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OC'S REPORT

This is my last report as the OC of 656 Squadron AAC, however, as we enter 2014, the Sqn is in great form. Since the last report, our time has been dominated by one major event – Exercise SEA KHANJAR. With very little notice, the Squadron was tasked to deploy to the UAE and HMS Illustrious to conduct tactical development work against Fast In-shore Attack Craft (numerous small boats representing a threat to Royal Naval vessels). This proved a real challenge for us as illustrated in my introduction to my Orders Group before departure:

“We are deploying by Land, Sea and Air, to a new country for UK AH operations, to conduct something we have never done before in a significantly reduced timeline. It doesn't get more difficult.”

The exercise itself was a consummate success, yet again purely down to the hard personal effort by the entire Sqn. A few names have shone through including Capt Tom Brunwin, the Ops Officer, Cpl Brian Symonds for his work with the logistics moves, and for maintaining our strong linkage with our tied REME Close Support Section, SSgt Matt O'Grady. The only negatives were the curtailing of the exercise due to a major engine fire onboard, swiftly dealt with by their personnel and procedures. It was, however, an emotional moment lifting off her deck for the last time after the last two years of close work with her (656 Sqn is the most frequent user from all services of HMS Illustrious!). 2014 will see Illustrious hand over to HMS Ocean before being decommissioned in December.

The Sqn then supported the Association at the Remembrance Sunday parade at the Cenotaph with 16 personnel from Airtrooper to Major, all of which came away with an amazing sense of duty, ethos, respect and family spirit. Since then, we have managed a full Squadron top-table dinner (in the style of the Officers' or WOs' and Sgts' Mess) and survived the Christmas 'silly season' including an outstanding Squadron party organised by LCpl Marcus Sharpe.

Over the past two years in command, I have seen the Sqn switch from supporting multiple aspects of AH operations (Conversion Flight support, MT support, and Contingency), to a more defined focus on the Contingent requirement. In that, I have tried to ensure that AH is used in the manner it was initially procured for in the current global context. Ironically, at the end of the 2 years, I feel this was only achieved once with 45 Commando on 'COUGAR 12' last year in Albania.

On a personal note, I have found command frustratingly rewarding. The effort supplied by the HQ and all ranks of the Sqn to pull in one unified direction has truly reaped rewards for all. The soldiers have all

been proactive, inventive, seized opportunity, and in doing so have really formed a great, well oiled team. To be in command of such a well-motivated group of soldiers, and see so many promote for their efforts has been my best reward. Yet, this has been balanced by the constant uphill struggle to try to develop the Attack Helicopter capability in the post-Afghanistan era. I wish my successor luck in this.

The Sqn is due to maintain its Maritime focus over the coming year, this time with HMS Ocean, and, although we will hand over the formal Land Very High Readiness requirement to 653 Sqn in the second half of 2014, we will maintain this Land level of capability with a Maritime “wrap” - as expressed by Col Andy Cash (a former OC) - for the foreseeable future.

Major Jules Pannett takes the reigns of 656 Sqn from January, and I wish him all the luck at the helm of the best Squadron in the Army Air Corps!

Piers Lewis



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2013 has been a highly successful year for both the Association and the Squadron. It was important to celebrate the Squadron's 70th Anniversary (and incidentally the 25th Anniversary of the Association) as a mark of respect for those that have gone before us. In all our events we have been ably supported by the Squadron, when their focus has been on training and operational matters.

The backdrop to all our activities has been the publication of the history of the Squadron: ***From Auster to Apache, The History of 656 Squadron RAF/AAC 1942 – 2012***. The project was conceived over 3 years ago, when we approached Guy Warner to ask if he would be willing to write the history. Publication, by Pen and Sword, was planned for May which tied in with the anniversary events. Only when we saw the published book did we fully appreciate the mammoth task that Guy had achieved. The Squadron's history is complex and varied, with many operational theatres, sub-units and fascinating personalities. The book also records the impressive honours and awards and the sobering list of those that died on operations. The project produced many surprises and finds, not least that squadron personnel have so far amassed 1 DSO, 4 MCs, 49 DFCs, and 9 DFMs. We are indebted to Guy for doing justice to the history of a unique Squadron.

This year's reunion was held alongside the Squadron at Wattisham. All the squadron personnel had gone to remarkable efforts to lay out the aircraft hangar with a wide range of equipment. Nowadays the vehicles are huge, the communications equipment incomprehensible and the soldiers who operate them all highly impressive and professional. The event was the ideal occasion to officially launch the book. While many members had pre-ordered in anticipation, it was gratifying to see young soldiers buying copies and taking the opportunity to get signatures from our members. The day would not have happened but for the hard work of many individuals including Captain Charles Field, Sgt Alan Mason and WO2(SSM) Andy Eardley.

Alongside the Squadron's awesome Apaches we invited two Austers to join us. We are lucky to have a good relationship with the International Auster Club which has always supported our functions and greatly added to the atmosphere. With a backdrop of aircraft - which span the Squadron's history - we had a group photograph taken.

It is always a privilege to dine in a military Mess and so it was a particular pleasure to dine in the Officers' Mess to round off the day's activities. It was also a joy to have two Burma veterans, Vince Weaver and Peter Andrews - and Margaret Windscheffel and her close family - join us for the evening.

Although our book had been 'launched' at the Squadron base, we felt that it deserved a wider audience. We therefore held a public launch at the Museum of Army Flying on Friday 14th June. The event was well attended and proved the right time and place to give the book a further boost. Our thanks are due to the Museum staff for providing the excellent facilities and to the members of the International Auster Club for flying in with two Austers. As we approach Christmas, Pen and Sword inform us that book is selling well.

This Anniversary year we also thought it would be a good idea if some of our members could attend a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. Thanks to the 'Not Forgotten Association' four association couples were able to attend. Another of our members, Ted Maslen-Jones MC, DFC, OLM having attended a Burma reception, hosted by The Duke of York, at the Palace in late 2012, was nominated, by The Burma Star Association for the Medal of the Order of Mercy, which he received at the Mansion House in June.

To round off the year we formed our seventh contingent at the National Act of Remembrance at the Cenotaph, Whitehall on Remembrance Sunday. While we can normally muster around 15 to 20, this year we achieved 55, thanks in part to a good turnout from the current Squadron. We were blessed with clear but cold skies as we collected on Horse Guards Parade. The whole ceremony, in the presence of Her Majesty, The Queen is a moving event which brings home the Nation's relationship with those who have served, and especially those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

We are most grateful of the support of the Squadron, which while assisting the Association was going about its UK Contingency training and other responsibilities. They started the year in the cold of Norway and finished it aboard HMS Illustrious in the heat of UAE. We wish them all success in the years ahead.

I hope you feel that we have done justice to the history and heritage of a unique Squadron. Yet our activities and plans do not end on New Year's Eve. In 2014 we will continue to work with the Museum to update the 656 displays: arrange a visit to the National Memorial Arboretum to unveil our third commemorative tree: hold an 'Auster Mark 9 Fly In' at Old Sarum Airfield with the International Auster Club; and we plan to visit the D Day Beaches in September. Details of these events can be found in the Journal. I hope as many of you as possible can join us.

Wishing you all a successful 71st Anniversary and 2014!

Andrew Simkins

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Although my own service in 656 Squadron was relatively short, my memories of the comradeship, humour and sense of duty remain very vivid. I am certain this is true of many veterans, whilst also recognising the commitment made by families, who often served in foreign postings.

I was therefore delighted to find an active association which represented the veteran community of 656 Squadron. I was also amazed to find that the Squadron had such a rich and varied history, with a nearly continuous operational record. Its history is well recorded in our book, 'From Auster to Apache'. Sales has been very pleasing, with the majority through our own efforts. However, Pen and Sword, the publisher, have been very helpful and continue to advertise the book and sell copies at a steady rate. We still hold signed copies which are available on request. Should sales continue at the current rate, there is the possibility of a paperback issue sometime in the future. If you have yet to buy a copy, I suggest you read the excellent reviews later in the Journal.

Having attended a number of Association events I thought it was time to offer my services as Honorary Secretary. I am indebted to Sylvia for providing such a comprehensive handover. She is a difficult act to follow, given the quality of the biannual Journal and her firm control of the administration. The Association would not be in such a good state but for Sylvia's (and not forgetting John's) selfless efforts. I am most grateful, and I am certain I speak for the whole membership.

Although I take over at the end of the 70th Anniversary events, the Association is not slackening its efforts. We have a very busy programme for 2014 which is detailed later in the Journal. The National Memorial Arboretum visit was popular in 2012, and therefore I am confident we will have a fascinating and stimulating visit this year. There is also an Auster Fly In at Old Sarum, and a proposed D Day Beaches tour in September.

I look forward to my duties as Honorary Secretary, the opportunity to learn more about '656' and the various functions planned for 2014 and beyond.

On behalf of all our members, the president and committee members wish Sylvia, who has recently been told she has cancer, our very best wishes and thoughts during her medical treatment. All committee members are available to pass on messages of support.

Will Harrell

TREASURER'S REPORT

656 Squadron Association

Statement of income and expenditure for the year ended 31 December 2013

Income		Expenditure	
General account			
Subs	2,747.00	Journal costs	1,694.21
New member subs	230.00	Printing & Stationary costs	69.28
Reunion income	2,079.00 ¹	Reunion costs	2,310.69
History Book income	598.94	History book costs	2,053.03
Archives income	0.00	Archives costs	366.04
Event income	0.00	Events costs	441.41 ²
Donations in	25.00	Web & PC costs	170.07
Postage paid income	90.20	Postage costs	121.91
Adverts income	250.00	Committee costs	193.50
Misc income	0.00	Donations out	136.00
Interest	1.00	PayPal fees	59.12
Payments from debtors	50.00	Payments to Creditors	0.00
Totals	6,071.14		7,615.26
Surplus (or overspend)	(-1,544.12)		
Sales account			
Sales		Cost of sales	
Shop sales	5,216.33 ³	Opening shop stock	1,237.81
Shop profits	1,531.90 ³	New stock added	3,525.00 ³
			4,762.81
		Less closing stock	<u>1,078.38</u>
	<u>3,684.43</u>	Cost of sales	3,684.43
		(Includes write-offs)	93.55 ⁴
Total income	<u>11,287.47</u>	Total expenditure	<u>11,299.69</u>
Overall surplus (or overspend)	-12.22		

Notes

- 1 Reunion income does not include the additional shop sales on the day of £ 219.43
- 2 Cenotaph, NMA tree, etc.
- 3 Reflects the purchase of 282 copies of "From Auster to Apache" and sale of 266 copies.
- 4 Raffle prizes, gifts, lapel badges for new members, etc.

These are provisional, pre-audit figures.

656 Squadron Association.**Balance sheet for the year ended 31 December 2013**

	2013	2012
Current Assets		
Cash	3,398.51	3,251.30
Stock	1,078.38	1,237.81
Debtors	0.00	50.00
Assets	26.09	45.38
	4,502.98	4,584.49
Current liabilities		
Shop stock	0.00	0.00
Unpresented cheques & transfers	0.00	0.00
	0.00	0.00
Net current assets	4,502.98	4,584.49
<i>(Represented by)</i>		
Funds B/F	4,489.11	4,659.86
General surplus	(-1,544.12)	(-112.28)
Shop profits	1,531.90	(-58.47)
Plus Debtors - current year	0.00	50.00
Minus Creditors - current year	0.00	
Assets	26.09	45.38
	4,502.98	4,418.49
Reserve account		
Opening balance 1 January	2,000.30	2,503.69
Transfers in	0.00	0.00
Transfers out	0.00	504.62
Interest received	1.00	1.23
Closing balance 31 December	2,001.30	2,000.30
M Meaton Treasurer		D Walker Deputy Treasurer

An Illustrated selection of the 70th Anniversary Year Celebrations

Group Photographs - Museum of Army Flying - 14 June 2013



The present Officer Commanding, 656 Squadron Army Air Corps, Major Piers Lewis and former OC's, along with four recipients of the Distinguished Flying Cross and General Sir John Learmont KCB, CBE.



Four recipients of the Distinguished Flying Cross with General Sir John Learmont KCB, CBE.
Captain Neil Sierens DFC (Libya), Colonel John Greenhalgh DFC (Falklands)

Captain Ted Maslen-Jones MC, DFC, OLM (Burma) and Lieutenant Colonel Sam Drennan MBE, DFC, AFC (Falklands)



Committee Members and officials of the Association, with Guy Warner.

From left: Lt Col David Joyce, Mark Meaton, Guy Warner, Andrew Simkins OBE (President), Ted Maslen-Jones MC DFC OLM, Will Harrell, John Bennett, Ron Ward and Lt Gen Sir Gary Coward KBE CB.

70th Anniversary Reunion - Wattisham - 7 June 2013.



656 Squadron Army Air Corps personnel with members of the Squadron Association, flanked by an Apache and Auster.



Squadron at home





Squadron on board





Major Piers Lewis, Guy Warner and Andrew Simkins OBE.



Presentation of a painting of Noble Field, K.L., Malaya by Peter Elliston to Major Piers Lewis and Andrew Simkins OBE



Association members seated for the Opening Presentation by Major Piers Lewis, Guy Warner and Andrew Simkins OBE.



'Team Shop' Joyce Bennett, Sylvia Heyes , Jane Simkins & Diane Haynes.



Association Members assembled prior to Dinner at the Officers' Mess.



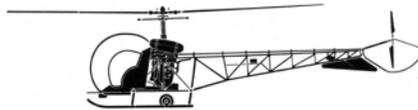
John Bennett, Vince Weaver and his son Dave Weaver



L to R: Pam Drummer, Margaret Flint, Terry and Joan Williams.



Margaret Windscheffel and her granddaughter, Amanda Reynolds.



Book Launch Museum of Army Flying - 14 June 2013



Welcome to the Book Launch



Guy Warner and Andrew Simkins opening the presentation.



Guests at Launch.





Guests at Launch



Starting young!

Buckingham Palace Garden Party - 2 July 2013



Four of our members attended as guests of of the 'Not Forgotten Association'. Terry 'Slim' Burns flanked by the Yeomen of the Guard, Alan Saunders ex WO1 (ASM) REME in glasses and Bob Smith ex WO11 Royal Signals.

Order of Mercy - Mansion House - 8 July 2013

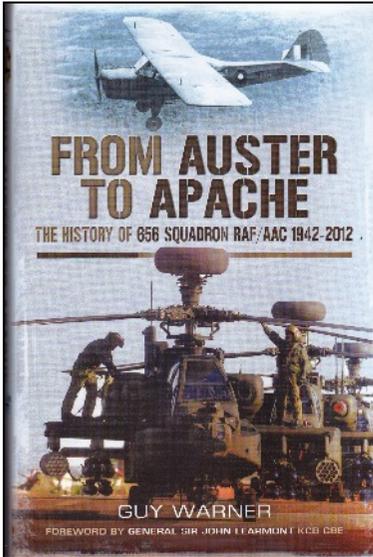


Ted Maslen-Jones, left, receives his badge of the Order of Mercy by Lord Lingfield.

Cenotaph 10th November 2013



656 Squadron Association Contingent on Horse Guards Parade after the March past.



'From Auster to Apache'

By Guy Warner

REVIEWS

The following review is reproduced with the kind permission of the Ulster Aviation Society journal

Guy Warner's achievements as an aviation researcher and author are remarkable. With around 25 books and monographs to his credit during the last 16 years, one can only wonder where he finds the energy.

In *From Auster To Apache*, he provides an in-depth history of 656 Squadron, Army Air Corps. This particular unit's total flying hours, accumulated during more than 70 years of operational service in theatres throughout the world including India, Burma, Java, Malaya, Borneo, Hong Kong, Rhodesia, the Falkland Islands, Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan, as well as in Great Britain is a record unmatched by any Royal Navy, Royal Air Force or AAC squadron. Interestingly, 656 Squadron has no associations with Northern Ireland, unless one stretches a point to have regard to its accomplishments flying Austers in Burma in 1944, target spotting for the artillery of the 8th (Belfast) Heavy Anti Aircraft Regiment which was part of General Sir Bill Slim's 'forgotten' 14th Army, or in 1964 when one of the squadron's Scout helicopters was detached to work with the Royal Ulster Rifles at Serian in Borneo. Incidentally, in the Burma campaign, two of the squadron's pilots were each awarded both the Military Cross and the Distinguished Flying Cross, a unique combination, not awarded to any Army pilot since.

Significantly, *From Auster To Apache* is something of a departure for Guy, as his previous books on aspects of Army Air Corps history have focused on activities in and closer to Northern Ireland. Not for a moment should that observation be taken to imply that the book will be of little interest to members of the Ulster Aviation Society or the wider local community. No reader who is enthusiastic about aircraft will fail to be fascinated by the numerous anecdotal accounts of the wide range of unique experiences gained flying Tiger Moth, Auster and DH Beaver

fixed-wing types, Scout, Sioux, Gazelle, Lynx and Apache helicopters in a very wide variety of military roles and operational environments. Moreover, the book is testament to Guy's ability to quickly research and assimilate a huge amount of information and present it in a detailed but easily accessible way, thanks in part to an Index which, in itself, must have taken immense patience to produce. Without doubt, the book is one of his greatest achievements to date and I know from personal contact it has given him great satisfaction to write. Highly commended.

On the recommendation of old friend and colleague Ron Ward (56A), I recently purchased one of the first copies of the above titled book, written (and kindly signed) by Guy Warner. Guy is the author of many books and magazine articles on aviation and presents this current title in a very professional and interesting manner. Harking back to Ron Ward, he himself joined the AAC (Army Air Corps), and sent some articles on to me a few years ago about his AAC experiences in the Far East. I think the first two of these articles have already appeared in OBAN and I am sure that the current editor will catch up with the remainder in due course. One of my own 56B intake, Tony Domoney, now in splendid retirement out in Western Australia, also enthused upon his experience of joining the AAC in an OBAN article, before going on to become an 'air-worthiness' expert for many years in Africa. Racking my brains back to many years ago, I recall that there must have been many ex-Apprentices who made their careers in the AAC, proud wearers of the coveted light-blue beret, but only a few names from 56B come to mind, such as Bob Lennon and Tom Hardy.

Going back to the book, it has probably taken me a couple of months to 'read, mark, learn and inwardly digest' its contents – but what a pleasurable experience that has been. It is written mainly in documentary style, giving a stage-by-stage explanation of all the various changes to the Squadron and its aircraft since the early days of its conception in the dark days of the Second World War. But interspersed with the 'skeleton' of the storyline, Guy has put 'flesh on the bones' by adding thoughtful and exciting personal memories and anecdotes from those many individuals who were an essential part of the whole story. The Squadron history covers so many theatres of service and conquest, it almost serves as a veritable history of Britain's involvement in recent world history – India, Burma, Malaya, Java, Sumatra, Korea, Brunei and Borneo, to name but a few of the earlier areas. Later service includes

Hong Kong, Rhodesia, the Falklands, Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo, leading up to the most recent scenes in Afghanistan with the *Apache* Attack Helicopter.

A recurring theme throughout Guy's excellent book is the value placed by the air-crews and commanders upon the back-up provided by their REME personnel. One quotation, given by Captain Sam Drennan, at the end of the chapter relating to the Falklands War of 1982, sums up the ethos:

"The REME technicians were outstanding at their engineering tasks, but are also excellent, bright soldiers who can be relied upon to get 'down and dirty' when the need arises. Their military prowess is generally overlooked; many forget the REME don't just fix things – I have witnessed them as soldiers on many occasions and they are very good."

All in all, the book provided a vivid and thought-provoking image of what it was to serve with 656 Squadron, over the seventy years of flying in such a variety of aircraft, under the sometimes most hazardous of conditions. I highly recommend it to the readers of OBAN.

Pete Gripton 56B

I was delighted when the Regimental Secretary invited me to review the history of 656 Squadron. I admire Guy Warner's work and enjoy the manner in which he interweaves historical fact with oral history. It brings his subjects to life, particularly when read from the professional soldier's viewpoint. It also adds colour to what could easily be a black and white report of days gone by. I confess that I read it from the selfish standpoint as an Army Air Corps veteran with four decades of service and was entertained (and educated) by what I found there. That is an important point; Guy's contribution to the recording of Army Air Corps history should not go unnoticed. His work on Aviation in Ulster, the history of 651 Squadron and now this recording of 656 Squadron all add to our knowledge of ourselves and stand as authoritative references to our story.

From "Auster to Apache" captures 70 years in an Aviation squadron's vibrant life and tells us just how much has changed in the intervening years – and just how much has remained the same. In a way it is a story that reflects the history of the Army Air Corps itself and demonstrates the flexible role of Army aviation across the spectrum of operations. Nevertheless, it also conveys the human story and illustrates changes in both our culture and society as a Corps. In his research Guy was able to draw upon official and private diaries that are rich in detail. I

sincerely hope that the modern Corps is keeping similar records for future generations to read.

This book is densely packed and may be read as an interesting story or mined for nuggets of useful information. It is a must for all who have served in 656 Squadron and highly recommended for those who have an interest in our history.

“LZ”



'FROM AUSTER TO APACHE' FORESIGHT & ENERGY

Hopefully by now many members of our aviation related associations will have purchased a copy of *'From Auster to Apache'* the history of 656 Squadron RAF/AAC 1942-2012, written by Guy Warner to mark the Squadron's 70th Anniversary. Whilst perhaps appropriately it was 651 Squadron that was first to have its history chronicled in such a way, 656's story is an unusually diverse one, characterised by almost continual operational activity across the world; I doubt that any other Service unit can match it during this period! For those that resist buying such books, 'borrow' the book and just quickly read General Sir John Learmont's foreword and then turn to Appendix 1, the list of Honours and Awards (page 276), you will be quickly sold!

The Corps and Squadron Association are extremely grateful to Guy Warner for taking on this task and for donating his royalties to charity. Readers will quickly appreciate how much work has been involved in researching, collating and then ultimately writing such a detailed history. Equally Guy has been very fair in acknowledging the assistance of a whole host of characters who provided much of the detail that the archives neglected – fortunately most are still alive. He also pays tribute to the President and Committee of the Squadron Association who persuaded him to take on the task.

Old Comrade/Veterans Associations invariably rely on a few key committed volunteers to provide the foresight to create them and the energy to keep them vibrant, serving the interests of their members. 656 Squadron were fortunate to have had the late Nobby Clarke, a Burma veteran who provided the first tranche of foresight and energy for the Association and he would undoubtedly be chuffed to see his beloved squadron's history immortalised in this book. For this second tranche of horsepower we must thank Andrew Simkins (President) and his committee members, Mark Meaton, Ron Ward and Derek Walker for initiating the project and then supporting Guy in delivering such an inspiring story. I suspect they are as chuffed as Nobby might be, but are typically humble in acknowledging others' contributions rather than highlighting their own. So if you come across Simkins and his 'volunteer veterans', they deserve a strong pat on the back for continuing to provide an unending supply of foresight and energy – long may they continue.

Sir Gary Coward

Lieutenant General

Deputy Colonel Commandant AAC & President AOP Officers' Association

Auster AOP 9 WZ706 A Request for help!



*656 Sqn Auster Mk 9, Sumpitan Air-strip, North Malaya 1962
Pilot : Capt. C. R. Roberts 7 Flight
By David Shepherd CBE*

Just an update on this fine aircraft, I am nearly finished after four and half long years, however the Ministry in their wisdom has decreed the paperwork is not quite adding up to the total weight of the aircraft yet and it is proving a slow and tedious task to get that sorted.

If you can imagine having to detail in detail, everything that has been done to her in the restoration, from how you stripped the paint to how and what wire you used in her complete modern rewiring, but using the old wiring spec from the AP's. I have to provide work packs that are considerably more detailed

than the nice Form 700 ever required in fact I am up to 163 pages and still working on it.

The hardest part is getting missing items, we have literally tons of NOS, (New Old Stock still in its grease, wax and cardboard boxes you will remember) from the MOD but some things are just not available then you have to remake that bit, bend metal a very laborious process as you know from doing it back in the past?

Help!! Does anybody have a detailed drawing, pictures or even their own notes for the flap actuator that sat in the roof between the two pilots seats, this is still proving to be a complete pain, I have not been able to get any documents on this item and after 60 years you can imagine neoprene seals are like Dodo's, if you could help on this it would be a godsend?

To fly in her old colours I have had to apply to the CAA, the RAF, AAC and finally the MOD to get that approval, you can imagine that took some time and patience, however it is done, she is insured to fly and when this paperwork is approved she can get her air-tests sorted and then hopefully her permit to fly.

Below you will find the history as known of WZ706 AOP9.

What I would love to get is the fine details of where she was between "Allotted to 656 Squadron, Kuala Lumpur 13-1-56. WZ706 and WZ707 delivered to 656 Sqn on this date for 1907 Flight. And "Allotted

to 389/390 MU, Seletar 15-3-62. Aircraft received from 656 AAC Sqn by the MU for storage on 22-3-62 [Before Flight'd and cleared by Ron Ward at 0600hrs - 7 Flight Noble Field K.L, pilot to be identified].”

Please could I ask you to rack your brains and put airfield, strips, etc. and areas of operations and if possible dates and of course names of people. If you had some photos we could use to go with that information that would be the icing on the cake.

Ron Ward is helping collate a history board to go under the Auster, when it is on show at various air-shows around the country, any information that you may have already submitted to Ron is not required, but any new items and information would be great.

With this in mind we are still looking for some period webbing, any personal messing utensils also any information or kit items that would have sat in the starboard rear cockpit area that was held to the wall with two webbing belts and was survival equipment area, what was there do you have pictures or even nicer any of that equipment?

Lastly it would be nice to display the berets and badges of the different Services, Regiments that served with her up to and including the AAC Blue beret.

Anything and everything that you have and don't want that could be related to her work in the FEAF would be of interest, please take the time to look in attics, broom cupboards in that old kitbag in the garage or wherever, fish out the bits and lets make it a good historical show under the Auster

Auster AOP 9. WZ706. Civil Registration G-BURR.

Contract 6/Acft/7455/CB.6 (a) called for 56 Auster AOP Mk.9, which were to be serialled WZ662 to WZ679 and WZ694 to WZ731 for the RAF. **WZ706** was built at Rearsby, Leics during May/June 1955. Production test flight 24-6-55 by Les Leetham.

Awaiting collection 29-6-55 at Rearsby.

Delivered 4-7-55 from Rearsby to St Athan, Wales by pilot Edgerton-Green and allotted to 19 MU, St Athan on the same date.

Allotted 19-9-55 to Far East Air Force via 47 MU, Sealand for dismantling and boxing (*no shipping details known*).

Allotted to Maintenance Base Far East (*MBFE was at 389/390 MU, Seletar*) 24-11-55 for re-assembly.

Allotted to 656 Squadron, Kuala Lumpur 13-1-56. *WZ706 and WZ707 delivered to 656 Sqn on this date for 1907 Flight.*

On 24-5-56 Capt P.K. Myers forced landed the aircraft SW of Kampar when the engine failed due to a broken fuel injector. Pilot awarded a Green endorsement.

Transferred to Army Air Corps on 1-9-57 and allotted to 656 AAC Sqn/7 Flight.

Capt J.C.H.Richards forced landed on a newly laid track besides paddy fields 100 miles inside Thailand on 4-9-60.

Fuselage recovered by Sycamores of 110 Sqn and wings carried out by road. Repairs and re-assembly completed by 7-11-60.

Allotted to 389/390 MU, Seletar 15-3-62. Aircraft received from 656 AAC Sqn by the MU for storage on 22-3-62.

Aircraft crated during 10-62 at 390 MU for despatch to 19 MU, St Athan, Wales. Returned to the UK 10-11-62 (*shipping details not known*).

Allotted 6-3-63 to 19 MU, St Athan for storage until relegated to use as a ground instruction airframe with a total time of 3351.10 hrs.

Allotted serial **7851M** (*it is doubtful if this serial was actually applied to the aircraft*) on 16-6-64 for ground instruction.

Allotted to Royal Military College of Science (RCMS) Shrivenham 17-6-64 and delivered there on 19-6-64.

Removed to Netheravon 4-90 for disposal by tender.

Sold by MoD 12-90 to Military Auster Flight.

Registered **G-BURR** on 28-9-92 to R.P.D.Folkes, Aldershot. By 1992 being overhauled in AAC Museum workshops.

Registration cancelled 18-3-99 by CAA.

Stored in number 4 Hanger at AAC Middle Wallop until 02/12/2008.

Regd 2-12-08 to P.J.Gill, Whaley Bridge. Transported from Middle Wallop to Eggesford for continuing rebuild 2-08.

Compiled by I.W.O'Neill on 14-4-09 from RAF AHB files, RAF Form 78 (Movement Card), AAC Journal Vol 1, No.3, CAA Registration ledger, Les Leatham's log book, notes from late Major J.R.Cross AAC and own personal

Many thanks

Peter Gill

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656 SQUADRON ASSOCIATION PROGRAMME OF EVENTS **2014**

Our 2014 programme is detailed below. We look forward to seeing you at one or all of the events listed below.

Reunion Dinner and Tour of the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA),

Sat 7th and Sun 8th June

Following the success of our 2012 Reunion, we will hold our Annual Reunion Dinner (7.00 for 7.30) in the Best Western, Appleby Park Hotel on Saturday 7th June. The hotel is located on the outskirts of Tamworth and Burton upon Trent just off Junction 11 of the M42, Post Code: DE12 7AP. The cost of a Double Room is £65 (£55 for Single).

We will hold our AGM in the Hotel starting at 8.45am, Sun 8th June. This will enable us all to arrive at the NMA in time for the 2 Minutes Silence in the Arboretum Chapel at 11am. (Please note there is a car park charge, but entry to the NMA is free). After the short service we will move to the Army Air Corps Memorial for the unveiling of our 70th Anniversary Tree. We will then split into Groups to undertake a walking tour of the Arboretum, taking in as many Squadron-related memorials as possible. We will conclude with a two course meal in the Restaurant. There will be time to undertake your own walk after lunch.

Further details are on the Loose Leaf Return.

Auster 9 Fly In, Old Sarum Airfield, Salisbury, Saturday 9th August

We are holding an Auster 9 Fly In at Old Sarum, Salisbury (SP4 6DZ) on Saturday 9th August, in conjunction with the International Auster Club (IAC). Although focussed on the Mark 9, we expect many other Marks to fly in. The event is free, and there are good facilities on site, including a cafe and Museum. Members may choose to undertake a flight which will be charged at £25 per person. This should prove to be a relaxed, friendly event alongside the IAC. The airfield has great historical significance for Army Aviation, and the first Air OP squadron formed here in August 1941. The event starts at 10am.

Further details will be in the Summer Journal.

Continued

Tour of the D Day Beaches, September

We aim to undertake a 4 day tour of the D Day Beaches in September with a reputable battlefield coach operator. The tour will include all the D Day beaches and relevant Museums, along with Pegasus Bridge. Pick up will be from the Museum of Army Flying, Middle Wallop, Hampshire or Dover. The tour will include a Dover ferry crossing, then en route to our destination in the Caen area, Normandy. The hotel will provide three night's B&B accommodation. We will return on the fourth day arriving at the Museum at approx 1915hrs. The cost will depend on the numbers but will be between £290 and £340 per person (less entrance fees). A deposit will be required once numbers are known.

Currently we wish to measure interest in this event. Therefore if you wish to be included please fill in the Return. Full details will be in the Summer Journal.

Cenotaph Parade, Sunday 9th November

Details will be in the Summer Journal.



ASSOCIATION SHOP



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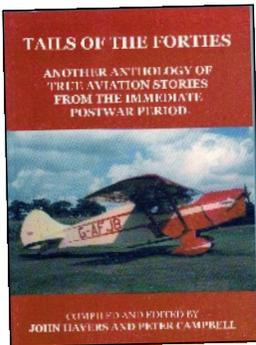
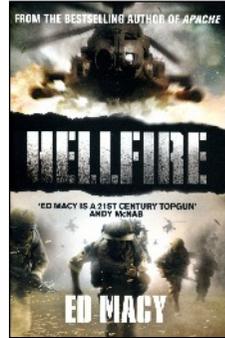
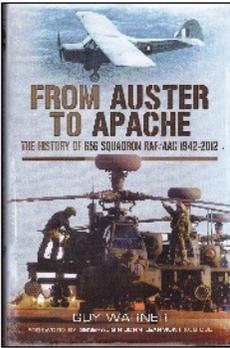


BOOKS

'From Auster to Apache'

The History of 656 Squadron RAF/AAC 1942-2012

£20.00*



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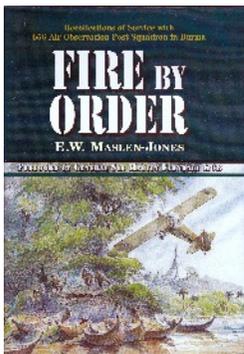
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If you order on-line you can now pay by credit/debit card, through PayPal. You do not need a PayPal account. The PayPal website's payment page now shows a note at the bottom that says "Don't have a PayPal account? Pay with your debit or credit card..." Once customers have paid, another screen offers them the chance to set up a PayPal account anyway, but this can be declined.

NOTICES

Vote of thanks: It has been an exceptional year of Celebration on the 70th Anniversary of the formation of our Squadron. Preparations for it have been going on for several years. The President and each individual member of 656 Squadron Association's Committee have been tasked with specialised jobs which together have led to the complete reorganisation of all our Archives, as well as the Research, which began 3 years ago, and led to the production of the History of 656 Squadron ("Form Auster to Apache"). This was launched on time, after Guy Warner had completed his commission to write it for us. A fine job he has made of it.

The work involved is largely unseen. Because of that its extent is hard to fully understand. 70 years of archive material takes a lot of sorting out! Our thanks therefore goes to the 656 Squadron Association, and the Dedication and Resourcefulness of all its members, whose support, because of its nature, will continue to be needed. *Ted Maslen-Jones MC, DFC, OLM*

NEW MEMBERS

Lewi Davies	AAC	Joined July 2013
Mark Brown	AAC	Joined July 2013
Guy Warner	Associate	Joined July 2013
Malcolm Worker	AAC	Joined July 2013
Paul Bains	AAC	Joined Aug 2013
Tom Brunwen	AAC	Joined Aug 2013
Ken Owens	RA/AAC	Joined Aug 2013
Vic Askey	AAC	Joined Oct 2013
Joan Gillson	Associate	Joined Oct 2013
Darren (Daz) Wight	AAC	Joined Oct 2013
Robert (Bob) Thorpe	AAC	Joined Nov 2013

DEATHS

Sadly, we announce the deaths of the following members and offer our sincere condolences to their relatives and friends.

Col. David Mallam OBE AAC

1961-64 14Fit Malaya and Borneo
Died July 2013

Col. S.M.W. Hickey

1953-55 1907 Fit Malaya, 1955-56 Korea, 1968-69 SHQ Malaysia
Died Nov 2013

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