

# 458 SQUADRON NEWS



THE EDITOR.

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

Vol. 15, No. 59.

May, 1964.

## THE WEST TURNS IT ON.....

The 11th. All-States Reunion of 458 Squadron took place in Perth, Western Australia, over the Anzac weekend of April 23rd to 27th.

Though not as many members from the Eastern States were able to make it this time as came to the first Perth "All-States" in 1958, nevertheless there was a good interstate roll-up to give the events the genuine interstate atmosphere. Support by W.A. members was very good and many Associate members of the W.A. Flight, coming from other R.A.A.F. Squadrons, lent their weight.

Squadron Treasurer Cyril Irwin and Squadron Secretary Bob Bruce arrived first by air from Sydney. Dave Firth, with Glad., arrived by road in their comfortable truck, equipped for sleeping, from Robinvale in Victoria. Harry Dorge with Pat and baby Gregory came by road the approx 3,000 miles from Queensland. Stuart Currington of Peak Hill, N.S.W. and Bill Chapman of Newcastle, N.S.W. made their ways in by air and Squadron President Peter Alexander was the last interstate arrival --by air from Sydney--on Friday night. The arrivals were met by Perth members at the Airport.

Perth gave the Reunion beautiful weather. The interstate members, at least those from N.S.W., found it colder than the weather they had left on the eastern side of the Continent, But it was a crisp cool with bright sunshine, ideal for marching and outdoor events. It continued fine the whole time.

Saturday--Anzac Day. Early, before dawn, 458ers assembled in the dark in Kings Park, near the War Memorial which overlooks Perth. Here in the chill of pre-sunrise, in a simple ceremony heralded by the firing of a gun, ex-service representatives, including the Squadron President and the W.A. President Tim Dale, placed wreaths on the Memorial in memory of their dead.

After breakfast, 458 assembled near St. George's Terrace for the Anzac March. The Squadron was specially honoured by the Air Force Association by being made the leading Squadron in the Air Force section of the March. The Squadron President, followed by the W.A. President and the 458 banner, lead.

In Perth the practice is to halt the March for the Anzac service, prior to the Salute, which was taken by the Governor of W.A. on this occasion. There was an address by the State President of the Returned Servicemens' League, singing by a Girls Choir, and the singing of well-known hymns. After the Service came the March past.

The March successfully accomplished, 458 moved over to the Braille Hall for the Reunion itself. Here members had lunch, drank Swan Draught beer, recorded messages on the Tape brought by Len Stewart, talked and sang in the ways traditional to an Australian Reunion. Members of 460 Squadron and 456 Squadron, many of them 458's Associate members, joined in the Reunion. There was a brief informal ceremony, better described perhaps as a family occasion, when the two Presidents, on behalf of the Squadron and of W.A. Flight, referred to the services to 458 Squadron over many years--wartime and peacetime, of recently retired W.A. Secretary, Butch (Peter) Power. They thanked him for his work for his old mates and wished him a complete and lasting recovery from the ill-health which led to his retirement from the Secretaryship. Butch in his reply to the Presidents' words and acknowledging the W.A. Flight's presentation, said that though

The West Turns it On (cont.)

he was probably known as a tough old so and so, he had never been nearer tears in his life; what he had done for 458 he had enjoyed doing.

Later in the afternoon Butch combined as a pianist with Lock Simpson as a singer in a high-class performance of various Air Force ditties including Lagos Lagoon--which though known and sung throughout the R.A.A.F. and the R.A.F. was a 458 song, composed, in Lagos, by 458er S/Ldr. Jimmy Sargeant.

The Reunion continued until the evening.

Sunday, April 26th.

Sunday, a fine sunny but cool day, was given to a family tour for 458ers down the Swan River to Fremantle. This was a beautiful journey between the winding and generally high banks of the Swan, now lightly built-up most of the way, to the famous port of Fremantle with its new Silo and new bridges abuilding. Returning, the Squadron paused for some hours for a barbecue. Here after lunch the Children had races and the Stewart Cup was run off. This is a footrace for Squadron members, unhandicapped, of approximately 100 yards. This year's very popular winner was W.A. Flight member, Bill Clues, who is the custodian of this handsome trophy for the ensuing year.

The boat proceeded on and in fact went some way up the Canning River, a tributary of the Swan. On board the Darts Trophy (the Dick-the Tick Trophy) was fought out, on rather sudden-death rules. It was actually commenced on land during the barbecue, but time required its completion on the water. Ben Cormack won this one and has our congratulations.

Monday April 27th.

During the morning a small party of members played golf at Wembley for the Anzac Cup: Geoff. Burgess, Lock Simpson, Cy. Irwin, Bob Bruce, Harry Dorge, and Peter Alexander. The winner was again a Sandgroper (by adoption) in Lock Simpson--who was runner-up last time the Cup was played for in Perth. After lunch Squadron Councillors assembled for the Squadron Conference at the Kurrajong Hall. In the evening the same site was the gay scene of the Squadron Ball. The Conference is reported elsewhere in the issue. The Dance was well attended and well enjoyed. Members danced, talked, sang, had a superbly ample supper--and emptied the Anzac Cup many times. Auld Lang Syne at the end of the Ball, brought the official end of the 11th All-States Reunion. However, several interstate members went northwards to Geraldton to see Al and Joy Wheat who live there and who thus had a longer 458 Reunion! That's another story!

Members generally agreed that the success and the expert organisation of the events of the 11th Reunion reflected the energy and interest of the lively W.A. Flight. This Flight has 458 keenly at heart and with that is able to attract the support of some valued Associate members. In this it resembles the Q. Flight. The Flight plans a continuing series of 458 Squadron events for members and their families and friends. To W.A. President Tim Dale and Poss his wife, as official Host and hostess, to newly elected W.A. Secretary Charley Geddes, who, with his wife and family contributed so much to the success of every event, 458's congratulations and thanks!

Those attending various events were the following:

T. Dale	Sid Baker	Geoff. Burgess	R. Chessell	Bill Clues	Chas. Davis	R. Gannaway
C. Geddes	H. Henry	Stan Hopewell	G. Jones	Ted Jewell	Bill Kelliher	Stan Long
S. Currington		Ken McLeod	Jim Palmer	A. Power	L. Simpson	Len Stewart
Ben Cormack	Ray Turley	Al. Wheat	Bill Chapman	Bob Bruce	Cy. Irwin	P. Alexander
Ted. Wheeler,		Harry Dorge	Dave Firth.			

Q. FLIGHT NEWS

from Jim Holliday, 43, Stella St. Holland Park, Brisbane, Q.

My deepest regrets to all, particularly to members of Q. Flight, for missing the News in the last issue. I wrote it but posted it two or three weeks late. Life has been rather complicated of late. Time doesn't seem to mean a thing any more. Our previous report (the one that was late) was mainly about the Xmas Social and Xmas spirit...

(EDITOR: Here follows the report that was late)..... In addition to his win in the Perth Consultation, which delighted Q. Flight, another honour has been bestowed on Jack Lewis. He has been promoted to be Chief Instructor in Wool and Wool Classing to the Education Dept., Queensland State Government. Jack has been and is and always will be an enthusiastic and indefatigable worker for the Squadron. He's been Flight Treasurer without a break, and much of the organisation for Q. Flight Socials falls on Jack.

After the Xmas/New Year holidays, all of Q. Flight who have been sighted

Q.Flight News (cont.)

Have returned to their place of toil, brown fit and well. The holiday break was very necessary to enable those who attended the Christmas Social to regain good health. This last social was slightly better than all others. All our socials have been smash hits but this transcended their heights. The only marring factor was that the band was a bit "off". It seemed to suffer from guitar trouble. The beau of the Ball was baby Dorge, brought all the way from Toowoomba by proud parents Pat and Harry. "Bouncing" is the adjective that fits.

Wife of Associate member, Merv McClurg, won the Ladies Hair-dryer.

A surprise visit to Brisbane was made by Stan Parker from Ayr.

He looks very fit and well. Stan has things organised so that he can get around a little now; often sees Erle Hetherington in Cairns. Stan brought greetings from Alf. Peake of Ayr.

(EDITOR: Here we continue Jim's latest report.).....This report is about Anzac in Brisbane and the gallant small band (9 in number) that marched behind the Banner, carried by Bernie McLoughlin with Lew Johnston striding ahead. Somehow or other we picked up about 50 to 60 waifs and strays making our contingent a rather formidable force. Whatever it was we imparted to our odds and sods, we copped the loudest claps and the most spontaneous cheers. We even got on T.V.!

After the march (Water Street being denied us) we adjourned to a spare house that Chas. Warren has on his garage and business premises, taking with us beer and vittles. Our members increased, either by multiplication or rapid reproduction, from 9 to 29. It was a neat, tidy, party; very businesslike when it came to drinking. Amusement was confined to tale-telling, led by that master raconteur, Bernie McLoughlin. A most successful "remembrance" that one would wish to remember.

Our next party is the winter Social at Water Street, on Saturday 6th.

June. Whacko!

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HISTORIC AIR FORCE ANNIVERSARY TO BE CELEBRATED IN SYDNEY.

1964 is the 50th. Anniversary of Military Flying by Australians in Australia. In August, 1914, a small band of four young Australians commenced flying training in Duperdussin aircraft at Point Cook. Two of the four are still alive in the persons of Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams, Federal President of the Air Force Association and Mr. D.T. Manwell of Sydney. The other two were Sir Thomas White, High Commissioner in London at the end of his career, and Lt. Merz who was killed in the first World War.

Sir Richard Williams will also celebrate, in August 1964, fifty years of continuing service in Aviation. After service in the first War, in the Middle East, he became first Chief of Staff, R.A.A.F., holding this appointment for 17 years. After service overseas in the Second War (he was responsible for the formation of the Empire Air Training Scheme Squadrons in Britain, including 458 Squadron), he became Director-General of Civil Aviation in Australia, holding this job for 8 years.

The Anniversary is being celebrated, on a Federal level, by a Dinner in Sydney on August 14th, at the Oceanic Hotel, Coogee at 7.30 for 8. p.m. Tickets £3-3-0 each (men only). The Dinner is being organised by a committee of three, of who two are 458 Squadron members Graeme Coombes and Peter Alexander.

Among those who have accepted invitations to the Dinner--and the list is an impressive one--are Sir Eric Woodward, who will be Administrator of the Commonwealth in August; the Minister for Defence and Civil Aviation (Senator Paltridge); the Minister for Air (Mr. David Fairbairn, M.P.); the Chief of Air Staff (Air Marshal Sir Valston Hancock); the Secretary, Department of Air (Mr. Macfarlane); the Director-General of Civil Aviation (Mr. Anderson); the Chief of Naval Staff (Vice Admiral Sir Hastings Harrington); the Chief of the General Staff (Lt/General Sir John Wilton); and National and State Executive officers of the R.S.L. (Air Vice Marshal Bladin, Mr. Keys, Mr. Yeo and Mr. Osmond); Air Marshals Sir George Jones and Sir John McCauley.

The organisers are anxious that as many as possible who served in the Air Force or with Civil Aviation should be at the dinner. They would be delighted to see as many 458ers and their friends there as possible.

Applications (with the necessary remittance please) to the Federal Secretary, Air Force Association, Box 83 P.O., King Street, Sydney, N.S.W.

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PERSONALITY PARS.

JIM MUNDAY asks 458ers to note that he is not now to be found in Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, but has moved to new premises at North Melbourne;

Personality Pars. (cont.)

BILL KELLIHER is now senior Divisional Engineer with the Western Australian Main Roads Dept. He has a girl of 14 and a boy of 12;

BEN CORMACK works in Refrigeration in W.A.. He has recently travelled through Malaysia to Hong Kong. Is doing a lot of travelling;

KEN McLEOD works with the P.M.G. Engineering branch in Perth. Asks to be remembered to Fred. Strom and Dicky Bird;

BILLY CLUES the winner of the Stewart Cup works with the Perth P.O. Mail branch;

RAY TURLEY has been with the Sunday Times for 10 years. Is travelling East this Xmas;

CHARLIE GEDDES has been working with the Commonwealth Survey Section in Perth. The new Flight Secretary is anxious to boost the Flight's Associate membership

JIM PALMER is farming in Kojonup---in sheep, cattle and grain. Has 1,126 acres;

GEOFF. BURGESS is Accountant with Marshall Motors in Katanning, W.A. He and Gwen have four children;

CHARLIE DAVIS is a foreman with W.A. Railways, at Midland Junction. Plays Pennant bowls;

TIM DALE is with W. Inglis in Perth. Sends wishes to "all the gang";

ALLAN SLARKS has been on a visit to Sydney from Shepparton, Victoria. Is considering a move to Sydney, with his wife and two children. Wants to be remembered to

Frank Mahoney, Bert Smith, and members of the Electrical Section;

We are pleased to introduce some members of other Squadrons in W.A. who have, in some cases as Associate members, proved themselves friends of 458.

ROD PERRY ex 460 Squadron at Brighton. Sends his remembrances to F. Hayman, H. Trane;

BEV. DAVIS and DAVE LOFTS of 456 Squadron. Sends remembrances to Jack Benning;

TED (Shorty) ELLIS who is with Jayworth Mercury as Production Manager, is an Associate on the W.A. Committee and a much valued worker. Is from 456;

JACK RISELEY ILL. The Squadron Conference heard with concern in Perth of the illness of Jack Riseley now living in Adelaide. The diagnosis is understood to be a Brain tumour. Jack is however improving and is reported to be home from hospital.

ANZAC DAY IN SYDNEY: N.S.W. Notes

from

Cy. Irwin, 17, Vincent St.,  
Canterbury, N.S.W.

The Squadron laid a wreath on the Cenotaph, on the evening before Anzac Day. Members and their friends assembled for the simple ceremony and afterwards adjourned to the Air Force Club. In the morning, squadron members assembled in Macquarie Street and in due course marched behind the Banner. They were led by N.S.W. Vice President Stuart Ricketts. After the March there was a Reunion at the Great Southern Hotel, George Street where about 40 members attended for lunch, beer and talk. There was some discussion of matters of Squadron business during the Reunion. Members suggested the holding a 458 Dinner during the year.

Some of the boys travelled quite a distance to swap yarns with old squadron friends. The rollcall was:

Fred. Copley Cec. Nation Jim Broad Tom Moore Bob Osborne Goldie Bartlett Curly Hosking  
Bill McBride Red-Jack Baker Norm Peachey Sam Barlow Stan Longhurst Kemp Beach  
Fred Strom Noel Spurling Eric Munkman Arnold Ashton Stuart Ricketts Bob Lyndon  
wal Archbold Alan Macmaster Doug Bennett Jack Aitken Bert Thompson Bill Turier  
Jack Bevan Henry Bryant Don Bitmead Bob Millar Black-Jack Baker Joe Pratt Dick Cook  
Bluey Lamond Jock McGowen.

At the All-States Reunion. Five N.S.W. Flight members attended this year's All-States Reunion in Perth--they were Peter Alexander, Bob Bruce, Bill Chapman, Stuart Currington and Cyril Irwin. Could I convey to the W.A. Flight through this issue of the News the thanks of the N.S.W. Flight for the hospitality and the general arrangements at the All-States Reunion.

Annual Meeting. Bob Bruce was re-elected Flight President at the Flight's recent Annual Meeting. Kemp Beach and Stuart Ricketts were made Vice-Presidents, and Cyril Irwin re-elected as Secretary. Don Bitmead has indicated that he may be forced into action as N.S.W. Treasurer in place of Tom Moore who is retiring. A committee of 12 was elected to assist the main office-bearers.

The Polish Ball. The Polish branch of the Air Force Association in Sydney recently celebrated the fifteenth anniversary of its formation. It held a Ball at the Grace Auditorium at which about 300 dancers had an excellent evening. Kemp Beach, Peter Alexander and I attended from 458, on the 16th. May.

A.F.A. Annual Assembly at Orange. This year's Assembly is at the beautiful country city of Orange. Graeme Coombes and Cyril Irwin will be 458's delegates and Junior Hawke and Rinso Purcill have been asked to be alternate delegates. They both live in Orange. Peter Alexander will be there as a State Vice President of the A.F.A.

Anzac Day in Sydney (cont.)

Sam's Move. Squadron members will be interested to hear that Sam and Maisie Barlow have moved into a new home in Pymble, Sydney. Sydney members will reckon that life will not seem the same without "Sam's Place" at Campsie. Sam has been very busy business-wise lately. He now has shops in Springwood and Penrith as well as Sydney. All of us will wish Sam and Maisie well in their new home.

Award for Bill Doman. A number of aircrews during the war in Europe were given a difficult and dangerous operation over Denmark. This was to bomb and destroy the individual buildings in Copenhagen, Odense and Aarhus which contained the Gestapo records for Denmark. To avoid injury to Danes and their property, the crews flew at rooftop level and had to achieve pinpoint accuracy. The attack was successful but there were losses. Among those lost were two Australian Flying Officers, named Palmer and Dawson.

After the war, the Danish people contributed funds in memory of those who died. A bursary, awarded alternately in Victoria and N.S.W., exists in memory of Palmer and Dawson. This year it has been awarded to Bill Doman, son of 458 member Ernie Doman, who died in 1962. The award goes to sons of former R.A.A.F. Aircrew.

The award is worth £40. Bill Doman is in his fifth year at St. John's College, Lakemba, Sydney. Congratulations to Bill!

Coming Events. The planned programme in N.S.W. is:

Squadron Picnic July 28th;  
Air Force Ball September 11th  
President's Cup Golf -Tuggerah October 18th;  
Country Reunion at Wollongong November

Members will be circularised.

SQUADRON CONFERENCE IN PERTH. The 11th Squadron Conference was opened by the Squadron President (Peter Alexander) in Perth at the Kurrajong Hall on April 27th. He said that being Squadron President, an office from which he now retired, was one of the great honours which could come a man's way during his life. He had felt it that way. No other Squadron had all the things 458 had achieved--interstate Reunions, a Flight in each mainland State and the U.K., a newspaper, a tie, car and lapel badges, frequent social and sporting events. For the future members had to hold fast to 458. New members could be posted to 458, as associates, but it had to remain 458. There should also be co-operation with other ex-airmen but members would forgive him if he thought that this co-operation should wherever possible be through the Air Force Association.

Conference received reports from the Squadron officers and from each Flight and adopted the annual accounts. There was some discussion, initiated by Victoria, on the cost of supplying the News to unfinancial members.

The U.K. Flight asked Conference to contribute to the East Grinstead (Plastic Surgery) Hospital through the Peanut Club and this was agreed and recommended to the Flights. Conference decided to approve a new Squadron tie, this however to retain the Winged torpedo emblem. The Squadron officers were instructed to proceed with this project. Conference again supported the interchange of visits interstate for children of Squadron members.

Queensland again raised the controversial issue of the frequency of All-States Reunions. After considerable debate, Conference noted that existing decisions allowed for Conferences at intervals of not more than two years: this allowing them, if desired, to be more frequently; and defeated a motion that they be held annually. However next All-States Reunion was approved for Brisbane in April 1965.

Elections, held next resulted in the choice of

Squadron President	Chas. Warren (Brisbane);
Vice Presidents	Peter Alexander (Sydney);
	Len Stewart (Perth);
Treasurer	Cyril Irwin (Sydney);
Secretary	Bob Bruce (Sydney);
Auditor	Bert Thompson (Sydney).

After thanking W.A. Flight for arranging the Conference, and the retiring President for his chairmanship, Conference adjourned, till 1965.

CORRESPONDENCE: Letters to the Editor.

From G/Capt. R.J. Mellor, D.S.O., D.F.C. R.A.F. (ret'd), Ulverstone, Tasmania.

Dear Mr. Alexander, An ex-R.A.A.F. friend of mine suggested I should write to you regarding 458 Squadron with which I served in England. I joined it on formation in

Correspondence (cont.)

in 1941 and as far as I remember I was the only R.A.F. pilot. I stayed with them until December 1941, when I was moved to the command of an R.A.F. Squadron. Looking through my log book I see the names Mulholland, Johnston, Lloyd, Moran, Peters, Howlett and Hickey. There would be a lot more. I would be grateful if you could give me news of my own crew... I went 'steady' in the air with Moran, Lloyd, Peters, and Howlett and Anderson (N.Z.)

Yours sincerely, R.J. Mellor.

From Basil (Sailor) Wheatley, 9, Adams Street, South Yarra, Victoria.

Dear Sec., herewith my cheque for subscription 1964+5; although I don't take a very active part in 458 activities, I like to know that the old squadron is still battling on. I occasionally run into squadron members in various parts of the country--the most recent being Bill Bailey--he was unfortunately on his way to Heidelberg Hospital then, having been unfit for some time. I have been trading to N.Z. all last year and am a little out of touch with local events: this year I look like running up to the NW with explosives for the new scheme at Ord River--so I'll have a variation of climate.

So, wishing all success in the future to yourself and other 458ers,

I am, yours faithfully,  
Sailor Wheatley.

From Jimmy Whitem, C.S.I.R.O., Private Bag No. 1, Parkville, Victoria.

Dear Peter, The recent issue of Squadron News has stimulated me to drop you a line with our latest news, as it involves, I imagine, a change of "flight".

In brief, the Whittem's have moved from Alice Springs to Melbourne, and are still undergoing the process of acclimatization. The move was not made without some second thoughts for we were ever very happy in the N.T., and purely in response to the stimulus of personal and professional ambition.

I am now officer-in-charge of the C.S.I.R.O. Division of Animal Health Laboratory in Victoria, where I continue my interest and activity in many matters of Animal disease which interested me in the Territory, and have a number of extra ones into the bargain.

In the process of moving and settling down again, there has been almost a crew reunion, for we called upon Ray MacDougall in Maryborough and have seen Ron Yates and Bill Wilkinson since our arrival. In case others wish to find us out of working hours the Melbourne address is, 52, Fernhill Road, Sandringham, Vic (98 7462).

I guess this letter will serve to introduce or re-introduce us to the Victorian Flight.

Kind regards, Jim Whitem.

From Les Cook, Midland Bank House, Pateley Bridge, Harrogate, Yorkshire, England.

Dear Peter, Every year, in the New Year, I decide I must send my greetings and best wishes next Christmas---and I usually remember again a few days after the deadline for Xmas mail. May I therefore be the first one to send you and all my old friends the heartiest greetings for the next Christmas and my very best wishes for 1965!

I must say I still get a great deal of pleasure when I read the Squadron News although my memories are fading a little with the years. Unfortunately I have not attended a reunion since we planted the tree at Holme-on-Spalding Moor. I should dearly love to see the Photographs which I gather are now in a collection of some sort. I do have a few of my own snapshots taken at Alghero, Foggia and Gibraltar which I look at on occasions to try to put a face to a name I see in the News.

As for myself I have very little to report. It is now just over four years since I came here as Second Officer at the Midland Bank. I did not expect to stay here so long but due to unforeseen circumstances I am still here. I ought not to grumble as this part of the world suits me and family (wife, Margaret, and two boys--Nigel 12, and Robin, 8). I am hoping that I shall be on the move in a few months time.

Now a question. On page 230 of We Find and Destroy you mention the nominal roll not being included in the book but that lists of names would be published and made available to us. Are the lists of addresses now being published in the News intended to be a substitute for the Nominal Rolls? Although I agree that it is an excellent idea to have these addresses I should dearly like some list of names giving--in order of my preference--details of Trade, dates of Squadron service, and rank. Of course, it may be quite impossible to obtain these details--but they would fill what in my mind is a gap in the Squadron history.

I am now going to drop a line to Harry Wise who is still in Cyprus--at the Base from which the British families are to be evacuated according to to-days papers.

Kindest regards to all my old Squadron comrades,

Most sincerely, Les Cook (ex-Compass basher)

Editor: The best I can say about the Nominal Roll is that it is not forgotten.

From Forbes Paulet, Glengarry West, Victoria.

Dear Sir, Thank you for the Squadron News which I received this week readdressed from my



Correspondence (cont.)

previous place of employment in Albury. For the past 2½ years I have been residing in Victoria.....

Gordon Guthbertson called on me prior to last Christmas---good to see him and meet his wife. Regards to 458ers.

yours faithfully, Forbes Paulet.

From Mrs. Vera Etherton, Sixth Street, Wonthella, W.A.

Dear Sam, ..... Hope everyone over there is on top. I am afraid Henry is some way from it.... We have another son now (after a ten year spell) but of course we all think he is beaut. We are getting swamped out here this year, so unusual for here. A lot of farmers won't get a lot of crop in because they are getting bogged. Henry is still with Massey Ferguson, he is manager of the Spare Parts Div. and he likes it. Been there about 7 years now. Well, cheerio for now and regards from us both.

Vera Etherton.

JOURNEY TO GERALDTON.

At the end of the events of the official All-States Reunion in Perth I drove north from Perth with Al. Wheat who was taking a new Ford truck up for sale in Geraldton where his company Radio Motors are the Ford agents. Joy was driving the family Ford home and the two cars travelled the 316 miles in convoy--- though the convoy covered a large area of road for part of the journey. It was my first trip north of Perth. The road follows the coast but out of sight of the sea through rather level sandy country. For me it had all the interest and excitement of new country.

Geraldton is an attractive town of about 13,000 people with two interesting Cathedrals and a port that has been built around wheat and crayfishing. I had a couple of fine days to look around, under Al's guidance, and to meet the local 458ers.

The Catholic Cathedral is an attractive basilican style building while the Anglican is a very new edifice in a modern style built by a local construction firm and with some remarkable stained glass with impressionist representations of the church festivals and symbols.

Immense deposits of iron ore have been found inland in W.A. and Geraldton is to be the port of exit. This has led to the building of new berths and to a need to deepen the harbour. Hard rock has, I gathered, been reached and there is talk of using controlled atomic explosions to do the deepening. The locals do not seem to be worried about this (personally I should be) but one doubts if in fact it will happen.

Geraldton has a beach, afflicted with weed when I saw it, but I have the impression that the Indian Ocean doesn't do as much for swimmers in the form of beaches as the Pacific does. One thing Geraldton does better than anywhere else in the continent and that is crayfish: on my sampling the best in the world.

Reg. Willis, who is the A.M.P. representative in the area, and doing well; and Henry Etherton, are the other 458 residents and I had some beers with them both --- I must say the chance to see these two and Al. and meet their families was a thing I shall value in memory always. There was another totally unexpected and very great pleasure. Nobby (K.L. Nobbs) arrived in town, with his wife, in his superbly equipped caravan. I was on the way to the airport to return to Perth but spent a memorable 20 minutes renewing a friendship interrupted since 458 left Gibraltar in 1945. There is a bit more of Nobby (and a bit less hair) but really very little change. He does a fair amount of travelling on business.

And so back to Perth. Dave Firth and Harry Dorge arrived with their wives a bit later to continue the 458 gathering in Geraldton. My thanks indeed (and I am sure that of the other interstate 458ers) to Al and Joy Wheat for their hospitality and genuine kindness, --- P.C.A.

NEW AIR FORCE BOWLS CLUB IN ROCKDALE.

458ers in Sydney, particularly in the St. George area should note the opening of a new bowls and social club for which A.F.A. membership confers eligibility. Several greens and most modern facilities are being built and now is the time to join while the list is open. Applications to the Secretary, P.O. Box 21, Kogarah, N.S.W.

AL AIRBORNE---WITH NAVIGATOR.

We are indebted to Bob Lyndon for an extract from the Geraldton Guardian which we reproduce with pleasure. We are sure many another 458er will feel a touch of envy.

"Over 20 years ago the co-pilot of a Wellington bomber in the Middle East was Alwyn Wheat and the navigator was Ken Brown. Last Thursday

Al Airborne (cont.)

Afternoon the pilot of a Cessna which flew into Geraldton was Mr. Alwyn Wheat and the Navigator was Mr. Ken Brown.

Mr. Wheat was in home territory but Mr. Brown now lives in Numurkah, a town on the Victorian side of the Murray River and he was paying his first visit to this State.

The pair were members of a crew of six who flew with 458 Squadron, R.A.A.F. in the Middle East and "elsewhere" during World War II. All are still alive and regularly plan to hold a joint reunion and fly a plane together again. However one lives in Brisbane, two in Sydney, one in Numurkah, one in Adelaide and the other in Geraldton so it is a difficult task.

Last year four of them hired an aircraft and got airborne.

Last week Mr. Wheat was in Sydney at a Ford dealers Conference and while there arranged to ferry back to Perth a Cessna 172 for Rex Aviation, the distributors in this State. He rang Mr. Brown and invited him to join the Flight and spend a day or two in Geraldton. Mr. Brown jumped at the opportunity. Leaving Sydney at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Mr. Wheat flew to Tocumwal, a N.S.W. town about 50 miles from Numurkah where he picked up Mr. Brown and they flew that night to Mildura.

On Wednesday they travelled to Kalgoorlie via Whyalla and Ceduna and last Thursday morning they arrived at Perth. There they transferred to a Royal Aero Club Cessna and came on to Geraldton. Flying time from Sydney to Geraldton--from one side of Australia to the other-- was five minutes less than 22 hours. Their longest day was that between Mildura and Kalgoorlie when they were airborne for 11 hours 20 minutes."

Good luck to the Drinnan crew ! That will be quite a get together !

We recall that some years ago, before Jack MacDonald's death, the Harris crew used to get five members together in Sydney--though not airborne (physically anyway !)

EDITORIAL: Everyone on 458 Squadron will wish to congratulate Charlie Warren on his election by the Perth Squadron Conference to 458's most senior office; that of Squadron President. No one more popular: no one whom the Squadron would be better pleased to honour! We welcome him and wish him a happy term of office.

THE EDITOR (.Peter Alexander) Box 5289, G.P.O., Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.