

Transcript of: - CHAIRMANS CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 1993
The Serving Squadron

1993 has been a very busy year for the Squadron culminating in the move to Dishforth and 9 Regt AAC. The main changes this year have been the arrival of a new OC and a change of location, The new OC is Major Gary Key, ex RCT, who took over from Major Gary Coward in July. Major Coward is now Lt Col Coward at DAAG, so many congratulations to him.

656 Sqdn will be operating from Dishforth with effect from 4 Jan 94. All the aircraft and most of the men have now left Netheravon and as I write this I can see the tumble weed blowing across the carpark.

A rough calendar of Squadron events over the coming year is attached to this news letter, and as you can see it looks to be a very busy 12 months. Despite this we hope to be able to extend an Invitation to the Association to visit the Squadron on a number of occasions.

The Jubilee Celebrations

The highlight of the past year was undoubtedly the Jubilee. This was a splendid occasion and much enjoyed by all present. It was a great privilege for the serving Squadron to meet so many of the "Old and Bold" complete with an alarmingly large number of medals! As you will know one of the most important parts of the Jubilee was the commissioning of the Silver Chintre. In order to pay for this the association raised the magnificent total of £2500. This was topped up with donations from the AAC fund and others and the Chintre purchased. Those of you who were able to attend the Jubilee celebrations had the opportunity of seeing it and all felt that it looked very splendid. Bronze replicas are still available from the Squadron.

Malaysian Expedition

As part of the Jubilee year it was felt that an expedition to Malaysia, the scene of so much of the Squadrons flying would be appropriate. Accordingly the Squadron 2ic, Captain Peter Gibbs IG (Now Maj Gibbs AAC - can there be a connection?), led a party of 12 to Malaya in September. The expedition aimed firstly to locate the crash site of Auster TJ 674, piloted by Capt J.P.Churcher and secondly to lay a wreath at the Kluang Garrison Church. The wreath from the drumhead service held at Netheravon on 27 March was to be used in commemoration of all who lost their lives serving with 656 in the Far East. All of these aims were achieved. Amazingly the engine block of the Auster was located on the first day in the Jungle with one of the expedition members literally stumbling over it! Following a short ceremony at the crash site the expedition continued with an arduous Jungle trek. Following this Capt Gibbs laid a wreath at the former Garrison Church and the expedition members left for a few days well-deserved R&R. The Auster engine block was returned to the UK and may be seen at the Museum of Army Flying at Middle Wallop.

The Coming Year

1994 is going to be a very busy year for the AAC as a whole as well as for the Squadron. This offers us a number of possible venues for the AGM linked with the various events. It may well be appropriate to have our meeting at the same time as the Guidon parade or IAS. Please let Nobby or Derek Walker know your feelings on this, as we will have to make a decision soon. Alternatively once the Squadron is settled at Dishforth we may be able to combine a Families Day with the AGM. Again please let us know your feelings in this matter.

Other Association Matters.

Nobby reports that our membership has now increased to 277, with a corresponding increase in income. On that note he has asked me to “gently remind” those members who have not yet paid their annual subscription to do so — the Bankers Order is recommended.

Obituary

Over the course of the year we have been informed of the death of members of the association, namely:— K.J.Price. T.W.Seanian. K.G.Shaw.

Expressions of condolence have been sent to their families on behalf of the association.

And finally; Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.