



'EASTWARD'



The newsletter of the
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)

CHRISTMAS 2007

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.





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Association Officials

Chairman: Tony Parrini
Hamethwaite
Rockcliffe
Carlisle CA6 4AA
Tel: 01228-674553
e-mail: tony@parrini.co.uk

Treasurer: Len Wood
3 Fairfield Avenue
Grimsby
Lincs DN33 3DS
Tel: 01472-327886
e-mail: len.wood@ntlworld.com

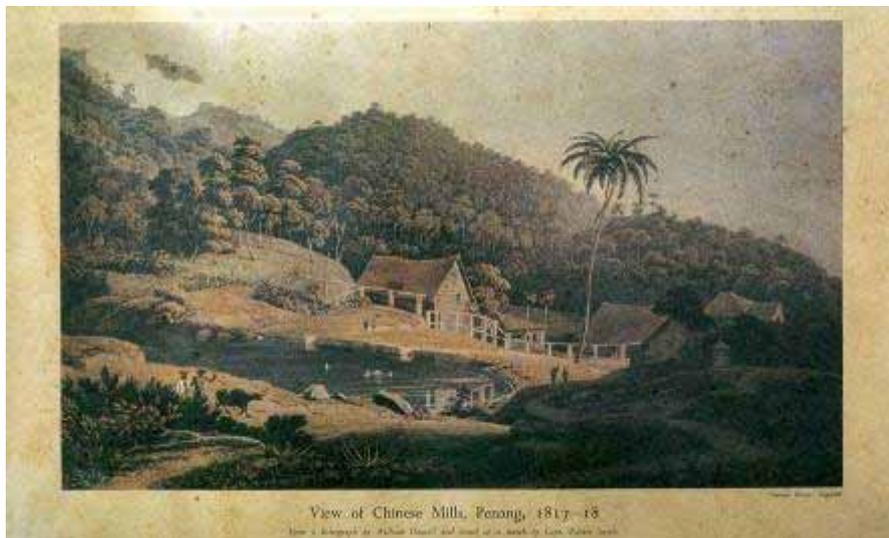
Secretary: Pete Mather
25 Budham Way
Bracknell
Berks
RG12 7PE
Tel: 01344-429238
e-mail: peter.bpa@tiscali.co.uk

Newsletter Editor and Archivist:
Dave Croft
West Lodge Cottage
3 Boynton, Bridlington
East Yorkshire YO16 4XJ
Tel: 01262-677520
e-mail: dmcroft320@aol.com

Association Website-

<http://raf-butterworth-penang-association.co.uk>

Webmaster - george.gault@ntlworld.com





CHAIRMANS CORNER

Unusually, this Chairman's Corner is about - not by - Tony Parrini. Tony and Anne have had a hectic but happy time over the past week or so with the birth of their first grandchild, Hannah Grace, and Tony's MBE investiture at Buckingham Palace. I am sure that Association members would wish to join me in offering our congratulations to Tony and Anne on these very memorable occasions. DC

20th November 2007, Buckingham Palace, MBE Investiture by HRH The Prince of Wales



BUCKINGHAM PALACE



Above: Tony Parrini MBE
Right: Anne and Tony Parrini



Congratulations from all members of the RAF Butterworth & Penang Association

IN GENERAL

From the Editor

My thanks go to Len Wood who takes the CD of each newsletter to the printers to be changed into the 'hard' copies that, after being printed and collected, are put into envelopes, addressed and stamped before the trip to the Post Office. As with all jobs placed with outside agencies things can, and do, go wrong. These 'hiccups' in the system can easily interfere with the timings of distribution of the electronic and hard copies. No matter how much we plan a smooth release of the newsletter, in whatever form, to members something is bound to go wrong! With the last issue the delay was through the postal dispute and local actions in some areas caused even further delays in delivering your newsletter to you.

Which brings me onto to the electronic issues of the newsletter that is distributed via Richard Harcourt through the internet. Basically, for members with access to the internet the colour version can be received within seconds of Richard pressing the 'send' button, providing Richard has the correct e-mail address for that member. Why not give it a go?

Decorations & Honours Register

Tony Parrini has forwarded an e-mail received from *The Decorations & Honours Register* to say that they are now inviting registrations for the Commemorative Edition of the Register to be published in the spring of 2008. It is believed many members of the Association are eligible for inclusion and the Register organizers welcome their entries.

The Decorations & Honours Register is a unique reference book designed to feature anyone holding a UK honour and/or decoration, including campaign medals. Qualifying personnel can contact the Register via the website address: www.honoursregister.co.uk or by writing to: The Decorations & Honours Register, KBC Bournemouth Exchange, 23 Hinton Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2EF.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the Director, Adrian Checketts at either of the above addresses.

Gremlins Corner



Page 19 of the last issue newsletter (Autumn 2007) had a piece of text missing from the last paragraph of the page, viz '*...to give radar cover, with additional support from RN Gannets from Changi also patrolled the area at night...*', should have read '*to give radar cover with additional support from RN Gannets and RAF Shackletons, from Changi, who also patrolled the area at night...*'

New Members

Mr **H A Dade**, Eng Mech (L) 33 Sqn, Jan 1954 – Mar 1955

Mrs **Rosalyn Blackmore**, widow of O J (Yogi) Blackmore, Fireman RAAF Butterworth, Oct 1965 to early 1967, then RAF Western Hill until March 1968.

Mr **Andy Johnston** (known as Paddy), Fireman RAF Butterworth, 1957-1959

Mr **James David Roberts** (known as Robby), Aero Eng Fitt 33 Sqn 1954-55

Mr **Frank Alvey**, Armourer RAF Butterworth 1965-67

In this issue of *'Eastward'* two ex-RN personnel have written a piece on their service in the Far East in response to my request for something towards the series on Confrontation started in the last issue. In addition, one of the Navy personnel, Bill Turton (Mines Clearance Team), has asked for help seeking anyone who is in contact with any ex-13th/18th Royal Hussars who served at Kuala Lumpur in 1960? Bill's brother-in-law, Trooper Arthur D. Bird (now sadly deceased), was stationed at KL at that time and his family would like to hear from anyone who knew him. Should any member be able to help Bill please contact Dave Croft.

The Shirt of Bidan

Reference story by Don Brereton - 'Eastward' Autumn 2007 Page 12.

In the Autumn 2007 issue of the newsletter Don Brereton wrote of 'The Shirt of Bidan' quoting the number 4034579 written inside the shirt. Mike Ward has come up with the answer!

4034579 SAC Kevin McKenzie. Enlisted Dec'48. RAF Butterworth Jun'56-Jun'57(Ex-Tengah) Clerk/General Duties. Do not ask how I know!!! Believe me!!!

Regarding the issuing of Airmen's KD shirts instead of KD bush jackets. When I was posted to the Far East in April'55 I was issued with bush jacket (see pics Newsletter Spring 2007 Page 12. and 'Eastward' 2007 Page 15) and shirt. When I was posted to the dreaded Aden in Feb'63 it was only shirts issued - a pity because the jacket always looked smarter (after 'dhoby') for us 'shinies' in SHQ. Sorry I do not know when Airmen's KD bush jackets ceased. Perhaps one of our ex suppliers will know! - 'Curly' Rod Hartley perhaps!!

Mike Ward.

An e-mail from Rod Hartley regarding bush shirts (Autumn newsletter). Rod thinks they were issued in 1955. When he was kitted out at Innsworth in 1954 it was with bush jackets, the shirts came later. Rod was also issued with a KD cap, similar to a baseball cap at the same time. For parade use a heavy KD tunic with anodized buttons was issued with dress to include shirts and tie...in that climate! As Rod observes, people seemed to wear either if you had them, shirts or bush jackets.

Long Haul to Penang!

We look upon long haul flights as normal these days but 160 Squadron, RAF, made a number of special flights to Penang, Singapore and Malaya in the later stages of the war against the Japanese.

Both German U-boats and Japanese submarines used Penang Harbour on a regular basis and, through use of this facility, created problems for allied shipping. The answer seemed to be laying mines in the waters around the harbour and this was attempted with limited success using RN submarines. Because of the continuing threat posed by the Axis submarines it was decided to investigate the possibility of delivery of mines by allied long-range aircraft. But the nearest RAF bases were at Calcutta and Ceylon and the aircraft (Consolidated Liberators) were required to carry mines over at least a thousand miles of sea!

No.160 Squadron was one of several squadrons that flew minelaying operations using modified Liberators, usually stripped of their mid-position gun turrets and armour plating. 160 flew from Minneriya in Ceylon using modified Liberator mark Vs. The minelaying procedure required dropping mines at around 200 feet at night, with a degree of precision...the targets being around 1200 miles away in Malaya, Sumatra and the Kra Isthmus. Visual flight referencing was backed up

with a low level radar approach should the target area be obscured by rain so the mines could still be laid.

From the book *Wings of the Dawning* (Arthur Banks) the story is taken up by two flight engineers from the squadron. **JB**: 'In these long flights there was no mistaking the four-letter word in everyone's mind – "FUEL"! To carry more fuel, Air Gunners were excluded, the remainder of the crew taking turns at the guns, ("I have seen gunners in tears because they desperately wanted to see action").

'Ammunition was reduced to save weight; the rear turret was cut from 6,000 rounds to 600. All equipment not considered absolutely essential was stripped, even oxygen systems. Bomb bay fuel tanks were then fitted in order to stretch the operational range to even greater lengths (these were flexible fuel tanks)'

BC: 'In order to achieve the range the mark VI Liberator was exchanged for the mark V which did not have a nose turret. To further lighten the aircraft the top turret, armour plate and Elsan chemical toilets were removed. *In extremis* crews used nose cones from flame floats *in lieu* of the Elsan. In normal times insects used the outlets from the toilet tubes as a nesting place and woe betide any Flight Engineer who did not shove a long wire through each of the three tubes during his pre-flight check'.

By early January 1945 the Liberators Vs of 160 Squadron were ready to fly to Penang, lay their mines in the channel between Penang Harbour and the mainland and return to Ceylon. The first trip was on 21st January 1945 and led by the CO W/Cdr Stacey and to quote 'I made the mistake of going in very low to avoid giving radar warning, but it proved impossible to identify



landmarks at such a low level and the mission proved abortive'. **JB**: 'We had been practicing low flying for some time, and Stacey now informed us it would pay off as he told us to approach enemy territory at wave-skimming altitude to get under the Japanese radar beams.'

'After dropping our mines Stacey announced that he intended to increase his altitude to reveal his aircraft on Japanese radar and fly on a north-west course. This was to give the impression that we were returning to an Indian base. Holding this course for a short time he then intended to drop back to sea level and follow our two aircraft back to Ceylon. I can still see the expressions on the faces of W/Cdr Stacey's crew as he announced this. I'm sure they would have preferred to skip the heroics and get the heck out of it with us.'

After the abortive attempt of the 21st January the aircraft, on subsequent operations, would approach Penang at 200 feet but climb to 500 feet when around 5 miles away from the target. These subsequent 'trips' to Penang and Singapore were successful and had a significant effect on the sea war figures.

An extra long trip to Singapore on 23rd March 1945, with each aircraft carrying four mines instead of six, and extra fuel from Catalina tanks resulted in a successful operation lasting 21 hours and 15 minutes flying.

160 Squadron detachments also flew Liberator Vs from Gan on coastal photoreconnaissance and meteorological sorties. Towards the end of hostilities with Japan the squadron was involved in dropping supplies to units operating behind enemy lines, mainly in Malaya.

Two Iconic Aircraft at Butterworth



A photograph from the Association archives featuring Victor XA936 and Lightning XR768 on a stop-over at Butterworth, most probably June 1967, when 74 Squadron was deployed to Tengah from the UK.



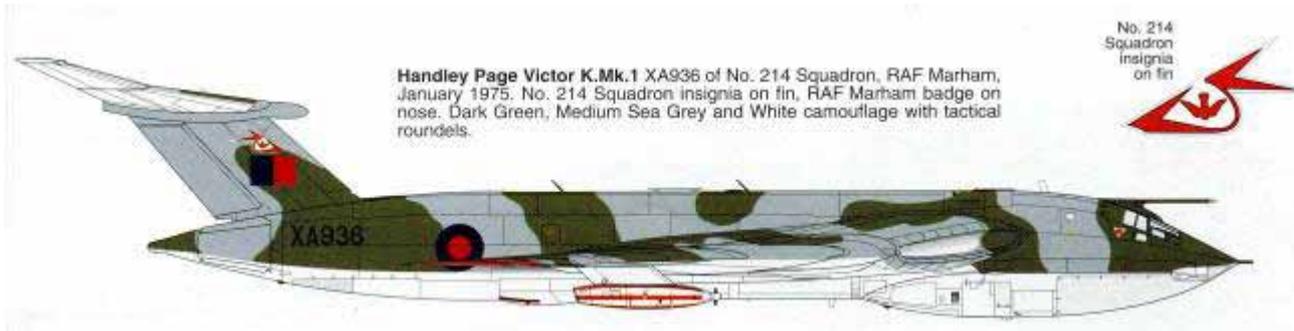
Victor XA936 started its service career as a Victor B.1 at RAF Cottesmore, first with No.10 squadron followed by No.15 Squadron and then to 232 Operational Conversion Unit (OCU). Following conversion to K1 standard XA936 joined the inventory of 214 Squadron at RAF Marham. The aircraft was scrapped at St Athan in 1976.



Victor XA936 of 10 Squadron showing to good effect the high gloss anti-radiation finish in use at the start of the Victors service career.



10 Squadron insignia



The fin insignia of the Butterworth photograph of XA936 (above) shows it to be a No. 214 Squadron aircraft.

Lightning XR768 was built in 1965 and 'joined' No. 74 Squadron '*The Tigers*', at Coltishall. XR768 was a F.6 variant which had an enlarged ventral pack in two parts, the forward portion being a fuel tank or an Aden cannon pack and the rear portion being a fuel tank. Additionally the ventral pack was fitted with directional stability fins for supersonic speeds and the aircraft also had a cambered outer wing leading edge extension to help reduce subsonic drag giving improved range. Additional range was provided by two over-wing fuel tanks and in-flight refueling from Victor tankers.

74 Squadron was deployed to Tengah during June 1967 replacing in effect the Javelins of No. 60 Squadron and helping ease the Hunters of No. 20 Squadron into retirement.



Lightning XR768 over Singapore c1967





Following service with No.74 Squadron, XR768 went to No.5 Squadron as XR768 'P'. The aircraft crashed into the North Sea off Mablethorpe in October 1974 through engine failure. The pilot ejected safely.



Members Stories

A Little Stupidity or Too Much 'Tiger' by Rod Hartley

The 8th May 1955 - it was as I recall a Sunday! My 21st birthday - the day when I was supposed to become an adult! I had decided that I would take a few days' leave and go down to 'Holiday Island', Singapore, to celebrate. Like many another, my money soon ran short (for the usual reasons, song, wine and other things) so I had to head back to Butterworth, just about stony broke. Luckily there was a draft on the train, so I got back from Prai on their transport, and then set about borrowing and scrounging some money ready for the eventful day. I got up late on that morning, headed over to the NAAFI, had I think a 'chip banjo' to sustain me and got down to the serious business of getting my gullet round some Tiger. Closing time duly came, two or three bottles were purchased to pass away the afternoon, and by opening time that evening, the session was under way again. By the time the NAAFI closed, I was well away and not having eaten properly for several days, I was pretty hungry. The thought crossed my mind that if I went across to the mess, I could scrounge a duty meal -I was in a room with three Army blokes from the Air Reconnaissance Section, one of whom was a Lance Corporal. I 'borrowed' his jungle greens and went across. Now as bad luck had it two dog handlers came in, recognised me, nicked me and told me to report to the guard room! Not me - back to the billet, hung up the uniform and got into bed! The next thing these two arrived, got me out of bed and proceeded to march me up to the nick - the cell door slammed and that was me till next morning! Morning dawned, the Orderly Officer was called to release me from close arrest and as bad luck had it, it was my boss, Flt Lt. (later Sqn Ldr.) Fowler who, to say the least, was less than impressed. He told me to report to him in his office later that morning, where he cancelled the remaining day or two of my leave and sent me back to work. At least I could eat officially in the mess again! He also said that he wished to hear nothing of the matter at this stage as he would be hearing the initial charges against me later. (There were as I recall 8 - ranging from 'Whilst on active service, disobeying an order, stealing rations and attempting to break

away from close arrest, to impersonating a soldier, etc., etc.)! The breaking away from close arrest was a laugh, I was pretty legless and those two SP's had a dirty great Alsation with them!

Then the wind-ups started. I was pretty reliably informed that I was likely to get court martialled for this lot, and good old 'Chiefy' Robinson quietly told me that he didn't give much for my chances! A few days later, I was marched in to John Fowler, who duly asked me if I would accept his punishment (if he was able to award it) and 'Chiefy' having advised me previously (probably against QR's) agreed with alacrity to do so. By this time, a couple of charges had mysteriously been dropped, others had been reduced - disobeying an order became 'failing to comply with...', stealing rations became 'attempting to procure...' (I had not actually got my hands on any food anyway). I can only assume that John Fowler had a hand in it somewhere. The evidence was duly heard, I pleaded guilty (I was anyway) and my mitigating circumstances were my 21st, the demon drink etc. I kept noticing that Fowler kept his head down over his desk and occasionally his shoulders shook a bit as if he was having a quiet laugh! The final outcome was that he gave me what he termed initially 'an astonishment' which he quickly corrected to 'admonishment' and I was marched out. He then had the two dog handlers in and gave them a right going over for wasting everyone's time, not seeing I went to bed and stayed there etc! The final bit of the tale is that at Christmas that year I came up in a draw to go to Frasers Hill for Christmas (the small unit there was turned into a leave centre at Christmas time) and of the half dozen or so from Butterworth was one of the SP's who had arrested me! We settled our differences over several pints during the festive season and all was over - or nearly so. This was before the advent of the infamous SWO Mr. Preston, who, had he been present, would, I am sure, had me hung, drawn and quartered! The SWO at the time was Frank Parris, who came home and was posted to RAF Norton at Sheffield. At some stage, somehow, he met my father and regaled him with the story. My father being a former Squadron Leader was, to say the least, not pleased, telling me so in a long letter! It didn't do me much harm, I had a couple of tapes up in about twelve months but there were some other escapades later, of which, perhaps, more anon! Happy days!



They certainly were happy days, Rod, none more so than when bed packs were the order of the day!

Mike's Diary of his recent Anniversary of Merdeka visit to Malaysia

MALAYSIA 50th ANNIVERSARY OF MERDEKA (INDEPENDENCE) 31 AUGUST 2007.

Mike Ward-RAF Butterworth(SHQ) 1955-57 - NMBVA Tour.

I was stationed at RAF Butterworth on 31st August 1957 when Malaya gained independence from British colonial rule. Independence had been secured two years earlier in 1955 and resulted in the signing of the Independence Treaty at Lancaster House in London on 8th February 1956. Although the State of Emergency was to continue to 1960, the threat by Chin Peng and his CT's (Communist Terrorists) was in decline. As I was responsible for payment of the locally engaged civilians and enjoyed social functions with them, I was fully aware of what Independence would mean to them. Malaysia was formed in 1963 when the existing States of Malaya were joined by Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo. Singapore left the Malaysian Federation in 1965 and became independent.

As a member of the National Malaya and Borneo Veterans Association (Bristol branch) I, with my wife Pam, was fortunate in joining that Association's tour commencing 28th August 2007 to participate in Malaysia's 50th Anniversary of Merdeka (Independence) celebrations. Below are some details of my tour but firstly I give my sincere thanks to all people mentioned for their superb hospitality and guidance through the tour. They were magnificent!

Tues 28 Aug '07 0630 KUALA LUMPUR

National Coach (much better than taking a car) to Heathrow where Pam and I joined fellow tour members (approx 100 including wives and partners) for Malaysian Airlines Fit MH003 at mid-day to Kuala Lumpur. At the departure lounge I met Ron Blain (RAF Butterworth radar 1960's) our NMBVA co-ordinator who, even on our holiday in Penang (see item later), was ever present to assist us. The 13 hour flight to KL seemed to pass very quickly as we were able to walk around the aircraft and speak to tour members (9 from my Bristol Branch). Also on the flight was Said (camera) and Haliza (interviews) of TV3 Malaysia who were to accompany us on tour until we departed from RMAF Butterworth (see item later). A DVD has been produced by TV3. Flight hostesses were charming as ever!

Wed 29 Aug '07. 0800 ARRIVAL AT KL

Met by Colonel Paul Edwards (Defence Adviser at British High Commission) and his deputy Lt.Cdr. Martin Davis with W/O Chris Hardman. Col. Edwards and his staff would liaise with the Malaysian Ministry of Defence Secretariat and would accompany us with the Secretariat Liaison Officers on all our official functions in KL. Our party was preceded to the airport exit by a Pipe Band, 4 members of the Royal Tank Regiment plus Malaysian Defence Force. Our 3 coaches from the airport to hotel (about 25 miles) were escorted by 4 police motor cycle out-riders. With all the lights flashing we felt like royalty! Other traffic was stopped at all road



junctions and at a toll barrier we wove between the queues of traffic. People waved to us - so we acknowledged. The Malaysians in KL knew we were the Veterans and wished to shake our hands and have photographs with us. Extremely hospitable. At the Dorset Regency Hotel we were welcomed by the Malaysian Defence Secretariat and a glossy programme book was given to all tour members. We were then given a briefing on the functions. At 8.00pm 6 of us,

including Ron Blain and Ron Stevens of my NMBVA Bristol branch, went with Col. Edwards to the Shangri La Hotel for a rehearsal of the Pingat Jasa Malaysia Medal Conferment to be held next morning. After a nice curry meal members of the Malaysian Defence Secretariat instructed us on the procedures and protocol for Conferment of the PJM by Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak. We 6 would be on the first table to receive the PJM and 39 other recipients would follow our example in groups of 6. Of the 45 recipients I would be number 5 in line of waiting.

Thurs 30 Aug '07 0700 NATIONAL MONUMENT

Coaches with escorts for visit to National Monument. Return **0845**

1000 MENT OF PJM

All of our party in coaches to Shangri La Hotel for the PJM Conferment. I estimate about 800 people in the grand ballroom with a number of photographers at the foot of the stage. There was an official photographer on the stage to take shots of the individual conferments and I received my print later. After conferments the DPM made a complimentary speech to the Veterans followed by a speech by NMBVA Patron General Gary Johnson. Gen. Johnson had served with the Gurkhas during the Emergency and was warmly applauded when he spoke in Malay. After the speeches we were entertained by Malaysian musical groups and dancers. During the whole proceedings a splendid Chinese meal was served.

1300 CHERAS ROAD CEMETARY

All of our party with escorts went to pay our respects at Cheras Cemetery where Gen Johnson and Archie Elkington of Bristol branch laid wreaths. I found the grave of a soldier from my home village (See separate article).

1700 PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

Pam and I went to the twin Petronas Twin Towers (1,483ft tall and 84 floors) and walked on the bridge at the 41st floor (Imagined the film 'Entrapment' when Sean Connery and Catherine Zeta Jones were on the bridge). The towers look more spectacular when lit up at night.



Fri 31 Aug '07 0545 GRAND PARADE

Depart hotel (marchers and spectators) in coaches to Dataran Merdeka (The Padang by the Selangor Club) where independence was celebrated 50 years ago. On arrival, wives, friends and other non participants were escorted by the Defence Secretariat Liaison Officers (Pam stated that Army Major Sera Ann looked after them very well) to a seated viewing stand which was ideally sited in the shade of a large tree. We marchers waited about 2 hours whilst the many dignitaries arrived (Sultans, Prince Andrew, Presidents, PMs etc). Our marching contingent was led by Gen. Johnson and next to us was a contingent of New Zealand Veterans who kept us entertained with their Moari songs and finished with the 'Haka'. Then a Malaysian contingent followed with their renditions. I think everyone in our contingent (some in their 80s) endured the 28°C heat very well. All Malaysian citizens passing by wished to shake hands and have photographs taken with us. The parade and festivities started at 8.00am



after the arrival of the King and Queen of Malaysia and lasted about 3 hours. As we were near the

front of the parade (13,000 people) we only had about 500 yards to march. Also in the parade were 14 decorative floats and 25 Army vehicles. 10,000 other Malaysians took part in dance and musical performances on the padang. It was estimated that there were 150,000 spectators. According to the 'New Straits Times' the march-past of 510 local, British, Australian and New Zealand war veterans received the loudest cheers and claps, and a standing ovation from the VIPs at the grandstand. After saluting and passing the dignitaries we were able to disperse and join our wives and non-participants. We were then able to watch the parade and fly past which included an impressive show by the Russian built Sukhoi fighter/bombers of the RMAF. The parade and festivities came to an end at about 11am with the playing of the Negaraku (The National Anthem which is a joy to listen to). We all felt it an honour to have participated in such a mammoth colourful spectacle. We returned to our hotel about mid-day, had a shower and change of shirt etc in readiness for our next official function that day.

1330 DUKE OF YORK.

All of our party went by coach to the residence of the British High Commissioner for a reception with HRH Duke of York. Small groups held conversation with the HRH Duke of York. A light buffet was served on the patio leading to the lawns. This function lasted about 2 hours.

After a busy day we were to travel to Penang next morning. Pam and I relaxed for the rest of the day. In the evening we watched on TV the Malaysians celebrate at the Stadium Merdeka. The multimedia show and performances by 20,000 people was quite spectacular.

Sat 1 Sept '07 0930 JOURNEY TO PENANG.

Time to leave KL after 3 busy but great days. 54 of our party boarded the 2 coaches to Penang. Others in our party had departed by road for Kuantan or flown to Singapore. So we said goodbye to Col. Edwards, Lt.Cdr. Davis and the Liaison Staff who had been magnificent.

Our first major stop was at Batu Gajah Cemetery (Gods Little Acre). In addition to our fallen servicemen, this is also the resting place of the first three Planters - Allison, Christian and Walker whose murder by terrorists in Sungai Siput on Sat. 16th June, 1948 precipitated the Declaration of the Emergency in Malaya. A wreath was laid at the Memorial by Ron Blain on behalf of the NMBVA. Remembrance services are held at this cemetery every year and Ron Blain has already started to organise a tour for next year 2008 to coincide with the 60th Anniversary.

Next stop was at Ipoh where we had lunch at Ipoh Club and were photographed for 'New Straits Times'. So we then crossed Penang Bridge (Another longer bridge will be built to the south because of the amount of road traffic) and arrived at the beachside Sandy Bay Resort Hotel, Tanjung Bungah. The hotel, which had a welcome sign for us at the entrance, is very good and is situated right next door to the old Sandycroft (Army) leave centre which is now a school. The RAF Centre has vanished to become a car park. The hotel is convenient for taxi or bus to Batu Ferringhi and Georgetown.

Sun/Mon 2-3 Sept '07 REST DAYS.

Tue 4 Sept '07 0900 RMAF BUTTERWORTH

16 of our party (3 ex RAFB - Ron Blain, Phil Forde and myself) went by coach across the bridge to RMAF Butterworth. This visit would very special for me as I was there at Merdeka Day in 1957. I had visited the station in 1994 but my movement was restricted and I could not take photographs as it was just Pam and myself. However, I felt that this organised veterans' visit would be something special - and it was! After reporting to the guardroom we went to the Officers' Mess for lunch and introduction to our escorting officers, Maj.(Sqn.Ldr) Rosmal, Capt.(Flt.Lt) Kamarudin and Capt.(Flt.Lt) Ibrahim. We then proceeded to SHQ and outside the Pay Accounts Office I was able to produce a photograph of myself standing outside the office in 1957. This drew attention in our

party and the RMAF Officers were very interested . I had photographs taken with the officers and was interviewed and filmed by TV3 (Said and Haliza). A substantial number of buildings (years 55-57) still remain, most with new roof tiles, doors and windows. SWO Preston's office at SHQ looks immaculate!! . Some of the buildings near the control tower are as they were including, I think, Flying Wing HQ. Between the control tower and east/west runway (now helicopters and aircraft dispersal) is the same patch of grass where we had station sports day (see 'Eastward' Autumn 2007 (Page 13). Near the control is a bronze plaque which incorrectly states that No. 2 Airfield Squadron RAAF built the airfield during 1955-1958. It was the north/south runway which they constructed and some of the squadron were friends of my old pal Allan Borley and myself . They



taught me to swim in the pool which we visited and found in good order. The old tennis court was still there as were the old married quarters in their original condition. I was hoping to take more photographs along the road leading to the pool but, unfortunately, did not have time. I think the old church is still standing. I did not have time to look for the 'mystery hut' at the beach end of the east/west runway and blocks of flats are in that vicinity. There is a new Astra cinema near where stores used to be on the main site (makes sense as personnel visiting the old cinema had to cross the old east/west runway. The old NAAFI has vanished and a new club built further up the road.

We concluded our tour with group photographs in front of SHQ. Here we said goodbye to our Escorting Officers and to Said and Haliza who had been with us from Heathrow. The visit to RMAF Butterworth had lasted about 2 hours, was the final official function on our NMBVA tour and to me was the 'Icing on the Cake'.

Wed 5 Sep '07 LAYING OF WREATH AT WESTERN ROAD CEMETARY AND TOUR OF PENANG.

Laurie Bean is a member of our RAFBP Association and lives with his charming wife Lily at Batu Ferringhi. I had taken our RAFBP Association wreath with me from UK and had made a prior agreement with Laurie that together we would take it to the memorial in Western Road Cemetery, after which Laurie kindly took Pam and me on an extensive tour of Penang island starting at Fort Cornwallis then to the Snake Temple followed by a circular countryside journey visiting places I had not seen in '55-'57 as Penang was at that time a designated 'Black Area' with approx 50 CT's still active.

Thank you Laurie for giving Pam and me your time on an excellent day out. We had fine dining with Laurie and Lilly during our stay in Penang - many thanks and look forward to meeting you both again in the future.

Thu 6 Sep '07- Sat 08Sep '07 CASUAL SIGHTSEEING

Occasional visits to the Night Market at Batu Ferringhi and to Georgetown (Penang Road, Komtar Bldg etc). From the 55th floor viewing area of Komtar I was able to look down on the old Boston Bar (now under renovation for something!) where I had enjoyed social functions '55-'57 (see Newsletter Summer 2007 Page 18). On a visit to Batu Ferringhi Pam and I had a look at the Casuarina Hotel (where our Association was formed in 1996 and Pam and I had previously enjoyed a holiday in 1994) which is being extended and it will be, I was told at least another year or two before it is re-opened!

Sun 9 Sep '07 PENANG TURF CLUB

Pam and I enjoy horse racing (not avid gamblers) and have been to the 'World Cup' in Dublin and the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe in Paris. Laurie Bean kindly drove us to the racecourse where we were escorted to a pleasant air-conditioned viewing area. We did not have any winners but the afternoon was most enjoyable.

Mon 10 Sep '07 REST DAY.

Tue 11 Sep '07 - Sat 15 Sep '07 SINGAPORE

10.30 Singapore Airlines flight of 1 hour from Penang to Singapore for 5 night stay at Bay View Hotel. The hotel (small, but comfortable) ideally situated near the bottom of Orchard Road (shopping and eateries) and only 300 yards from Raffles where Pam and I enjoyed a 'Singapore Sling' in the Long Bar. We enjoyed a day in the fabulous Botanical and Orchard Gardens. We went to the Island of Sentosa ("Isle of Peace and Tranquillity"), now a major resort and recreation area opened in 1972 for the Singapore population. When I visited the island in '56 whilst on leave in Singapore with my pal Allan Borley it was known as Blakang Mati ("island at the back of which means death"!! - due to death by disease of many islanders in past centuries) and was a garrison island for the British Army. There are many attractions on the island, not least the 360ft Carlsberg Sky Tower - the disc-shaped air-conditioned cabin slowly spins up a central column and gives panoramic views of Singapore and its surrounding islands. We returned to Singapore on the cable car shuttle which, at a height of 230ft, gives a good view of the waterfront and shipping lanes. Pam and I also spent an evening in Chinatown and also visited other places of interest. I feel the strict rules applied in Singapore over the past years have paid off because the city is very clean with no rowdyism. Pam and I hope to revisit in a couple of years time.

Sun 16 Sep '07 JOURNEY BACK HOME

Departed Changi Airport for KL and transfer to Malaysian Airline overnight flight to Heathrow.

THE CONCLUSION OF A BUSY BUT MOST WONDERFUL JOURNEY.

Following this very enjoyable account of Mike and Pam's visit to Malaysia is this postscript to Mike's finding of the grave of Gunner Gibson.

Did not return home.

Recent Association Newsletter's have featured articles and pictures of those we left behind in Malaysia and who did not return home.

This is an occurrence which took place on my recent NMBVA tour of Malaysia for Merdeka 50th Anniversary Celebrations.

In my home village of Churchdown (midway Cheltenham/Gloucester) the engraved War Memorial has an individual 9" x 6" metal plaque with the inscription MALAYA. Gnr. Gibson. J.H. RA. I knew that we would visit Batu Gajah Cemetery (Gods Little Acre) on route from Kuala Lumpur to Penang and I thought I might find there the grave of Gnr. Gibson.

On the afternoon of 30th August '07, after Conferment of the PJM (see my diary on Merdeka Tour), our party went to pay our respects at Cheras Cemetery, KL. I looked at the cemetery register which listed all military graves at the

cemeteries in Malaysia. Gnr. Gibson was not listed at Cheras. However, by chance as I was flicking through the pages I found that Gnr. Gibson had been buried at Seremban (about 30 Miles south of KL). Shame, I thought, as we were travelling north and I did not have time to go south.

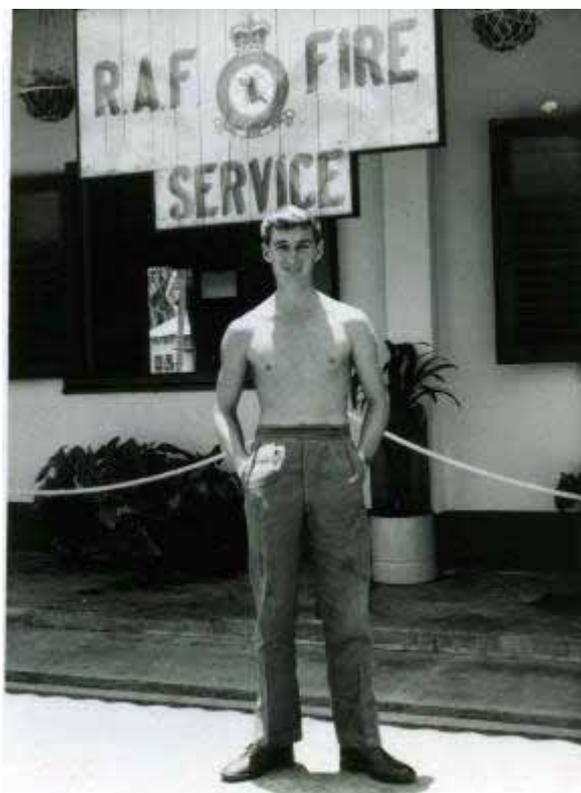
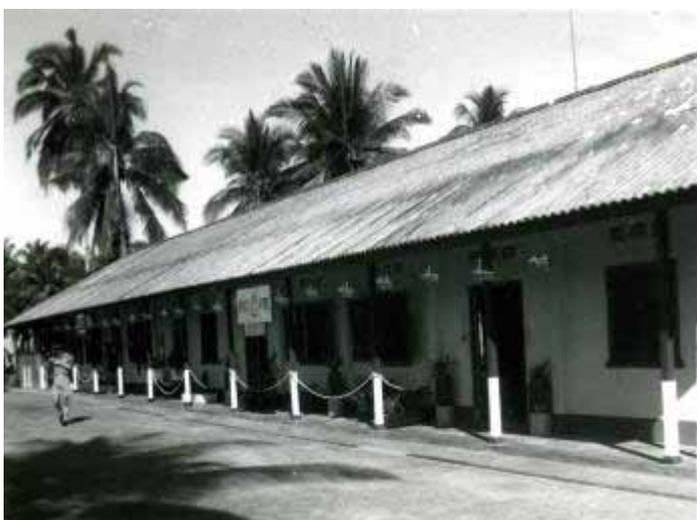
At Cheras Cemetery I was having a conversation with Lt. Cdr. Martin Davis (Deputy Defence Adviser at the British High Commission in KL) and mentioned Gnr. Gibson. 'Ah', said Martin, 'about 5 months ago we had a small problem with maintenance at Seremban and had to move 8 Graves to Cheras - come with me'. Martin then showed Pam and I the 8 graves and there was Gnr. Gibson (died 21 Dec'49 age 22). Save for that chance conversation we would have passed by Gnr. Gibson because the transfer had not been affected in the register. I have photographs and hope to make contact with Gnr. Gibson's dependants. God does act in mysterious ways!!

R.I.P. Gnr. Gibson.

Mike Ward.

Butterworth Pictures from 1958

The following photographs are from John Crooks who was stationed at Butterworth 1956-58.



*Above left: taken inside the main gate looking towards the main road. ET Room, Fire Section and Guard Room.
Above right: John outside the Fire Section.
Left: St George's Church, on the same road as the Astra cinema*

Butterworth welcomes American Invader by John Wilson

While serving in Butterworth 1965/68 me and my mates working in the Ground Equipment section had to share arrester-barrier duties with RAAF. As it was our turn I had this task to perform on the day this event refers to.

It was about 10am and the alarm sounded to indicate a aircraft was coming in and was in trouble so I dived into the special Landrover and headed out to the north end off the runway. The barrier was already up and it was my job to check everything was in order when I got there, for example that the net was hanging correctly, air brakes at the ready and so on.

One of the main duties when the aircraft hits the barrier was to isolate the electricity supply as a fire precaution and it is this precaution that has a bearing to this story!

From the tower my radio crackled "Ready barrier", "Yes ready", I replied. "We have a visitor, an American aircraft coming in from Vietnam. It's been shot up and diverted here. Can't make it back to its base" the tower continued.

In the distance I could see the aircraft getting larger as it approached. Visible also were the fire tenders now positioned at the far end of the runway. The aircraft touched down as far as I could see about halfway up the runway. It looked huge to me as I had only ever seen Sabres in the net before. I knew it was not going to stop without some help as it had loads of smoke coming from the undercarriage. It hit the middle of the net and the net air brakes were automatically released to avoid subjecting the crew to a sudden stop. During its deceleration the front wheel broke away stopping the aircraft even faster!

I rushed over to the electrical box and turned off the power as the aircraft was smoking like mad. Damage to the aircraft was very obvious with shell holes through the tail and wings. Judging by the damage it looked as if the aircraft had been lucky to reach Butterworth at all.

Under the belly a hatch opened down and a crewman jumped down. The sight off him will always remain with me! He was wearing brown riding boots, fawn jodhpurs and a leatherjacket. I could also see two white pistols at his side. He then put on a white Stetson hat and as I approached him took out a cigar. I rushed up to him and said, "Sir, I would advise you not to smoke due to the fire risk" His reply was, "We got this far kid and we ain't leaking". With that he lit up and then took out a silver bottle and had a good drink...I wonder what of?

A special repair group was flown in and the aircraft left Butterworth 4 days later with its crew

J4237316 SAC (Tug) John Wilson ,RAF Support Sqn, RAAF Butterworth

Editors note...the identity of this aircraft caused a number of telephone calls and e-mails to be made between John and myself. Between us we have identified the aircraft as a Douglas B-26K Counter-Invaders (COIN) aircraft, a rebuild of the post WWII Douglas A-26 Invader which also saw service in Korea. The B-26K was in effect a new aircraft with strengthened wings, more powerful engines, an enlarged tail section, powerful modern weapons, and the ability to be fitted with camera packs in the bomb bay and interchangeable nose section. Altogether a very powerful machine that was operating with the 609th Special Operation Squadron at Nakhon Phanom in Thailand for 'black cover' operations.

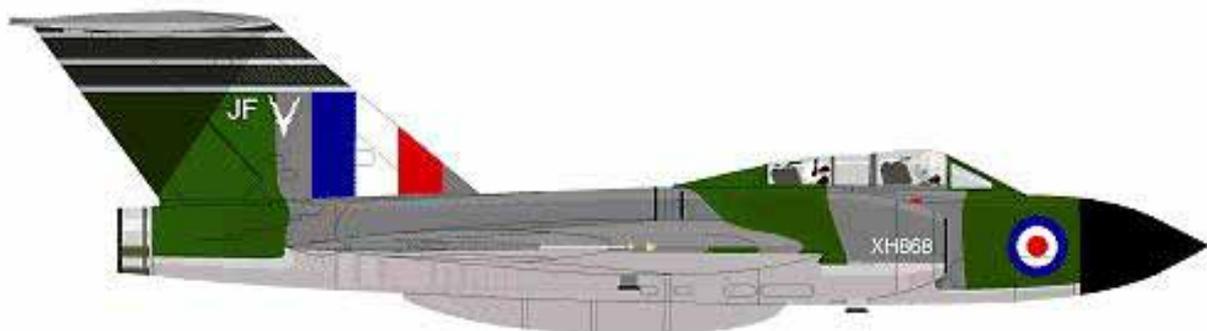


Above right B-26K COIN Invader.



Left: B-26K at Nakhon Phanom 1970

CONFRONTATION IN BORNEO 1962-1966



We continue with the series on the (mainly) RAF involvement in the Confrontation with Indonesia. In this issue of *Eastward* Laurie Bean looks at the history and activities of 60 Squadron Javelins charged with the task of patrolling the air corridors of both West and East Malaysia.

No. 60 Sqn and Butterworth.

On 1 April 1920, No. 97 Squadron, based at Risalpur on the Northwest Frontier of India, was renumbered and became No. 60 Squadron. Thus began an association with the Far East that was to last, unbroken, until 1 May 1968, when 60 Sqn disbanded at RAF Tengah where it had been based for the past 18 years. The squadron originally arrived at Tengah on 2 December 1946, spending a few months there before moving first to Sembawang, back to Tengah and then, its first period at Butterworth from 15 October to 6 December 1949, whence it moved to Kuala Lumpur. It was to remain at KL until moving permanently to Tengah on 31 May 1950.

When it arrived at Tengah in late 1946, 60 Sqn was equipped with Thunderbolt II aircraft. These gave way to Spitfire F18s in January 1947. During the early Emergency period the squadron also flew Harvard II aircraft on operational sorties. December 1950 saw the arrival of the first jet powered aircraft in the Far East when the squadron re-equipped with DH Vampire FB5s. The squadron's pilots had started conversion to jet aircraft a month earlier, with the arrival on the squadron of its very first jet aircraft, Gloster Meteor T7 WA681, having been collected from Seletar on the afternoon of 6 November 1950 by the then CO, Sqn. Ldr. W G H Duncan-Smith DSO*, DFC*.

At the start of March 1952, Vampire FB9s took the place of the earlier mark and remained in service until April 1955 when they were replaced by Venom FB1s. These in turn were replaced by a later mark of Venom, the FB4 in April 1957. October 1959 saw a change in role for 60 Sqn. At that time, it went from a day fighter/bomber unit to become a night/all weather fighter unit. For this purpose it was re-equipped with the Gloster Meteor NF14. July 1961 saw the final change of aircraft for the squadron in the Far East when it exchanged its Meteors for another Gloster aircraft, the Javelin FAW9. These remained in service until the unit disbanded and left the area in May 1968.

Although they had no permanent presence at Butterworth, 60 Sqn aircraft were regular visitors to the station, both to No.27 Armament Practice Camp and to provide additional support to the base squadrons who were involved in anti-bandit operations in the northern part of the Malay Peninsular. When it re-equipped with Vampire aircraft at the start of 1951, 60 Sqn was withdrawn from operations until its pilots were familiar with the new aircraft. Quite a bit of this time was spent at the APC at Butterworth. Similarly, when No. 33 Sqn was re-equipped with Hornet aircraft starting in May 1951, the two flights of 60 Sqn took it in turns to provide four aircraft at a time on detachment to Butterworth for continuing anti-bandit operations. On 3 November 1951, during one such detachment, the squadron was tasked to provide 4 Vampire aircraft as a formation to overfly the SS Canton as she left Penang Harbour carrying the retiring British Resident of Penang, Mr A V Aston. These detachments continued until January 1952 when 33 Sqn was declared operational and redeployed to Butterworth to take over those responsibilities.

Visits and short detachments to Butterworth continued after this date but there was no permanent presence of 60 Sqn aircraft at Butterworth until after the start of the Confrontation with Indonesia in late 1963. Then, the Indonesian Air Force started flying Soviet built Badger aircraft over the Penang area and it was decided to detach two of 60's Javelins on a more permanent basis to Butterworth to counter any possible threat that might be posed by such flights. This number was later increased to six and C Flight of the squadron was formed at Butterworth to provide all weather defence of the northern peninsular. The additional four aircraft were flown in from India where No. 64 Sqn had been exercising and these were the first extended range variant of the Javelin, the FAW9R, to join 60 Sqn.

By May 1964, 60 Sqn had 26 aircraft on strength, including two T3s. The numbers continued to increase and, at peak strength, the squadron had 33 aircraft and 42 crews, making it the largest squadron in the RAF. It seems that at this stage, instead of following the normal practice and allocating individual code letters to aircraft, the squadron adopted a system whereby each aircraft was numbered 1 – 33 instead.

*Javelin No. 29 of 60 Squadron at Butterworth.
Neville Stubbings*



Besides providing aircraft for Butterworth, there were also detachments at Kuching and Labuan in East Malaysia to provide air defence cover for that area. There were no known interceptions of Indon aircraft in the area. However, in the one chance encounter between a Javelin and an Indon C130 near the border, the Javelin pilot reported the ‘looks of amazed consternation’ on the faces of the Hercules pilots as both aircraft flashed past each other.



Javelin XH707 en route to Long Jawi, Sarawak.

S.J. Ludman

Besides the normal air defence duties, Javelins also escorted supply dropping aircraft operating close to the border with Indonesia. On several occasions the presence of 60's Javelins helped ground forces in engagements with Indon infiltrators. This was usually achieved by making low, fast runs over the skirmish sites and, as the aircraft passed overhead, engaging the aircraft's afterburners. The subsequent ‘explosions’ as the ‘burners cut in led the infiltrators into thinking they were being bombed, with them quickly withdrawing and returning to the jungle. Although no aircraft were lost to ground fire during these sorties at least two aircraft were struck by rifle bullets.

The Javelin's ability to operate at both high and low level is graphically described by a Vulcan navigator who, in late 1965, was offered a ride in the back seat of a Javelin out of Butterworth. As he thought the opportunity too good to miss he readily accepted the offer. Taking off as a one of a pair from Butterworth, the aircraft first carried out some fighter affiliation exercises at around 40,000 feet over the northern Malacca Straits. Once these had been completed, he reports that the pilot he was flying with stated that he would now show what the Javelin was very good at - falling out of the sky at a high rate of knots! The navigator takes up the story: “Over the top we went and into what seemed to me a near vertical dive, at which point I made use of the brown paper bag that I had thoughtfully brought along. When I caught up with events, we were chasing sampans at around 50 feet over the sea. Indeed, on one turn I could almost swear that I saw wave disturbance on the sea from our wingtip! At that moment I was glad of the bang seat”. Later that same day, our

intrepid aviator flew from Butterworth to Tengah in his normal crew capacity aboard the Vulcan, sans 'bang seat'. It is not recorded if he had to make use of a further brown bag on the way!

One notable airborne interception by the squadron took place off Singapore on 21 September 1965. A Javelin on routine patrol was vectored onto a contact that was approaching the island. The contact turned out to be an Indon Badger aircraft. As the Javelin approached, the rear guns of the Badger started to track it. Seeing this, the pilot rolled the Javelin belly up so that the gunner was able to see the four Firestreak missiles that he was carrying. The guns of the Badger "very quickly" rotated into the straight-up, non-aggressive position and remained there. The Javelin formed with the Badger until it moved clear of Singapore airspace and then returned to Tengah. It transpired later that the Indon Air Force Chief of Air Staff had been onboard the Badger.

With the easing of Confrontation in early 1966, No 60 Sqn began to return to normal strength. By April of that year, it had a complement of 22 aircraft, 12 at Tengah and 10 at Butterworth. With the ending of Confrontation in August 1966, these numbers dropped further. In June 1967, large scale rioting broke out in Hong Kong and four of 60's aircraft were detached at short notice to the Colony should a need for their services arise. This detachment lasted just nine days but was followed by a further three such visits.

By the beginning of 1968, No. 60 Sqn was the only operator of Javelins in the RAF, now having just 10 aircraft on strength, and its days were clearly numbered. By this time all the squadron's aircraft were based at Tengah, but still making visits to Butterworth. No. 60 Squadron finally ended its association with the Far East, and the Javelin its operational service with the RAF, at a dusk ceremony at RAF Tengah on 30 April 1968. The following day, 1 May, all the squadron's aircraft were ferried to Seletar for disposal and its personnel began preparing for the journey back to the UK.



60 Squadron Javelins awaiting disposal at West Camp, Seletar in 1968

Don Donovan



No. 60 Squadron: the morning after the disbandment ceremony

Laurie Bean

The situation leading up to Confrontation in Borneo

Confrontation with Indonesia stemmed from a 1961 proposal to incorporate Malaya, Singapore and British North Borneo into a new Federation of Malaysia with the new Federation to be part of the British Commonwealth.

The major part of Borneo is Indonesian and known as Kalimantan. The border with the states of the new Federation (Sarawak and Sabah *and geographically including Brunei, which was to remain as a Sultanate within the Commonwealth and not as part of the new Federation*) was some 900 miles in length.

The Federation was proclaimed in September 1963 following the Brunei Revolt of December 1962 where rebels of the Kedayan tribe, under the adopted title of the TKNU (*Tentara Nasional Kalimantan Utara – North Kalimantan National Army,*) took hostages in Brunei town and across the border in Sarawak. Following the quelling of the revolt (which was sponsored by Indonesia) by a series of rapid co-ordinated responses from the Royal Navy, Royal Marines, Army and RAF, Confrontation with Indonesia was seen to begin.

From the start in 1962 Indonesia opposed the concept of the new Federation of Malaysia much preferring a formation of *Malaya, the Philippines and Indonesia* into a union of Maphilindo. The Indonesian President Sularno decided to enforce his preference by use of force! Both Britain and Federation undertook to defend the right of the people to remain as part of Malaysia.

In Borneo the first cross border raids of Confrontation (*Konfontasi*) were by IBT's (Indonesian Border Terrorists) made up of members of the Clandestine Communist Organisation (CCO) from western Sarawak and led by regular Indonesian forces officers and SNCO's of the elite commando forces. Later on there would be a change of tactics by the Indonesians where only army patrols were used for incursions into Malaysian Borneo. The change of tactics by the Indonesians at this stage of Confrontation suggested the situation previously was not unlike the Emergency of 1948-69 changing to a jungle war similar to that of the jungle war against the Japanese in WW II. There is no escaping the fact that the Indonesian troops were tough opponents!

Confrontation was an undeclared war fought along a 900 mile border of mainly jungle-covered mountains. Although the main thrust of action lay with the Commonwealth troops on the ground, both the RN and RAF also played major roles, especially with intercepting 'terrorists' at sea and the vital use of helicopters.

Personal recollections of involvement in Confrontation.

Several ex-service personnel have been invited to share their experiences of Confrontation with members of the RAF BPA and their stories follow. Any member with a story of their time in Borneo and/or Butterworth during the period of Confrontation with Indonesia is invited to share their experience(s) through the newsletter.

The prime task of the Royal Navy during Confrontation was to guard the West Malaysian coastline against attempted landings by sea of Indonesian regular troops, gun-runners, saboteurs and terrorists. The task was also complicated by the legitimate activities of fishermen and the traditional bartering trade between the Indonesian islands and mainland Malaya that had been going on for centuries. Also piracy was not uncommon in the waters between Indonesia and Singapore and the Malacca Strait.

We start with the story from **John Hunter** RN of the capture of a most wanted Indonesian terrorist.

John served on the destroyer, HMS Barrosa, patrolling the Malacca Strait during the period this incidence relates to and writes: “We were patrolling up and down the coast from Singapore to Penang, a duty we did many times. I was Chief of the watch in the engine-room and the ship was cruising at 104 shaft revs/min, about 10 knots.

The ship was darkened and at a state of readiness. We had become used to getting from our own mess-decks to the engine and boiler rooms in the pitch dark but sometimes bumped into a member of the seamen’s upper deck party. It was only short distance along the upper deck but our eyes had not had time to become adjusted to the available light. Anyway, we had all been briefed that should we hear ‘Action Indon’ over the ships tannoy we would close up to state one readiness and, complete with respirators, close all watertight doors.



One night, after several hours of gently cruising along at 10 knots, it came – ‘Action Indon, Action Indon’. The bridge rang the engine room telegraphs on to 154 revs and we gathered speed. I believe we actually went to 256 r.p.m, about 26 knots. The Captain went to the bridge and we down below were told by telephone that we were approaching an Indonesian ship which had been taken over by Indonesian ‘pirates’. The ship was only small but carried a cargo. It’s name was, I think, ‘North Wind’ or similar. As we approached and slowed down the sea-boat was lowered into the water with an armed boarding party. Apparently there was some confusion at first as to who was the ship’s crew and who were the ‘pirates’. The boarding party eventually made a decision and brought one of the Indonesians back to the Barrosa. (As all HM ships logs are retained by MOD its name and a report of the incident will be in the archives).

The prisoner was taken to our Chief Petty Officers’ recreational space on the Seacat deck above the upper deck and handcuffed to the guardrail near the Seacat missile launcher. Jack, being curious, went up to see this prisoner when daylight came. He was guarded by a seaman with an S.M.G. and looked quite relaxed. We fed him, gave him drinks and cigarettes and even chatted to him in a lighthearted way. He was quite a good artist and sketched a few of our crew.

We were ordered to go to Port Dickson on the Malacca coast where our prisoner would be disembarked. On our way there he continued to chat with the lads in a friendly way. On arrival we anchored and a boat came alongside. A man who looked like a human rock came on board with a portfolio of known communist terrorists and eventually identified our prisoner who, by this time, was almost a guest on board. I never found out who this ‘human rock’ was but he was hard. He got a length of rope and tied the prisoner’s arms behind his back so that the forearms were parallel and bound them tight, like whipping on the end of a rope, complete with two frapping turns. He then ‘threw’ the prisoner down on to the upper deck (an 8 ft drop), marched him to mid-ships and threw him down to the boat and they left. Of course, we all felt sorry for the prisoner after watching that treatment. We were later told that he was one of the most dangerous and wanted terrorists on the official list

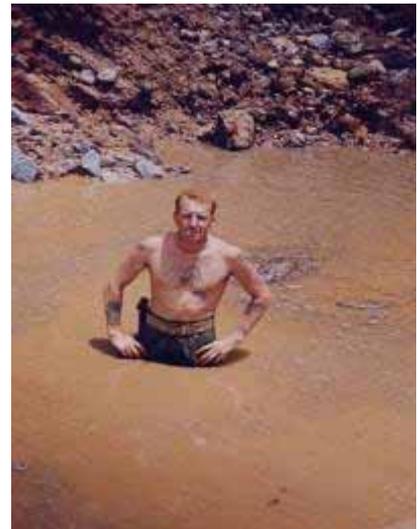
We then set sail and continued patrolling. As a coincidence my cousin was on the Barrosa on the commission before me. He was the ship’s Chief Electrician and they had a man killed by the Indonesians.”

Our next story is from **Bill Turton** RN who did two tours of the Far East, one prior to Confrontation where the ship he was on was tasked to help fulfill the prime task of the Royal Navy in the Far East and then during Confrontation as a member of the Fleet Clearance Team in Singapore.

“Although we of the lower deck were not privy to all the reasons for our being there in 1959 to 1961 we were on board HMS Carysfort showing the flag in the Far East, and on duties involving anti-gunrunning, anti-smuggling and anti-bandit patrols where we would patrol the (Malacca) Strait to prevent any insurgents from landing etc.

After returning to Blighty I was again drafted to Singapore (HMS Terror, a shore based establishment) as a member of the Fleet Clearance Team (the Bomb and Mine Disposal Unit) where yet again we were involved in countermeasures ops against insurgents all around Malaya, Borneo etc.”

“While stationed at HMS Terror, as a member of the Far East Fleet Clearance Diving Team, we used to be called upon to deal with explosives that had been stored at bandit camps. *These explosives had been obtained from bombs disposed of by being dumped at sea or recovered from bombs dropped that had failed to explode!* To get at the explosives inside the bomb casing the bomb shells were cut up using hacksaws and using the contents to make new bombs. As can be guessed sometimes the attempt went wrong and pieces of bandit were scattered to the four winds. We returned to the UK in 1968”



The pictures show Bill (left) at work on his way to destroy an explosives cache and right, Bill standing in a large crater, the result of destroying the explosives cache.



The Fleet Clearance Diving Team from HMS Terror



Bill ready for work in Hong Kong Harbour

The next contribution is from **Gerry White**, an ex-RAF policeman, who was detached to Butterworth during Confrontation:

“My contribution to the Confrontation was that I had been stationed at RAF Dishforth in the Vale of York and, together with Cpl Denis Clarkson and Sgt Jim Chidgey, we had been on trial with what was called the Village Constable Scheme. The end of National Service had meant a huge reduction in manpower, so smaller units needed a RAF police section to maintain physical security and yet able to help Station Commanders with a modicum of fairly efficient policing.

In 1963 I was on standby for overseas emergency drafting. On 1st Jan 1964 I was drafted to RAF Brize Norton and flew by Comet to RAF Changi. There were 18 RAF police corporals and two sergeants. We languished in transit at Changi for a week. I took time out to visit RAF Seletar and visit F/Sgt ‘Tiny’ Grimshaw and his family who had previously been stationed at Dishforth. Later the draft was flown by Twin Pioneer, I think, to RAAF Butterworth. On arrival we were briefed on the need for armed duty, and were going to provide security cover for No 15 Sqn Victor Bomber Aircraft. The squadron was on its Annual Bombing Camp.

During this time, in Indonesia, President Sukarno was threatening to send his ‘Circus’ to sort us out. In downtown Penang rickshaw drivers and coolies shouted ‘Sukarno’s a bloody bastard’ and other unprintable things. The Aussies fed us well and made us welcome as our aircraft were parked on the Jap Strip and armed with Iron Bombs before taking off daily to take part in the Bombing Schedule. Also at the same period rumour was that some infiltrators had been landed on the Malay peninsula, but had been rounded up by the Malayan Armed Forces and parted company with their heads as bringing the body out of the jungle was difficult.

At Butterworth the coconut harvest was being gathered around this time and our draft had the treat of fresh coconut milk but after 2½ months the draft said farewell to our Aussie friends and we returned to Changi. Then by Britannia to Brize Norton, so ending our draft’s contribution to the Confrontation.”

“In addition, I remember the swimming pool at Butterworth and the fortnightly bingo, which we used to go to. I also remember a place in Butterworth village called the B.C. The staff were surprised that I could speak Cantonese, which I had been taught during two years in Hong Kong at RAF Kai Tak. Yep, I can still say ‘M’goy lei. Bei poy Tiger beer gnogh!’ (Excuse me, please bring me a beer.)

Our accommodation was near the Jap strip and the two-man rooms had a fan to each bed. They were roofed with Atap and had stable doors*. I think we also used mossie nets as the mossies were a nuisance. Most of our RAF detachment were, in RAF parlance, ‘plumbers’ (armourers) as the Victor carried quite a bomb load. There was only one serious hang up, a 1000lb job, but it was safely downloaded.

I remember that the Butterworth Beach was out of bounds after dark. This was because of the myriad small sea snakes that swam in the shallows. One of our sergeants disobeyed regulations and was bitten. His big toe became badly infected and he could not carry out his duties. As a SNCO Policeman he was supposed to set an example! The cost of shipping him out to Malaya and kitting him out was totally wasted. He sat on his backside in the Mess for the detachment duration and Sergeant John Lord did all the duties!”

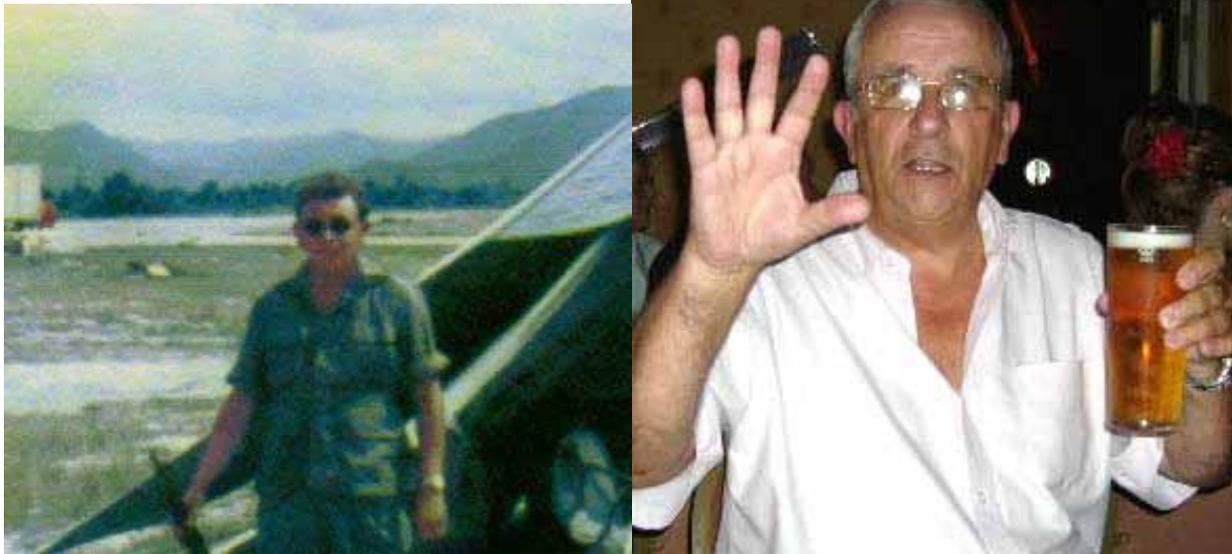
** Is it possible the accommodation Gerry refers to is/was the mystery building referred to in various issues dating from Spring 2005? In addition, in the Autumn 2006 issue, Mike Ward, refers to the Saddle Club and asks if the building could have been used as stables?*

Then and Now

We continue to show photographs taken of members in their youth and also recent ones. You are invited to submit photographs of yourself for inclusion in future issue(s) of *Eastward*.

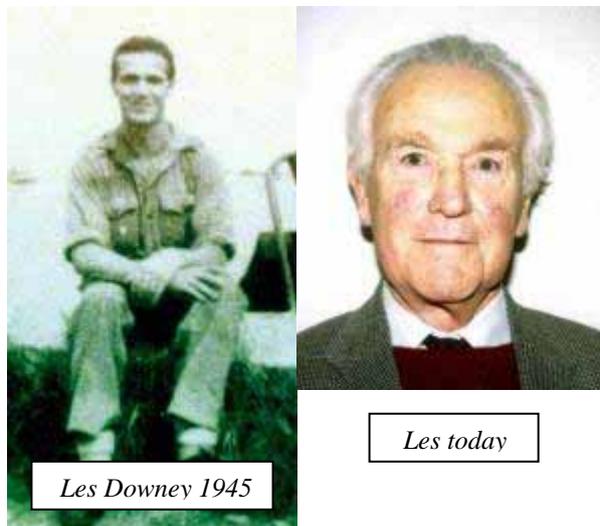


John Crooks 1956-58: Above & right



John Wilson 1965-68: Above and below

Geoff Morris: Above and above right



Les Downey 1945

Les today

Last Minute Christmas Shopping...a stocking filler?



I wish!!!!



**and
have a good 2008.**