

CIRCULAR

458 SQUADRON NEWS



The EDITOR.

Box 5289, G.P.O., Sydney, N.S.W.

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SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE.....

MURRAY RIVER IN FLOOD.

Australian Squadron members who live in the States bordering the Murray River Valley will have a particularly vivid idea of the devastating floods in which the overflowing river has threatened to overwhelm the Irrigation Areas (in which a number of 458 ers have their post-war homes and livelihoods) and in which major damage was suffered. 458 members with properties near the Murray include Ken Cupper, Dave Firth, Roger Rodwell, Ian Showell and Fred Barnett. To give members generally some idea of the desperate battle that was fought to preserve the relatively low-lying lands from flooding and to protect some of the Wine and Dried Fruits Vines from obliteration, we quote from the South Australian Press:

REMARK--August 20th. Desperate urgency gripped Renmark to-day as women and children were evacuated from threatened areas.. From a night of tension and frenzied activity on weakened levees, the people moved into the day tight-lipped and determined. Down Murray Avenue the river tried to force itself through drains and old pipes, through any chink in the defence line. The Battle of Angove's Distillery will go down as Renmark's finest hour in the flood. Hundreds of men and women worked through the night to protect the sagging bank. Breackage of the bank endangered two-thirds of Renmark's Irrigation Area. Floodlights blazed down on a sinister pool of water bursting through a hole in the corner of the Levee. Men with shovels sprinted out of the darkness from all directions. Peter Thompson and Ian Showell plunged into the water on the outside of the bank. Clinging to ropes, they disappeared below the black water trying to find the break. At first it looked hopeless--the sandbags washed off as fast as they were stacked. But more and more earth arrived and helpers swarmed in. Gradually that hole was filled in and a secondary levee piled up.

But the battle has gone on for six weeks. The river takes one bank and they put up another. Sometimes the river takes that too, but they go on putting up banks. When fruit-grower Ian Showell was asked this morning if he minded a bank being put through his vineyard, he never hesitated. "Go straight through the lot," he said. The Bulldozers roared, a vineyard died and another bank went up.

School, hospital, vineyards have gone but though the Murray may break earth levees the courage of this town and its people is..so..strong that no river will ever engulf it. (The Advertiser-Adelaide.)

458 ers in Adelaide wanted to help and a party drove up to Renmark. Here is Ron Badger's account of their journey.

"The River Murray is in flood. Ian Showell lives at Renmark. So, Bill Taylor, John Ringwood, Ron Badger were in a party which journeyed to Renmark with shovels, food and, also, supplies of bottled good cheer, to lend a hand for a week-end.

"En route, as the miles dwindled, so dwindled the supplies of good cheer; many squadron stories were told.

"Fantastic is an expressionable word and sums up the conditions we found at Renmark. It likewise sums up the extraordinary efforts put up by Ian Showell in the past two months.

"He has been a tower of strength in the "Battle of the Flood". His name, coupled with others of course, will be a legend in the district for years. His citation for a 'Gong'

Murray Floods (Cont.) would be difficult to write adequately. We arrived, had 'one' for the Levee, and were driven in Ian's Ford, which, coupled with the driver, displayed due contempt for ruts, bogs, logs and passengers, to a new Levee where we volunteers were introduced to the business end of copious stores of sandbags for a few hours into the night.

"Our ardour was dampened, our backs were broken, but not our spirits, which we kept in our hip pockets. So to bed on Ian's Dining Room floor. Next day a further battle with sandbags, levees, bulldozers and trying to remain in one piece in Ian's Ford in the drive to our next assignment---which was filling sandbags, sandbags, sandbags, sandbags, sandbags, etc, etc., after a smoko, we filled sandbags, sandbags, sandbags, etc, etc, --then more sandbags, sandbags, sandbags. That afternoon we built a levee round Ian's house, or a bulldozer did.

"Yes, that's all we did, we helped build a levee; but when you see the size of it, and the speed in which it was completed one just stands back and says 'It's Fantastic !'

"So, back to Adelaide, very pleased to have had the opportunity of helping a fellow Squadroneer, also deeply conscious of the tragedy of the flood and the spirit of the people. -- It's Fantastic, and its not finished yet by a long way."

VICTORIAN FLIGHT NEWS.

from

Arthur Green.

We are planning to plant our Memorial Tree--most likely early in the New Year. Since the last News-Letter, we have held a Social Dance. This was not the usual huge success--the weather was really bad--but 30 odd couple turned up and had a really happy night. We also held our Annual Reunion in September--again not the best as regards attendance but some new faces gave new interest in their doings. During the evening an election was held and Wing Commander Mick Mather, became a new member of the Flight Committee.

Our next function is our Annual Dinner to be held at the Hardware Club on December 12th at 6.30 p.m.

Several of us braved the floods to visit Ken Cupper at Robinvale. Those from Melbourne were Ian Allison, Harry Ashworth, and myself. Bob McKinna kindly put the three of us up for the night and the next day he journeyed with us to Robinvale. Roger Rodwell was another visitor, from Merbein. Dave Firth and Ken are in good health--or at least were before we arrived---wouldn't like to say after we left. As at our previous visit we started to say good-bye at 9.0. a.m. and left just after 4.0.p.m. Still, it was a grand week-end. Harry and Ian say "Let's do it again." For myself, I and my wife may head that way during the Christmas Holidays.

Twins for the Rabones.

There's headline news ! Boys. Ian and Neil. To Roy and Margaref, our hearty congratulations !

Charlie Harding and wife stayed with me for a night, down from Mortlake. Tom Burgess is awaiting a visit from me but the weather has me beaten at the moment.

Both Dave Firth and Ken Cupper have been in hospital but I am glad to say are now hale and hearty once more. They are next door neighbours at Robinvale. I often wonder how many of the boys have opened up these farms together or joined each other as business partners.

Jin Munday is off to Western Australia to-day--rang me for a few of the boys addresses.

Glad to hear that arrangements for Anzac Week in Sydney are progressing well. Victoria will have at least 12 going. Tell Sam Barlow to polish the glasses.

In spite of Theo Ravenscroft's claim to be the last single man to be trapped, he's slightly amiss there. Two Offhand here occur to me. Pud Meredith and Don Johnson. Who the heck would marry either of these deadbeats is beyond me.

How are Allan Walker and Cy. Irwin these days. Give them my good wishes.

Norm. Cugley is about to move into his new home just outside Pentridge. I reckon he's on the wrong side of the wall.

Bill Carr is packing for a business visit to U.S.A. Bon voyage, Bill. That seems to be about all the news. My regards to all.

IN HOLLIDAY MOOD: Q-Flight Commentary.

Squadron Memorial Tree at Amberley. About 20

members and associates with wives and children saw the very well staged ceremony of planting Q Flight's Memorial Tree at Amberley on Sunday 16th September. Bernie Hughes came down from Emu Vale, bringing Bob Coles from Toowoomba. Mo. Guthrie was one of the Associate members present.

The site chosen was on one of the lawns between the Officers Mess and the Parade Ground. Two Flights of Airmen were drawn up on either side of the site. R.A.A.F. officers and members of the Association occupied one of the remaining two sides, while

In Holliday Mood (continued) G/C. Douglas, the Padre, and Flight President Ron. Russell, were stationed on the fourth side.

Just as the ceremony was about to begin light driving rain fell and continued throughout the ceremony. This forced G/C Douglas to cut his address considerably. The Padre's Service was also curtailed and Ron missed out altogether. G/C. Douglas traced the Squadron's fortunes from its formation at Holme-on-Spalding Moor in September 1941 to its disbandment at Gibraltar in 1945.

Wreath at Shrine of Remembrance. As has been our custom, Flight President Ron Russell, on behalf of members and associates, laid a wreath on the Shrine of Remembrance on Saturday, 15th. September, at the ceremony at the opening of Air Force Week.

Melbourne Cup Sweep. Q-Flight ran its own Sweep again this year. 1st. Prize to T. Fursey; 2nd. Prize to Chas. Richardson; 3rd. Mrs. E. Monson. We made a modest profit, sufficient to offset a loss anticipated on the Christmas Social. A splendid gesture by Bernie Hughes, Bob Dangaard, and Tim McQuaid, all of whom could not return books in time but sent a donation of £1 each. Thanks, boys, from all Q Flight. Bernie Hughes, winner of two of the three prizes in last year's Sweep wrote: "I'll give the boys a chance this time!"

A.T.C. versus Q-Flight. A few stalwarts upheld the honour of Q-Flight when challenged by the A.T.C. Mess at Billiards, Table Tennis and Darts. The winner is still in doubt.

Coming Events. Q-Flight is to be entertained by R.A.A.F., Amberley, on Sunday, November 25th. We've been invited to push buttons, pull levers, and make things tick. Our Christmas Social is set down for December 1st. This is THE social event of the season.

ANZAC ALL-STATES REUNION: SYDNEY; APRIL; 1957.

The N.S.W. Flight announces the following programme for next years All-States Reunion in Sydney.

Wednesday April 24th.	Afternoon-Interstate visitors welcomed. 7.0 p.m. Wreath laid on Cenotaph, Martin Place. 7.30 p.m. Social Gathering (Mixed), Air Force Club-3rd. Floor.
Thursday April 25th.	Dawn Service. Anzac March-Squadron President leading; Anzac All-States Reunion following March-South Sydney Police-Boys Club; For the Ladies, Races or the Theatre; Evening--Private entertainment;
Friday April 26th.	Free Day; 8.0 p.m. Squadron Anzac Dance
Saturday April 27th.	9.30 a.m. Squadron Conference, at 330, George Street; 2.0 p.m. Sight-Seeing Trip Evening-Private entertainment.
Sunday April 28th.	The Anzac Golf Cup-location to be arranged. Barbecue and Picnic.

Accommodation for interstate and country members is being arranged at the Hotel Sydney. Members desiring accommodation should please notify the N.S.W. Secretary at Box 5289, G.P.O., Sydney by January 1st. 1957, accompanying their notification with a deposit of £2. If anyone is arriving earlier than the 24th, will they please let the N.S.W. Secretary know. Members will have a first-class time and the Ladies Committee is planning for the entertainment of Squadron wives during the Reunion Week.

BRITISH BULLETIN.

from

Sid. Thompsett.

First and foremost, all arrangements have now been made for the planting of a Squadron Memorial Tree. Everyone here all agreed that Holme-on-Spalding Moor should be the site and the ceremony will take place on Sunday December 2nd. The type of tree to be planted is an ACACIA, which seems most appropriate. At the present, six or seven of us from the South will be making the trip but we are sending out a circular and hope quite a few more will come.

Our next Reunion will be taking place on November 17th. This will be for wives also.

About two weeks ago, the U.K. Committee got together in London to discuss the question of 458 Squadron Ties. Most of the discussion was carried out in Harry Bishop's office, so you can imagine we did not go short of a few drinks. We agreed that

British Bulletin (cont.)

we should have a plain blue tie with our Squadron Badge hand-embroidered below the knot.

Pete Pettit should be home by now. Ask him to drop me a line.

The Blazer.Pockets are on the way.

It's a cold dreary Sunday afternoon here with a fire as a great comfort;I will now sign off and put my feet up. So,for now,the very best to all 458 ers in Aussie.

PASSING OF OWEN (DARKY) CROMPTON.

At the end of August,after a two year illness very courageously born.

Darky was born at Forbes,N.S.W. where he lived until he was six or seven when he moved to Homebush,Sydney with his people. He was the youngest of a family of seven children. Educated at Fort Street High School,he was noted as a brilliant cricketer and tennis player.

His business interests were in the Wholesale Butchering Trade in which he worked for a time with a brother.

Enlisting in Queensland,where he was at the time managing his Uncle's Ford Showroom,Darky came to 458 Squadron as a Wireless Operator/Air Gunner in Len Thiele's crew.

His brilliant left hand batting and pace right-arm bowling made him at once a mainstay of the Squadron Cricket team. As a youth he played for the N.S.W.Colts Team and he now represented the Air Force.

After the war he returned to Wholesale Butchering. His Mother died two months before he returned home.

We recall his return to activity in post-war 458 Squadron. It was at a cricket match,in Centennial Park,against the Air Force Club. Going in first wicket down,he at once showed us what attacking batsmanship could be,making 98.

After a couple more summers,the Malignant Hypertension,which was to cause his death,attacked him. In spite of his illness he carried on with his job with splendid fortitude until the last weeks.

He is buried at Rockwood. 19 Squadron members attended him there and four,Eric Munkman,Allan Walker,Cy.Irwin and Alf Hammond,were his pall-bearers.

We shall remember him.

To Yvonne Crompton and to the twins,Greg and Patricia,our deep sympathy and the assurance of our friendship.

N.S.W.NOTES-Cornstalks Elbow-Bonding.

from

Allan Walker.

Half-yearly Reunion.

This was held on Friday 26th.October. As with most former Reunions,this was at 330,George Street,but this time it was transferred from the Basement to the Third Floor. Most of the 40 odd members who attended thought this was an improvement. We had a good time,of course.

It was a Reunion notable for several things. Firstly,it was our pleasure to welcome the W.A.President,Len 'Binghi' Stewart,who was in Sydney on business. Welcomed by Eric Munkman on behalf of N.S.W.Members,he said how happy he was to be able to spend some time with his old squadron mates. Secondly,and most regretably,the N.S.W.President,Peter Alexander,was unable to attend owing to illness. Neither could Senior Vice President Sam Barlow come,due to another long-standing and very important engagement. This was the first Reunion we can remember without either Peter or Sam there. We congratulate Junior Vice President Eric Munkman on a very good job done in their absence. We were glad to see Cyril Murray (onetime of the Instrument Section and now with Sydney University) at the Reunion.

A Raffle for a bottle of Scotch was won by Maca and we can remember,at roughly 11.30 p.m.,forbidding him to open it but from that point our reliable memory ceases and subsequent discussions seem to indicate that we were still going strong at 1.0 a.m. Thanks to Buster Balmer and Kemp Beach who tended the Bar for most of the evening and to N.S.W.Treasurer Graeme Coombes who had a heavy evening,having to cope with many Guessing Competition returns in addition to his normal duties.

The Guessing Competition.

The Prize-winners in this year's Melbourne Cup Competition were:

1st Prize (£25)	J.Carroll,45,Holmwood Avenue,Newtown.
2nd Prize (£10)	J.J.Maroney,St.Marys,N.S.W
3rd.Prize (£5)	A.F.Paulet,109,Marie St.,Albury,N.S.W.

Winning tickets were sold by Stuart Ricketts,Norm.Skinner,and Forbes Paulet. Including Consolation prizes, prize-money totalling £52 was distributed. Our thanks to all

N.S.W. Notes (cont.) who took part.

Golf-The President's Cup. This was held in very fine weather at Campbelltown in September. We welcome Alf. "Slappy" Hammond as the new Holder of the Cup. We must sympathise with Frank Hickey who lost by $\frac{1}{2}$ point on a count-back: both players finished with a nett 69. Once again Lefty Chalmers turned in the best stroke round and we must recognise Lefty as our best N.S.W. golfer. The Annual Match with the Armadale Old Boys team was won by the Old Boys. Congratulations to them. Trophy winners were Lefty Chalmers, Jack Miller and Allan Walker for the Squadron and Joe Murphy, Sid Bowen, Bob Custer, and Jim Wendon among the visitors.

Darts Evening. A very enjoyable evening was spent at the Ryde Bowling Club on Friday November 9th. when the Squadron Darts Team again engaged the Club. The Club won by 2 to 1. Congratulations to them and thanks for the Evening. Congratulations to Mrs. Nation who carried off a Poker Machine Jackpot.

Interstate Visitors; and New South Welshman returning.

We enjoyed having Len Stewart, the W.A. President with us, and more recently, to have Johnny Bax here on a short business visit. We endeavoured to fill as many of their waking hours as they had available and hope that both Len and Johnny will have happy memories of their visits. We appreciate Sam Barlow's mighty efforts in upholding our hospitality towards visitors.

Apart from these welcome friends from the other states, we are very glad to have Peter Pettit back with us in Sydney. Pete, who played a very important part in Squadron organisation in N.S.W. after the War, qualified as a Dentist and went to London about six years ago. He practised there and also played an essential part in establishing the U.K. Flight. He married an Adelaide girl while he was in London, and has now brought her and their small daughter to Sydney. He is going to practise as a Dentist at Fays Buildings in Pitt Street, Sydney. Good luck to him.

Christmas, 1956. Sydneysiders of 458 Squadron will gather for the usual Christmas Drink and exchange of good wishes at the Air Force Club at 5.30 p.m. on December 20th.

Cricket. The Annual Cricket match against the R.A.A.F. Station, Richmond has been arranged for February 17th next. Geoff. Burgess, please note.

The Editor--Special note by the N.S.W. Secretary. I feel it my duty to report here (since he almost certainly will not do so himself) that the Editor of the "News", N.S.W. President, and Squadron Secretary, Peter Alexander, has recently been in ill health, and whilst on the road back, is not fully recovered. He has recently had a considerable time away from work as a result, and I am sure I speak for all 458 ers in wishing him a speedy and complete recovery.

NEWS FLASHES.

Jack Bovan writes from Wollongong that he recently visited Jock Philip at Randwick--Jock sends his regards to all;

Bill Honan writes to Sam Barlow from Roma, Queensland "Never see a soul from 458 around here." Bill has a wife and two children and is going on leave between January and May next year. He would like to spend it in Sydney if he could find accommodation.

Harry Baines is coming down from Wallabadah for the Anzac Reunion next year.

"Rinso" Purcill is also coming (from Orange) for the Anzac Reunion. He hopes to bring one or two others with him.

Jack Nichols who is now living in Campbelltown, recently had a spell in Yaralla. We believe him to be O.K. now.

Ross Burgess was recently in Sydney from Newcastle. We were sorry not to see him;

Norm Walker has now come out of hospital after a lengthy stay. All the best to you, Norm.

Gordon Nash is looking for a Flat in Sydney for a week from January 14th--for four adults
Can anyone help?

Bob Coles, fit and well; with Parks and Gardens, Toowoomba City Council. Sends regards to all;

Fred Klockham is now back again in New Guinea--at Daru, W.D., T.P.N.G. and is doing an agricultural survey of the Western portion of Papua. He writes: "Usual domestic worries; wife with fever, both boys with a broken arm and self with shingles. Otherwise life is normal. Give my regards to all the old coppers."

Tim McQuaid and Bob Dangaard send Christmas greetings;

Ron Russell is now lecturing in Sales Management at Brisbane Technical Management. He also works for Ampol;

Jim Plunkett is fit and well. Sends his regards to all;

The Editor thanks members for telephone inquiries and good wishes during his recent ill-health;

Ernie Laning has been awarded the Long Service Medal by the R.A.A.F. He is with the Air Trials Unit, Woomera, S.A.

News Flashes (cont.)

Bill Laughlin is now at Deniliquin in New South Wales;

Jim Wilson has left Broken Hill for Port Pirie

Col Corten and his wife have our congratulations and good wishes on the arrival of their fifth child, a boy (Colin). Col has maintained the girl-boy sequence;

Bill Fordyce has left Flying and has a newspaper business in Melbourne.

Doug Bennett and Thanar have a second son (Graham Stewart). Good work !

YOUR SECRETARIES' ADDRESSES.

Squadron Secretary (Peter Alexander)

Box 5289, G.P.O., Sydney, N.S.W.

N.S.W. Secretary (Allan Walker)

1, Denison Street, Parramatta, N.S.W.

S.A. Secretary (John Ringwood)

290, Beaumont Road, Beaumont, S.A.

Victorian Secretary (Arthur Green)

57, Woodlands Avenue, Pascoe Vale South, Victoria.

Queensland Secretary (Jim Holliday)

43, Stella Street, Holland Park, Brisbane, Q'land.

Western Australian Secretary (Butch Power)

145, Gildercliffe Street, Scarborough, W.A.

United Kingdom Secretary (Sid Thompsett)

16, Brook Lane, Bromley, Kent, England.

CORRESPONDENCE.

From Mrs. Yvonne Crompton, 14, Lennox Street, Homebush, N.S.W.

Dear Peter, Would you kindly pass on my very sincere thanks to the members of the Squadron. I appreciated their presence as that in itself was a tribute to Owen.

Sincerely, Yvonne Crompton.

From Harry (Better Beer) Baines, Wallabadah Hotel, Wallabadah, N.S.W.

Dear Allan, Long time since I have been mixed up with you fellows down there: will have to try and make one of the Reunions or outings. Will be down for Anzac Day anyhow: even if the customers up here have to serve themselves.

Have had Sam Barlow here a couple of times and have had to turn him to work, I would strongly recommend Sam as a competent Bar Tender at any of your outings. Expect him here this coming long week-end on the way to Annidale. Also have been in touch with Bob Male by phone a couple of times and any day now he will be here with me for a few days and he will then be going to Sydney (I may find an excuse to go with him). Bob is doing very well on his sheep property and says he is looking forward to seeing some of the 458 boys.

It is very good to receive the Squadron News; Nita and I both look forward to receiving it and it is certainly doing a marvelous job of keeping the boys in contact with one another.

Wallabadah isn't as bad as the name sounds, it is on the Highway just near Tamworth and any 458er is welcome. Several of the boys have called and we have had a few of "Baines Better Beers".

Regards to all, Sincerely,

Harry Baines.

From Doug Bennett, 32, Butler Street, Deniliquin, N.S.W.

Dear Allan, As you will note I am no longer at Burrinjuck Dam, but was recently transferred down here. It's a hell of a long way from Sydney but not a bad little town. Haven't been here long but ... am going to like it.

You will notice I have met another ex-458er, Bill Laughlin. He was a pilot operating mainly from Malta in 1943. He has been interested in news of the 458 Squadron Association, and I have passed on to him the recent copy of Squadron News.

The family is well. We have recently had an addition, a son, called Graham Stewart.

All the best, yours sincerely,

Doug Bennett.

A 458 SQUADRON TIE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

The Squadron Council has arranged, through Sam Barlow, for the weaving and import of a special Tie material which will be made up into 458 Squadron Ties (long, short and bow). It incorporates the small Winged Torpedo emblem, approved by Squadron Conference, on a dark blue background. Delivery is expected soon and the price will be reasonable. Special arrangements are also being made by the U.K. Flight for a Squadron Tie incorporating an embroidered 458 Badge. These ties are something for members to look forward to with keen and pleasant anticipation. Final announcements soon.

