



THE CHINTHE



656 Squadron Association Newsletter

Winter 2003

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Secretary's report

On behalf of the membership I would like to welcome the new O/c, Maj Andy Cash, who is now responsible for the best Squadron in the AAC. I'm sure we all look forward to meeting him at some time. The Squadron is now converting onto the Apache and should be entering 'operational training' by April.

As I write this there is still no definite time for Joyce and I to move to France. We get uplifted one day with an acceptable offer, only to be depressed a few days later when they call to say they could not raise the finance. Meanwhile life goes on. Once we move there will naturally be a short period whilst we settle in to our new home. I intend to continue to provide strong support for our Association, and I will at least prepare newsletters, membership duties, and do whatever I can to assist in the organisation of the Association. As I hope you will appreciate it may not always be convenient to do this from outside UK, and as such it is imperative that a new General Secretary be recruited. The committee all share the load in organising and running events but a person is needed to be the primary organiser and contact. If you can help in either position please call me and I can advise you what it will entail.

There is a questionnaire compiled by our President included with this newsletter. Please complete it honestly and quickly so any suggestions can be raised at the AGM. If you intend coming to the social or fly-in day (see centre pages) then send both returns together.

Things are quiet on the Association front at last, following the busy times spent getting the very successful Jubilee celebrations underway. Following the photo supplement of the Jubilee I have had some exceedingly good responses from members who were unable to attend. Many were able to see familiar and some not so familiar faces.

I regret that unfortunately the price for the 4" crystal Chintre as published in the last newsletter is wrong. I forgot that the manufacturers price to us did not include V.A.T. The correct price to members as shown on the new advert is £105.00 plus postage.

John Bennett

President's Page

It is a few days before Christmas and I have just returned from visiting Claire (Clark) in Langport, who was in good spirits. The Association continues to gain new members and the 602nd was added to our books in November 2003. Actual membership is currently 496. Over the past year we have lost a number of our members and I extend my sincere condolences to family and friends concerned.

Conversion training for 656 Squadron AAC continues apace, and by March the Attack Helicopter will be added to the Squadron's inventory of aircraft. From Auster to Apache!

Our major event this year is the **Auster Fly-In on Sunday 13 June** at Airfield Camp, Netheravon. Plans are well advanced, so let's hope for good weather. 7 Regiment AAC have been very generous with their support and we have access to the Officers' Mess where we will hold a social event on the Saturday evening and the AGM on the Sunday morning, prior to the flying. We are working hard to keep the costs as reasonable as possible, but with modern litigation and Health and Safety regulations, we will incur additional expenditure. We have not had to do this before but it seems necessary for all future reunions. Full details of the event can be found on Page 6 and on our Website. Any help with the administration, before and during the weekend would be greatly appreciated. If you aim to attend please complete the slip and return it to John asp.

In the previous Newsletter I mentioned that I would be seeking your views on the future direction of the Association. You will find a loose leaf Questionnaire enclosed, and I would be obliged if you could spend a few minutes filling it in. Please feel free to add any additional comments, suggestions or proposals you wish to put forward to the AGM.

By the time the Newsletter is distributed it will be 2004. I therefore wish you every happiness and success for the year ahead, and look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Fly-In.

Andrew Simkins

US Airforce snag sheet: Pilot: Left inside tyre almost needs replacing.
Engineer: Almost replaced left inside tyre.

SQUADRON COMMANDER'S REPORT

Happy New Year!

I took command of 656 Squadron in August 2003 and therefore missed our Jubilee, so I thought I'd better introduce myself. I joined the AAC directly from RMAS and completed my pilot's course in 1992. I have remained true to the Gazelle and have served in Germany, Wattisham, Northern Ireland, Cyprus, Bosnia and Iraq / Kuwait (UN). I was Adjutant to a previous OC 656 Squadron (Brig Gary Coward) at 1 Regiment before attending Staff College from 1999 – 2001. I have just completed a tour in the MOD.

Last year saw a period of considerable turbulence for the Squadron as it prepared for the Apache era. There was an interregnum following my predecessor's departure in March and my arrival in August, which was very ably filled by a number of the Squadron's senior Captains. Personnel were busy supporting and deploying on Op TELIC as well as other operational and training deployments worldwide. The Squadron undertook a major 're-manning' as personnel were posted in and out to ensure that we had the best team possible to field the Apache, we now have a more robust SHQ and Ground Support Flight.

2004 is now here and we are poised to introduce the Initial Operating Capability (IOC) of the Attack Helicopter in October. The vast majority of our groundcrew and REME technicians in Dishforth are already trained. The aircrew's Conversion To Type (CTT) course at Middle Wallop continues and we are now learning the new skills required to fly and operate using the Night Vision System and to utilise the aircraft's systems and weapons to best effect. The groundcrew are now conducting continuation training and supporting the Air Manoeuvre Training and Advisory Team (AMTAT) as they prepare for our Conversion to Role (CTR) training package in Dishforth. The experience they are gaining as they do so will be vital to ensure they are both competent and confident to refuel, re-arm, provide logistic, technical and communications support and assist with Mission Planning.

The Squadron will reform, in Dishforth, as a complete sub-unit in April, on the completion of the aircrews' CTT. We then begin the six month CTR course, as a Squadron, under the guidance of the AMTAT. IOC in October will be followed by continuation training. This will prepare us for additional tasks such as Maritime operations and a higher level of collective training at BATUS in summer 2005.

We have a very busy year ahead during which we will be forging one of the major new Defence capabilities into a robust and useable force. We will be asking a lot of the Squadron's personnel and I am sure they will deliver, it will not be the first time that they have! We hope to see many of you during the course of this year.

Andy Cash.

Social Evening & Flying Day

Following members requests we have arranged a day for you to go flying in the Austers again! We will have Association aircraft as well as some from the International Auster Club. I hope also to have a Falklands Scout! To make it a full week-end there will be a social evening with a buffet supper on Saturday.

Saturday 12th June

Social—will be held in the Officers Mess at Netheravon on **Saturday 12th June**. Doors open at 18:30. There will be a bar until 22:30. A buffet supper will be served at 19:30. This event sadly is restricted in numbers and we can only accept 80 in total, which will be on a first come — first served basis. With this restriction we can only allow you to bring **one guest** if you wish.

COST will be £10.00 per head, the majority of this being staff pay as they are now all contract civilians.

There will not be any overnight accommodation available within the Unit, so you will need to contact the Tourist Board or friends

AGM & Flying. Sunday 13th June

Members and guests will be welcomed into the Officers Mess from 11:00 where tea / coffee and biscuits will be available.

11:45 AGM for members in the Mess conference room.

Following the AGM members and guests move off to the airfield under direction of staff. There will be drinks and a selection of sandwiches provided by the Association available at the airfield. Association goodies will be on sale so bring your cheque books! Hopefully the AAC Historic Flight will be in attendance, with Auster Mk9, Sioux, Scout and Beaver.

PRIVATE FLYING will be for members first then, if time (and pilots) permit, guests may take to the air!

Don't forget your cameras, bring your deck chairs, picnic hamper, flasks, beer etc and have an enjoyable nostalgic time, relax with old friends in the wonderful weather !
(Indent has been submitted)

COST will be £6.00 per head

NOTE: There will be parachuting going on and there could also be Service operational flying, which may give short interruptions to the program.

SAFETY. Keep within designated areas at all times. Beware of other airfield vehicular movements, do not drop litter—use the bins or take it home.

**If you plan to attend you must
COMPLETE and return the form with your payment ASAP**





Social Evening & Flying Day Return

NAME

Initials

& Membership No (if known.)

I would like to attend the SOCIAL EVENING on 12th June.

I would like to bring as my guest.

My vehicle details: see below

=====

I will be attending the AGM and Flying Day and have completed the form overleaf.

I enclose £ To cover the events

My vehicle details are:

Make & Model:

Colour : Reg. No

(This is for gate passes.)

FLYING.

The flying is provided free by the pilots and no payment can be accepted due to their license restrictions. Members will have priority to fly and guests may fly afterwards if time permits.

Members and their guests attending this function, and those who fly, do so entirely at their own risk and understanding, that no claims for injury, damage or loss can be made against the pilots, Ministry of Defence or the Association.

Attending are : (Tick the box if wishing to fly)

(Member)	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Guest)	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Guest)	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Guest)	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Guest)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Guest)	<input type="checkbox"/>
(Guest)	<input type="checkbox"/>

I have read and understand the above disclaimer. My guests have also been made aware of it.

Signed :

Dated :

Return this form ASAP to the Secretary

What's wrong with me??

Recently, I wondered why, wherever I have been;
People are reluctant to linger when I come upon the scene.
Is there a sinister reason why they can't be seen with me?
Something about my character with which they disagree?
I don't think I have got B.O. (My best friend has not said)
I bathe most thoroughly, and often, from tip of toe to head.
I see neither twitching noses nor disapproving looks,
There's just a hasty "got to go!" as they all sling their hooks.
The casual manner of my attire is untidy, but its clean,
I am not a trouble maker who has come to make a scene.
I am neither anti-social nor indelicately crude
My manners are impeccable; I don't swear, I am not rude.
My religion and my politics are a matter for myself,
I'm neither steeped in poverty, nor imbibing in great wealth.
I have the same of everything as any man I know,
So why is it when I approach, folks just get up and go?
No one stands still long enough for the most innocent of talk;
And it happens every time I take my tiger for a walk!

(Thanks for this submission from L.P.Brighton)

US Airforce snag sheet:

Pilot: Something loose in cockpit

Engineer: Something tightened in cockpit.

Pilot: The Autopilot doesn't

Engineer: IT DOES NOW

Pilot: DME volume unbelievably loud

Engineer: Volume set to more believable level

Pilot: Dead bugs on windshield

Engineer: Live bugs on order

Pilot: IFF inoperative.

Engineer: IFF always inoperable in OFF position.

US Airforce snag sheet: Pilot: Test flight OK, except Autoland rough.

Engineer: Autoland *Not Installed* on this aircraft

History and Archives

How many times have you heard that someone regretted when an elderly relation passed away their memorabilia and artefacts were disposed of, as they were meaningless to others? It happens all too often as 'house clearance' men dispose of un-saleable items into the rubbish, or relatives have no care after the initial sorrow phase passes, and dispose of them.

PLEASE do not let this happen to anything you own connected with 656 Squadron. Get your relatives to be aware of it, put it in your will, do what you may but please, ensure that anything, no matter how minor it may seem, is sent to the Secretary of the Association. Photo's, letters, diaries all contain an historic aspect of the Squadron.

Even better, why not send them now so you can guarantee they are preserved. We can then decide if and where items should be best kept or copied

Members with Internet access.

Members with access to the internet and E-Mail can read Newsletters on the website. Only when a return is needed will the newsletter will be posted (snail mail) to all members. By not sending newsletters to members with Internet access we can save a large sum on postage. The threatened rise in costs for a letter in a large envelope to 46p will mean that viewing on the website becomes more essential. As you are aware I publish at least twice a year, usually in spring and Autumn, and I will notify members when I have uploaded it to the Website.

Will ALL members with E-Mail

please send a message (blank if you wish) with subject heading "Association" to me at the address below so I can revise our address book and distribution list. To avoid spam I will not publish your address on the web.

I get a lot of E-mails returned as the addressee is available. If you have changed your ISP please notify me, and also note... I have a new E-mail for the Association, put it into your address book now:

656assn@talk21.com

NOTICES

Please remember to

notify the General Secretary of any change of address, or phone numbers. The members using **Email**, remember, when you change your ISP you lose your old address. The ability to send you these newsletters by Email saves quite a cost to the Association in postage, stationery and labour! Not to mention full colour pages!

I know we don't like to talk about it, but please, leave clear instructions for your next of kin to contact membership records, so firstly, if possible, we can get a representative to attend the funeral, and then to also avoid sending distressing correspondence. As Membership is open to any relatives of persons connected to 656, they may wish to continue with the Association in their own rights.

US Airforce snag sheet:

Pilot: Number three engine missing

Engineer: Number three engine found after brief search

Pilot: Friction lock causes throttle levers to stick.

Engineer: That's what its there for.

Pilot: Evidence of hydraulic leak on main landing gear

Engineer: Evidence removed

NEW MEMBERS			
599	Clayton J.A.	R.A.	74-76 Hong Kong
600	Greaves D	R.A.	46-47 Java Sumatra Malay
601	Cooper J	R.A.F.	50-53 7 Flt Kuala Lipis
602	Monaghan Wm. T	R.A.	55-58 2 Flt S'pore,Benta, Ipoh

Deaths

Regretfully we announce the death of the following member, and offer condolences to his friends and relatives.

6 Kemp D. Mr RAF Died 24-November-03

ASSOCIATION SHOP

“Sweetheart Jewellery”



ITEM	SILVER	W/Y GOLD
Ladies Brooch	47.00	140.00
Tie Stickpin	18.00	50.00
Lapel stud	11.00	45.00
Cufflinks (chain or swivel)	45.00	140.00

EXTRA on request: Add a Diamond (£10.00)
or ruby (£5.00) for the eye

Commemorative Crystal Ware.

The Chinthe was laser copied from the original Silver 50th presentation statue.. Below the Chinthe is ‘656 Squadron’ but additional text can be added, up to 3 lines. The block is delivered in a stout presentation box which has blue silk look lining.



Prices: Standard block 50mm x 50mm x 80mm tall £35.00
 Large block 60mm x 60mm x 120mm tall £105.00
 Postage is extra on these items. Orders to Ken Mattocks (Treasurer)
 with who will arrange delivery of them to your home address.