

39 SQUADRON MARAUDER ASSOCIATION

FOUNDER – PETER HATCHER.

**39 SQUADRON . A B26 MARTIN MARAUDER
SQUADRON. 254 WING. BALKAN AIR FORCE.WW 11**

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Newsletter on Disc.

Centre. West. No 2 Whiteoaks Court. 01752 690092. These Newsletters are on disc and are free to any of our members. We recommend that if you have difficulty with your sight 'phone – they last an hour.

Write to ; - Transcription

David's Lane. Ivybridge. PL21

REUNION. SEPTEMBER 20TH & 21ST. FALCON HOTEL.

Here we are again – our above Reunion is in four months – do you agree that as you get older time goes twice as fast? We all hope that we have as many as possible attending – 35 last year – there is no reason why we can't. It is hoped that a member/members of present day 39 will be there and as in 2014 the Squadron will be back in the UK we can hope for more to visit us.

Clive Mitchell, our good friend and ex CO of 39, says that he should be back in the UK from his posting to South Africa and if he is then he and Terry will attend. That's great news as he and Terry fitted in like a glove and on Saturdays he could stay up and drink with the best of us!

I'm hoping that someone will be able to ferry Frank and Sylvia Doran to the Falcon but do not hold high hopes.

You will see a report from our President in another part of this Magazine which will tell you more about Frank's present availability and health so you will see what his present position is and what we can expect.

You will find a booking form for the hotel enclosed plus the menu selection for our Official Saturday Night Dinner. If you are attending, and we hope that you are, then please complete the booking and menu details and send back to me by the 26th August at the latest – email or letter – as I have to inform the Falcon in good time. Any queries please contact me by any method.

Once again please, make all efforts to attend – we do have a great time and nostalgic weekend.

OUR PRESIDENTS COMMENTS (Well done Frank)

Frank is unable to write a report himself but Chris, his son in law, has very kindly produced a few notes on Frank and Sylvia's present position and health which I will pass on to you good people. It's great to have details.

Both of them are very much enjoying the Torquay life and Frank is still active physically and shops each day but, unfortunately, struggles some days with his speech. Frank still manages to get some flying in (at least an hour a week) with his grand daughter's fiancé who has a Piper Arrow 28R which is kept at Exeter Airfield. Often they fly to the Channel Islands for a spot of lunch or down to the old St Mawgan Airfield outside Newquay.

Frank fusses over Sylvia (hasn't he always?) and cooks for her every day whilst she gets her cooking pleasures from watching the chefs on TV – the recipes, however, are forgotten quite soon after the programme. But, Sylvia still really

enjoys her Daily Telegraph and woe betide the person who attempts to throw out for recycling, any copies before they have been read cover to cover!

Sylvia celebrated her 90th birthday in early May when all the family travelled to Devon to join in the partying which seemed to go on for a week and boy, did she milk it!

They usually join Chris and their daughter for supper at weekends and then a pub lunch thrown in during the week. Frank has finally given up the beer but he still enjoys a glass of red wine or 2.

Peter Olson, Johnny Olson's son (Frank was a great friend of Johnny's who was a Marauder man that he met at one of the US MHS Marauder gatherings and, I believe, spent holidays with him in the USA) who is coming to Torquay to visit Frank from Texas the first week in July. He incorporates this with his visit to Wimbledon for the tennis

As Chris says, this is nothing major but it tells us how the Doran's are coping and we can see that it's pretty good - I will go far as to say "Frank and Sylvia you have fallen on your feet, I know that you would far sooner be speaking OK and looking completely after yourselves but as this is not possible you can enjoy the next best thing. Frank also asked that we give his regards to every one of you - this we do.

I hope to pay them a visit later this year.

DIANA SWANBOROUGH. TREASURES. REPORT.

Hello to all you 39'ers. I last gave an up-date on the 39 Squadron finances November 2012. Not a lot has happened except that my and Frank's call for donations to help the coffers had some very good results. A few of you responded and made donations to the fund - I would like to thank these people - Tony Ayling from Sussex, Tommy Elliott from Berwickshire, Trudy Roy from Edinburgh. Pam West from Kent, Charlie Cooper from Portsmouth and Don Ogilvie from Western Australia. These entire donations were very gratefully received and welcomed, thank you.

The closing figure for 2011/2012 was £1,263.61. During the first part of 2013, we have received donations of £220.00. Outgoings total £236.66 - so you will see - a small loss. The outgoings being mainly Postage for the Newsletters and buying more of the 'Partisan Wings' books that seem to be sold at regular intervals. If you have not read this book, why

not reach into your pockets and purchase it and send monies to Frank. Although I have not yet read the whole book, I know it contains many interesting features and stories, both factual and fiction. Try it!

That is all for now – I hope I will see you in September at the Re-union – if not for the weekend then do visit for a drink and a chat! – you would be very welcome

Regards to you all

Diana Swanborough

JULIE GILLIGAN. ARCHIVIST REPORT.

Not much happening so nothing to report – we hope that Julie will be able to provide us with a winter magazine article.

CHRIS WALLER. OUR WEB SITE REPORT.

Chris's job now finds him doing his bit in Beirut. Lebanon so you can imagine that this keeps him fully occupied and on his toes. Still, you know what they say Chris, "You can't do too much for a good Boss"

THE FOLLOWING IS FROM ROLY BELL.

Roly has put in a lot of work on this project and all those eligible to apply as soon as they can. Roly writes as follows.

Bomber Command Award of Clasp.

I reported to you in an earlier News Letter an attempt by a member of Parliament to have Bomber Command recognised by the Government of the day for the huge sacrifice made by those in the various theatres of war in World War 2 which resulted in something like 50% of their members being killed inaction or flying accidents and a further 7000 taken as POW's. This action was highlighted by several national newspapers and prompted Frank Swan and me to approach our local Members of Parliament and to seek their support. Both MP's were very supportive and agreed to take the necessary action.

In point of fact all that seemed to occur was for me to receive a two page A4 size letter from the Under-secretary for Defence and Veterans which effectively said that the Government considered that the award of Campaign Medals reflected the Governments recognition of the hazards faced by all Armed Forces in that particular Theatre of War.

About this time several national newspapers started a campaign of their own to help raise funds from the general public and other public benefactors toward the cost of “The Bomber Command Memorial” in Green Park proposed by The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund and officially unveiled by Her Majesty The Queen on the 28th June 2012.

This splendid Memorial seemed to me, to surpass any proposals the Government might have in mind and I therefore closed the file with the M.O.D and it came as a complete surprise to hear the announcement on the 26th February by the Minister of State for Defence that an Arctic Star and a Bomber Command Clasp had been awarded to personnel who had served in these two very significant campaigners of World War Two.

Veterans and next of kin can apply for an application form the MOD Medal Officer. Tel 08457 800 900 or download one from “bomber command clasp” web site and follow the links. A little bit of extra ‘bling’ for you to stick somewhere!

Have a nice day. Roly Bell.

FCS. Roly has spent a lot of time on this subject which has now come to a successful conclusion so please all you veterans apply for your clasp – you have earned it even after all this long time. Also, all of you that have relatives that flew on 39 Marauders apply also as their next of kin. You will see from the form that the MOD will require proof of your claim which can be a photostat of your or their missions from their log book.

Roly has told you how you can obtain the application forms but if you have problems then send a SAE and I will send you one. It has been a long time coming but you have entitled so go for it.

FROM OLLY JACKSON. NOV 2012.

SUMMER ARTICLE

Some of us are staying in the USA for a while! Whilst the transition to conducting Reaper operations from the UK has been slower than planned, the process is nearly complete, with XIII Sqn now almost at full strength and ready for the tasks they are to endure while operating the aircraft from RAF Waddington. However, 39 Sqn is remaining in the USA for a short time longer in order to smooth out the hectic nature of the project – too much was going to change in too short a period. So, personally I am here for another 12 months, for others it varies, and I am sure that the wheel will turn and it there will be further change before I return to the UK!

Operationally, we continue to go about daily business as we always do, so little news there; however, the latest addition to our brethren took place a few weeks ago, when the first 4 Remotely Piloted Air Systems (RPAS) pilots were presented with their specialist pilot wings, here at Creech Air Force Base. The graduation and presentation follows the announcement in December 2012 that the sub-specialisation within the RAF flying branch was to be created. The establishment of the RPAS pilot flying branch has been designed to aid the recruitment and training of qualified pilots to support current Reaper based operations but also gives the RAF the flexibility to convert and operate other future potential RPAS that might be considered by the Ministry of Defence. The traditional pilot training they receive is far shorter than regular pilots, and the medical category requirements are far less restrictive – for example, you could be too tall or short to be a pilot, but within the height limits for an RPAS pilot. A lot of time and money has been spent over the last few years to determine the relevant amount of training that is required to operate an RPAS platform. Regular pilots come to the platform with a wide skill-set, of which not all of those facets are required to be a competent RPAS pilot; logically there is no need to train and assess someone on their aerobatic and formation flying ability when they will never be required to use that skill. It does mean that the RPAS pilots are purely that – they cannot fly a manned platform in the RAF; the corresponding effect that creates, though, is that it allows the regular pilots to move back to manned platforms, taking with them the breadth of experience they have gained from operating the latest aircraft in the inventory. As an aside, to identify qualified RPAS pilots a dedicated RPAS pilot badge has been created, which differs only slightly from the design of the current RAF pilot badge by having blue laurel leaves to identify the specialisation.

Olly

Flt Lt Olly Jackson|39 Sqn Pilot, Historian and OIC Sqn Society|39 Sqn,
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Olly also gave me a few answers to queries that I have requested – here they are.

Dizzy Lashbrook's paintings / pictures. These were given to us by his two daughters. I offered these to the Squadron so they would be on show in their mess instead of with our mementos at YAM. Olly's answer was. "Yes to the paintings and to anything else that anyone wishes to donate! Sensibly, it's worth waiting until we are back in the UK – the BFPO service out here tends not to serve parcels too well and I would hate any damage to occur. Can you hold

them for a few months until we start to filter back? (We said, yes, we can wait and deliver them direct) I will pass them all to Julie our Archivist who will make the necessary arrangements. (You never know Julie, we could have a delivery visit to the Squadron??!!)

I enquired about Squadron Ties.

Olly. A big “sorry” about ties, I keep forgetting to mention it! Unfortunately, we don’t have any and due to our current work routine we rarely get a chance to get everyone together for a function so would sell only few if we made the appropriate bulk order. I’ll think about what we could do. (to assist Olly, I have had quite a few inquiries in the past from some of you for ties. If you would still like a Squadron tie please let me know and I can tell Olly the figures which may help him in his thoughts.)

I enquired, would the Squadron take over our magazine production when I could no longer continue. (None of our members volunteered when I inquired a while ago)

Olly. It is only right that an Association continues to run as a focal point to bring together the “old and the new” and you are correct that we do not have a 39 Squadron Association, which I do find surprising. It would therefore seem logical to morph the Marauder Association at the point when you feel the reins need handing over – I’ll speak to the Boss about it. (Great News)

THE BALKAN AIR FORCE.

I thought that the our veterans would like to be reminded of the of the outfit that they operated in on 39 Squadron during World War 11 and I’m sure that it will be of interest to most of our other members whose close relatives were also involved. This article is from Peter Hatcher’s Biferno Journal.

B.A.F. The establishment of the B.A.F. was the direct result of a signal from H.Q. Mediterranean Air Force (M.A.A.F) sent to the Air Staff at Air Ministry on the 22nd May 1944. This signal detailed the urgent need for a new subordinate Air H.Q. to be established, to co-ordinate all air activities in the Balkan area, which was currently divided between the Desert Air Force and the Tactical and Coastal Command of M.A.A.F. The new AHQ would exercise administrations and operational control of all units operating over and later in, the Balkan operational area – particularly Yugoslavia and would co-ordinate both U.S and Italian air activities in this area.

Air Ministry approval was received in mid-June, with an official start up date retroactive to 1st June. The units involved operated between 22nd May and 15th June as “G” force, commanded by Air Vice Marshall W Elliott, who then became B.A.F’s first Air Officer Commanding. He was later succeeded by Air Vice Marshal G Mills who continued to command until the force was disbanded.

In the first full month of operations, 2,370 sorties were flown for the loss of 21 aircraft. In August sorties were increased to 2,822 for the loss of 54 aircraft and in September 4,500 sorties were flown and 50 aircraft lost. The relative high loss rate was due, in main, to the many low level attacks carried out and pressed home to the absolute limit. During the remaining seven months of the war, a further 28,300 sorties were flown for the loss of another 255 aircraft – the last on May 9 making a grand total for the force of 38,089 sorties in ten and a half months of operations. The overall loss rate was therefore just over 1%. At its peak, BAF had a total of 30 Squadrons representing six different countries -

- 7 Light and medium bomber squadrons.
- 18 Fighter squadrons (single and multi-seat)
- 5 Transport squadrons.

These units were operating from bases in three countries simultaneously, Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia as well as being able to call on aircraft from

- No 205 Group RAF – heavy bombers.
- 15th Air Force USAAF – long range fighters and heavy bombers.
- Desert Air Force. RAF. Fighters, light and medium bombers.
- 60th Troop Carrier Group USAAF – transports.
- Italian Co-Belligerent Air Force transports.

HQ. BARI. SOUTHERN ITALY.

Bases. All used at sometime but not all simultaneously.

Campomarino/Biferno.	Southern Italy.	Madna.	USAAF.Southern Italy.
Canne.	Southern Italy.	Nuova.	Southern Italy.
Ram.	Southern Italy.	Bari.	Southern Italy.
Brindisi.	Southern Italy.	Grottaglie.	Southern Italy.
Hassani.	Greece. (1944/1945)	Foggia.	Southern Italy.
Prkso. Zara.	Yugoslavia. (1945)	Vis.	Yugoslavia.
Araxos.	Greece (1945)		

No 281 Wing.**Fighter Bombers.**

No 6 Squadron.	RAF.	Hurricane	IV/11D
No 213 Squadron.	RAF.	Mustang	1111/1V
No 249 Squadron.	RAF.	Mustang.	111/1V Spitfire 1X.
No 73 Squadron.	RAF.	Spitfire.	1X/VC/V111
No 253 Squadron.	RAF.	Spitfire.	VC/V111/1X.
No 32 Squadron.	RAF.	Spitfire.	VC/V111/1X.
No 108 Squadron.	RAF.	Mosquito X111	Beaufighter V1.

No 283 Wing.**Fighters.**

No 16 Squadron.	SAAF	Beaufighter X.
No 19 Squadron. 227	SAAF.	Beaufighter X (was originally Sqdn RAF)

Yugoslav Wing.**Fighters.**

No 351 Squadron	YAF.	Hurricane 11C/11D
No 352 Squadron.	YAF.	Spitfire VC/ Hurricane 11D.

Italian Co-Belligerent Wing.**Fighter.**

3 Squadrons	ICBAF.	P39. Airacobras.
3 Squadrons.	ICBAF.	Macchi 202/205.

254 Wing.**Light and Medium Bombers.**

No 13 Squadron.	RHAF.	Baltimore. 111/1V
28 Stormo Gruppo	ICBAF.	Baltimore. 111/1V.
132 Stormo Gruppo.	ICBAF.	Baltimore. 111/1V.
25 Squadron.	SAAF.	Marauder 111. (B26 F & G)
39 Squadron.	RAF.	Marauder 111. (B26 F & G)

334 Wing.**(Special Duties) Transport.**

148 Squadron.	RAF.	Halifax. V/11. Liberator 11. Lysander 111A.
267 Squadron. 44	RAF.	Dakota 1/111/V. Replaced by Squadron. SAAF. Dacota 111
264 Squadron	RAF.	Lysander (Walus 1. Ventura 11. Halifax 11/V. Sterling V1)

301 Squadron. RAF. Halifax V. Liberator V1.

337 Wing. Fighters.

335 Squadron. RHAF. Spitfire. VB/VC. Hurricane 11C.

336 Squadron. RHAF. Spitfire. VB/VC. Hurricane 11C.

Russian Air Group. 1 Squadron Transport – C47.
1 Fighter Squadron – YAK-9.

1230 & 1328 Wings. RAF Regiment – Airfield Defence.

The Balkan Air Force employed fifteen types of aircraft, flown by aircrew of different nationalities, British, Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, South African, American, Italian, Greek, Polish, Russian and Yugoslav – truly the first international air force,

Following the end of hostilities in May 1945, BAF aircraft continued to fly, carrying out relief and rehabilitation missions, including the hurried evacuation of all British units in Zara (Yugoslavia) on May 16th 1945 following political problems with Marshall Tito, culminating in an ultimatum to withdraw.

The end of the BAF came on the 1st July 1945 when disbandment was effected bringing to conclusion a year of vigorous, vital operations by this force, comprising men and units of many different countries, banded together for the final effort to bring the German forces in Yugoslavia to defeat and surrender.

RAF= Royal Air Force. SAAF= South African Air Force.
YAF= Yugoslavia Air Force. RHAF= Royal Hellenic Air Force.
ICBAF. Italian Co-Belligerent Air Force. BAF= Balkan Air Force.

I hope that you all found that article interesting and informative – maybe our member, AVM Deryck Stapleton, who was our 254 Wing CO, would like to let me have his comments on this article for inclusion in our Winter Magazine.

PRESENT 39 SQUADRON MARAUDER ASSOCIATION VETERAN MEMBERS

AIR GUNNERS.

Tony Ayling.

Bill

Busby.

Doran.

Tony Elliot.

WIRELESS OPERATOR AIR GUNNERS.

Roly Bell.

Bill Charlesworth.

Geoff Gassor.

Jim Harris.

Frank

**James Jamieson.
Phil Langdon.
Gavine Renton.
Jimmy Spence.**

**Geof Kemp.
Wilf Lockhart.
Alan Norton-Baker.
Frank Swan.**

BOMBARDIERS.

**Frank Baldwick.
Ron Milton.
John Newman. (SAAF)
Alan Talbot.**

NAVIGATORS.

**Charlie Cooper.
Douglas Davies.
Don Ogilvie.
Ken Miller.**

PILOTS.

**Vic Dembo.
Jim Draper.
Harry Mullins.
Ken Salter.
John Smith.
Rev James Stevenson. (SAAF)**

SAAF ASSOCIATES.

**Dick Curtis.
Jack Millin.
Frank White.**

GROUND STAFF.

**James Arber.
Harold Archer.
Alan Baker.
Jimmy Cook.
Doug Garratt.
Tommy Heslop.
Edmund Payne.**

Air Vice Marshall Deryck Stapleton.

Officer Commanding 254 Wing.

We have done remarkably well, health wise, this year (I hope that I am not tempting fate!) as our Veterans number still stands at 29 and, mostly as far as I know, we are now all over 88 and are determined to make the ton. (A good number are already over 90)

What I would dearly like is for all of you 29 Veterans (or their relatives) to contact me by email, letter or phone, and let me know how you are coping in health and temper - some of you do already, but news from **all** would be fantastic. This Association and the newsletters are all for and about you ex 39'ers and it would make me very happy to do an article on you all and how you are in the next newsletter. **So please humour a silly old sausage! and get in touch. Thanks**

GLYNIS HUNTER – DIZZY LASHBROOKS DAUGHTER.

In the latter part of last year I was contacted by Glynis and her sister Cindy (Cynthia) to say that had the job dealing with Dizzy's estate and that they had an amount of 39 memorabilia would I like to see and maybe it would be OK for YAM. They had already sent a large amount direct to YAM for inclusion in our 39 materials held there. Naturally, I said great and Cynthia and I arranged to meet them in Malmesbury for lunch, as Glynis lives at Cirencester this was a half-way point.

They were a charming couple and we an excellent lunch and discussion – I took all the materials that they had brought to go through at home. The ladies were quite knowledgeable about 39 and were interested in all that we were doing to keep our history alive. They also said that they were very interested in attending our Reunions and they were away for our 2012 Reunion but would make all efforts to attend in September 2013.

All the materials that we were given will be used. There were several large portraits (some originals) so I contacted Olly, our 39 Liaison Officer if they would be suitable to be hung in one of their messes. From my description he thought that they would. So, when the Squadron moves back to the UK we will take them up, with a few other things, for them to view. The pictures are of good quality, one is by our artist Roly Bell, so I am sure they will be suitable.

The rest of the items I will pass on to Julie Gilligan, our Archivist, to deal with for YAM.

OBITUARY.

EDWARD (EDDIE) ATKINSON.

A relative of Eddie's contacted me just before Christmas to say that Eddie had passed away on the 15th December at the age of 88, apparently he had not been too good for some time. I don't believe that Eddie had any direct family as his wife had died in 2004 so we will now be losing contact with the family.

Eddie was the WOP for one of our New Zealand pilots, WO Mac McMurchy, and as far as I am aware Eddie was the last member of that crew (my obsession again!) so this ends another outfit. I am very pleased they said that when Eddie's "things" are settled I have been told that any surplus memorabilia will be sent to us for our show case at YAM.

He also said that Eddie was a firm supporter 39 Marauder men so the coloured Squadron Emblem that I circulated with last summer's magazine was being put into an envelope and placed in his coffin – that was a great thought.

FROM BARBARA WEBSTER.

As you will know Barbara's husband, Maurice died late last year and Barbara has very kindly let me have further detailers of Maurice which I'm sure she will not mind me sharing with you.

Maurice, unfortunately, had a fall on August 27th 2012 I which he broke his hip. He had an operation for a new hip which was successful but, unfortunately, he developed pneumonia and had a slight heart attack the day before he died – Aug 27th.

Graham their son said "Dad is going to have a good send off" and I must admit it was our five grandsons and Graham who carried the coffin between the "Guards of Honour" of the local Air Crew Association together with their Standard.

As Maurice had always enjoyed his whiskey the boys each bought different names of whiskey and put the honey labels around each (As you may know Maurice was (as was Rex Waller) an avid beekeeper for 56 years.

These whiskey bottles were placed on the coffin in the crematorium and Maurice went "in" with the New Orleans Jazz band playing and the Dam Busters tune. It was a very memorable occasion to say the least. His ashes have been scattered on Southport Beach.

FCS. Barbara also included the Service Sheet which was also in line with above having pictures of Maurice in his uniform and several pictures of him and his crew in front of their Marauder. The Squadron Crest was displayed prominently too.

I firmly believe that Maurice's family did him and Barbara proud with a fitting tribute of which all 39'ers would be proud. Not being morbid, but it does make one thing deeply (you veterans) as how you would like to be sent on your way – it does me, and I will give seriously thought to the "future"

PERSONNEL GLIMPSES.

John & Esme Smith. Life is not a lot easier for John; Esme is now permanently in a Nursing Home – her two broken hips of two years ago still

give her problems. John visits her every day where he endeavours to have a conversation – this gets better each time. He also feeds her whilst he is with her. So it is a loneliest life for him but you never hear him grumble.

Fortunately he is still able to drive otherwise life would be very difficult. Chin up John, try and have a couple of days break and attend our Reunion – we will have lots to talk about and you will be able to compare similar situations with friends.

Tommy Elliott. Re last magazine comments on lack of information on four of Tommy's crew he has now advised me of his efforts to locate.

John Haigh. Tried to contact but had to luck at all – completely disappeared.

Alan Cross. Never located but Tommy says that in one of Pete's newsletters that someone had visited a lady and notice a 39 Squadron plaque in the k house. He believes the lady in question was Alan's wife or widow. He has searched all past magazines but unable to find the article. I am unable to look as all my past original magazines (and Pete's) have been sent to YAM. Can anyone else assist?

Robert Adams. Wrote to him, letter was opened, resealed and sent back as "address unknown"

Michael Wilson. Tug was their WOP/AG but he was never able to make contact with after the war.

Tommy is still reasonably well and has visited YAM to see our show case but was also very much impressed by the Air Gunners Display Room and says that it is well worth a visit and it will get you all nostalgic.

JIMMY COOK. Jimmy has had a really rough time this year. He is having to attend hospital weekly for blood tests and what gets up Jimmy's nose is that he cannot look after his "estate" (I joke you not!) and he is not allowed to drive. Up to last year Jimmy was as active as any healthy 93 year old so he does not take it kindly when he has to ask for help or to watch other people doing his job. (And I bet that they never do it too his standards) Sorry Gill.

He had a big clot in his lung but, thankfully, it was too big to pass around his system otherwise that would have been it. He has dreadfully ulcerated legs which have to be constantly dressed plus, in February he turned a bright orange – more blood tests – which proved that he was jaundiced. I bet that was a kick back from his Middle East days. I got jaundiced in the fifties and the doctors said that it was a throw back from Egypt and the Middle East in general. So, he still has to have hospital treatment.

NEWS FROM MY CHRISTMAS CARDS.

Tony & Ilse Ayling. Still plodding along as usual but with no further comments.

Charlie Cooper. No changes with Charlie but I am pleased to hear that he hopes to make our Reunion in September. Go for it Charlie.

Ken Salter. Ken is slowly recovering from the Shingles that affected his leg – although it is improving he still has to use a walking frame. Ken says that the doctor has told him that it will eventually get better!!! He says that if all improves he will definitely try to attend the Reunion in September. Ken says that he feels a bit of a fraud belonging to our Association as he only arrived in Khartoum to join 39 in late 1945. He had been trained on Beaufighters and the rest of his course had been posted to Athens to join the Beaufighter Squadrons there. Only Ken was posted to 39 at Khartoum. Well Ken you flew Marauders at Khartoum on 39 so that makes you a Marauder man so you are fully entitled to be a member of our Association. You reckon that someone dropped a clanger in thinking that 39 were on Beaufighters – maybe, but it was only you that flew a decent aircraft on a cracking Squadron!

The Xmas menu in our last edition brought back many happy memories to Ken but these are vague – as Ken says – those who were there may recall that a plane on its way to Khartoum dropped into Cyprus with empty bomb bays on the way down. On its arrival at Khartoum its bomb bays were full of Cyprus Brandy – hence his lack of memory over Christmas. He well remembers the pantomime “Ali Bull Bull and the 39 Thieves” and has many pictures of the cast.

On the menu if you look carefully there is a picture of Gordon on his camel. The real statue used to be near Khartoum Cathedral but now it resides at the Gordon Boys School in Surrey – Bagshot or near there. Will see you at the Reunion Ken.

Alan and Rosemary Talbot. Both have their health problems. Alan has to shuffle along now with the aid of a frame and never goes out alone which means that Rosemary is officially in charge but that is not to her liking! He still plays his trumpet but not with the band but when he does play

Rosemary says that he is still very good but often says that it is not worth it. That’s rubbish Alan, you must keep it up for your own good and also, we may decide to form another 39 Squadron Band with you, again, on trumpet.

Rosemary wishes that she could still play the piano as before - her left hand is great but her right hand seizes up – this is a result of her Parkinson's. Both of you keep your peckers up – we all know that as time passes so do some of our faculties so, we are all in the same boat.

Paola Di Bello. Paola sent us all her seasonal from Campo and inquired how our annual Reunion went – I hope that one day we will have representatives at our Reunion from Campomarino which would be fantastic – I have “pushed this” several times but with no success as yet but I live in hope.

When Paola wrote this missive in December she said that she was sitting in her office in lovely sunshine and warmth. She also said that, due to the European crisis, she was finding it more difficult. People are spooked by the crisis but what she sees is that many do not want to give up their lifestyles so continue to go to the café in the mornings for their espresso and croissant but then cut costs elsewhere. She naturally hopes that 2013 will bring better news. We all hope that the situation improves Paola.

Don Ogilvie. Usual warm greetings from Don in Australia who says that he is still mobile and is keeping in fairly good health. I think that you are doing OK Don – none of us are getting any younger and, don't forget, the old 90 is not too far ahead so we must expect the odd (or a few!!) aches and pains. We are always pleased to hear from you.

Others who I heard from and I assume are not too bad Jean and Wilf Lockhart. Joan Waller. Vic and Judy Dembo. Jim and Jill Cook. Lawrie Evans (says he is 91 not out). Betty Stapleton. Dorothy and Edmund Payne. (Our youngest 39 member). Roly Bell. Doreen Holland. Peggy Newbold. Davina Ashton. Frank and Sylvia Doran. Pam West. Hal and Lynda Howe.

I have mentioned all these good people, all old 39'ers and widows, so that other old 39'ers will know that they are still very much alive and kicking.

ARTICLE BY WILF LOCKHART.

Wilf produced the article below for the magazine quite a few years ago – I don't believe that I have ever used it but, in any case, if I did it is worth another viewing for the memories it will bring back to our veteran readers.

AFTER HOSTILITIES. By Wilf Lockhart.

After our last week in Rome November 1944 we found ourselves in Sorrento (R&R) May 1945 but did debate whether to “nip up” Route 6 to Rome, as Sorrento appeared, at first glance, not to be up to the hectic standard required for a seven day rest. We changed our minds after the first day and settled down to enjoy ourselves in this smashing little place, good friendly people, nice bars, lovely vino, fine hotels etc.

Have just been looking at pictures from my album showing three airmen, Hank Owen, Roy Bloomfield and myself in mis-matched uniforms, blue battle dress with K/D trousers, khaki open neck shirts and me with a blue beret – Balkan Air Force issue. Roy in a white shirt and black tie. The locals must have wondered who we were and from where we had come.

Went on a trip with the local Octopus fishermen and took a fine specimen back to the Hotel, kept it in the wash basin but the cleaners soon took it away to be eaten. Had a trip across to Capri to see how the Americans were coping with the hardships over there, not impressed. One fine morning walking into town we were mobbed by a very excited crowd, cuddles, kisses and vino flying all over the place. We were told that the war in Italy was over and that we had probably won.

Just as we were thinking of booking our Hotel up to about the 1950's the Squadron transport turned up to take us back to Campomarino. It appeared that we were required to help drink the free booze at the Squadrons VE celebrations. Which we did, of course – hangovers were just about clearing when we were put on standby, Marshall Tito who was our friend, was not our friend any more – also certain service personnel were to be airlifted back to Italy a.s.a.p. from “Jugland” It seemed that we were back in business.

After things cleared up volunteers were called for to serve on medium bombers in the Far East – Hank, Roy and myself put our names forward and were subsequently posted to a transit camp just north of Bari called Barletta. It turned out to be a nice seaside resort and we spent our time swimming, sunbathing and drinking. Everything was going fine until some silly b...r found a set of boxing gloves and I was daft enough to have a go with Ginger George, he proceeded to knock “seven shades of (anyway seven bells) out of me, he was far from being a novice. I had forgot the golden rule “never put the gloves on with someone that you know you might not beat”

A few days later at the R&R Roy was surprised to find that he had “acquired” a 9mm hole in one of his thighs and finished up at the local military hospital. Shortly after this dramatic event transport arrived to take us back to the Squadron – now at Rivolto –it seemed that the war in the Far East could be won without us. It was either us or the Atom Bomb and, of course, the Atom Bomb won!

Arrived at Rivotto and found ourselves tent and bed – mine being the usual discarded house door, minus knobs and letter box of course. Soon settled down to steady boozing in the mess and the local village and helping drunks out of our home made swimming pool behind the Sergeants Mess.

Roy Bloomfield arrived back from Hospital and we once more started to earn our coppers. The area was only moderate for radio reception and a certain person occasionally advised me where to put my D/F Loop etc I, of course, often replied “that it would be far better if he would do the same with his pencil and slide rule” Things were certainly getting back to normal. Hank Owen left us to return to Canada so Roy and I decided to have a “Cooks Tour” of Northern Italy. We visited Venice a couple of times – a very nice city but not an ideal place for pub crawling! Visited Verona one day and found that the locals were not happy with us. It seemed that “some” bombers had knocked a few holes in the area around the railway station. We politely told them that “it was not the RAF, it must have been the Americans - the station was still standing was it not?”

The local R&R was at Riva at the top of Lake Garda so we spent time there, we also visited Krumpendorf in Austria (another local R&R) so we made good use of both. They were not ideal for places for rest and recuperation but very good for entertainment. Not long after our Italian holiday Roy was posted to Malta – to an accounts dept I believe, I always said that he was good at figures. I thought that this was the end of my flying career but I managed to get air borne a few times with Tom Grossett, Bill Ellis and P.P Thompson.

I mentioned one day to the Signals Officer that I did not have a crew and could I possibly be posted to somewhere like Sorrento as a barman or something similar. He said “You are not going anywhere” then changed his mind and said “Actually, in a few days time you are leaving here as WOP to P.O Thompson bound for Khartoum going via Shandur, Egypt. Khartoum is another story but Shandur was not something for me to be happy about. I had hoped to keep clear of the place – it was a place full of bad memories and it nearly had the last laugh on us. On our take off from there, going to Khartoum, the port engine mis-fired. Fitter, Flt Sgt Paddy Lynch, who was travelling with us and knew all about these things, remarked that “it was only a drop of water in the fuel tank caused by condensation” he thought. I very nearly had more than a drop of water in other places too!

Wilf Lockhart.

FCS. Do hope that this brought tears to your eyes at the terrible times that we all had? – it certainly brought back a lot of memories to me. The Minerva Hotel in Sorrento was one – it was built on the side of a steep cliff over looking

the Bay of Naples. You entered a lift on the road side and went up the equivalent of five floors to their reception. The rest of the Hotel was above this – it was commandeered by the RAF as a Rest and Recuperation centre for their personnel. I've been to visit the hotel a couple of times since when in Sorrento and found out that it is still owned and run by the same family as in 1945- grandchildren and they were happy to find and show me the visitors book for that period. It was great, Germans in 1943/44 and then RAF personnel onward – I read quite a few entries from 39 lads and I recognised most of the names – some remarks were in good taste but a couple were rather dubious! It's a four star hotel and it is a great place to stay if you ever want to visit Sorrento.

ONE OF ROLY BELL'S MEMORIES.

A typical illustration of the unusual and unreal times surrounding the war in Yugoslavia was that the conflict was actually a three corned one. When Germany marched into Yugoslavia King Peter of Yugoslavia took refuge in London and while Marshall Tito and the Partisan Army were actively opposing the German occupation it would appear that General Mihilovitch leading an Army loyal to the King was in fact in opposition to Marshall Tito rather than the German occupation.

Into this complicated mix the Allies had authorised the supply of at least one Squadron of Spitfires to Marshall Tito and was taken over by Yugoslav fighter Pilots. The aircraft bore the Red Star insignia of Yugoslavia but were serviced by the Royal Air Force engineers and fitters at their Yugoslav base. To the embarrassment of the British Government, several days after the surrender of Germany and the remnants of their Army in Yugoslavia, these Spitfires were still going out on fully armed missions against Mihilovitch. It was in great haste, therefore, that several B26 Marauders of 39 Squadron were stripped out and ordered to Zara in Yugoslavia to bring the RAF personnel back to Italy. The operation was carried out on the 9th May 1945.

On landing at Zara apparently Marshall Tito was in the area and met some of our aircrews. He was well protected by a band of very attractive partisan girls all wearing kinky boots and carrying Tommy guns. It was rumoured that he handed out Red Star Badges for the crews all of which were confiscated on return to base.

It might also be of interest to you to learn that in this particular odd war that aircrew baling out or surviving a crash landing in Yugoslavia were at risk of being shot by the Partisans because RAF blue battledress, at a distance, could be taken as German field grey and in that war a lot of people had very itchy

fingers, firing first and asking questions afterwards. Therefore all the crews were issued with Army Khaki uniforms to wear under their flying jacket.

A Barmy Army in a Weird War. Roly Bell.

FCS. Brings back a lot of memories Roly. I remember flying arms and supply's to the Partisans flying into Split. We were not even allowed to get out of the aircraft being surrounded by men and women – we just passed the equipment down. The Partisans were all carrying many guns and bandoleers and looked a ferocious lot – secretly, we were more than pleased that we didn't have to get out. All aircrew carried a 45 pistol and it was rumoured that this was the first thing that the Partisans would pinch whether you liked it or not.

An amusing incident with the khaki battledress was that in 1946 we flew a Wimpy back to the UK landing at St Athens. We went for lunch and as I was only a Warrant Officer, I went to the mess but I was considered improperly dressed and was not allowed into the Sergeants Mess - had my meal served in a small anti room by myself. I did not consider that this was an appropriate welcome after 2 ½ abroad and said so which made no difference what so ever. I was glad to get back to Cairo! (Although, Cynthia made me very welcome!! For the few days that we were in the UK)

Do hope that you don't mind me adding these few words Roly – they seemed appropriate.

OUR MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS.

Its four years since I gave you our membership details – so here is our update.

Total Membership at this point in time.	112.	2009.	115.
Veterans who served at Campomarino. 4 Ground Crew. 31 Air Crew.	36.	2009	56.
Widows.	30.	2009.	27.
Second & Third Generation.	27.	2009.	18.
USA Marauder Friends,	4.	2009.	5.
39 and RAF Friends.	6.	2009.	5.
Other Associates and Marauder Friends.	9.	2009.	4.

It is rather interesting that although our veterans have decreased by 20 our total membership has increased by 3 so our widows close families are happy to join us and to remain in contact – this is after 68 years – I think that that is marvellous. We still average 35 at Stratford and 16 at our West Country Sunday Lunches.

All that remains to be done now is for me to say adieu to you all, hope that you enjoy all the 39 news. Don't forget, book your places for the Reunion as soon as possible, all veterans to advise me how they are and do apply for your Bomber Command Clasp.

All the very best until I am in touch again via the Winter Newsletter.

Frank.