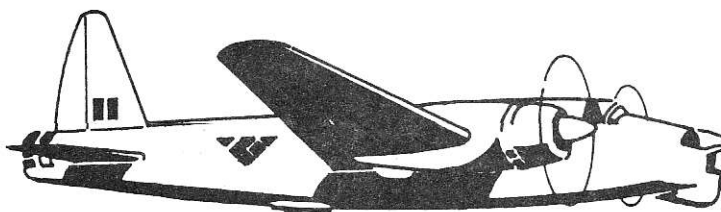


458

SQUADRON NEWS



JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL: G.P.O. Box 5289, SYDNEY, N.S.W. AUSTRALIA.

Year 37, No. 146.

May, 1986.

Registered by Australia Post----Publication No. NAS 6056.

4 5 8 S Q U A D R O N C O U N C I L O F F I C E - B E A R E R S .

Squadron President: Col. Fereday (A.C.T.); Squadron Vice Presidents:

Squadron Treasurer: Peter Alexander (NSW) Ted. Jewell (W.A.)

Ron. Russell (Vic)

Squadron Secretary: Graeme Coombes (N.S.W.)

Squadron Hon. Auditor: Bert Thompson (N.S.W.): Editor: Peter Alexander.

Flight Correspondents.

N.S.W. Cy. Irwin, 3/23, Cecil Street, Ashfield, 2131, N.S.W.,

Queensland Jim. Holliday, 43, Stella Street, Holland Park, 4121, Queensland,

Western Australia Ted. Jewell, 61, Wyaree Road, Mandurah, 6210, W.A. .

South Australia Geoff. Esau, 24, Fowlers Road, Glen Osmond, 5064, S.A.

Victoria Stan. Tarczynski, 36, Winmalee Drive, Glen Waverley, 3150, Vic.,

U.K. Sid. Thompsett, 49, Amblecote Road, Grove Park, SE12 9TN, England.

LAST LISTING FOR CANADA. The 4th. International Reunion of 458 Squadron.

The Reunion Party is booked to leave Australia on July 17th. The Organising Committee--Col. Fereday, Stan Longhurst, Jack Baker and Don. Bitmead has worked hard on arrangements--in conjunction with the Travel Agent (Vic. Williams of Veterans Travel, 215 Clarence Street, Sydney). In Canada, Bryan Quinlan has worked with Canadian 458ers. The latest List of the party supplied from the Committee is:--

Wal and Mrs. Archbold	Sid and Pat Bartram	Don and Bev. Bitmead
Mrs. M. Dickson	Col. Fereday	John and Mrs. Hamilton
Ted. Kennedy	Ern. Laming	Peter and Mrs. Leonard
Yank and Kath Martin	Mrs. McGlynn	Bob and Pat Millar
Stan and Jean Longhurst	Fred. Strom	Bob and Mrs. Miller.

We hope most of the Canadian 458ers will join in and there is a chance that Sandy Yeomans (Bruce McKenzie's daughter) will join at Calgary.

PASSING OF FATHER JOHNNY MACNAMARA.

458 Squadron members, particularly those who served with the Squadron in the Middle East, will hear with great sorrow of the death in Melbourne of Father MacNamara, one of the three R.A.A.F. Chaplains who looked after the R.A.A.F. Squadrons in that area. He had not been well for some years, having had a number of heart attacks. After the war years he returned to Parish duty in the inner city suburbs of Melbourne where he was a most successful priest. He had a reputation for being very plain-spoken. Like his brethren Chaplains he retained a keen interest and involvement with the people of the war years and their families, in all the M.E. Squadrons. After retirement he lived in Kew and wrote or visited his R.A.A.F. men whenever possible. He attended a 458 Squadron Conference in Melbourne. He wrote an appendix to the Squadron history. He officiated at Bruce McKenzie's Memorial Service at the (Anglican) Air Force Memorial Church in Sydney.

We shall miss and we shall remember him.

*** *** ***

CORNSTALK COMMENTARY

From Cy.Irwin.

The main report for this issue of Squadron News is of the Anzac Day March and reunion for N.S.W. members. A fine and enjoyably sunny day for an attendance of about 30 to march behind the Squadron Banner, led by President Eric Munkman. After the March members adjourned to the Great Southern Hotel for a Reunion lunch and Annual General Meeting. It was pleasing to note an increased attendance of out-of-town members, mainly from Newcastle and Wollongong areas.

The Roll Call. Those present: Bill Chapman, Noel Spurling, Jack Bevan Stan. Longhurst, Don. Bitmead, Bob. Smith, Bob Lyndon Jack Baker Arnold Ashton, Bill Fiddes, Jock McGowan, Lofty Bracker, Merv. Hargraves, Harry Baines, Sam. Barlow, Peter Alexander, Graeme Coombes, Stuart Ricketts, Wal. Mobbs, Bob. Millar, Wal. Archbold, Peter Fennell, Jack Aitken, Eric Munkman, Cy. Irwin, Bert. Thompson, Red Jack Baker, Dick Healey and Bruce Dean.

After lunch the Annual Meeting was conducted. Eric Munkman outlined the past year's activities and commented on the pleasure of having Don. Bitmead and Bruce Dean back in the fold after accident and illness prior to last year's reunion. He also mentioned Alan Piggott's re-admission to Concord Hospital. Stan. Longhurst and Bert. Thompson reported on the year's accounts and the elections followed. A notable addition to the Committee (which was largely re-elected) was Lofty Bracker. Members were asked to keep in mind the need for early planning for the 1987 All-States Reunion to be hosted by N.S.W. Flight.

Church Service at Gladesville.

Closely following Anzac Day, a party of Squadron members and wives attended an Anzac Memorial Service at Gladesville Uniting Church on Sunday April 27th. Fred. McKay, one of our Middle East padres, conducted the Service. Members were very pleased to meet with him again, and his wife, Meg. After the Service, Iris and Stuart Ricketts (who had been the wreath placer in the Service) were good enough to entertain some of those attending at a luncheon in their nearby home. Our thanks to them.

Annual Assembly of R.A.A.F. Association.

The N.S.W. Division of the R.A.A.F.A. is to be held in Orange on the weekend of 14-15th. June. Our Squadron branch will be represented by delegates Eric Munkman and Stan. Longhurst, and by Peter Alexander.

All for now. We send our best wishes to members in other States.

*** *** *** *** ***

BRITISH BULLETIN

From Sid.Thompsett

On the 26th April '86, a very enjoyable evening was held at the Royal Air Force Club in London and the following attended: Leon and Doreen Armstrong, Norman and Joyce Duke, Mick Mason and Amalia, Chico and Peggy Mercer, Peter and Eileen Leonard, Norman Gilbert, Harry Bishop, Eric Phillips, Sid and Violet Thompsett, and Harry and Nance Filley. It was the first time we had seen Harry Filley for about 25 years. It was so nice for Harry and Norman Duke to meet up as they flew together. Lots of old times were discussed once again as was the Vancouver Reunion. I understand that Peter and Eileen Leonard will be going over. Thinking ahead to 1988, Chico and Peggy Mercer were coming over to Sydney in 1987 but have now changed this to 1988 as have Peter and Eileen Leonard.

It is so nice to meet up with some of the boys and their wives again. What a pity more of them don't come along! I do get the odd letter from some of them now and again but it would be so nice to meet up personally. As Anzac Day falls on a Saturday in 1987 maybe we might attract a few extra bods.

Looking out of the window here, it should be bright and sunny, but, alas, it is raining again. Let's hope our summer is better this year.

It won't be long before all of us will be O.A.P.s. Only Harry Bishop, Eric Phillips (retiring in July) and myself are still working for our living in the U.K. I expect the same situation applies to you in Aussie

On a dull wet day I send greetings to you all in Aussie for continued good health and happiness.

*** *** *** *** *** ***

SANDGROPPERS SAY.....

From Ted.Jewell.

Anzac Day. As usual Anzac Day here in the West was a big affair attended by large crowds, especially lots of young people. At the Dawn Service, 458 was represented by Charlie Davis and Henry Etherton who laid the wreath at the War Memorial. As usual, the wreath was made by Vera Etherton and once again I wish to thank her for her efforts.

For the Service in the city during the morning Perth turned on perfect weather as it usually does. W.A. Flight had about 30 marching behind the banner which was carried this year by Skeeta Staveley, with Al. Wheat leading the Parade. After the March and Service on the Esplanade we all adjourned to the Hyde Park Hotel for lunch and drinks. We had about 40 at the lunch, members and wives, with many well-known 458 members. Shorty Long, Gordon Jones, Syd. Baker, Hensell Hemy, Stan Hopewell, Ron. Gannaway, Charlie Davis, Henry Etherton, Al. Wheat, Col. Corten, Ray Turley, Nundi Carpenter as well as Peter Riseley, Poss. Dale, widow of Tim, and our Associate members Tom. Foster, Phyl. Hicks, Tom. Howard and Bob Ellis.

In Town. Joe Elliott from Queensland has been on holidays here in the West, staying with old crewmate, Hensell Hemy and wife Lil, down at Mandurah so we had the pleasure of Joe's company on Anzac Day at the March and afterwards at the Hotel.

Lil said the only time they stopped talking was when they were asleep. Not having seen each other since the war years, I guess they had a lot to catch up on in just one week. Joe stayed with Elsie and myself for a few nights and we were very pleased to have you with us, Joe.

Out of Town Our Flight President, Bill Clues, and Joan, were not with us this year on Anzac Day as they were on holidays in South Australia---I believe mainly for Joan to attend a doll Festival at Hanndorf. Had a card from Bill who said he would attend the Anzac Day reunion in Adelaide.

All the best from W.A. Flight.

*** *** *** *** *** *** ***

CROWEATERS' CAUCUS.

From Geoff. Esau.

S.A. Anzac Day started with high winds and heavy showers--in spite of which a very large crowd attended the Airport Memorial Service so ably conducted by Padre Ben. Williams. Trees and plaques were dedicated to those who served in 22 Squadron and 30 Squadron, R.A.A.F. Formed in 1936, the Squadrons were equipped with Gypsy Moth and Avro Ansons respectively. (I can still see an Anson (crossing Ballarat Airfield at 5 knots approx. in 1941. Mind you there was a stiff headwind at the time!). These Squadrons were later equipped with Bostons and Beaufighters, and during their wartime careers served with distinction in the Battle of the Bismark Sea.

Fortunately, the rain cleared soon after the Service, and the weather was fine but very gusty for the March. Those marching under the 458 Banner were John Carey (leading), Brian Woodhead, Ted. Creighton, Bert Oliver, Bill Cribb, Arn. Scholar, Jack Riseley, Peter Thom, Reg. Priest, Bill Clues (W.A.), Col. Hutchinson, Alex. McKinnon, Lyle Skinner, Paul Hallam, Ray Whitrod, and Geoff. Esau (grappling with the (Banner).

Marked Absent. Apologies were received from several stalwarts: Sid Bartram, Bert Ravenscroft, and Bill Taylor (all out of town), and Ted. Hinsley from the Barossa. A large number of well-wishers lined the streets with a high proportion of young people. Bill Clues had other commitments after the March and missed (and was Missed at) the Talbot gathering and lunch. A very well-known and youthful face seen at the Talbot belonged to ex P.R. Officer, Ken. Robertson, late of the Advertiser, and now in his 80s. It's hard to believe!

Personal Pars. It is with regret that I advise the passing of Ray Warwick from Cradock (Holowiliena Station) on Feb. 18th, 1986. It is noted (We Find and Destroy-P.8) that Ray, an airgunner, was a member of an experienced crew posted to 458 at Holme-on-Spalding Moor, so he was really a foundation member. Further reference is made on pages 78-79 (2nd Edition) to the renowned walk of 400 miles he and three other members of the crew made in July '42, from the site of a crashlanding near Daba back to British lines. Very sincere sympathy is extended to his widow, Ruth, and family. I have also learned from a cousin of the death of Lloyd Letcher some time ago. He being unmarried contact with the Squadron was lost.

Kind regards and best wishes to all.

*** *** *** *** *** ***

Q. FLIGHT NEWS.

From Jim. Holliday.

Anzac Day, 1986.

The Anzac March was the longest we have seen in Brisbane. The "Z" Force marched for the first time and there was a huge increase in Viet War veterans. The contingents of British, American and other Allies who fought in WW2 were also larger. And, probably because of the extra participants in the March, the crowd was larger. To us, who have participated in the March these many years, the plaudits of the crowd were not only louder but seemed so much warmer.

Unfortunately, the numbers marching behind our banner are getting fewer. Age and the effects of injury are preventing the enthusiastic from marching, but all who are able join us at the Reunion after the March. And, it is inspiring that those who are prevented by circumstances from joining us go to so much trouble to tender apologies by telephone, post, or through other members.

At the Reunion, we had Eric Kelly, Bert Garland, Jack Baxter, Gordon Cuthbertson, (Jack and Gordon came up from the Gold Coast) Clive Wyman, Len MacDonnell, Hank Ewens, Bernie McLoughlin, Bob Helyar, Chester Jones, Bernie Hughes, and Jim Holliday. We were joined by stalwarts of years standing--Cec. Bull, Sel Williams, and Mick Suley. Apologies were tendered by Pres. Jack Lewis (touring

Q. Flight News (cont.)

(Britain and Europe and planning to drop in at Vancouver), Chas. Warren (on a camping safari to North Queensland and planning to visit members everywhere), Joe Elliott (on a convalescent holiday up north), Gordon Postle (an apology by telephone late Anzac Eve disconsolate that urgent business must whisk him away) Dud McKay (business kept him at Norfolk Island), Jim McKay (as a Bowls Club executive he had to attend a club function), Ian Higlett (transferred to the Gold Coast), Tony Stone (the journey from Banora Pt. to Brisbane was a bit far).

In the absence of Jack Lewis, Clive Wyman presided and despatched business expeditiously. All officers were re-elected unanimously. In particular, Clive welcomed Hank Ewens. Jack Lewis met Hank on the local bowling green. Neither had seen the other since Squadron days. Hank has retired to Queensland and lives near Jack Lewis. Postcards from Evelyn and Jack Lewis in Yorkshire. Says they have visited Holme-on-Spalding Moor. The Station is deserted. The Tree is enclosed but looks very forlorn. Lettering on the plaque is peeling and now indistinct.

We've heard a rumour that Sel. Foote is about to retire but Joan says she wishes there was substance in the rumour.

Jack Baxter still enthusing about the trip he and Kitty made in their boat last December from Brisbane to Sydney to see the start there of the Sydney to Hobart Yacht race. They helped to escort the yachts through the Heads. On the way back they put into every port on the seaboard to Brisbane.

*** *** *** *** *** ***

VICTORIAN VIEWS.

From Stan. Tarczynski.

Anzac Day in Melbourne. The most unfortunate aspect of Anzac Day, apart from one of the wettest days possible, is the lack of interest to front up to say "hello" at this annual reunion as our members continue to decrease. Admittedly many live in the country. The R.A.A.F. was last in the March this year and luckily we were sheltering under the Swanston Street verandahs opposite the Melbourne Town Hall during the heaviest downpours which the Army coped before us. Thanks to Ern. Laming, No2 Flight, Preston assisted with the carrying of the Squadron banner. We are grateful to Cadets, J. Hedger, B. Ristrom, and L.A.C.s G. Jordan, K. Jordan, and D. Stephens, of the A.T.C.

Stan. Cartledge brought his granddaughters Karen and Janine, likewise Gordon Nash and granddaughter Michele Jackson. For the record, Gordon marched last year but his name was unwittingly omitted by me. Many dropped out at Flinders Street. The solitary single row of marchers from there on was made up by Ern. Laming, and his grandson, Craig Chinn (who likes Melbourne Bitter) Ken. Morkham, Mick Singe, Stan. Tarczynski, Bill Hurford, Tom. Primrose, Ted. Kennedy (all the way from Ballarat), and Bill Henry. Unable to march, Shorty Bradshaw and Yank Martin fronted up at Windsor at the Melbourne Bowling Club. Yank's spinal problem has been diagnosed to the knuckles in his big toes. Somehow, they may scrape the first knuckle a couple of millimeters to bring him back to normal walking.

Ian Alison, of course, is a member of the Melbourne Bowling Club, and was in attendance from early morning preparing food. A hundred-strong Army Unit also attend here for a reunion at the opposite end of the Club. There is a destination amendment to Ian's imminent departure which is quoted as Creswick. His address will be Rokewood, near Cressy south of Ballarat.

Mona Mathews wrote to Ern. Laming thanking him for his welcome letter and acknowledging receipt of the two Xmas hampers which she did not expect with the passing of Bill. Mona is now widowed three years and has a job, to keep herself occupied, at the Sue Ryder Home for the Disabled.

Regretfully, we announce the passing of Marie Boyer at Kyneton, in April, and convey our sincerest condolences to Les and family.

Air Commodore Jack Dowling in his 71st year is looking remarkably well

Victorian Views (cont.) during his long convalescence and he is hoping to sell his home in Mt. Waverley to buy a small unit in South Vermont to be near his two daughters and their families.

*** *** *** *** ***

FRED RETURNS TO THE MIDDLE EAST.

Freddy Strom left Australia in February, on a Spring World Discovery Tour to retread wartime footsteps. He has given us some notes on this remarkable journey. He left by sea on the 5 star ship M.S. Sagafjord. From Malaga in Spain he flew to Gatwick and a 5 day bus tour of southern Ireland. Return to Australia by Qantas just before Anzac Day. But that is just the bare bones of it. The full route was, he writes, Sydney-Hobart-Adelaide-Fremantle-Bali-Pandang-Colombo-Cochin-Bombay-Djibouti in the Horn of Africa-Safraga (Egypt)-Port Tewfik (after a passage through the Red Sea (NOT on the Mendoza)-transited through the Suez Canal to Port Said-Haifa-Catania (Sicily)-Civitavecchia-Villefranche-Malaga.

Some of his impressions:--Hobart, The grim cruel conditions imposed on gaoled convicts. Hong Kong, immense population, traffic, overcrowded junks, poverty of people amid huge skyscrapers.

Singapore Huge Commercial Building programme stopped. Overcrowded slums. Bombay. Desperate living conditions of most Indians, beggars, street sellers, cripples; nothing apparently done in the way of Social Help; Djibouti, huge slums of starving refugees outside the city. Noise, dirt, the Red Sea, Colourful sunrise/sunset, Port Tewfik, Tremendous building programme. Cranes, highrise, new white mosque; The Suez Canal, Proceeded No 15 in convoy; yacht club under construction, sand dunes, fortifications on both sides, Signal station at El Shalufa (the Lips), under-canal road traffic tunnel from Sinai, canal from the Nile near Fayid; ranges of mountains visible. Anchored in Great Bitter Lakes; who remembers swimming in the Lakes? Ismailia Hospital wrecked in 1967 war; Speed boat circled the ship had President Mubarak aboard; he has large house at Ismailia. Arrived Port Said that night. Haifa, Gun emplacements, met by customs, police, gunboat.

London, very cold, Southern Ireland, farms in poor condition, country appears in poor economic shape, factories recently closed in towns visited; through the Border to the North. Army and customs control points. Young British soldiers patrolling with automatic guns --no place for this ex-troop. Glad to get away from it !!

*** *** *** *** ***

SOME LATE MESSAGES FOR MEMBERS.

Stan. Longhurst asks any interstate member intending to visit Canada for the Reunion who has problems with the travel arrangements to telephone him on 02-80 4902.

Al. Wheat writes from the West about 458's donations to the Bomber Command Museum Appeal Fund. This finally totalled \$535. Group Captain Bill Randle, of the Museum, has written asking that the Museum's thanks be conveyed for the great effort. The refurbishing of the Hendon Wellington has not yet started. They had hoped to get some of the fittings of the inside of the Loch Ness Wimpy could have been used but unfortunately most of the interior of that wreck slipped through the break point just aft of the main spar and lies again at the bottom of the Loch.

Al has been looking after the matter of the listing of 458 as a Wellington Squadron. 458 was missing from a board of Wimpy Squadrons adjacent to the Hendon Wellington. According to G/Capt Randle the board has been removed and they are in the process of a quite dramatic revision.

AL has received from the Museum a brochure about the Bomber Command medal which is available for those who served with Bomber Command, as did 458 at Holme-on-Spalding Moor. Al will no doubt give those interested, details. His address--PO Box 160, Geraldton 6530
