

CIRCULAR

458 SQUADRON NEWS



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EDITOR OF 458 SQUADRON NEWS: Peter Alexander.

DEATH OF BRUCE McKENZIE. AIRCRAFT EXPLODES RETURNING FROM UGANDA.

458 Squadron members around the World were horrified, and immensely bereaved, when the news reached them, on Thursday May 26th, of the violent death of their third C.O., and 9th. Squadron President, Bruce McKenzie. Accompanied by two business associates, and a pilot, he was returning from business discussions in Kampala, capital of Uganda. He was understood to have had discussions with President Idi Amin Dada of Uganda. The Piper Aztec 23, twin engine, was approaching Wilson Airport nearing dusk, when the plane exploded violently in the air, about four miles from Ngong township. The plane's tail dropped about half a mile from the rest of the aircraft, the pilot, Paul Lennox's body was near the tail. The other bodies were found near the rest of the wreckage. There have been allegations that there was a strong smell of cordite near the wreckage, and the Kenyan Government has sent a firm request to Uganda for an investigation, at Entebbe, into the possibility that a bomb was placed in the aircraft there.

President Kenyatta of Kenya, whose close associate Bruce was for many years, said "I have learned with deep sorrow of the untimely death of my good friend, Bruce Roy McKenzie. My association with Bruce goes back to many years, to before independence. He was among the very first Kenyan Europeans to have identified himself with the 'African peoples' struggle for independence.... His contribution to the agricultural industry of this country not only in his capacity as the Minister for Agriculture but as a farmer will never be forgotten. Bruce will be greatly missed by all who knew him..."

Other Kenyan Ministers joined in the tributes.

Bruce was born in Durban in 1919. He came to 458 as a Major at Malta and soon found himself, as a S.A.A.F. L/Colonel, commanding an Australian Squadron--458. It is a matter of knowledge to everyone who served with him and to all 458ers that he proved an immensely capable and driving leader and also a very popular one, combining high efficiency with disregard of "red tape". The local Group Captain christened 458 Squadron "McKenzie's Air Force"--and Alan Atherton immediately put up a sign along the roadside directing visitors to that Air Force. His time on the Squadron is described in detail in the Squadron History. After leaving 458, Bruce

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR BRUCE McKENZIE.

458 Squadron members and families are invited to attend a Memorial Service for Bruce McKenzie at 3 p.m. on SUNDAY JULY 9th at the Air Force Memorial Church, 11, Moore Avenue, West Lindfield, Sydney. Celebrants will include the Very Rev. Fred McKay (one of our (R.A.A.F. Chaplains in Bruce's time with 458), and Bishop Neville Langford-Smith, lately Bishop of Nakuru, Kenya, and hopefully, Father Johnny McNamara from Melbourne.

MEMORIAL SERVICE (cont.)

Bishop Bob Davies, the third R.A.A.F. Chaplain, will be overseas at the time but has asked Fred McKay and Johnny McNamara to represent him. Members of the Kenya-Australia Society will also attend.

The SQUADRON COUNCIL hopes all Squadron members who can will be present. It is understood that Judge Bernie McLoughlin will attend, to represent Q.Flight.

DEATH OF BRUCE McKENZIE (Cont. from Page 1)

commanded a S.A.A.F. Squadron and before the War ended reached, the Editor believes, the rank of Brigadier. After the war he moved to Kenya, bought a Stud Farm at Nakuru, became Minister for Agriculture both under the Colony and during the Republic. His was the difficult job of managing the redistribution of land to the landless African population. This he did with success and equity. He also with great energy succeeded in obtaining much overseas capital for Kenyan development -- which enabled Kenya to be the prosperous and peaceful country it is. His powers of leadership and acceptability, shown on 458, were thus used to the benefit of East Africa. His work was of course on a much wider and major field than just Agriculture. Among other things he was a Director of East African Airways and Kenyan Airways, being largely responsible for their successes. He left politics in 1970 for health reasons but remained extremely influential, seeing the President at least weekly, and being employed on many important and sensitive matters.

458 Squadron saw him twice in Australia (as well as in the U.K.). The most recent occasion being last year at the All-States Reunion at Marcoola. Those there will always recall his address to the Anzac Day Parade at Caloundra, on the high ground overlooking the blue and sunny waters of the Pacific, during which he told us how fortunate we were to be able to meet together in peace to remember the Fallen.

458 has sent its deepest sympathy to his wife, Christina and his family and hopes to remain in touch with them. Bruce was a great man.

CORNSTALK COMMENTARY.

from Arthur Jollow, 40, Nicholson St., Chatswood, 2067.

What a tragedy that a man of Bruce's qualities should apparently have died at the hands of a cowardly murderer, skulking behind a bomb! All who knew him and those Squadron members who only knew him by his reputation will be shocked and deeply saddened by his death, as I am. We will never forget him. To Christina and to members of his family our hearts go out to you at this unhappy time. We mourn with you.

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Anzac Day in Sydney.

I was absent from Sydney on Anzac Day but know that the March and following Reunion went well and were well attended. The Federal President of the Air Force Association, Air Vice Marshal Bill Townsend, commanded this year's Sydney Anzac March and chose Graeme Coombes (A.F.A. Federal Treasurer) and Peter Alexander (Federal Secretary) to march with him at the head of the March.

At the Annual Meeting, Eric Munkman was re-elected as Flight President, and the present committee and office-bearers re-elected together with Jack Baker (who rejoins the Committee) and Don Bitmead. We welcome them. I spent Anzac Day at Tangalooma, the old whaling station on Moreton Island, off Brisbane. The fishing was excellent.

I have received a letter from Cec Percy. He and his brother own Twin Bridge Motors at Frankston Road, Dandenong, Victoria so any of you travelling through that lovely area may like to call in and say Hello. Thanks for the letter, Cec, and we hope you have solved your problem by now.

North Queensland Reunion.

Quite a few N.S.W. members have just attended the North Queensland Reunion of 458, at Cairns. They have included Eric and Dorothy Munkman, Fred Strom, Stan and Jean Longhurst, Jack Baker and I believe, Bill Chapman, living the life of ease these days. They had, by report, an excellent time, meeting with many old friends, including Jack Daw, Erle Hetherington, George Reid, Bob Dangaard. They joined in the social side of the Queensland A.F.A. State Reunion. Pleasure was marred by news of Bruce's death. The A.F.A.

members joined 458ers in remembering Bruce in silence.

Ethnic Dinners continue.

A substantial and cheerful party of 458ers and family/friends ate an excellent Italian dinner at the Italo-Australian Club on April 19th. The next such Dinner will, by a pleasant change, be at the home of Graeme and Dulcie Coombes, where we shall eat Scandinavian food. Will those interested in these dinners contact Eric Munkman or Peter Alexander, please.

Passing of Dick Watson.

On another sad note, we have heard of the passing of 458 pilot, Dick (D.O.W.) Watson. Dick in the postwar years worked for a long time in Djakarta, in the Insurance business. He returned to retire in Sydney a few years ago. He was very well known and regarded on the Squadron. He and his crew were the participants in a memorable ditching south of Corsica--which is recalled on Pages 125/6 of the Squadron History. We mourn his passing and send our sympathy to his kin.

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Q.FLIGHT NEWS

from Jim. Holliday, 43, Stella St., Holland Park, 4121, Q.

It may have been a "Mini" Reunion at Cairns but it provided maximum delight for those who travelled those thousands of miles to Cairns. From the reports that have flooded in (a leaking leg prevented yours truly from attending) the programme was most capably organised by Erle Hetherington (458's only Cairns resident now) ably assisted by Bob. Dangaard of Mareeba for the Tablelands trip, with help also from the few others in the district. Some of the highlights were the train trip up the mountains and continuing on by bus to Bob Dangaard's lunch at Mareeba; Erle Hetherington's amazing 'pin-pointing' of big clams and unique coral formations in the glass-bottomed boat he skippered on the Green Island trip; and the 'al fresco' barbeque lunch on the trip to Port Douglas. Unfortunately the tragic death of Bruce McKenzie dampened Saturday and when announced by Pres. Eric Munkman at the combined A.F.A.-458 Dinner Dance those present stood to honour him with the tribute of a Minute's Silence.

Those who rallied at Cairns comprised: Dorothy and Eric Munkman, Clive Wyman, Joan and Don. Brandon, Hilda and Frank Wilks, Jack Baker and his son David, Jess and Bob. Helyar, Jean and Stan. Longhurst, Fred. Strom and Mrs. L. McGlynn, Bill Chapman, Mary and Bob. Scholes, Enid and Dud. Mackay, June and Ken. Brown, Bev and Erle Hetherington, Elizabeth and John Rosenberg, Bernie Hughes, Bob. and Mrs. Dangaard, Jack and Mrs. Dew. Apart from the Hollidays those who had for urgent and personal reasons to abandon plans to attend included the Jim Mackays, the Lewes, the Garlands, Chas. Warren and Alan Atherton.

Anzac Day was again well observed though the ranks of marchers were thinner. But the numbers at the Reunion were up to strength. The traditional poker game was again the highlight with those who were fortunate not to 'sit in' aiding, abetting, and generally misleading the more unfortunate players. Clive Wyman, after several years of Presidency, insisted that another should have that honour. Bert Garland was unanimously elected; yours truly was again firmly saddled with the secretaryship and treasurer'ship despite trying to buck it off. There must have been something significant about the venue for this year's Reunion. Thanks to Donny Brandon it was held at the premises of the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. Naturally and perhaps as a protective measure, a substantial donation was forwarded.

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CROWEATERS SAY..... from Geoff. Esau, 24, Fowlers Rd., Glen Osmond, 5064, S.A.

Service at West Beach

On Sunday April 2nd, 458 was represented at the Service at West Beach Airport--various R.A.A.F. Squadrons have commemorative trees and plaques adjacent to the Smith Memorial Hangar where is housed the biplane in which Sir Ross and Sir Keith Smith and crew flew to Australia from the U.K. in 1919--a scant 16 years after the start of powered flight. Attending were; Ron. Badger, whose effort is mainly responsible for the concept, Syd Bartram, Bruce Thomas, Jack Riseley, Kevin Tait, Ted and Mrs Creighton, and Bill and Madge Taylor.

Occasion at Edinburgh.

On Sunday April 16th a party of 20 ex R.A.A.F. were guests of 24 (City of Adelaide) Squadron and its C.O., S/Ldr Cox, at R.A.A.F. Base, Edinburgh., and were shown over the Base and an Orion flown by 10 Squadron and 11 Squadron. These aircraft are most impressive and carry very sophisticated equipment, but I would miss my four little Brownings down the backend! Perhaps at 560 m.p.h. you don't need them.

Croweaters Say.....(cont.)

The very apparent keenness of our hosts was quite reassuring.

Anzac Day started with the Dawn Service (for some) at the War Memorial on North Terrace in cold wet conditions. A service was held at West Beach Airport at 9.30, attended by some hundreds of ex-Air Force members and families. The weather improved for the March at 10.30 and Bill Taylor, Mel. Priest, Ted. Creighton, John Carey, Bill Cribb, Brian Woodhead, Arn. Scholar, Eric Baker, Syd. Bartram, Ted. Oliver, Reg. Priest, Jack Riseley, Bert Ravenscroft, John McGlasson, Ken. Robertson, Bruce Thomas, Charlie Cunningham and myself carried the banner for the boys. At the brief meeting prior to the March Jack Riseley was elected as President, John Carey as Secretary, Bruce Thomas remaining Treasurer and myself as News-Correspondent. Bruce Thomas produced a Balance Sheet shewing a nett surplus, thanks to some very generous donations. But payment from unfinancial members would be very much appreciated.

Personal Pars.

We heard with profound regret of the death of Bruce McKenzie in Africa. To hear any Squadron member who served under him, he stands out as the epitome of all that was best in leadership. Bill Taylor reports having a letter from his navigator, Tom Phillis in the Phillipines; he recently retired as Headmaster after teaching career and is heading slowly towards Europe and the U.K. living where possible with people of the countries en route rather than at Hotels. Sounds fascinating if one has a flair for languages. In May Bill and Madge Taylor left (in a little more luxury) for the same destination to catch up with their son and family in London. They expect to return in November. I understand John Ringwood is off overseas too.

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FROM THE SANDGROPPERS. from Bill Clues, 179, Kooyong Road, Rivervale, W.A.

Not a great deal to report. Ted Jewell has asked me to fill in as he has not been too well. Nothing really serious, but there has been a bit of virus around.

Anzac Day reunion went off well--the weather was just like summer. The lunch table was well stocked, and many thanks to the ladies who manage this chore for us each year. Most important, the beer was nicely chilled. Those present were: Tim. and Poss Dale, Ron and Alice Gannaway, Tom and Phil. Foster, Ray and Marge Turley, Ted and Elsie Jewell, Henry and Vera Etherton, Gordon and Olga Jones, Peter McCarthy, Bob. Ellis, Stan. Long, Ted. Ellis;--my apologies if I've missed anyone.

We have the list of those members who receive the News in W.A. Firstly, let me say I am in full agreement with Peter Alexander who states that once a person was posted to 458 he should always be regarded as a member. But when I read the mailing list I see we have 59 members. I then take a look at our list of financial members for 1978. These total 15. This means 25% are carrying the other 75%. What about it, chaps? How about kicking in towards the News occasionally? Our subs have not increased since we were formed in W.A.--still \$2--and News costs are \$4 per annum. Common business principles indicate that if this state of affairs continues too long, we shall all be in the hands of the Receivers and no one will receive the News.

Vale Bruce McKenzie.

With the sudden passing of Bruce McKenzie 458 has lost a respected and outstanding member, a man who has left his mark on world affairs. To have known him and been associated with him has been an honour indeed. We in W.A. extend to his wife Christina and family our heartfelt sympathy at this time.

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VICTORIAN VIEWS.

from Ken. Morkham, 19, Terang Ave, Burwood East, 3151.

Anzac Day. 23 members gathered for the March and Reunion on a cool dull day: we expected a larger turn out but were very pleased to see the old stayers plus a few we hadn't seen for some time. We were very pleased to welcome Harry Godfrey. Harry flew with Phil. Mather. We were also pleased to have Walter Sullivan from Sydney. Squadron members may remember Leo Taylor. His niece and nephew Jenny and Philip, came down from Hopetown to see the March and spoke to us afterwards. Jenny would like a copy of the Squadron History. Harry (Matron) Jenkins has been ill for some time, has had an operation, but is on the mend. Harry, like other stayers managed to come to the March. We wish him well.

Victorian Views (cont.)

The Reunion. We expected the ladies to turn up in full force at the Reunion but we were disappointed. Very pleased to have the company of Dot.Fleming and Nell Ashworth. Squadron members missed Harry Ashworth and Ian Alison at the March, but --guess where they were? They were at the Melbourne Bowling Club preparing the Reunion meal (a real feast). Nell supplied the mushrooms for the steaks. We thank them all. Squadron members thank the Bowling Club for the use of their premises and facilities for the Reunion.

Annual Meeting. This was held as usual on Anzac Day. Stan.Tarczynski was elected President, Ian Alison-Senior Vice President; John Fleming-junior Vice President; Ken.Morkham was re-elected Hon.Sec/Treasurer; Committee-H.Ashworth, Col.Hutchinson, Ern.Laming, Harold Martin, John (Roger) Rodwell.

Personal Pars. Ern.and Jean Laming are on a trip to the U.K. Ken and Beat.Morkham are busy preparing for their trip overseas. Beat went to Sydney to visit her daughter Dal and Family. Ken.batched for a week and reckoned the house was as quiet as a church. Jean and John Rodwell have settled in their new home at Cheltenham and are happy and well.

Vic.458 Ladies Auxiliary. The Ladies held a meeting at Joan and Ron.Russell's home. The menfold joined them for supper afterwards. They all thank Joan and Ron for their hospitality.

Vale Bruce McKenzie. All Squadron members note with regret the recent tragic death of Bruce McKenzie whom we all knew and respected. We offer our condolences to his family.

Addresses. Vic members--please let your Flight Secretary know your new address, if changed. If we are to keep in touch with members, this is essential. Once again, we appeal to Vic.Flight members who have not paid their subs (\$3 sub--\$2 newsletter) Please help us with the newsletter at least. Kindest regards.

Note. We have been advised since receiving this news from Ken that he has had a family tragedy--his daughter Lorna being knocked down by a car while a pedestrian and not surviving her injuries. 458's most sincere sympathy.

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BRITISH BULLETIN. from Sid.Thompsett, 49, Amblecott Road, Grove Park, London, U.K.

Our Reunion this year was deferred when we heard that Ernie Laming was coming to England; also I had been in touch with Bruce McKenzie's Secretary to see if we could get him along too--to our delight we found that May 6th WAS a convenient date (this is the first time in recent years Bruce has been able to get to a London Reunion). As the Pathfinder Club is no longer able to provide evening meals, we managed to book a private room at the Piccadilly Hotel.

Bruce McKenzie and his wife, Christina, also Ern.Laming, his wife and cousin were our guests. The following members also attended: Harry and Ethel Bishop, Mick Mason and a friend, Norm and Glynn Gilbert and a friend, Charlie and Joyce Humbles, Hugh Hamlet (the first time for quite a number of years), myself and my wife, Violet, and last but not least George Edmonds, and this was his first time to any reunion since leaving the Squadron. Quite a few regulars were absent this year for one reason or another but send their greetings to all Down Under. We all enjoyed a very splendid evening but alas the time came to leave too soon.

Bruce. Last Thursday, 25th.May, I had reason to phone Bruce McKenzie's secretary. Christina answered to tell me the tragic news about Bruce. I can tell you it made me feel quite sick as I am sure it has done to all his friends. I expressed our condolences but I find words very hard to come by in cases like this. I would like to quote comments from Chapman Pincher in the London Daily Express: "Bruce McKenzie, the white Kenyan, killed mysteriously after visiting General Amin, "was the most remarkable man I have ever met. He was a high level politician, "Ambassador Extraordinary, Intelligence Agent, Agricultural Expert, Successful "business man, authority on big game, military adviser arms dealer and outstanding "pilot."

To close, may I once again express deep regret at the sad loss of a quite remarkable man. Only time will tell as to how much this loss will mean to all of us that knew him.

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In the course of going to press, we have been advised of the death following a car accident in the Newcastle area of 458 Squadron member Frank Mullane. Frank flew with Merv. Hargraves as a Gunner. In postwar years he became a well-known figure in the Newcastle area, being a noted racing driver as well as a popular figure in the horse racing sport. He had a Building business. He died following a head-on car collision in his car with a young driver who, we understand, faces a drink/drive charge. Frank was a loyal 458er who, among other occasions, played cricket with the Squadron team. We send our sympathy to his family and we shall miss Frank.

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From Peter Eastcott, 531, Homewood Ave, Peterborough Ontario, Canada, K9H 2N4

Somehow since your last trip out here we have completely lost touch. I hear from Ron Eggers that you have been ill but hope you are fit again. Please drop me a card with your latest address so we of your loyal crew may drop you a line.

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We have been asked, through the R.A.A.F., to supply background on Bruce's service with the R.A.A.F.