

Dear sir,

I was very pleased to see your notice in the Sunday Express about a proposed reunion for R.A.F. Warmwell. This station was my first operational one, and has always remained as my happiest one.

I wonder if you know that there have actually been two such reunions, although for separate specific reasons. You may of course have been to them and so I will not go into any detail, but if not then just contact me and I will be pleased to give you the name of a very good contact

What I can say however, is that they were extremely well attended and were a huge success. I do not attend any "official" reunions, but mainly because they are for Squadrons and not stations, thus being too selective.

I was posted into Warmwell at the very beginning of 1941 to 152 as a Sgt Pilot and went with them to Portreath on April 9th 1941. I was with the Sqdn until I went up to join 92 at Biggin Hill. I remained with 92 until I finished my first tour at the end of 1941. When I went on the usual circuit as an O.T.U. instructor. A spell at C.F.S. then as an instructor at the central Gunnery School at Sutton bridge. Then I managed to get back on ops and picked 234 Sqdn. And I was delighted to find that there were still some of the old servicing personnel with them.

At the previous reunions there were quite a lot of people from the old Station Flights who had married while serving at Warmwell and were living in the area. I normally manage to fit in a visit to the old place every year as we wend our way with our caravan to visit a old friend who was a Sgt Pilot on 234 while I was the same with 152. We go to the old church at Warmwell and pay our respects to the Military section in the churchyard, and also visit Moreton church to see its famous windows. And of course we go to the Memorial Stone in Crossways village.

If you require any more information let me know, but in any case I look forward to hearing from you, and wish you luck in your efforts.

Sincerely,

W. H. Johnston.

Please excuse the typing! Using a pen begins to play up these days and thus the machine. Unfortunately, I have not yet mastered all its modern ways!

Dear Bob,

18-3-97

Thank you for your letter.

I am enclosing the photos you wished to borrow. In addition, you might like the original of the group to copy, plus a larger group on a Spit. It's both taken at Tengah.

Thank you for the addresses.

The only one that puzzles me is

● Sqd. leader Jackson - I only remember a W/O Jackson.

The only Sqd. leaders I knew were the 2 C.O.'s of 152. - Kerr & Harding.

Anyway, I hope you can get better copies than I was able to get.

Yours sincerely,  
G. Potter

6<sup>th</sup> Feb. '04

Dear Rob,

Thank you for your Phone call  
and letter enclosing Photo of Howard  
Marsh & me at Portsmouth.

I am enclosing copies of the few  
photos I have of my time with 152  
and also one of me taken at Waddington  
Air Show last year which my Grandson  
has made into a composite photo with  
2 B of B Memorial Flights going past !!

I joined 152 at Warmwell with  
Howard Marsh early October '40 - in Nov  
I was sent on detachment to 234 Sqdn at  
St Eval - Returning to 152 Warmwell in  
Dec '40 doing mostly practice flying with  
the odd X-Raid. In April the Squadron  
moved to Portsmouth where most of our time  
was taken up with Convoy Patrols.

I left 152 in July and joined  
91 Squadron at Hawkinge.

Hope this is some Help to  
you

Yours Sincerely John Anderson.

1st March 1996

Dear Mr Rooker,

Thank you for your letter of the 22nd February.

I joined No 152 Spitfire Squadron at Warmwell at the end of September 1940 and remained there until I moved with the squadron to Portreath in April 1941.

During October and November we had occasional brushes with the Luftwaffe, mainly Me 109's, during which we achieved several victories for the loss of two of our own pilots. I shot down a Me 110 near the Isle of Wight.

My flight commander was F/Lt Dennis David DFC & bar, who had fought in France and with whom I flew as his No2. We used to do formation aerobatics together by way of light relief.

During that autumn, one day when flying was suspended owing to bad weather, I was playing snooker in the Mess when the sound of low flying engines brought me and my opponent to the window to see what fools were flying with such a low cloudbase. We saw three Heinkel 111's overhead with showers of bombs dropping away from them. The Officers Mess was not hit but one of our sergeant pilots died in his Mess from a machine gun bullet through the head. The airfield buildings were badly damaged and a direct hit on the Station Workshop killed many, including WAAF.

Neither we, nor our companion squadron No 234, had aircraft on readiness because of weather conditions and no warning had apparently been received of the approach of the raiders.

Fortunately none of our aircraft was hit and we were able to carry on with our duties but it took many days to clear the wreckage.

I hope this may be of interest.

*Yours sincerely,*

*N.E. Hancock DFC.*

Dear Mr Rooker,

I read the notice enclosed some weeks ago and intended writing at once, but have been delayed by a bad attack of flu.

However, for what its worth I thought you might be interested in these details. I was living at Warmwell July 1940 - October 1940

When my first husband was shot down and died next day in Dorchester Hospital, he is buried in Warmwell churchyd.

P/O. Harold John Arkroyd 152 Squadron He was 27, was a flying instructor at the start of war at Kinloss Scotland.

As there is no family to pass his medals on, I sent them to Tangmere where they have a museum - an

Andy Saunders contacted me re this in the mid 1980's

Sony my writing is such a scrawl



I had meningitis early  
in the year at 81! and  
find it difficult to write  
as well as I did.

If there is anything you  
wish to know please ask  
there's nothing wrong  
with my memory!

Best wishes and good  
luck with the reunion

Sincerely

Irene Carr MRS.  
(AKROYD)



2 November 1946

Dear Mr Rooker,

I have just noticed your request for information on 152 Squadron in the last issue of Air Mail.

I was one of the original members of the Squadron when it formed at Acklington on, I think, 1st October '39. I was then a flight lieutenant and was o.c. "B" flight.

I remained with the Squadron, except, for a short attachment to form the Fighter flight in Shetland, until November 1940 when I was promoted Squadron Leader and posted elsewhere.

If you require further information regarding those early days

of the war please let me know.

Yours sincerely

L. M. Thomas Wg Cdr (retd)

4th November 1996

Sean Rooker,

Since speaking to you on the phone I've taken some photocopies of which may be of interest in your researches about 152 Squadron.

The Squadron fotted history showing all the bases from 1918 comes from the RAF Complete list of Squadron details which I obtained from Coringsby where the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight has its headquarters. The copy map of Bengal & Burma shows numbered locations of landing strips and airfields but I seem to have mislaid the reference table indicating those used by 152 - perhaps a reasonable scale atlas map will be of help to you in marking them off from the listed bases on the history sheet.

I have some photographs covering the period January 1944 to May 1945 - not of the best quality - and I enclose a couple of photocopies showing the visit of General Oliver Leese HQ AFSEA in April 1945 to the ~~Squadron~~ Squadron and 'A' Flight Soccer team as a sample.



I joined 152 at Raigachi near Calcutta in January 1944  
as a Wireless Mechanic on 'B' Flight at the age of 19 &  
was with them until the planes flew off to Penang by which  
time we had become 7152 servicing Echelon. Some of the  
blokes had been with the Squadron since Warrnwell including  
a few 'regulars'.

At present I am in touch with only one other survivor  
of those times but I am sending him the details of your  
message in 'Air Mail'.

Look forward to hearing from you & the best  
of luck in your researching.

Yours sincerely,

Hugh Bond

Dear Mr. Rooker,

Herewith 152 Squadron

taken at Warmwell in 1940. Hope  
it is good enough for copying.

I would be grateful for its early return

Please phone me if

there are any bits of information

I can give you

Yours faithfully,

Robin Atkinson

Sqn. Ldr. R. E. ATKINSON R.A.F.O.

Potted history of my connection and service with 152 (Hyderabad) Squadron,  
a Squadron of Spitfires also called the Black Panther Unit.

It was in October 1942 that I first became aware of 152 Squadron which formed part of 322 Wing. This was a Fighter Wing destined for the landing at Algiers in North Africa when the invasion took place. The first base was at Maison Blanche but that was only for a very brief period. The Wing very soon moved to Bonne further east along the coast and it was here more or less that it came to life. In those days the Spitfire had a very limited range. The ground staff moved over land by motor transport across the Atlas Mountains and it was at Bonne that we spent Xmas 1942 our Dinner being M & V and unleavened bread. However the Wing was extremely busy and my duties were concerned with consolidating data etc., for onward signalling to HQ and additionally the preparation of Daily Routine Orders. As time went by we moved to Souk-el-Arba where the Engineers had prepared a landing strip. There was much more action from this area as the Americans were flying Marauders and the Wing continually gave air cover against enemy action. It was here that I first made contact with 152 Squadron staff. By this time we had a new Commanding Officer a South African Fighter Ace - Wing Commander Peter Hugo. The Commanding Officer originally in charge was badly wounded during an air raid on the airfield at Bonne. My memory does not serve me so well but I believe him to have been either Group Captain Atcherly or Appleton. As a result of the land advance and air strikes from this area a lot of progress was made and very soon we found ourselves in Bizerte still on the north coast of Africa. By June 1943 the Wing was on the move to Malta, the siege being over but again we were involved in continual combat and striking out at Sicily and Italy. Whilst in Malta my main duties were pin pointing machine gun nests, gun sites and any other places of importance along the coasts of Sicily and Italy the information being received following recce work by camera and debriefing. This work was undertaken at a Naval Unit in Valetta. June and July 1943 were spent in Malta being billeted in Nazzer (Nasha) a distance of about three or four miles from Ta Kali air base. We were housed in a beautiful Mansion which amazingly had escaped bombing. Officers and Aircrew were housed at the Grand Hotel in Rabat. Food was very poor but it was surprising how we managed on Compo Rations etc. Eventually the invasion of Sicily took place and in this the fighter units played a very big part. By mid August we were over in Sicily and based between our Infantry and the enemy at a place called Lentini. Rather unfortunately we were bombed here one night losing aircraft and personnel but were very soon operational again. Before long we moved and camped on the river bed at Messina. This was to await our transfer to Italy. When that happened it was then that I joined 152 Squadron as Clerk Special Duties. Little did we know when news came that a move was to take place that after Italy we were destined for Alexandria in Egypt. Again it was not very long before we were moved to Port Said in readiness for transportation to the Far East. In a matter of about three weeks we were in Bombay but only for re-kitting and by Xmas 1943 we were operational at Baigachi a station outside Calcutta. 152 was the first to take clipped wing Spitfires to India. These proved a great asset although some modifications had to be made. They proved a boon in assisting the 14th Army who had been struggling against heavy odds. Early 1944 we moved to Chitagong in Bengal. Here we were raided by the Japs but no great damage was done and very shortly we were moved down the Arakan to Cox's Bazaar. From here it was possible to hit harder at the Jap and help the Army. By now the Spits had been fitted with long range tanks to carry more Octane so that sorties further East could be carried out. Although these advantages helped greatly other hindrances occurred such as monsoon periods and bad road conditions. Heavy rain often hindered flying and not always were spares available for aircraft servicing. There was always something to set us back slightly but we were greatly boosted by the occasional visit from Mountbatten, Wavell or Slim. From Cox's we moved to Comilla mid Burma as things were hotting up in the North around Imphal and Kohima and before long we were on our way to Imphal being camped at Talihul. Although it was a serious state of affairs the unit came through unscathed. Things like Dysentery, Hepatitis and Malaria did tend to lower our strength occasionally but to no great effect. On the whole the Unit's health was very good and apart from aircrew our losses were very low.

R.D. Lloyd-Bros. 31/7/97.

It was not until some time June/July 1945 that we had our first casualties. We were camped at Kham in Burma and one night we had a jap air raid. Our losses were three or four of the lads and some wounded. It was tragic really to lose boys who had been our mates for years and who had been like brothers to us. In anycase we had to continue with our work and from here we went to Prome aiming for Rangoon which was reached by August. During August hostilities ceased but this was not the end for us. The Squadron was directed to Siam (Bangkok) to fly the Flag but again that was not to be for long as things were not so good in French Indo China. Again ~~we~~ we were directed to Saigon (Ho Chi Min) to help out. By the time things were quietning we learnt that the Fighter Squadron was being disbanded and the personnel would become 7152 Servicing Echelon. As time went by the Echelon began to split and I volunteered for further service in Hong Kong where I was occupied with three others in opening an Air Booking Centre at the Shanghai Bank Building for reopening of Trade facilities and routing of interested parties to other parts of the world. Although offered permanent occupation in Hong Kong not having been home in Britain for four years I could not find my way clear to accept this and was repatriated in May 1946.

R.J. Lloyd-Jones 31/7/97.

R.J. Lloyd-Jones. (TAFF) Jaff.



1st December 1996

Dear Mr Rooker,

I was most interested to see your request for information on 152 (Hyderabad) Sqn as I served with them from the 15-09-42 until November 1944, as a Corporal in the M.T Section.

I joined the Squadron at Wittering when it was being reformed for special overseas operations, we undertook special training in preparation for an invasion and were issued with khaki uniforms together with Sten and Thompsons which of course at the time were new to us, the total strength was about 250 personnel mostly picked for the job.

We left England (Glasgow) on the 11-11-42 for operation Torch and arrived at Algiers, North Africa on 22-11-42 where we suffered heavily at the hands of the better equipped Luftwaffe.

On the 2-06-43 we left Sousse on Landing Craft to go to the relief of Malta, which at that time was expecting an invasion by German parachutists and things were pretty tough there at that time.

We left Malta on LST on the 16-07-43 for the invasion of Sicily and landed at Siracusa on the 17-07-43. I always remember one particular night here when we were bombed by Italian four engined planes dropping 2000lb bombs, the night was lit up by flares, just like daylight, there were a lot of casualties and it was very uncomfortable being on a small landing strip at that time. However we did get our own back when the sqd destroyed thirteen enemy aircraft in one glorious day over Milazzo.

Leave Sicily on LST for the invasion of Italy, we arrive off Salerno beaches on the 22-09-43 under intense shell fire. We were the R.A.F. squadron to arrive in Italy and did very well, having won our way back into Europe it was a blow to be diverted to the Eastern Theatre.

We leave Taranto on the 3-11-43 for Alexandria where we arrived on the 11-11-43, we move on to Port Suez where we join the liner SS Strathmore for Bombay.

Note. The Squadron took part in three invasions and the relief of Malta in its first twelve months of overseas operations.

We became operational at Baigachi about 35 miles from Calcutta in the December and we were in no way downhearted at our future prospects in spite of a defeatist attitude which seemed to prevail amongst the troops there. On Christmas day 1943 we had a good dinner and some beer, on Boxing day two of our pilots Pat & Mac shot down the last Japanese aircraft known to have ventured over Calcutta.

After a brief stay in Baigachi we moved on to Chittagong, where many of the chaps went down with dysentery including myself, I well remember being dumped outside Wing Sick quarters on a stretcher and left for hours with other sick and wounded. We then moved to Rumkha where I was going down a track in an open jeep came under sniper fire, it was a near thing as a bullet passed to the rear of my head.

In a way I was pleased to leave this area as the Japs were closing in fast at this stage, we went on to amongst other places to Tamu, Tulihal and the siege of Imphal and at one time the only way out was by air,

cont

one night the Japs infiltrated the landing strip area where the Spits were parked and dropped bombs down the engine air intakes, re-sulting in a number of planes being blown up and destroyed.

We lived under terrible conditions at times, but in spite of the trials and discomfort the Squadron Spirits were good, the enemy were so close on some of the strips that Hurricane fighter/bombers took off, circled, dropped their bombs and landed without retracting their undercarriage.

Trusting you will find the above of interest, as you will appreciate it would be possible to write a book on my overseas experiences and consider my-self very lucky still to be alive at 78 years of age, although my memory is now beginning to fade of all that happened so many years ago.

yours sincerely,



George W. Hennah.

PS I returned to Liverpool on the 25th October 1945 on the SS Georgic.

4/3/97

Dear Mr Rooker,

Thank you for your letter of 25/1/97. Shortly after receiving your letter, I went off to New Zealand and have only returned last week.

The brief details of my time with 152 Squadron are as follows:

I joined them on April 21st 1941 at Portcath where the Squadron was resting from their time at Warrwell. The C.O. was S/Ldr Derek Bortel-Gill, now deceased, I believe. We spent our time escorting convoys in the sector from Hartland Point round Devon & Cornwall to Plymouth. And there was the occasional "bandit" spotted and we were sent up to investigate. I once saw a German Condor near the Scillies but it disappeared in to cloud. The members of the Squadron then included: P/O A.W. Kearsey, F/O R. Miller, P/O N. Hancock. F/O W.D. Williams, F/Lt I.N. Bygles, F/O E.S. Marrs (shot down over Brest 24 July 1941), F/O G.S. Cox, and the adjutant. F/O L.R. Hiscock. S/Ldr Bortel-Gill was replaced whilst we were at Portcath by S/Ldr J. Darwin.

On 24/7/41 we escorted Hampdens in a daylight raid over Brest in order to bomb & hopefully cripple the Scharnhorst & Gneisenau who were held up in Brest.

I believe these were American Fortresses flown by R.A.F. crews. They were higher than ourselves & our Hurricanes who were at 16000 feet. On August 18 we started flying up to Norfolk and escorting 2 Group Blenheim's over the North Sea on raids on shipping and targets in Holland, including Rotterdam. Eventually, the idleness of the whole Squadron flying from Cornwall to Norfolk, carrying out an escort duty, and flying back to Cornwall, was realised, and 152 was moved from Portcath to Snairwell near Newmarket and then to Swanton Morley.

I was posted on Oct 17th to Central Flying School, Upavon where I did an instructor's course, and after a short time instructing at an S.F.T.S. returned to C.F.S. as a Staff Instructor.

So there we have a brief resumé of my time with 152. If you want any more detail, please ask. I have a cut-out photo from, I think, the Illustrated London News of the Squadron taken about August 1941, which is pasted in my log book. If you are interested, I will try to get it photo-copied.

Yours sincerely

Michael Gardner



W 1234 X  
I was interested to read in our local paper of your interest in 152 Squadron; in 1941 I was serving on the M.T. section of 255 Sqd. at RAF Collyerhay on the night of 18.1.42 I was told to get my kit together as tomorrow I would be leaving for N. Ireland with 152 Sqd. this was to be the start of a very hectic few years that went on till June 1946 when I was discharged. The Sqd was giving air cover to convoys that were heading overseas and we were based at EGLINTON N.I. On 11.11.42 we were all aboard a troopship heading for the invasion of N Africa all the ground crew went on to the beaches of Algiers

with the Army to try to establish a  
air strip, so that the Squadron could  
land which they did after about 19 days  
by which time we had got the strip  
Operational, we went on to follow on  
behind the Army, to Tunis and at Sousse  
we packed everything up and boarded a  
troopship for Malta we landed 1-6-43.  
On 18-7-43 the 99d took part in the  
invasion of Sicily after a few moves  
on the island we took part in the  
invasion of Italy 22-9-43 after several  
moves we arrived at Naples 6-10-43 where  
we were ordered to pack up we were  
heading for a troopship lying off Bari  
we were heading for Alexandria for a  
rest and regroup it is 11-10-43  
we were at a holding site outside

Alexandria for about a month then it was on to a Geography and on to Bombay India 28-11-43 to Chattergang on the borders of Burma there we waited for the planes to arrive and then we followed the Army every few miles, they moved we moved up to small landing strips in the jungle, Comila, Pafel, Inphat, Tudipal, Tamu, Kan, Cinthey, Magwai, Muhlila Rangoon it was while we were there that the Jap war was declared over, so it was decided that the Sqd had to go to Indo China but was the Airfield at Saigon ready for planes it was decided to form another team of men to be called 7152 Servicing Echelon we were to go on ahead by boat to prepare for the Sqd to follow, this was quite a nerve racking



experience we arrived at the airfield at Saigon on 12-10-45 this was to be jointly, and, the planes flew in a few days later, as you can imagine all this was not achieved without a lot of lives lost through Malaria, Sickness, bombs and machine gunned and I would say that 152 Sgd and 7152 S.E. had a very hard war and served their country well I hope all goes well in your research.

I am not quite sure where the Sgd was formed but I think it was at RAF Swanton Morley, until a couple of years ago a Spitfire of 152 Sgd was on a concrete base outside the main gates of Swanton Morley.

The dates and place names are fairly accurate

Yours faithfully

G. Corbett

(I do have several photo copies)



Dear Mr Rooker,

Some time ago I saw you  
re your advert in Air Mail about  
your insert seeking research & info  
of 152 Hyderabad Squadron. Sorry I  
have been so long replying but with  
Xmas & other things it slipped my  
memory. Anyway here goes, I hope you  
find my information useful.

I was 940781 Corporal Bellamy  
Airframe Flight Mechanic on the  
B Flight of 152 serving from June 5<sup>th</sup>  
1940 when I was posted to Acklington  
to January 1945 when I left them  
as they were preparing for the

P.T.O

invasion of Singapore.

Here is an account of the dates & places we went to in the course of my service.

June 5<sup>th</sup> 1940 joined squadron at Acklington B Flight under F/S Barnes

July 13<sup>th</sup> 1940 squadron moved to Wamwell or Dorchester in defence of Portland Bill Submarine Base.

On March 26<sup>th</sup> 1941 Jerry bombed & machine gunned Wamwell demolishing 1 Hanger & H Q.

April 9<sup>th</sup> 1941 Sqdn moved to Portreath Cornwall April 11<sup>th</sup> 1941 4 bombs on runway at Portreath.

April 13<sup>th</sup> 1941 Sgts Short & Tabour (A Flight) shot down Heinkel III.

May 13<sup>th</sup> 1941 camp bombed at 12.30 am

May 9<sup>th</sup> 1941 P/O Mars & Sgt Short  
missing on close escort to bombers  
over Brest. P/O Mars was the pilot  
of my plane U.M.Z.

Date unknown moved to Swanton  
Morley

Early 1942 - Sqdn moved to Eglington  
N. Ireland & taught the Japs how  
to fly Spitfires which we handed  
over to them. I was in hospital  
at Londonderry for a hernia operation.  
June 1942 Sqdn moved to Wittering  
nr Stamford ready to hit out for  
overseas.

Nov 10<sup>th</sup> 1942 arrived at Greenock &  
boarded Greek Boat "Nae Hellas".  
Nov 14<sup>th</sup> 1942 picked up convoy & sailed  
for Algiers N. Africa

(4)

Nov 22<sup>nd</sup> Arrived Algiers harbour  
bumped on beach bombed at night.  
Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov 1942. marched to  
Maison Blanche airport to await  
arrival of 8pts.

Moved on to Douke el Khemis  
airdrome doing close support for  
1st Army attacking Tunis.

Squad personnel moved to Tebessa  
to help the guards regiments as  
the 8<sup>th</sup> Army were pushing up from  
Doulbrook & the Yanks were  
leaving forward Dromes. Bombed  
& strafed on the road to Tebessa  
Victory parade in Tunis about  
May 21<sup>st</sup>. 1943.

Moved to Dourze June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1943  
sailed for Malta June 3<sup>rd</sup> (Valletta)



June 5<sup>th</sup> moved to Slinga a/crome 8/sgdn already there. The king visited Malta on June 20<sup>th</sup> 1943.

July 10<sup>th</sup> 1943 Sicily invaded. Sgdn gave air cover.

July 17<sup>th</sup> 1943 landed at Syracuse  
Montgomery met us as we landed

August 5<sup>th</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> Army took Catania  
New 60 Squadron leader Ingram  
joined us August 11<sup>th</sup> 1943.

August 17<sup>th</sup> 1943 Sicily captured  
September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1943 Invasion of Italy at  
Messina A Flight moved to Millazzo  
Sept 4<sup>th</sup> 1943 B Flight moved to  
Millazzo.

Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> 1943 landed on beach at  
Salerno as it was being shelled.  
Eventually billeted in a tobacco  
factory.

242 Sqdn were also on Drome  
we played them at football.

Oct 30<sup>th</sup> 1943 sailed from Toronto  
for Alexandria arrived Nov 11<sup>th</sup>.

Left kit behind at 108 RSU.

Nov 16<sup>th</sup> sailed from Suez on  
the "Strathmore" for India.

Nov 19<sup>th</sup> 1943 Anchored off Aden.

\* picked up convoy heard 81 sqdn  
were on the "Devonshire" in the convoy.

Nov 27<sup>th</sup> 1943 docked at Bombay.

Dec 2<sup>nd</sup> 1943 Left Bombay by train  
for Calcutta.

Reached Bagachia camp outside  
of Calcutta Dec 4<sup>th</sup>. camp was  
"Bamboo Bashes".

Xmas Day 1943 Sqdn dinner officers  
waited at table (see menu) with  
autographs on back.

(7)

Boxing Day 1943 Sgt Paterson &  
4/0 Mc Donald shot down first  
Jap out at sea

Feb 15<sup>th</sup> 1944 Left Calcutta for  
Chittagong. Lost diary & have no  
further records until Sept 1944  
when we flew into Imphal as  
Japs had cut the road.

Proceeded on to Tamu <sup>Burma</sup> where the  
Japs destroyed 6 Spit<sup>^</sup>s in a raid  
on Drome.

I was posted to Ramree Island  
leaving 152 as they prepared for  
invasion of Singapore.

I arrived home August 1945. &  
was discharged Jan 1946.

Hope this account has been helpful  
even if a bit scumbling.

(8)

Would like to hear of anyone else  
of the squadron who is in  
contact with you, if possible  
There was one squadron reunion  
but sorry to say I was unable  
to attend, it was in London soon  
after the war.

Am enclosing some snaps hope  
they are useful & would like  
some returned when you have  
finished with them please.

Hope to have been of use  
Yours faithfully

Tom Bellamy



Dear Mr. Rooker:

Your undated letter in reply to mine of December 10th was received yesterday and I thank you for the details it contained.

For your information, my time with 152 Squadron began with my joining it in Wales on or about September 20th, 1942. Near the end of that month, 152 moved to Wittering, Cambs., to stay there for about 30 days preparatory to posting overseas. On October 25, 1942 I found myself on an escort ship that was part of a convoy enroute to North Africa, destined to take part in Operation Torch. As deck cargo on that convoy, were the Spitfires we were to fly. On November 14th, I flew with a part of our Squadron from Gibraltar to Algiers.

The Squadron moved up through Algeria and into Tunisia variously acting in fighter, fighter-patrol, fighter-bomber and bomber-escort capacities and I flew with it until I became tour-expired. On April 29th, 1943, I was posted to 144 Maintenance unit at Algiers for a rest, where I remained until April 13, 1944, test flying rebuilt fighter aircraft. I was then posted back to Canada and spent the remainder of the war giving elementary flight instruction.

I hope some of this helps. Incidentally, I wonder if one of your research respondents is a chap named Ray Johnson. He must be almost unique among 152 Squadron personnel. As one of its Armourers he played a most important part in its life from the time it reformed in (I think) 1939 until it disbanded in 1945. I will send him a copy of this letter containing your address, in case he wishes to make contact with you, if already he has not.

Good luck with your research. I would be interested in continuing to hear how you are progressing with it.

Yours sincerely,

  
W. P. Paris, C.M.  
Flt/Lt (retired)

cc: Ray Johnson

Hello from America!!

After viewing your wonderful website, I was wondering if you might have any information on LAC Walter Walker, who was killed in the Japanese raid on 13 Feb 1945 at Sinthe? He was my wife's father, but never got to see his daughter, who was born 8 Mar. Walter was from Salford, Lancashire, and is buried in the military cemetery at Taukkyan. I was able to get some photos of his grave-site through the American Embassy in Rangoon, which I shared with my wife's 88 year old mother. If you have any info on him, or any of the old fellows still around remember him, I'm sure she'd be grateful to know!! I don't know what unit he was with at Sinthe, but also wondered if any of the group shots of the guys there might include him? Is it possible to get copies of image files that I might be able to enlarge enough to see faces? Any help you could offer would be greatly appreciated!! Thanks!!

Carroll J. Collins



22 February, 2001

Dear Bob,

### 152 Squadron

Many thanks to you and your wife for your hospitality last night. I am really impressed with the effort you have put in to making up the display boards, and obtaining all those photos, and your general dedication to a fairly obscure Sqdn.

It occurred to me later last night that I have some books regarding the Battle of Britain which you may not have seen, and which I would be pleased to lend to you. They include "*The Hardest Day*" by Alfred Price, which takes one particular day in great detail, and which has some references to 152. "*Harvest of Messerschmitts*" by Denis Knight, which is based on the 1940 diary of Mary Smith, who lived in the same village as I did. And "*Spitfire Summer*" which is a general book on the period.

I also have various other books covering the war period, particularly in respect of the night fighter war and radar development. There is also "*Blitz on Britain 1939 to 1945*" by Alfred Price, which could well interest your wife. If you would like to borrow any of these, not necessarily all at once, I would be happy to lend them to you. I also have somewhere some statistics on the Battle, published in *Flypast*, which I will try to rake out, although that may take a few days.

I enclose a photo which I forgot to bring last night of WS788 painted correctly in 152 markings as it stood at the Yorkshire Air Museum at Elvington a couple of years ago. This is the same aircraft as the colour photo of the Meteor NF14 in flight that I gave you.

Once again congratulations on an excellent effort to record the history of 152, if there is anything further I can help you with please let me know.

Yours sincerely



Peter Verney

Dear Mr Rooker

Thank you for your letter of 22 Feb 03 and congrats on the website. I spent an hour or so yesterday flicking through points of interest and was amazed by the range of subjects.

I'm sure it will be valued by historians and by those who would like to know more about particular people and events. Regretably perhaps, I am no longer in the latter category and have difficulty keeping up with my role in the Legion and family affairs.

It also just so happens that I recently attended a winding-up meeting of an Assocn formed in 1992 to keep in touch with some 50 or so colleagues who trained as pilots in Los Angeles. A very active ex civil servant ran the Assocn putting out a newsletter every month, but after a peak at around 25 including a VC and several DFCs, numbers dropped rather quickly in recent months and only five of us attended the last meeting.

In Ray Johnson you have already met 152 Sqdn's most notable archivist who has very detailed records of the squadron's progress from reformation right through to closure in Thailand. "Johnny" would be the key man to provide whatever data you thought would interest future students of 152's history and if he could spare the time I'm sure you would find that his material would make a valuable contribution to your records, especially as they are now searchable online.

It occurs to me that the Dept of Education should be made aware of your work so that they could draw it to the attention of Universities, Colleges and Schools if only to ensure that future researchers had access to "correct" information.

For now, may I wish you all the best for what you have already done and for what you may do in future. As an afterthought, you may wish to consider approaching the authors of "Aces High" who might help to extend and publicise the website.

Either Christopher Shores or Clive Williamns, at Grub Street, The Basement, 10 Chivalry Road, London. SW11 1HT could be useful initial contacts.

With best regards  
NGJones DFC



17th October 1997

Dear R.J.

Dear Mr. Rooker sounds very formal so as I don't know your name I thought RJ would do!

Thank you for your letter (on nicely headed paper!) and dated 23/7/97. I made no answer at the time as it did not seem to call for one.

You were the instrument in putting me in touch with Alfie Allsop now living in Weymouth, thank you very much your research has at least born that pleasant fruit! Alfie is quite well and came to visit me a few weeks ago. Unfortunately his wife is not mobile as she suffers badly from osteoporosis.

What has finally goaded me into writing to you is an article in the magazine of 'The Spitfire Society' which caught my eye. I have photo copied it and highlighted it and enclose it for your interest. I don't recall the author though we must have been on the squadron in the early days together. But then he was an armourer whilst I was a fitter and we moved in different circles. He seems to be a bit of a walking encyclopaedia of life with 152 so if you are not yet in touch with him it might be worth making contact.

Best wishes with the research and keep at it, things have a habit of turning up!

*Yours sincerely  
Douglas Brown*

PS I liked your FAITHFUL ALLY !

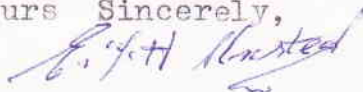
Dear Mr. Rooker.

Further to our conversation by phone, I enclose Memories of 152.Sqdn, I have not detailed dates etc from my log books I feel they have been covered by P/o Vickers.

I have stuck mainly to episodes fresh in my mind. I appreciate the effort you are putting into this, & if there is anything I can do, or reimburse in any way, please let me know.

Wishing you and yours  
all the Best, and a "HAPPY XMAS to All."

Yours Sincerely,



E. J. H. UNSTED.,

P.S. Photo enclosed as requested.

Mr R.J.Rooker  
413, Spring Road  
Ipswich  
Suffolk  
IP4 5LY

Dear Bob,

For what it is worth in your research, my RAF history is:

- Volunteered in '40
  - S.Rhodesia training, first on Tigers at Belvedere (Salisbury) then on Harvards to Wings.
  - Back to Blighty for Spit I training.
  - Shipped to Gibraltar for Operation Torch
  - Joined 111 Squadron. (On same wing as 152)
  - Completed tour in Tunisia, Malta, Sicily and Italy.
  - Sent to Ismalia Fighter OTU as Gunnery instructor.
  - Commissioned while there and insisted on returning to *ops*
- Thought I'd be sent back to UK but was posted to 152 at Tamu in Burma.
- Operations were all in support of the army fighting their way down the country. Mainly strafing and denying the Japs air access. Messy.
  - Operated off jungle strips down to Rangoon.
  - Flew 5+hour trip to Penang, thence to Singapore to establish a presence immediately after the surrender.
  - Once there I left the squadron for a short while with another officer, Hoffard, son of the ex-governor of Akyab. We set up a prisoner of war club to get them off the streets. The venture came to an end when I pinched a carpet for the club. I was rushed before a gentleman with a lot of scrambled egg who kindly informed me "I am the provost marshal for S East Asia and you have stolen my carpet."
  - Made commander of B Flight and did some dodgy ops over Sumatra (or was it Java? ) Anyway the one on the west of Malaya.

.....

Ken Plumridge



I did not enjoy my tour in the far-east. It seemed to be run by staff wallahs back somewhere in India. We rarely saw, let alone flew with, senior officers and to my mind the degree of understanding was unsatisfactory.

Unlike the African/S.Europe war which was a personal fight.

I suggest you *major* on that part of 152's history. Include the story of Smithy DFM. A truly gallant pilot who was killed shortly after the war, doing a flying exhibition at Luquas. He was due to be married a couple of weeks later.

When I met his brother a half a century later, I remarked how sad it must have been for his fiancé. His brother's wife then told me that it was her.

Last year I received an e-mail from a couple living in Japan. They asked for information about their uncle, Lt Potgeiter, who was killed in Burma. I was able to tell them he was shot down and his fellow S.African pilot was injured at the same time.

That's about all of interest. I hope it will contribute a little to your research and best wishes for an exhibition.

Yours sincerely

Ken Plumridge



Dear Mr. Lockes,

Enclosed as promised a few photographs and cuttings re 1523 Squadron. The quality of the photographs are not too good, but you will appreciate that the original snaps have suffered over the years. I hope they will be of use to you. I have been in contact with E. Unstead whom you kindly gave my telephone number.

would like to hear your comments and I do not want them returned.

Sincerely

John Lockes

Card 12<sup>th</sup>

Car Bob,

Thank you for your letter.  
Caprotulation on the website, and  
many thanks for you good work in preserving  
the memory of "152".

I enclose a recent photo of  
myself.

All the best,

Yours

Ken 152

10<sup>th</sup> Nov. '96.

Dear Mr. Roker,

Thank you for your letter of 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov.  
and for the safe return of 152 Apr. photograph.

I will remember some names such as

Tommy Thomas, owner of Poock the bull terrier  
squadron mascot - He was B Flight Commander.

Jumbo Dearnley was P/O section leader in 'A' Flt.

He was leading P/O Chobmondly-Innes & myself in low  
cloud over Alnwick when somehow Innes & I  
managed to collide beam on, missing the leader!  
Innes managed to force land back at Bickington  
with only a broken nose. I crashed into a potato  
field & blew up - Suffered multiple burns  
and spent 15 months in hospitals (various).

I did see the squadron again at Portreath  
in 1941 but was unfit for flying so went  
into night fighter control after a course

on the subject. A year later I managed to get a refresher course on flying and was posted as P/LT supernumary to 234 Sqn Portneath mostly doing convoy patrols. Then posted as F/S Commander to No 185 Sqn. Halifar, Malta after a holdup for two months in Gibraltar. Last leg to Malta was in a Spit Vc with 170 gal external overload tank and no canons, took 5 hrs & 10 mins!

Malta was mostly ground attacks on Sicily, Lampedusa & Linosa & the 5c having onboard canons replaced by bomb racks for 2x 250 lb bombs! In Feb '43 I had to go home to hospital for another nine months for further dodgy repairs to my left hand. All sorts of jobs thereafter until demobbed in Feb 1947 - some flying non-operational some ground jobs.

Sorry, have to stop here, getting thirsty  
Yours truly

Robin Atkin



Dear

*Robert Rooker*

Thank you for your letter about tracing RAF Personnel based at Warmwell, Dorset between 1940-45. I have enclosed some memorabilia which may be of interest. As you will see I was based at Warmwell with !52 Sqdn from July 1940 To September 1940 flying Spitfire IIs during the Battle of Britain. This mark of Spitfire was equipped with eight Browning machine guns, which gave a total of about fifteen seconds fire power. About two or three good bursts. So one was quickly out of amo and could not stay around in the fray after that. So it was get in, destroy and get out fast.

The memorabilia costs me about £5, so if you feel like keeping it would be grateful if you would let me have the cost.

Hope this helps you with your research.

Best wishes



Denis N Robinson F/Lt

13-2-1997

Dear Bob,

Thank you for your letter and sorry for the delay of my reply.

I had to find my old log book and sort the photographs, which I have photo-copied. Black & white do not copy too well, but after trying different machines I managed to produce the enclosed.

I did know the 4 persons you mentioned and I have included a copy of the names which was attached to a Remian invitation for 8-9-1951. I did not attend, as it was also my wedding day.

The photo of Sgt. Botterill's wrecked Spitfire, was a result of him drifting on to a jeep, laying right flying cable. He had not locked his straps & his face hit the gunsight and he lost an eye.

On 13-2-45 when our camp was bombed, the bomb fell on the ground staff tented area. My tent, which I shared with 2 Australians, W/O Clark & Herman, was the nearest to that area & there was about six of us inside at the time. Two of these pilots had minor shrapnel injuries and in the morning our tent had dozens of holes in it.

Pete Clark had a bush jacket hanging from the tent roof and when he took it down, the next day, a large piece of shrapnel had gone through several folds of the jacket. Another piece had also gone through my blankets & bed.

On another occasion, Pete had a suitcase on the floor, which had clothes in & which he usually opened <sup>by</sup> the lid only.

However, he picked it up one day & the contents fell out. White ants had eaten the bottom of the case and had also got into a folding camera and eaten the telescopic part of the lens as well. I learned a few new words on those 2 occasions.

The Spitfire was a tough little plane. When I was hit, the port elevator was badly damaged, the trailing edge of the starboard wing was damaged & the wing tank was holed. The camera was damaged & the cable operating the undercarriage had one strand left, which luckily for me did get the wheels down when I got back the 100 miles to base.

Well I hope the enclosures may help you - it's brought back some memories for me.

Yours sincerely,

Gyrl Potter

(12 PHOTO-COPIES ENCLOSE)



30-1-45. - JOINED 152 SQDN. WITH SGT. ANGUS GRAY, AT AN AIR-STRIP AT KAN (SOUTH OF KALEMYO). THE C.O. WAS A SOUTH AFRICAN AIR FORCE OFFICER, WHO WAS REPLACED AFTER ABOUT 3 DAYS BY SQDN/LEADER, GRANT KERR D.F.C. OUR SPITFIRES WERE MARK 8.

7-2-45 - MOVED SOUTH TO SINTHE AIR-STRIP.

MOST OF FEBRUARY SPENT PATROLLING 4<sup>TH</sup> CORPS BRIDGEHEAD AND SQDN. FLEW OVER 1,000 HOURS ON OPERATIONS.

1 DINAH & 2 OSCARS DESTROYED. 5 OSCARS DAMAGED.

1 SPITFIRE & PILOT MISSING & 1 PILOT WOUNDED.

ON 13<sup>TH</sup> FEB. CAMP BOMBED BY A LIKY, DURING THE EVENING, LEAVING 10 KILLED AND 30 WOUNDED.

3-3-45 P.M. LIKY BOMBED AIR-STRIP - 7 HURRICANES (INDIAN AIR FORCE) DAMAGED & 2 SPITFIRES (152) DESTROYED, ALSO FEW CASUALTIES.

MARCH & APRIL - MOSTLY PATROLS AND SOME AIR TO GROUND STRIKES.

20-4-45 FOUR SPITFIRES (INCLUDING MYSELF) WERE ON A DAWN STRIKE WHEN WE WERE ATTACKED BY 20 OSCARS. - INTELLIGENCE REPORTS SAID NO JAP PLANES WERE IN BURMA.

2 SPITFIRES WERE DAMAGED & ONE OSCAR DESTROYED.

30-4-45 MOVED TO MAGWE (MAIDA VALE).

25-5-45 MOVED TO THEIDAW, MEIKTILA.

MAY & JUNE - PATROLS AS FAR SOUTH AS TOUNGGOO.

15<sup>TH</sup> & 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE FLY-PASTS OVER RANGOON.

JULY 19<sup>TH</sup> - 25<sup>TH</sup> - 4 OF OUR SPITS. FITTED WITH BOMB RACKS AND WE CARRIED 500 LB. BOMBS & OPERATED FROM TOUNGGOO.

BOMBED & STRAFED RETREATING JAPS SOUTH OF TOUNGGOO.

AUG 18<sup>TH</sup> - MOVED TO AIR STRIP OUTSIDE RANGOON.

AUG/SEPT. SQUADRON FLEW TO SINGAPORE WITH ONE STOP IN WEST MALAYA - W/O ANDERSON (N.Z.A.F) LOST ON TRIP.

SEPT 45 - MAR 46 - BASED AT TENGAH.

JAN. 46 - NEW C.O. - SQDN/LEADER R. P. HARRING.

ALSO RECEIVED A MARK 14 SPITFIRE

152 SQUADRON DISBANDED 10-3-1946.

WHEN I JOINED THE SQUADRON THE PILOTS WERE FROM! - BRITISH ISLES, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, SOUTH AFRICA, CANADA AND KENYA.

THE AUSTRALIAN PILOTS RETURNED HOME IN EARLY AUGUST, 1945.

THE ROUNDELS WERE ONLY WHITE & BLUE. RED WAS OMITTED TO AVOID CONFUSION WITH THE JAP RED.

THE BLACK PANTHER EMBLEM WAS APPARENTLY SEEN ON GERMAN VEHICLES WHEN THE SQDN. WAS IN NORTH AFRICA AND THEN ADOPTED BY 152.

17th November 1996

Dear Mr. Rooker,

Thank you for your reply to my first letter about 152.

I've been scratching around looking up some photographs suitable to send and hope the selection enclosed will be of use. As they are the only copies I have I'd be grateful for their return asap.

The one showing the Jap army 105 mm gun is interesting as it was one of those which shelled the airstrip at PALEH in June 1944 when the Squadron was in the IMPHAR Valley and caused a bit of a flap when the aircraft had to be dispersed widely in rather a hurry. The enclosed bit of information culled from AIRMAIL may be new to you. The gun was later captured when the Japs retreated.

I've written some details on the backs of the photos regarding dates and places.

Our Squadron Commander until he had a fatal crash at IMPHAR was Squadron Leader Ingram who was a New Zealander and was mentioned as being a Junior Swimming Champion in earlier years. He came in & landed down too early <sup>on soft ground</sup> & the Spit went up on its nose causing him to injure his face on the gunsight. Although this seemed a minor



injury he developed tetanus and died within 48 hours.

The temporary replacement was Major HOFFE, South African Air Force then later Squadron leader KERR who had lived in Edinburgh. Jack Kerr was our boss when General Oliver Leese paid his visit at SIN THE.

This was a morale-booster after the Squadron suffered a considerable number of casualties in a hit & run raid at night by a single Jap plane which must have spotted the camp lights.

It is strange but as one gets older the memory of events which happened many years ago seems to get stronger.

Must stop there or you'll never get these photos.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely

Hugh Bond  
(Taffy Bond)

P.S.

Yes. The Spits in the photos are Mark VIII's.

The official Logo of the Nizam's headgear was superseded by the 'BLACK PANTHER' thanks to a pilot called Tunita who was a commercial artist pre-RAF. He painted one on his Spit & they all wanted one!

Dear Mrs Rooker, further to my  
phone call yesterday I enclose two  
negatives of:- 1) a Sqn Group 152 Sqn  
at Watmwell dtd late August 1940.  
2) Self & Spitfire plus  
Sqn mascot (Pooch) in  
the wing of my machine  
dtd early September 1940.

I do not appear in the Group photograph as  
I did not join until September 15<sup>th</sup> 1940.  
Regarding other members of 152 Sqn, I can only  
say that most of my contemporaries were either

killed during the Battle or subsequently during the war or have died since.

During the 1990 (50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary) we mustered 8 members at our annual re-union of 152. two of whom lived abroad. These were Wing Cmdr Baker in Australia and Wing Cmdr Pete O'Brien in Canada.

The ones still living in England also attend re-unions are: Gp Capt Dennis David, & "Hank" Hancock (Sgt Ldr) but seldom any others.

This is as much as I can do to help you in your enquiries I'm afraid.  
All the best - to you for your further efforts.

Yours Sincerely

Roger Hall.

(P.M.D. HALL)

Dear Mr. Rooker,

Thank you very much for  
your letter & photocopy of your  
exhibition. I recognise the picture  
of Jerry in his Spit C for Charlie.

Very unfortunately Jerry has  
alzheimer's, he has had it for some time  
now but 12 months last February  
I had to go into hospital, so Jerry  
had to go away, he did not come  
back, the doctor said he did not  
know how I had coped for so long.  
I try & visit most days. I must  
admit it was not easy especially  
the incontinence but I would rather  
have him at home.

I shall take your  
letter & picture to show him but  
doubt it will mean much to him.  
It really is a terrible disease

I feel worse than cancer as with  
cancer you know what is going  
on. He is 83 now so I have  
the satisfaction of knowing he has had  
a good life, he loved flying & we  
had a very good marriage.

Glad to hear your  
problems have been resolved

All the very best  
with your research

Yours sincerely

Joan Marsh.





5-11-96

Dear Mr. Rooker.

As promised a few photos of 152 Sqdn.  
at RISALPUR on the North West Frontier:

The photos have been written on  
the back, and I have enclosed a few  
negatives, as I thought it would be  
easier to get copies from.

The negatives depict the following:-

- (a) The C.O.'s Tempest after he put it on its  
nose after landing.
- (b) Tempest being brought back into dispersal
- (c) Ground testing the engine B-UM
- (d) M-UM at dispersal
- (e) Interior of Spitfire cockpit - Mark <sup>VIII</sup> ~~Tempest~~ (not 152)

Hope these maybe of some use to you,  
and good luck with your project.

Please don't forget to return them.

Cheers for now

Yours sincerely B. G. Godden