (Ground Liaison Section) Army. There were a number of sections within GLS, including Mobile Wireless and Photographic Interpretation, and it was part of the 28th British Commonwealth Brigade, initially stationed at Taiping. I learnt more about actual war (The Emergency) while I was at Station Ops and the cost in casualties on both sides.'

'On the 17th June 1957, while on leave in Singapore, I was admitted to the British Military Hospital (below) in Singapore for a minor op and nine day stay! I didn't find out until October 2020 through the TV series 'Singapore Grip' that in February 1942 the Japanese had entered the hospital and murdered a large number of wounded soldiers and medical staff in the very ward I had been in. I am glad I didn't know at the time I was a patient.'



## Don's Pictures



1 Don outside Station Operations, RAF Butterworth.

2 Don (centre), Alexandra Hospital.

3,4 and 5 Ambushed vehicles

6. Dead CT brought in for identification

*All pictures this page are from Don Brereton.*

**Mrs Fleming at Butterworth:** RAFBPA Member **Mike Ward** (1955-57) has sent in material relating to that very popular WVS lady, **Mrs Dorothy Fleming** of Butterworth, which is reproduced below.

**SHE'S THE CREAM IN OUR COFFEE.** Take a plate, there's something for all tastes but you're going to be a gourmet. Shakespeare said music was the food of love so we'll start right there; take your pick, you can sample anything from Rimsky-Korsakov to Rock 'n Roll, now take in a movie, follow that with a helping of dancing classes and for a double top help yourselves to a game of darts; that's match for anyone, but you shouldn't be fed-up because here comes your next course. Tombola, with snooker and billiards for flavour, round it off with a 21st birthday cake with one or two savoury extras like motor launch trips, a football or cricket match, add to that the gravy of patience and understanding, flop into an armchair and read one of the 1200 library books at your finger tips, then wash the lot down with a cup of NAAFI coffee - if you can. That's a mighty lot for anyone to digest, but this particulat plateful belongs to Mrs Fleming. You see she has to be a glutton, to cope with all the work and worry that spells W.V.S.. If you want to meet an organising genius, a mother and champion of your cause in one then go along to the WVS lounge any night of the week.



Mrs Fleming started her WVS "career" in Germany. I say "career" but hers is no ordinary job. Her hours are as many as she can fit into twenty-four, her task gargantuan, her remunerations a grateful smile on the lips of blokes like you and me. Mrs F. was no novice when she started with the WVS for she had experience in both the catering and social side of the hotel business, so we are blessed with having someone who really knows her job.

In December 1954 Mrs F. came to Malaya of her own volition and has worked with the RAF at Kuala Lumpur, the Garrison Club at KL, Sandycroft and Butterworth. But make no mistakes working with the WVS is no luxury tour. Mrs F. hasn't always worked in the plushy WVS lounge at Butterworth. She smiles at the time when she was working with the army at Bentong, here she daren't move without an escort. How would you feel if you were travelling in a jeep and the driver casually told you that only a couple of weeks ago a sergeant sitting in the same seat was shot by C.T.'s? Or the time when the bridge crossing a gushing river had been blown up and the only way to cross it was by a lashed up plank. "Your turn next Mrs F. and be careful, the corporal before you has just fallen in!"

With this mosaic experience in store Mrs Fleming came to Butterworth in 1956. The result of her work at Butterworth is manifest to everyone, from the detailed organisation of the week's events to your own personal problems. Take one aspect of her work - the library; it is quite unique in the Far East and now contains 1200 books all of which has grown up under the guidance of Mrs F. There is something planned for your entertainment every night of the week as well as trips round the island, visits to the tin mines, rubber estates and anywhere else of interest that is suggested to her.

Unlike Germany Mrs F. says she regrets that she can't organise trips to breweries out here (don't think she's the only one with regrets on that score). Mrs F. says she likes Malaya and as you know although she went away some months ago she's only to glad to be back at Butterworth. That makes you think. doesn't it? Either there's something special about us or there's something special about Mrs Fleming, but whatever the reason we are pleased to have her here with us. If fact, can you imagine Butterworth without Mrs F? Wouldn't it be a drab and dismal place? Rather like coffee without sugar or milk - and don't say you like black coffee!

**The Coming of Age Cake!** Another snippet (below), written by Mrs Fleming for the WVS Bulletin No. 205, January 1957, was also sent in by Mike Ward: 'I have always thought it a great pity that servicemen who come of age when serving overseas seem to have memories of only a sore head and a nasty taste in the mouth, so I started a 21st Birthday evening. The airmen gave in their names (I checked up) and at the end of

the month they had an enormous cake. PSI gave me a grant for the ingredients (including four dozen eggs), a Flight Sergeant (catering) made a magnificent cake, weighing approximately 52 lbs. With marzipan and icing it was a marvellous sight. The names of the airmen were written in coloured icing. We had a free Tombola evening. A buffet was provided to which the airmen did full justice. The "birthday" airmen were presented with a key and a mascot. Cameras were very much in evidence during the cutting of the cake ceremony. The lounge was packed and the airmen all voted it a most enjoyable evening.'

**D. Fleming, R.A.F. Butterworth, Malaya.**



Mrs Doris Vera Fleming, WVS, RAAF Butterworth, was awarded the MBE in the 1963 New Year Honours List.

**Mike Ward** adds that his job at RAF Butterworth was that of Cpl i/c Civilian Pay, liaising with the Civilian



Labour Office next door to his place of work. Memorable names from the CLO included Mr Narendran, Patrick Koh, Lee Sing Tee, Yusouf and Ali. Mike adds "I knew Mr Narenden very well. He was a quiet spoken gentleman and as with him and other civilians I did not venture into conversation about their life during the Japanese occupation. In *Eastward* Christmas 2014, mention was made of the very attractive girls in the offices. These would include Violet Loy Kim Leng (TWHQ) and Dorothy Scully (FWHQ), a Eurasian. In the group photograph (page 18), Violet is seated next to myself, both of us being in front of Mr Narendran (with the pipe) with Dorothy being seated next to the gentleman in a jacket on the extreme right of the picture. In SHQ we had Fong Sieu Wan who also attended Patrick's farewell party on his departure to RAF Seletar. Mention has to be made of Fg Off Deas of Accounts who was also the paying officer on my civilian pay parades and rugby captain, we had a good rapport. He informed me that after leaving the RAF he would emigrate to Canada, but it

is not known if he did." In another communication Mike writes of the Jet Age Museum (Gloucester) where he is a member/volunteer. A number of pictures of the aircraft on display were included and specific mention was made of Javelin XH903 and Vulcan XM569. The Javelin was a 33 Squadron aircraft when the squadron was based in the UK prior to being reformed as a Bloodhound Mk II squadron at Butterworth. Mike, in his 2020 communication reports that "The Javelin XH903 is in great condition (engines not fitted but on display) and receives TLC at the Jet Age Museum (Gloucester). Also on display is a piece of the

runway from the factory airfield at Brockworth where the Javelin would have taken off to fly the short distance to the Moreton Valance site for fitment of further equipment. The runway at Brockworth was where the first British jet aircraft E29/39, took to the air in 1943 before going to Cranwell for flight tests. A full size replica of the E28/39 is on display beside the Javelin.

**Vulcan XM569:** This aircraft did visit Butterworth in the 60s. Mike mentions that the cockpit of the aircraft (there are no other parts of the aircraft left) is popular with visitors " The cockpit of Vulcan XM569 has TLC at the museum where I am a member/volunteer. The cockpit is always a key attraction for visitors who can have a conducted tour inside the cockpit. At present we have, as members of the museum, two pilots and two navigators who were crew members in XM569,"

XM569 had an extended stay at Butterworth when the port foot brake seized when landing on the 21st April 1967, resulting in the aircraft veering off the runway and requiring a major repair. The aircraft, after a long stay in RAAF hands, showed what they had been up to when photographed in Malta in October 1967 (Ref: *Eastward* Summer 2008).

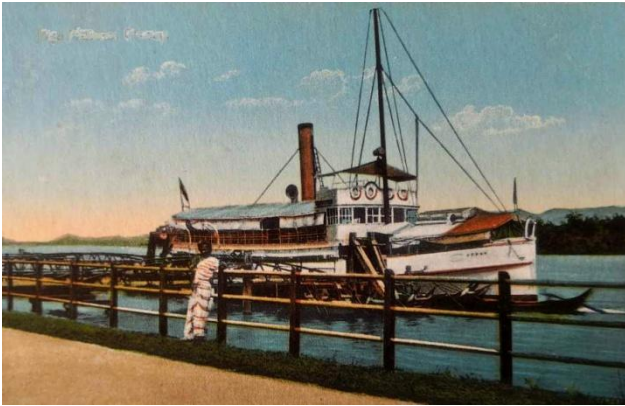


Mike, still in uniform to this day



Malta 1967

**Penang's Iconic Ferry Service.** A communication from Bob Margolis in December 2020 mentioned the future of the Penang Ferry Service starting the 1st January 2012 as reported in the press. Bob writes: The ferries have been very mildly modernized in the 73 years that I have known them. The "greatest" innovations were probably the twin decks and cover over most of the ferries. Since 1997 they've been unchanged, the exception being the ferry terminal being shifted a couple of times. They have had very long lives and a number were bought second hand after giving faithful service elsewhere.'



ferries only the *Bagan* survived the war, being used at the start of the war to transport evacuees to Singapore and then to Sumatra where it was pressed into Japanese service. Following the end of the war four military landing craft were converted into ferries, two being simply modified to carry passengers and named *Senagin* (bottom left) and *Lidah*. The other two

To add to this 'history' five were built in the 1960s in a Hong Kong shipyard with another built in 1975. Going back in time there were the pre-war passenger (rail) steamers in service, the *Elizabeth*, *Mary* and *Violet* (left), along with purpose built ferries, the latest, *Bagan* (below) being brought into service in 1938. Of these pre-war



vessels were re-fitted by having a new passenger deck each added, and named *Talang* and *Teggiri* (bottom right) respectively. All were in service until replaced at a later date by purpose built vessels



Now all has changed again. 'On December 31 2020, after the final journey between Penang and the mainland, the 'traditional' ferry service that transports both passengers and cars across the channel ceased to operate. Foot passengers are diverted to the Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal to take the 'fast boats' across the stretch of water, and there will no longer be ferries available to transport four wheeled vehicles, but the ferry *Pulau Angsa* is to remain in service to carry motorcycles and bicycles over the next 18 months before a new water bus and vehicle transport comes into service.'

Note: A more detailed history of the Penang ferries *Brief History of the Penang Ferry-2018* is included with this copy of '*Eastward*' as a supplement.

A later search for the earlier ferries brought up the following picture of the Butterworth Ferry which in the 1930s operated between the Bagan Tuan Kecil Pier (Butterworth) and Kedah Pier (Georgetown).



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**110 Squadron XI 1959/60 RAAF Butterworth Malaya.** The following picture, sent in by **Brian Lloyd**, appeared in Astral 2020. Brian added that there was no other text to accompany the picture except that Don Roberts (third from the left, sitting) was a Wolverhampton professional and that the club sent out a full team kit (gold and black). Can anyone add to the occasion?



## The RAF Career of Tony Parrini (continued)

**Part 2 - The Far East.** In Part 1 Tony had returned from his detachment to Majunga in October 1968 and, after six weeks leave in the UK, began an accompanied three year tour at Butterworth.

'Whilst in the UK on leave we squeezed in visits to every relative we could think of! We returned to the Chandos Restaurant and Pub just off Trafalgar Square a few times, took in a few films in the West End until eventually the six weeks were come and gone and I was off to Brize Norton for the trip to Malaysia. This time travel was in the luxury of a Vickers VC10, one of the new "Shiny Fleet" as it was known.



First to Cyprus, then to Muharraq (Bahrain) without incident. The VC10 eventually arrived at RAF Gan, another tropical paradise in the middle of nowhere. We were to stop over for a few hours and unwind before the final leg to Singapore. We disembarked to the Air Movements Lounge for refreshments and a good wash. After a while a message came over the tannoy, "Would Flying Officer Parrini please report to the Duty Movements Officer". Getting directions I made my way, curious as to why I had been summoned. I knocked on the door and was invited in. "Whoops, sorry" came the voice of the DAMO, "I thought I recognised your name as one of the WRAFs I did a course with!" Very embarrassed and apologetic, he sent me back to the lounge to resume my stopover meal.

One must remember that a six month tour on Gan (now known as the Maldives) was totally unaccompanied and was generally "men only", so the opportunity to engage with females passing through was always being attempted. I understand that many WRAF cabin staff volunteered for the Singapore run; perhaps this was the reason for the six hour stop overs at Gan?

Arrival in Singapore at RAF Changi was like walking into a steam oven compared to the dry atmosphere I had experienced in Majunga. For those not posted to stations such as RAF Changi, Seletar and Tengah, or the many Army and Navy establishments in Singapore there was accommodation in transit messes at RAF Changi. In my case I had to wait for the next scheduled flight to RAAF Butterworth a few days later. I can't recall making any excursions away from Changi, but eventually my aircraft awaited me on the pan back at the airfield.



What a shock! There it was, a bulbous heap of an aircraft with huge open doors below the cockpit, sitting on its tailwheel with Kiwis painted on the side (The 'Kiwi' roundel was introduced in 1960). This was to be my

second encounter with a Bristol Freighter - a few years previous to joining the RAF, I had travelled in a "Frightener" with Cross Channel Airways to Holland for a holiday. But this aircraft seemed different - parachute seats and harnesses everywhere, and no carpets, just 90,000 rivets flying in close formation!

It's worth a quick recap at this point - it's late November 1968; I am 22 and commissioned for almost 2½ years after six months at OTCU. I've completed the Supply Officer's Course at Upwood, a Fuels Handling Course and Sea Survival Course. I've served a full two years as a Pilot Officer during which time I shadowed a Warrant Officer at No.6 Site at Stafford, been OC SCAF at RAF Ternhill, managed a team of Royal Pioneers at a furniture depot at RAF Hartlebury and been detachment Supply and Movements Officer for six months in Majunga. Now Flying Officer Parrini arrives in Malaya as OC Technical Supply Flight at RAF Support Unit, RAAF Butterworth. So whilst my credentials might be a bit limited, I have been about a bit!. I include this because on various occasions during the tour I was aware of comments from the "Plumbers" and "Fairies" (Armourers and Radar Fitters) to the effect of "who does this green behind the ears schoolboy think he is?"

Compared with tents and tin huts in Majunga, Butterworth was luxurious. They had real buildings, tarmacked roads, green grass and vegetation, palm trees, running water coming through taps, a telephone network on the camp, comfortable single rooms in a palatial Officers' Mess, magazines and newspapers from the UK, real shops and much more. For me this is a new paradise where I know my future wife will be happily married to an RAF officer under 25 years old - that age is significant as you'll read later.

My predecessor, whose name escapes me, greeted me at Air Movements where I was also welcomed by Phil Brightwell who I trained with earlier. The bags and cases were loaded into the back of the Sherpa and thus began the handover with a quick tour of the base, pointing out the important landmarks, the Supply Squadron, various compounds, engineering sections, swimming pool, messes and shops. That handover was so insignificant and I think it was about all I received as he was keen to pack his bags and get home for Christmas! I was supposed to be taking in all this information but bearing the travelling etc. over the past few days I was desperately in need of some sleep! However, I was eventually booked into the Mess, a beautiful white colonial style building and given keys and a Bar Number (most important) - and so to the bar for a few well earned beers! Lots of handshakes and welcomes from all sorts of people, fellow RAF, RAAF, Army and PM Nurses, and many more that I'll get to know better as time progresses. Eventually I reached my room in a colonial style single storey building a few yards away. I recall it being cool under the trees, and with mosquito netting over the windows and swinging doors just like you see in Westerns. I unpacked my bags and got myself sorted out for my first day at work in my new role.

I don't think I'd ever realised what was about to hit me. The OC Supply Squadron was a very quiet individual who didn't seem to command much authority. Equally his deputy was a flight lieutenant who was a quiet academic who didn't relish being in the Far East at all. They both lived on Penang Island with their families and if they had a social life I wasn't to be part of it! So I appeared to be very much left to my own devices to "get on with it". I learnt most from my Warrant Officer (Bill Lamb) who ruled Tech Supply Flight in a very businesslike way through years of experience...Bill Lamb treated me like his own son and guided me into the job over the next few weeks.

I discovered that I was the officer ultimately in charge of the Stores Section at the Marine Craft Unit at Glugor on Penang Island, and for another one at the top of Western Hill. I was also the ground fuels officer for the RAF Support Unit, Glugor and Western Hill and had responsibility for aviation fuel dumps sited at various locations across northern Malaysia where our helicopters ferried troops and supplies for jungle warfare courses. Then there was the matter of No. 33 Squadron! Located on the far side of the airfield was a large array of Bloodhound missiles cooking in the sun! These were about to be declared redundant and their

supply officer (Dave Thompson) also had his posting notice and was about to be posted home. When he left I was to become the supply officer for 33 Squadron (*below*) as well.



Tech Supply Flight was located in a very large tin shed with various offices located there. Mr Narendran was a large well spoken Indian Gentleman who ran the shipping desk. He dealt with the import and export of "Personal Effects (PEs)" for people posted in and out, and eventually he was to be hit by the export of thousands of tons of equipment when the "Withdrawal from the Far East" was announced. Mr Narendran commanded much respect - his knowledge of PE Entitlements, Bills of Lading and booking of sea containers was most valuable to everyone.

Corporal Mick Joy was our qualified fuels handling NCO. He saw to the daily routine of ground fuel deliveries, maintenance and manning of the fuel pumps at the MT Section, and to the paperwork for the various daily, weekly and monthly checks of fuel stocks including the tanks of diesel fuel at various water heating locations on the base. But the real "gem" was having to go out to do checks at the fuel locations at Glugor, Western Hill and at the Jungle Warfare clearings. On a number of occasions I insisted on going out with Mick Joy and we would book a helicopter to take us to the jungle clearings, Sometimes it would be a Belvedere, other occasions a Whirlwind, and if there were no fresh drums to deliver we would travel in a Twin Pioneer (*right*), which gave a most exciting experience; quite how these little aircraft got in and out of some of the tiny strips in the middle of nowhere, I'll never know!



Mick Joy won an AOC's commendation for his work and I think he was awarded a medal of some kind. He had taken a truck laden with drums of aviation fuel for delivery to one of the major clearings. He went with a couple of locally enlisted armed guards who were to keep him safe and assist him when necessary. The vehicle came under fire and arrived back at Butterworth with bullet holes in the bodywork and a shattered windscreen. Luckily no one had been hit but it was the first and only occasion of this kind I had witnessed.

Once I'd settled into the job as a "singly" living in the Mess, I became interested in joining the local radio station (Radio RAAF Butterworth, the voice of the Australian Air Force in Malaysia and with dings on the xylophone). As I lived across the road from the radio station I was soon enlisted to do a couple of Breakfast Shows from 5.30 to 8 am, the purpose of which was to rouse personnel from their sleep and inform them of any changes to the bus and coach schedules. These were the days of the new clock radios - everyone had their set and it was our job to play as much loud and boisterous music as possible to get them going, especially the married personnel over on Penang Island. I remember making announcements such as "those still at home on Jalan Tokong hoping to catch the 6.45 bus to the ferry, you've just missed it as its now ten to seven." It was great fun, very amateurish and announcing the radio station with three dings in purposely

accentuated plummy English really infuriated the Aussies. Later, after getting married and living on Penang Island, I returned as "Uncle Tony" to broadcast a children's programme on Sunday afternoons with phone-ins, storytelling and music for the youngsters.

However various people in SHQ and in the Mess knew of my intentions to get married and bring my bride out to Malaysia, irrespective of the fact that I was under 25, the age at which officers qualified for overseas allowances, married quarters and other overseas entitlements. I don't recall getting any help or advice from my boss, but the Station Commander (Wg Cdr Bob Sillars), Stn Admin Officer (Flt Lt Eric Johncock) and OC Accounts (Flt Lt John Pegg), whilst warning against being married under 25, couldn't quench my certainty that I could manage. I viewed a number of flats and apartments near the base that would have been sufficient and was assured that Anne, as a qualified nurse, could get a job locally or at the RAAF Hospital. A date was set for Saturday 19 July 1969, letters, tapes and phone calls were exchanged and Anne and her family started to make all the plans. My colleague in Air Movements (Phil Brightwell) guestimated that if I could get permission to take most of July on UK leave he could get me on a low cost indulgence flight at the start of a Far East Reinforcement Exercise (not Bersatu Padu which took place in 1970). This was a major exercise to show the Far East that the UK could reinforce the area at short notice with the V-Force and all its attendant aircraft and equipment.

One of my secondary duties was as OC of one of the airmen's barrack blocks. The night before a CO's inspection, I had supervised the tidying of the block and by the time of the inspection at 9 am next morning I was well satisfied that the place was clean and tidy, and I was also in possession of a list of outstanding works services covering such things as dripping taps, loose floorboards, badly fitting blinds etc.

The inspection took place without much comment, no "well done" or similar was given to pass on to the airmen. A few hours later I was instructed to report to the CO's office with my hat on! This meant trouble, and I wondered what had been discovered during the inspection. Escorted by Eric Johncock, I was wheeled in front of Wg Cdr Sillars and OC Admin (Sqn Ldr Fielding), saluted and stood to attention waiting for a *bollocking*...

"You obviously weren't listening to the BBC World Service news last night."

"No sir"

"Well if you had been listening, subject to your Station Commander's approval, your pay and conditions can be changed. But your barrack block was in such a state today that, in your case, I can't give such an approval."

At this point everyone burst out laughing, the joke had been on gullible Fg Off Parrini. Denis Healey (Secretary of State for Defence) had announced the introduction of the military salary and that married officers under 25 years qualified for all the benefits that previously applied to those of 25 years plus.

"Go and speak to the Families Officer and choose a married quarter on the island."

"Book yourself and your wife a duty passage back after your wedding."

"Buy a car now as you can afford one!"

It was my lucky day. Suddenly the whole picture had changed and the prospect of living on next to nothing compared with the rest of the officer corps melted away.

July suddenly arrived. Belfasts, Britannias and Hercules started to arrive and Phil Brightwell waved me farewell on one of the Britannia's back to the UK via Gan and Cyprus. As the aircraft was fitted out for cargo carrying I think I was the only passenger travelling to RAF Gan, but we filled up the other seats at various stops following Gan, before finally arriving at RAF Brize Norton. I took a train to Paddington where Anne would be waiting. Proudly sporting my virgin moustache, I walked down the platform into the arms of my fiancée (who I hadn't seen since the previous November) to be greeted with "If you're going to go down the aisle with me, you can shave that off for a start."

A week or so later we were married and as man approached the moon (Apollo 11 Spaceflight July 1969) and landed on it for the first time, so too did I manage to reach my destination for our honeymoon and, although the timings may be in dispute, both Neil Armstrong and Tony Parrini took their giant steps on previously unexplored territory for the first time.

**If You Go Down to the Jungle Today...** *'You're sure of a big surprise!* On page 13 of this issue Don Brereton(1956-57) states that he learnt more about the Malayan Emergency while in Station Ops working with the Army and not solely with the RAF. This collection of short stories was the catalyst initiated by that statement, first made during a telephone call, and is about the Malayan Police Field Force, the operational arm of the Malayan Police who, among other duties, operated from remote jungle forts.

**Of Elephants and (Police) Men:** From *The Jungle Beat* by Roy Follows\*. 'The mood of the jungle here was quiet, almost sinister; we heard and saw nothing. After a time we came across elephant tracks. As they were



heading east, I decided to follow them, for it would make the going easier for us. Their track looked as if it had been made by a bulldozer - on either side saplings had been trampled down and snapped off. Their huge fresh droppings suggested they were not far in front of us. By the different sizes of footprints it looked as if there were several young ones among the herd. For several hundred yards we followed in the wake of the elephants, then we heard sounds of tearing foliage and the snapping of branches. It grew louder and, rounding a bend, we saw the herd in a clearing. I had to try to get a photograph and began to move closer to them. Sgt Shaffie (*image left*) warned me to be very careful; they had young and were dangerous! I was within about 20 yards of them and began taking photographs - one of adults slowly hinged his ears round, then a second one threw back his massive head and pointed his trunk up in the air. They all started to drum the ground with their feet, and then the trumpeting began. As it reached a crescendo the adults, with trunks held high, charged towards me. I ran as they came thundering down on me with a sound of splintering trees and tearing undergrowth. The air was filled with a drumming roar

which vibrated the earth. They were not great lumbering beasts anymore but extraordinarily fleet of foot, and gaining on me. As I ran I unhooked the hand-grenade from my belt ready, as a last resort, to toss amongst them. I shouted at the men to drop their packs and run too, and the jungle became littered with rucksacs as we made good our escape. Gradually the bellowing, trumpeting and huffing died away as they blundered off in another direction. When we eventually crept back to retrieve our packs, there was a giant footprint next to mine - it had been a near thing!

Later PC Tahir, the platoon's ladies' man, commented that he was disappointed that I'd failed to collect some elephants' tear drops - to the Malays the tears are priceless, a few sprinkled on the girl a man wishes to marry, and she cannot refuse him. How one actually obtains tear drops from a crying elephant still has me puzzled.' *Even more puzzling to be taken from a charging elephant if one has the courage (or stupidity) to stand in front of it!*

Another story concerning wild jungle elephants comes from Dennis Wombell\*\* in *The Building of a Malayan Jungle Fort - Fort Kemar*. 'An interlude in my own work at the fort presented itself when two Orang Asli came running into the camp from the longhouse down the river to tell me one of their men had been attacked and injured by a bear and they needed our help. The injured man had stumbled across a female with cubs, and in this situation the Malayan bear - in common with the female of all bear species - is very

dangerous! I immediately took a small patrol with food for a couple of days and we arrived at the Asli ladang (settlement) by late afternoon and found the injured man had been almost scalped by the bear's claws. Whilst my medical orderly attended to his injuries and I radioed for a helicopter casualty evacuation for the following day, the men prepared to make camp on a flat sandy area below the longhouse, which was a little way up the hill. Clearing the site was soon completed and fires lit to prepare our evening meal before settling down for the night.

Then all hell broke loose! Two men tore into our camp shouting "Elephant, elephant, come to my house, run, run, hurry up!" We wasted no time in unceremoniously stuffing everything we could lay our hands on into our packs and with the rest in our arms fled like a pack of tinkers to the longhouse. (*Note: Dennis Wombell doesn't mention the casualty when the site was hastily evacuated but it may be assumed he was taken to the longhouse as the following day he was safely casevaced to Ipoh Hospital*).

At the longhouse the men were given an area at one end of the longhouse where they could sort out their kit and put down their blankets. I was given a very small room which projected from the rear of the house. So far, no elephant!

Then, just after I had fallen asleep, I was awakened by screaming and shouting and felt the floor under me trembling as the earth shook beneath the building. It took no stretch of the imagination to know that the elephant had not only arrived, but had arrived at the rear of the building and was very close to my projecting room. Then the entire population of the longhouse, after making flaming torches out of split bamboos which they had plunged into the fire which burned in the middle of the floor on an earth hearth, hurtled out of the building, waving their torches, banging tin cans and shouting abuse at the elephant who, upon finding there was no female elephant to be found after all, retreated back into the jungle.

Having joined in the general mayhem, my men and I returned to our blankets for a good night's sleep. Or so we thought! For, about an hour later, the same thing happened again - my floor shook, the earth trembled and there was a great deal of thudding and trumpeting outside, seemingly uncomfortably close to my room and with the same result. This time however the Orang Asli appeared less interested, even rather bored. Fewer turned out, the burning torches had become burning stumps and the initial 'general mayhem' might be better described as a 'shooing away'. Anyway it did the trick and jumbo retired, or sort of. He continued to snuffle, grunt and thud around for the rest of the night, seemingly much too close to where I lay, but no one could be bothered to get up anymore. I of course lay awake for the rest of the night listening to the thud and rumbling of this very large elephant convinced that at any moment he would be joining me in my very small sticking-out room.

I was glad, and relieved, to see the light of the dawn and after breakfast I was invited by the Asli headman to go down to see what was to have been our over-night campsite. Everything, including any tins we had left behind, was totally flattened.

Mid-morning, the casevac helicopter arrived and our casualty was safely removed to hospital...there were times during the night when I thought I might be joining him!

\*Police Lieutenant S. R. Follows No. 4 PFF

\*\* Police Lieutenant D. Wombell 18 Federal Jungle Company

**Daily Life inside the Jungle Forts:** The idea behind strategically placing jungle forts in remote aborigine territories, manned by members of the PFF, was not only intended to win over the local aborigines but also serve as advance intelligence posts. Roy Follows was appointed commander of Fort Brooke in October 1954 and walked to the site from the Cameron Highlands over two days...helicopters being for the privileged few! His chief contact with the local aborigines was the headman Mentri Awol who 'would shamle into my

room, and at once his eyes would start to ramble over my table, searching for some new wonder to examine. To him, a torch or a pair of scissors was the height of technology and always a source of curiosity and delight. He also adored magazines, whether upside down or the right way up - it made no difference. I can see him now, standing there like some jungle goblin, one hand holding his blowpipe, the other scratching his belly, his bloodshot eyes roaming round and always coming to rest when they spotted cigarettes. A grin would appear, exposing a few, very black, teeth.'

'Among the radio signals received from HQ was "On the next airdrop, a supply of soap will be included, and this to be distributed to all the aborigines on Mentri's *ladang*." The aborigines had never seen a bar of soap in their lives; they'd probably eat it, or try to light a fire with it - they certainly wouldn't put it to its proper use. I can only imagine some intrepid desk warrior, on a visit to the fort, had been so overcome by the aboriginal pong, or worse still, had become infested with head and body lice, that it was decided the aborigines needed cleaning up. Anyway there it was, boxes of soap arrived, courtesy of the RAF, so I sent for Mentri and a couple of his brighter lads and set about enlightening them on its use. Once they got the general idea, I packed them off with a box each, with instructions to issue one bar to each member of the *ladang*.'

The next day Mentri was back asking for more soap. When questioned where seven days worth of soap had gone, he invited Roy to accompany him to the river where he explained the soap had been used as instructed but then thrown away...some 150 bars of soap, almost in mint condition, had gone into the river! HQ was duly informed and no more soap arrived.

Airdrops arrived on Fridays. 'Two RAF Valettas would come weaving their way amongst the mountains, fly



low over the fort and launch their parachute-borne loads above the DZ. Usually their aim was excellent, and boxes of ammunition and bundles of barbed wire, petrol, clothes, medicines and rations would float down on target. Inevitably there were misjudgements; loads would go astray and land in the compound or threaten our frail huts. On one memorable occasion, when a parachute failed to open, five 4-gallon tins of petrol landed like a bomb on the cookhouse and went straight through the roof,

burst and showered petrol all around. Only the swift action by the cook prevented a disaster.'

'The PPF supply department was pretty good, all things considered, and one of the items I requested was a petrol engined water pump which I happened to know was rusting away, unused, in the stores."Your pump will be on the next available helicopter" was the reply. I was delighted; it would be much more efficient than my team of aborigines, trudging up from the river with their 4-gallon drums and bamboo containers. Sure enough, a few days later a chopper duly turned up. An immaculately dressed senior officer, festooned with cameras like an American tourist stepped out and, no water-pump! In the end I never did get the pump. After several more requests I received a signal to say it had seized up and was unserviceable. The water carriers carried on.'

'The police officer with the camera wasn't my only visitor, and most of them were nothing but a damn nuisance. One wanted the slit trenches moved further from the perimeter fence, another visitor soon

afterwards, thought they should be nearer to it. A third said he'd seen a much superior dropping zone about three quarters of a mile away, and suggested I should transfer our activities there. In answer to how the supplies would be moved to the fort he suggested that 'a narrow gauge railway could be laid, and the small trucks pulled, presumably, by a miniature steam engine, would do the job. When I couldn't even get a simple water pump I could imagine the likelihood of obtaining a narrow gauge railway with locomotive!'

**Inside the Longhouse:** 'The aborigine longhouse next to Fort Brooke was built of bamboo and roofed with attap, and raised three feet or so above the ground. *Metri Awol's*, typically, was some 100 feet long and 40 of his people lived in it. Forty people, all apparently coughing their guts up and spitting between the slats of the bamboo floor, if they had a good enough aim, on to the chickens that lived underneath. I (Roy Follows) shall never forget my first impressions as I climbed up the rickety steps for a meeting and gingerly picked my way across the springy bamboo floor. It was gloomy for a start, and thick with smoke from the continuously burning fire in the centre of the longhouse - no wonder they never stopped coughing.'

**Food additives.** After the meeting Roy was invited to 'dinner', a fish cooked inside a small length of bamboo placed in the hot ashes. 'Once cooked it was taken out and put on a large leaf, where everyone helped themselves. Picture the scene, if you can, The longhouse, lit only by chinks of light filtering through the gaps in the bamboo walls; rancid with smoke and the smell of human bodies, and now of roasted fish; full of dark shapes, men, women and children squatting round the fire and digging into the fish with their fingers, some of them dry and flaky with *korab*, a disease which shed bits of skin into the food. A visit to the longhouse of tribal headman Busu Jamin at a later date was described as being 'even worse than *Metri Awol's*; smokier and smellier, with an even more raucous chorus of hawking and spitting.' The visit 'meant being invited to eat with Busu and the others, and I could not decently refuse. The meal consisted of the inevitable root vegetables and fish cooked in bamboo, served on a large communal leaf. But it wasn't the food I objected to as much as the company. One man in particular was suffering from the worst case of *korab* I'd ever seen - his whole body was covered in scaly flaking skin, including his skinny arms and gnarled fingers which darted into, and all over, the food. I knew that if I stayed there a minute longer I should be violently sick! A policeman's lot is not always a happy one, but interesting, you must admit.'

*Note: Busu Jamin* was party to the wartime murder of the anthropologist H. D. (Pat) Noone by his cousin *Uda*, who blowpiped Pat as he attempted to escape when attacked. The murder was made the subject of a taboo and only came to light in the mid-50's through an aborigine elder. Headman *Metri Awol*, mentioned above, was pro-Japanese during the war and Roy Follows was not always certain about his association with the hostile aborigine, *Pangoi*, who was headman of the upper Broke area during the war and was loyal to the communists, especially *Ah Ming*, who organised the support of the aborigines of the region to the communist cause. Eventually *Pangoi's* people sought protection in Fort Brooke, to be later followed by *Pangoi* himself. Both *Busu* and *Pangoi* continued a 'hidden' liaison with *Ah Ming* while under the protection of the fort with the intention of aiding *Ah Ming* to ambush and kill Roy Follows. *Ah Ming* was finally eliminated by a New Zealand SAS squadron, guided by *Alok*, the son of *Pangoi*. *Alok* had developed a dislike for the CT's over a period of time and the elimination of *Ah Ming* resulted in him collecting a healthy reward from the Government.

Through later meetings with senior aborigines that were around at the time of the death of Pat Noone, Richard Noone (brother of Pat, and post-war Adviser, Department on Aborigines, Kuala Lumpur) collected sufficient evidence to put *Uda* on trial (there is no further mention of *Busu* as it was *Uda* who used the blowpipe on Pat and followed up using his parang to give the final blow that killed him). Apparently, after the attack, on his return to the longhouse *Uda* was challenged as to the whereabouts of Pat by the headman who then accompanied *Uda* to where the body lay. *Uda* then ran away, later to reappear a few times later visiting different aborigine groups whilst on his way into Perak. He never returned and in the mid 50s his

whereabouts was unknown - maybe he had changed his name and joined a hostile aborigine group? However Richard Noone was satisfied with the account given and didn't pursue bringing Uda to justice as he, Uda, *already 'would have been aware that Pat had already sentenced him to death through tribal law by being killed by one of his own kind - for Pat Noone was also of the Temiar!'*

### Some images Associated with the Jungle Forts



***Top left:*** Scottish Aviation Pioneer CG.1 STOL aircraft used for resupplying jungle outposts.

***Top right:*** Fort Kemar Senoi guard with blowpipe.

***Bottom left:*** No. 4 PFF. Roy Follows seated right.

***Bottom right:*** Jungle Fort Police Aboriginal Guard.