



RAF Butterworth/Penang Association



Chairman: Tony Parrini Treasurer: Len Wood Secretary: Pete Mather
(formed: 30th August 1996 at the Casuarina Hotel, Batu Ferringhi, Penang Island)

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2003

Aims of the Association

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.

Chairman's Corner



Eastward



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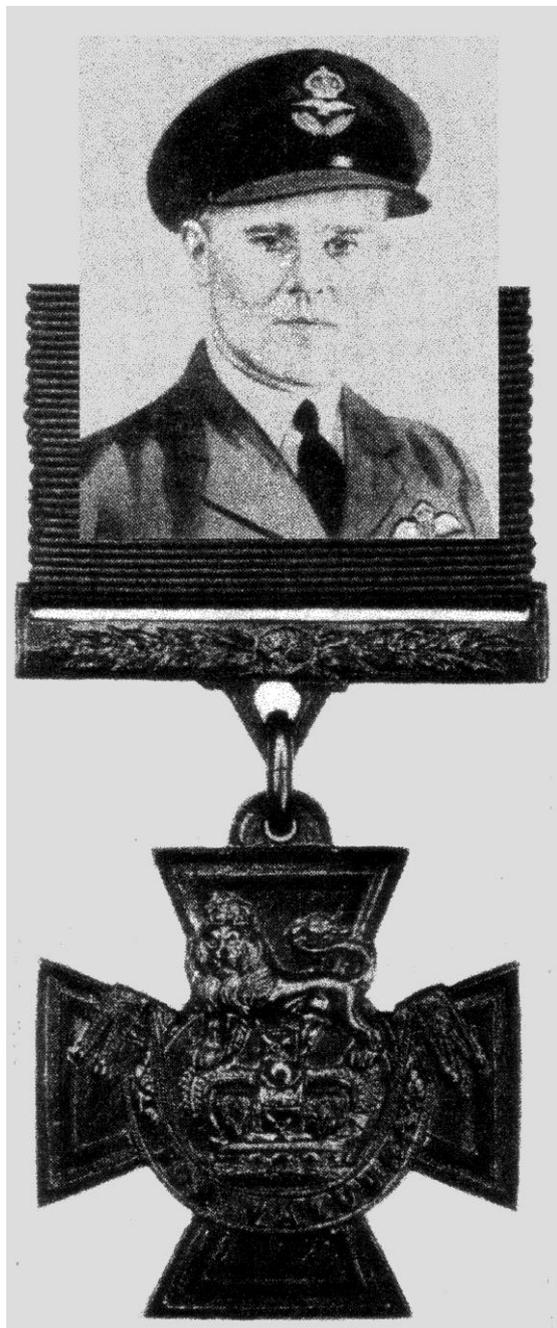


Annual Reunion 2003

The Annual Reunion for 2003 is to be held on the weekend of 11th and 12th October at the Ramada Jarvis Hotel in Solihull. The cost will be £73.00 per person for Dinner, Bed, Breakfast and Buffet Lunch. The cost for Saturday dinner only will be £20.50. A booking form is enclosed with this Newsletter.

Squadron Leader A.S.K. Scarf, V.C.

In the last Newsletter our illustrious Chairman mentioned a holder of the Victoria Cross associated with Butterworth.



Sqn Ldr Arthur Stewart King Scarf, V.C., of 62 Sqn on detachment from RAF Tengah to RAF Butterworth, was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross on 21 June 1946 after Far East P.O.W.'s revealed details of the Blenheim pilot's exceptional courage in pressing home an attack on the invading Japanese.

His was the sole aircraft to take off from Butterworth on 9th December 1941 during an intense Japanese raid on the airfield. He flew his lone bomber to Singora, Thailand, where the Japanese were landing but was heavily attacked by enemy aircraft on both the inward and outward journeys. Mortally wounded, he force-landed at Alor Star and died two hours later in hospital.

37693 Squadron Leader Scarf died on Tuesday, 9th December 1941, age 29. He is buried in Taiping War Cemetery, Malaysia, in grave ref 2. G. 14.

Taiping War Cemetery was created by the Army after the cessation of hostilities with Japan for the reception of graves brought from the Malayan battlefields and numerous temporary burial grounds.

Sqn Ldr Scarf's body was recovered from Alor Star and taken to Taiping for interment in 1947.

A barrack block at RAF Tengah was named in honour of Arthur Scarf and Royal Air Force aircraft VC10 XV 109 was named 'Arthur Scarf VC'. This aircraft possibly took the first contingent of 33 Sqn Bloodhound missile ground crew from Butterworth to the UK in the late 1960's.

Member Bill Bohannon responded in magnificent detail to our Chairman's challenge and wins a free drink as offered in the last Newsletter.

Ava Gardner

Further pictures received from Ron Glover (March 1953 – March 1955). Pictured with Miss Ava Gardner is Sqn Ldr N. P. W. Hancock, C.O. of 33 Sqn at this time. Many thanks to Ron.



Miss Gardner was featured in the last Newsletter arriving at Butterworth. A green-eyed brunette, once voted the world's most beautiful woman, she featured in films such as *The Killers* (1946), *Mogambo* (1953), *The Barefoot Contessa* (1954) and *The Night of the Iguana* (1964). She was married to Mickey Rooney, Artie Shaw and Frank Sinatra – but not at the same time.

Changi Incident

By Don Brereton

June 1957, Marty O'Keefe and Dave 'Scouse' Martin decided that we should go down to Singapore for a couple of weeks leave before we all went home from our stint at R.A.F. Butterworth, North Malaya. I went along with that and told them to make the arrangements. They booked us in for thirteen days at the 'Toc-H' in Ascott Road. This was a semi-religious organisationa started I believe by the famous Padre 'Woodbine Willie' in Work War One. Through our friends in Air Movements we got a flight down in a Valetta which I felt a little nervous about. We stopped for a couple of hours at R.A.F. Kuala Lumpur on the way, so by the time we got to R.A.F. Changi I was to say the least very very thirsty.

A lift had been fixed up at Changi and a Standard Vanguard took us at our request to the N.A.A.F.I. club. There we decided to have a very cold Tiger beer. That went down very quickly so we had another. Then we decided we were hungry so we would have a meal before we left. I am sure I had something as exotic as double egg and chips. After the meal we all became thirsty again and had another drink. After a while we became a little bored with the N.A.A.F.I. and somebody suggested we go to the Malcolm Club. We didn't know what that was but it sounded good so we went. It was even quieter than the N.A.A.F.I. but we still had a couple more drinks.

Then I spotted the piano. It was right in the middle of the room. I nudged Dave and suggested we have a sing song. The other two thought it was a bit quiet but it seemed like a great idea to me. It wasn't long before Dave was playing and I was singing some o the , I must admit, a little bawdy Squadron songs that we sang at Butterworth. Strangely nobody else joined in as they did at Butterworth. Oh well, I thought, maybe they don't know the words. Then suddenly I knew we were in trouble. Two women in white service-type dresses were coming towards us at a high rate of knotts. The look on their faces said it all. I don't think they were familiar with the type of songs we were singing.

One of them did the talking. "Stop singing. Close the piano. Finish your drinks and leave", she told us in a voice that one didn't argue with. They stood there while we did just that. Somebody had ordered a taxi for us and it was waiting for us outside.

With the eyes of everybody in the room watching us we picked up our

bags and with our heads held high we made the best exit we could.

What happened when we arrived at the Toc-H is another story.

That should have been the end of the story and it was until 2003. It was then that I started to subscribe to the R.A.F. Changi newsletter. I took advantage of an offer for half price back issues. To my amazement in the Christmas 2000 edition were the ladies who had worked in the Malcolm Club from 1956 to 1958. I was sure that the two ladies standing there were the ones who had supervised our departure. The photograph was taken outside the club. The item with the photograph offered to pass any letters on so of course I wrote. I asked her if she remembered the incident, which I described in my letter. What a nice girl. I got a very friendly reply saying she didn't remember it but was sorry if she had been a bit bossy. She, Ann, was normally the quiet one so she thought it was probably Eileen who had taken care of us. She always looked after that kind of thing.

With the letter she sent another photograph of them both and on this one Eileen wasn't smiling and I am sure she was the one

After I had finished writing this article I was telling an ex R.A.F. friend of mine 'Bart' Bartholomew who is an ex-Changi-ite and now lives in San Francisco and asking him if he knew the ladies in question. He couldn't remember them but he did remember that you had to pay a deposit of one Malay dollar on your glass. I'm sure you believe me when I tell you I remember paying the deposit but in the rush to get us out I am positive I didn't get it back, so they still owe me three dollars!



Looking for friends of Jim M. Campbell

On behalf of Jim M. Campbell, J4002915, Ian D. Gordon is trying to find anyone who served in Signals at R.A.F. Butterworth/Penang or Kuala Lumpur during 1947-1948. Call sign Bravo Tango.

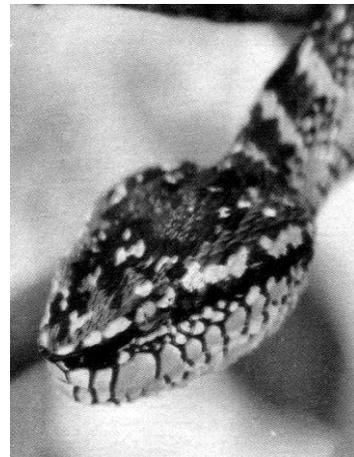
Jim served with Sqn Ldr Black, O/C Signals (walked with a limp due to a rugby injury); F/Lt Rice, Education Officer (also known as 'Paddy Fields'); Ray Pocock (fair hair); Rip Rippenham (slim, dark hair); Rusty Hutton (red hair, came from Rossendale, Lancs.); John Cadogan (D4005256, emigrated to Australia in 1971, died 1984); Charles Boyd (2315543, last heard of in Glasgow).

Jim can be contacted at Nairn, 01667 455018.

Ian can be contacted at 6 William Street, Queenspark, Nairn, IV12 5DS.

Penang Snake Temple

How many people are aware that the Wagler's Pit Viper on display at the famous Snake Temple is classified as 'dangerously venomous'?



If bitten blood abnormalities occur in the victim leading to increased coagulation which is counteracted by natural blood anticoagulants causing bleeding from mucous membranes, e.g. gums. Eventually these naturally occurring anticoagulants become depleted leading to blood clotting. In spite of this fatalities are rare.

There is no evidence of anyone being bitten in the Snake Temple – but be careful!

“The light through yonder window breaks”...
(with apologies to William Shakespeare)

4000770 LAC Gray, D., M.T. Section

I had begun to wonder where all the stories about Butterworth came from and it was not until the Spring/Summer newsletter that, I believe the quote is, “The light through yonder window breaks” or in my case ‘broke’. These letters from Old Time Butterworthians were actually from the ‘Young Lads’ or ‘Moon Men’ as we used to call them. The lads that took over from those who took over from us after we had got the joint ‘comfy’ for them.

By some strange coincidence we too in our time had a dog cull and a ‘Constellation’ aircraft also landed at Butterworth. Of course, there were no ‘cowboy’ actions from our ‘Snowdrops’ when we were there. ‘Chiefy’ would have killed them. No wonder I didn’t remember Ava Gardner on the aircraft even though I did have to meet it in my Hillman Utility. My aircraft was long before Ava’s. No wonder. I thought my memory had gone west.

Maybe you would like some really old memories such as when we had a sort of air lift to take the army on the Korea ‘do’. Most had never flown before. “What are these Daks like?” they asked. “Are they safe?” “Great kites” we said in the best RAF manner but we added, “There is just one thing. If you feel the aircraft drop just as you take off, brace yourselves as most likely you are going in the drink”. Well, we did have to use the best RAF language, it sounded better. And if you remember most slow moving aircraft such as the Dak did tend to drop just a little as they took off over the water, just like from an aircraft carrier. I still often wonder how many ‘accidents’ there were on those flights.

Another little ground crew story that may stir the odd soul is when one of our drivers turned his ‘Autocar’ tanker over on the road from the tower to HQ. That road was very narrow with high banking at one side. I remember the driver’s report that “Some prat of an officer came up the road like a bat out of hell. I gave way for him, the b----- ground gave way for me and I was in the s---“.

I don’t think we ever repaired that tanker. If my memory serves me correctly it was dumped on the other side of the airstrip – I know there was an Autocar there anyway.

With reference to the leave centre at Tanjong Bungah, it used to be a Dr McKern's house. I am told the good doctor was murdered by the Japs. To the right of the house there were some aviaries with a narrow road or path leading down to a hard standing just above the beach. One day the other driver, 'Taff', came to me – "Some b----- pinched the Jeep", he said. "Never in a million years" was my reply, "I have the rotor arm in my pocket". (I always took them out at night – like my teeth now!) We eventually found it. The hand brake had just slipped off a fraction and overnight it had very slowly gone down the track, negotiating a very sharp bend on the way down thanks to a very high kerb, eventually stopping when it levelled off at the bottom.



ROYAL AIR FORCE BUTTERWORTH

by kind permission of
Group Captain R. E. BAXTER, D.F.C.

A
DANCE
(In aid of the R. S. P. C. A.)

AT THE SWIMMING POOL
R. A. F. BUTTERWORTH

Friday, 5th April, 1957
from 9 p. m. to 1-30 a. m.

with
JOE ROZELLS AND HIS HAWAIIANS
BUFFET

THREE BARS **WILD WEST CABARET.**
Prizes **Novelties** **Carnival**