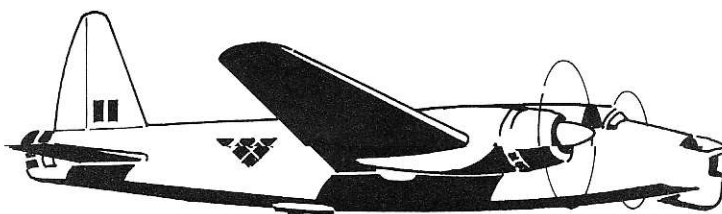


# 458

## SQUADRON NEWS



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### 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL OFFICE - BEARERS.

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#### WHO'S FOR THE TWIN TOWNS ?

With this issue of the News comes a brochure about the next ALL-STATES REUNION of 458 Squadron. This will be the 23rd in the series and another one of those magnificent occasions that 458 Squadron---and very few other organisations---can offer its members and their families. A gathering with old friends of over 40 years in wonderful surroundings all organised for them. Not to attend these Reunions is to miss one of the richest privileges that can come in a lifetime.

We urge members to read, fill in and return the brochure registration form promptly.

We shall see you in Ooolangatta/Tweed Heads, the famous Twin Towns.

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#### APOLOGIES ---and GREETINGS.

We regret the rather late arrival of this issue in members' hands, which results from the Editor's absence overseas and associated matters. But-----even a bit late, WARMEST CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR GREETINGS TO ALL MEMBERS, THEIR FAMILIES, AND ALL OTHER READERS, from the Squadron Council.

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#### VICTORIAN VIEWS

from Stan. Tarczynski

Our first Committee meeting since the Annual in May was held at our B.B.Q. on Melbourne Cup Day.

Since the passing of Don. Johnson I have to report two further bereavements in Kev. Quiney (address unknown as per D.L.O.) and George Cowan. I comment on these below.

Melbourne Cup. The Cup has been run and won. Vic. Flight members and wives attended the usual B.B.Q. at Joan and Ron. Russell's place in West Doncaster on this day. Proceedings began before the first race at 11.40 a.m. when numbered tokens equal to the number of horses in the field were selected

Victorian Views (cont.)

blindly at a cost of 20c. each. The "Tote" paid out on 1, 2, and 3. With a bit of time on our hands we were able to run several sweeps including two bigger ones on the Melbourne Cup. It is well known that Jack Fleming, our President, is a lucky fellow when it comes to raffles or sweeps. He had two firsts, two seconds, and then won the raffle for the cake made by the Ladies Auxiliary. This was the fifth time he has won the raffle for the cake. Not only that, but his wife Dot won a first sweepstake. The two bigger ones on the Melbourne Cup were won by Bill Hurford and Elaine Timms.

The gathering was well attended by ---our hosts, Joan and Ron Russell, son-in-law, daughter and grandchildren, Andrew and Georgina (they won a first and second), Kath and Harold Martin, Beat and Ken Morkham, Betty and David Evans, Dot and Jack Fleming, Col. Hutchinson, Ern Laming, Jean Anderson, Mavis and Mick Singe (Mavis is recovering from a third hip operation), Bill Hurford, Elaine Timms, June and George de Tarczyński, and yours truly.

Farewell. On a sad note we have to report the passing of Kev. Guiney and George Cowan. Ern Laming and Tom Primrose attended George's funeral and used the Squadron banner. From Sydney we learned that Bob Pollock also passed away since the last Newsletter.

Finance. In the last issue we made mention about unfinancial members. We have had a response, so please keep it coming to Bill Hurford, Hon. Treasurer, 1/9, St. Johns Avenue, Frankston, Vict., 3199.

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CORNSTALK COMMENTARY

BY Don Bitmead.

Vale. Linda Dean. It was a shock to be advised that Linda had died suddenly, in October. Linda with Bruce was a regular attender at our 458 functions. She will be sadly missed as she was always so cheerful and enjoyed life.

Len Dawes. We received a letter from Len's wife to say he had passed away in August after being in poor health for many years. To the families of Linda and Len, we do extend our sympathies.

Hospitalisation. Both Dorothy Munkman and Bob Millar have had several trips to the Eye Hospital to undergo surgery and we are pleased to learn that the operations were successful.

Melbourne Cup. We are very pleased and thank members for their co-operation in the sale of tickets. Profits from the sweep help in keeping our Flight afloat. Those successful in drawing a horse were advised by 'phone prior to the race. The winners were (1) Dorothy Munkman (2) Bob Lyndon, (3) Enid Miller. To the unsuccessful we recommend you (and me) to try again next year.

Ethnic Night. We were very pleased to have 40 members, wives and friends attend a night out at the Athena Restaurant in Crows Nest on 17th September. This was another enjoyable outing.

Christmas Night. As the Air Force Club where we have met for many years has suspended trading (it lost its premises) we held our Xmas dinner at the York Hotel in King Street. 50 attended for a good evening.

Committee meetings. Since many of us are retired and find it easier to attend meetings during the day it was decided during November that our future meetings be held at 1.30 p.m. in the Combined Services R.S.L. Club, 5 Barrack Street, Sydney.

Air Force Association. Would members please note that the AFA has moved its State office to Suite 608, 149 Castlereagh Street (G.U.O.O.F Bldg). The 'phone number remains 267 2722.

Best wishes. To all members for Xmas and 1985.

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CHANGES FOR THE AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION.

Recognising clearly the need for younger members if the Association with its 64 years history is to survive (and these can only come from serving and recently served airmen and women), the AFA is concentrating on enrolling them. Various changes to attract the younger people have been made. These have included a change of short title (not name - which remains the old Australian Flying Corps and Royal Australian Air Force Association) from Air Force Association to R.A.A.F. Association. This change crystallised some opposition, particularly, as it happened, in Queensland. A proposal was carried by a small majority of the State Council to wind up the Association in Queensland, despite a visit by Federal Vice President Barry Brooke and Federal Secretary Peter Alexander to endeavour to reach a compromise. Subsequently the Federal Council disbanded the Queensland State Council and appointed a small Committee headed by the State President Warren Agnew to run the Division until a State Assembly can be called.

458ers in Queensland are asked by AFA Federal officers Graeme Coombes and Peter Alexander to support Warren Agnew in this difficult situation. His address is 86, Boundary Road, Indooroopilly, 4068---tel. 378 3237.

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Sandgroppers Say.....

from Ted.Jewell.

There is very little news at the moment here in the West but as usual at this time of the year things are pretty hectic with dinners and social functions a regular occasion---including a function held by W.A.Flight last week on the 4th December at a motel in Perth. It was our usual Christmas function for members and wives. We had a good roll up with about 35 people who thoroughly enjoyed themselves, with plenty of food and drinks. As our guests we had Wally and Dora Archbold who were able to be with us as they were over in the West on holidays, staying with Dora's sister. It is great to see any members who happen to be over this way.

And Next.... Our next **function** for W.A.Flight will be down at our place at Mandurah---for a B.B.Q. lunch on **Sunday 3rd February 1985**. Quite a few members drive down from Perth for the day, and it is a great day.

Personal Pars. I have been told that "Shorty" Long has been in hospital with heart trouble but is pretty well again. All the best, Shorty. Bill and Joan Clues are back in the West again after their travels in the Eastern States visiting daughter Vicki and son Gary. I wonder how long it will be before they are off again. Jim and Lucy Palmer were up from the farm and came to the Xmas function, both looking well. Henry and Vera Etherton are just back from holidays, including some time sight-seeing in Tasmania. I received a card from Al.Wheat recently who said he had had a great time on his trip to England recently. Curly O'Connor called in a few days ago with a bag of fish. Said he is moving back to Perth to live.

We have lost contact with a good many 458ers over the years, for various reasons, but I am sure they would enjoy themselves at the functions we have from time to time. So, come along to the B.B.Q. on 3rd February, meet a few old mates and have a beer or two.

I have to catch the mail so I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of all members of W.A.Flight-----to wish everyone a very merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

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CROWEATERS CAUCUS.

from Geoff.Esau.

I note having stated in the August Squadron News that S.A.Flight had gone into recess for the winter. Well, it's been a long cold winter because we're still in recess!

I had the pleasure of meeting former bowling clubmate Jack Riseley in November. He changed bowling clubs when moving into the new house he and Verna built. He is looking very well but, sad to relate, his eyesight is minimal. He mentioned having been elected to the committee of the S.A. branch of the Royal Society for the Blind, and he finds it interesting being involved. I am sure Jack has the admiration of all his friends for his unfailing good humour.

Bill Taylor had a respiratory problem during a Sydney to Melbourne flight recently and was rushed to hospital on landing. Happily he was allowed out and returned home to Adelaide within a few days, singing the praises of Melbourne Hospital Casualty section. In happier circumstances some weeks earlier Bill enjoyed dining with Jack and Enid Dowling, both of whom he thought looked very well.

I heard with regret of the passing of Colin Draysey, I believe in June or July, and extend sympathy to Barbara on behalf of Squadron members.

Another casualty was Ron.Badger, who died in October. His dedication to the A.F.A. and various clubs was reflected in their representation at his funeral. It is remembered that Betty died in January. To their children our sincere sympathy.

I heard that Johnny Bax has been in hospital with a heart condition. Heart conditions start at about 16 years of age and it appears that many recur at any age! I hope this one is mended now, Johnny,---and look after yourself.

To Squadron members and their families wherever, best wishes for a safe, happy Christmas and prosperous New Year from S.A.Flight and its scribe. Geoff.Esau.

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Q.FLIGHT NEWS.

from Jim.Holliday.

The focus of interest in Queensland is, of course, the Interstate Reunion. Attention is drawn to the yellow sheet with this Newsletter. The overall theme is socialising. A relaxed "No hurry" programme with ample opportunities to natter. But, hurry those registration forms back. While May 31st is the deadline, early response aids planning.

Q.Flight News(cont.)

Vale. Bernie McLoughlin advises that Kevin Byrne, close friend and Squadron mate, died on 21st. September. Kevin joined 458 at Pictville to commence his second tour. A W.A.C. and Fl. Lieutenant, he was Gunnery Officer at Alghero. He owned a popular giftware/jewellery store at Brisbane's main centre, retiring to Coolumb three years ago. To his widow our deepest sympathy. Condolences also to Norm (Shorty) Taylor on the untimely death of his wife, Dorothy, a tireless worker for charity.

Christmas. On Sunday 9th December, we had one of our most enjoyable Brisbane Xmas barbeques. Again hosted by Joyce and Jim McKay, the gathering included Peg and Gordon Cuthbertson, Jack Baxter (Kitty was in Sydney), from the Gold Coast; Charlotte and Chester Jones from Mt. Beppo, Joan and Sel. Foote, Helen and Bernie McLoughlin, Evelyn and Prs. Jack Lewis, Kath. and Eric Kelly, Chas. Warren, Norm. Taylor with daughter Amanda, and Peg and Jim. Holliday. Apologies from the Brandons (business) and Wymans (wedding). The surprise guests were June and John (Junior) Davies with son and daughter-in-law, from South Australia. We missed Moyra and Tony Stone, the bubbling Tony currently undergoing surgery for his back injury.

Canada. Joe Elliott attended the recent R.A.F. Reunion at Winnipeg, Canada, expressly to meet crew member Jim. Donaldson. Met also two other Canadians of 458 Brian Quinlan and Micky Reid. Squadron Vice President Col. Fereday was there too.

Melbourne Cup. Our Melbourne Cup Sweep again brought newsy letters from the four corners of the State. Alan (Snowy) Atherton, now in Real Estate, fishes between deals. Only returning from their retirement tour of Australia, Sheila and Jack Hobbs are now re-located at 82, Riverview Drive, Burrum Heads. Doors wide open for 458ers. Keith Austin, when recently in Adelaide, met Jack Riseley and Bert Ravenscroft. Theo Ravenscroft, tracing family tree, declares that Bert and he are cousins. Family crest, lion, 3 black ravens, black chevron with motto "God feeds the Ravens"! George Read recovered from a heart attack, lost 58 lbs. Sneaks an occasional cigarette, still fishes and is still active with the R.S.L. at Tully. Frank Wilks, retired at last. Incidentally, the Sweep winner was Mabel Campbell, just returned with Keith from overseas; second, Joyce, widow of T. McQuaid; third, Don. Brandon.

Don't forget the yellow page. Read, and rush your registration form back.

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WHEAT IN A WIMPY.

From Al. Wheat.

Our visit to Hendon was a great success as you will gather from the following. Bob. Smith and Dorothy accompanied Joy and myself to the Museum on the 19th July and we were made most welcome by my contact Jackson Dymond (Squadron Leader-- Fighter type, retired). He in turn introduced us to Group Captain Bill Randle an ex-Wimpy pilot who demonstrated the long-forgotten art of climbing into the Wimpy without a ladder. (Bob and I used the ladder as there was no obvious way we could follow Bill's demonstration.) However we eventually made it as did the ladies who would no doubt be the first 458 ladies to inspect our wartime working cockpit. Unfortunately there is a lot of the interior gone AWL; but the basics are still there. Bob and I spent about 2 hours fossicking about in the old timer which is a Mk.10--a training aircraft that did not become engaged in operations. However, she is beautiful.

For two guys who flew together all those years ago to "crew up" again for the short time we were in the aircraft, there really is no explanation for the nostalgia experienced as it has to be experienced to be appreciated.

We took up stations in the pilots' seat and at the radio respectively, me wearing my old ops flying helmet and silk scarf, and posed for our photographs. Bob making out that he knew all about the radio facing him. At length I admitted that I couldn't remember what all those "levers and things" were within reach of the pilot's seat but it was two weeks later that Bob admitted---"You know I couldn't remember how to turn "the bloody radio on." But in our defence, it was 39 years ago when we were required to, and did, know what it was all about. We took a lot of photos and now the task faces me to select those for the Album collection, enlargements, etc. The job will take quite some time but I hope to have the final product available for the next All-States Reunion. We plan to present a series of photos to the W.A. Air Force Museum in due course---there is no great rush as the project was commenced many years ago.

The main spar is still in the middle and we each had difficulty in climbing over and/or through it. How we managed to do that in full flying kit I don't know, and as for

Wheat's Wimpy (cont.)

feeling our way to the rear turret in rough weather---I just don't know either---it certainly was hazardous enough recently.

As arranged, Group Captain Bill Randle, who is the C.O. of Hendon, met us for the official hand-over of a cheque for \$200 donation to the Museum Appeal to be used expressly for the preservation of the Wellington. The donation, incidentally, consisted of \$50 each from W.A., S.A., N.S.W., and Squadron Council. I did receive a letter from Q. but unfortunately the follow-up with a cheque I had hoped for did not arrive. I still hold \$5 from Vic which I received after I got home but I can hardly send \$5 to U.K., can I? Perhaps, individual 458ers would like to assist with the Museum Appeal (for the preservation of the Wellington, as far as we are concerned)---if so, would they please send cheques to me (Al. Wheat, P.O. Box 160, Geraldton, W.A., 6530) and I shall pass the amounts on to Hendon. Bill Randle was very sincere in his acknowledging comments and I am positive it wasn't so much the amount of the donation but the fact that 458 Sqdn. (R.A.A.F.) Association bothered. They were really impressed with our participation. Bill Randle has given us a large portrait (for 458) of Marshal of the R.A.F. "Butch" Harris. As 458 doesn't have a Squadron Mess and as the whole project is a W.A. Flight idea, instigated by yours truly I intend eventually to hand the photograph to the W.A. Air Force Museum with a set of Wellington shots---and, of course the compliments of 458 Squadron. Following the officialdom we were adjourned to the Mess where we partook of several types of pommie ale.

I would go back to Hendon to-morrow....

The next night we were entertained by U.K. Flight---Sid. Thompson, Harry Bishop, Norman Duke, Leon Armstrong, and their ladies. The venue was one of the pubs owned by Harry Bishop's company. We had a great time, with the publican and his wife becoming involved..... It was a great time. All the abovementioned boys send their regards.

Joy and I made our way up to Inverness where I was stationed before being posted to Palestine....

We visited Holme-on-Spalding Moor..... Frank Robertson has stated (News No.138) that the new owners of Holme have agreed to preserve the Squadron Tree and Plaque but there is presently displayed at the entrance a great sign stating "Holme Industrial Estate---Land and Buildings for sale or rent. Demolition is taking place and things are drastically changing at HOSM. Buildings being demolished and the run-way being chewed up and spat out by a great metal monster.

I was so concerned that I 'phoned Sid Thompson and Norman Duke who will follow up---but I have a feeling that the days are numbered.

Incidentally I enclose a "Notice" that seemed to fall off the Notice Board as I walked by. No I did not cliftie it---our driver did. He thought it should go back to Australia.

....I can't remember when I last wrote a nine page letter---which has taken me two days---(unless I wanted something) but I hope it is of interest to most if not all 458ers. It has been a pleasure to pass on a record of our enjoyment of the atmosphere of those good old days..... Regards to all

Al. Wheat and Joy.

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CORRESPONDENCE: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

From Justin McCann, 17, Shelley Avenue, Down Park, Tavistock, Devon, PL19 9AR, England.

Dear Peter, As a member of the U.K. Flight I would much like to have a copy of the Squadron History entitled "We Find and Destroy"

Once upon a time, long before I became a member, I was the proud owner of the book but unfortunately, having had it borrowed several times, it has a long time gone missing. I wrote to the Australian High Commission in London in 1982 to see if they could advise me how to get a copy..... they had no trace of the publication in their library and suggested I write to the Australian Publishers Association in Sydney..... this I did, but never had a reply.

Now, lo and behold, I notice from 458 Squadron News No.139 that copies are still available..... I enclose the amount involved.....

I served as a member of the Squadron initially as a co-pilot in Malta and North Africa from May to September 1943 and then as a 1st pilot in N. Africa and Italy from January 1944 to January 1945. My crew were: W.O. Pete Campbell, co-pilot; F. Off. Lofty Chalmers, Navigator; F. Off. Bert Sleight W.Op.; F. Sgt Harry Bishop W.Op./Radar; W.O. Bill Carr W.Op./Radar; W.O. Sorenson W.Op./Radar.

Should you be in touch please convey kindest wishes,

yours sincerely, Justin M. McCann Sqdn Ldr A.F.C., R.A.F. (Ret'd)

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Correspondence (cont).

Editor's Note:: Squadron Council wrote to all known Canadian 458ers seeking comments on the best location for the International Reunion planned for Canada in 1986. So far we have had four replies---all pointing to Vancouver as the best site. For space reasons we print here one of the replies as representative.

From Mick Reid, 1539 Glenwatson Drive, Mississauga, Ontario, L5E 2W1, Canada.

Dear Peter, please excuse the delay in my response to your request re time and location of a proposed Squadron Reunion in Canada. Good news, Peter. Do hope that such a decision will be reached. Be assured, God willing, I would attend.

I would recommend Vancouver, B.C. as my first choice site. Anytime in June, July, or August. Vancouver, our third largest city, offers the **natural** beauty of sea and nearby mountains and also provides the colour of a great seaport community with excellent convention facilities. It would afford "touring" Australians easy access to Northern Canada via B.C.'s coastal cruise vessels and excellent scenic roads through the Rockies for those who want to journey to B.C.'s rugged hinterland or to the well-known resorts, Harrison Hot Springs, Banff, and Jasper, or perhaps hop over the border into similar terrain in the U.S.....

To-day I talked to Ernie Henwood, a former 458 Radar Technician who enjoyed many a bridge session with you and Tony Mauro et al while with the Squadron in Italy. Please note his correct address 9, Haldon Avenue, Toronto Ontario, M4C 4P5. There are another three Canadian names, Peter, which may be added to your list--Alan Ruggles, Vic (Bill) Munro, Jerry Landry-----Ron Verity may have their addresses.

.....Kind regards, Mick Reid.

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BRITISH BULLETIN

from Sid. Thompsett.

It is with great delight I am able to report a very happy Reunion. Al. Wheat and myself have been corresponding over the past few months with regard to his visit to U.K. and Europe and on July 20th not only did Joy and Al. Wheat come along but also Bob and Dot. Smith. It was arranged for us to meet at the Aristocrat, a very nice London Pub just off Baker Street. Leon and Doreen Armstrong, Norman and Joyce Duke, Harry and Ethel Bishop,, also myself and my wife, Violet, made up the UK contingent. As you can imagine, an absolutely memorable evening transpired. The previous day Al, Joy, Bob, and Dot had been to Hendon actually to see and to get inside and to take many photographs of the only known Wimpy in the UK. We were all thrilled to talk about the Wimpy and refer to photographs as well. As the Aristocrat is one of Harry Bishop's firms Pubs we were well cared for, including a very nice buffet supper later in the evening. Time absolutely flew by before we all had to say cheerio again. Absentees were remembered but the most disappointed was Mick Mason who had flown out the previous Monday to Yugoslavia. Bill Waite and Eric Phillips would have loved to have been there but considered the distance just too far for a few hours.

It seems that Leon Armstrong is enjoying life to the full now that he has retired. He is off to Canada and the USA very shortly. Norman Duke is starting to wind down to his retirement in the near future, but Harry and myself have a couple of years or so to go before we can put our feet up.

When Eric Munkman asked me to forward a copy of the last edition to a Colin Balmain I didn't realise he was an ex-458er (Robbie McKays's crew, W.Op/Asv.C) until I received a letter from him, so we have found one of our **lost** members.

Al. Wheat telephoned a couple of nights ago to say cheerio before he departed for home. All the best,

Sid.

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YES, WE HAVE A NEW MASTHEAD. Thanks to our ever-helpful Squadron artist, Tom Moore we have a sharp new masthead for the News, after 35 years. Tom commented that the old letterhead was losing definition. He has taken the opportunity to shed the war clouds, U.boat and warlike look of the old design and give us a more peaceful appearance.

So, 458 and its Wellington fly on, over a calm evening skyline, towards whatever peaceful landing may lie ahead.

Thanks, Tom.

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ONCE AGAIN---A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL---SEE YOU IN THE TWIN TOWNS!