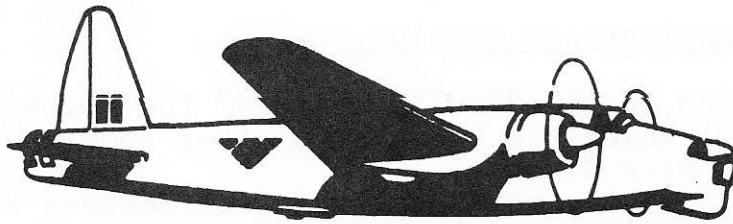


458

SQUADRON NEWS



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

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GREAT SUCCESS OF AN ANNIVERSARY AT THE BAROSSA VALLEY.

The magic figure of 50 brought 458ers in considerable numbers to the Squadron's 50th anniversary All-States Reunion. For the Commemorative closing dinner approximately 160 sat down to celebrate and to talk. The following account is based on the notes made by a number of those attending.

While the centre of events was the Yaldara Motel at Lyndoch, members also stayed at a variety of other sites. They started to arrive as early as Friday for a Sunday commencement. On the Sunday evening there was a crowded Reception in the downstairs Conference area assigned to 458 for the duration. Members and wives, wearing brooches made by Johnny Excell, renewed and updated acquaintance. There were so many there it wasn't till next day they ran into one another in some instances. There was a display of 458 memorabilia set up by Sid Bartram. Next day coaches took members to RAAF Base, Edinburgh. The Base Command, through G. Capt. Gilbert gave an excellent run-down on the current maritime activities of the R.A.A.F. We presented a Squadron History and received back a Base plaque. After lunch the ladies saw a display by the Guard dogs and the men examined hangars and climbed into Orion aircraft (probably obstructing the groundstaff working there quite considerably--but the serving RAAF was patient!).

The 50th Anniversary Reunion.

That evening, in the "Sergeants Mess" the "Dick the Tick" Trophy (for darts) which had resurfaced after some years was competed for-- and won by Mick Singe.

On the Tuesday, the morning being free, members were able to have a look at the lovely and green Barossa Valley with its many vineyards. At noon there began a Barbeque beside the small lake at the Yaldara Winery. In the evening, there was a bistro dinner, following an inspection of the wine-making area, at the Chateau Yaldara. It was a noisily happy occasion. 458 relaxing and talking can still make a deal of din.

The 458 Squadron Reserve dedicated.

On Wednesday morning 458 boarded several buses for a 2½ hour drive from Lyndoch to Renmark, in the irrigation area of the River Murray system. At Renmark they were received by Ian and Fee Showell, who are prominent citizens of the area, and were welcomed by the Mayor. Ian has been developing the riverside area and had given a block as a garden reserve in memory of 458 and other local RAAF who have fallen. There are trees and plants in memory of our C.O.s, Adjutants, D.W.O.s, Medical Officers, and Engineering Officers. Groups of trees for aircrew, and for groundstaff. The Dedication event was conducted, in the unavoidable absence of Padre Fred McKay, by Peter Alexander, who included words and a prayer prepared by Fred McKay.

Peter Alexander said, in part, that we were remembering but doing more than that in dedicating the Reserve. We were also providing a peaceful place where younger people could come and possibly think of the airmen of years before whose work and deaths had preserved peace for them. Fred McKay's prayer of dedication was "Eternal God, we dedicate this Reserve, the gift of the Showell family, as a living Memorial to members of 458 Squadron RAAF who gave their lives in the cause of freedom in World War II, and we dedicate the 50th Anniversary Plaque and monument accordingly to the work of the Squadron and its members. Amen."

After the return to Lyndoch there was a Food and Wine tasting that night.

The Squadron Conference and Dinner.

The Squadron's controlling body, its Conference, with delegates from all Flights, met in the morning, chaired by Squadron President John Carey. After receiving reports and noting that we lost \$500 since the last Conference, due to rising postal and printing costs of the News not offset by increased charges, it decided that the News will cost \$5 per annum from 1992. It decided that for financial reasons the project to reproduce a painting of an attack on harbour shipping was not possible. It elected Jack Lewis as incoming Squadron President and fixed Queensland as the location for the 1993 All-States Reunion.

Squadron golfers competed for the Squadron Cup and that was won by Wal. Archbold.

The Dinner that evening was the culmination of the Reunion. Over a very good dinner, the 160 participants listened to some of their members reminiscing, each Flight and classification was given a "go". Some were vigorously applauded for taking less time than others! The Dinner concluded with the Toast of "458 Squadron" proposed by Peter Alexander and with a farewell pibroch played by Col. Hutchinson--both a farewell and a summons to meet again in 1993 in Queensland.

Members were warm in praise for the organisation of John Carey and his committeemembers. The Squadron Conference sent a message of greetings to ex C.O. Jack Dowling; and of thanks to the Minister for Veterans Affairs (Mr. Ben Humphreys) for a grant of \$1000 towards Reunion costs.

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CANUCK CAUCUS.

from Jim. Donaldson.

Winter came early this year, with a vengeance, letting Canadians know again not to take our weather for granted and, as you are aware, Winter

Canadian Caucus (cont.)

means hibernation. Our snowbirds are all getting ready for their annual migration to warmer climes, and those of us left behind will keep the fires going, stop the pipes from freezing, etc., until spring breaks forth in all its glory. Thursday last I attended our annual Remembrance Day dinner, etc, at the Base Officers' Mess. As usual it was well attended but time is taking its toll.

There was good news as well however, our sixth Reunion is at 72% of the 1988 Reunion and could well be the largest yet. Successful Reunions have been held since 1970 when there were 1300 registrants.; 2800 in '76, 3900 in '80, 4400 in '84, 4700 in '88, and still going. I, and all your Canadian mates, wish you could be here with us; we know that this is impossible but do want you to know that you will be with us in spirit and in memory. There will be sand in our hair, our mouths, our eyes, and tears and laughter in our hearts for those of you who cannot make it, as well as many a toast to a Squadron that was second to none. God bless. JIM.

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THE SQUADRON PRESIDENT (Jack Lewis) AND COUNCIL WISH ALL READERS A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

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THE CORNSTALK COMMUNICATION. from Jock McGowen.

With much sadness we advise the passing of Rupert Holmes and offer our sincere condolences to his family.

The open house at Frank and Thelma Ward's was well attended, some 20 or so members were there and it was voted a great success--thanks to Frank and Thelma, much appreciated. During the afternoon there the opportunity was taken to present to Cy Irwin a plaque of appreciation for his long service to the N.S.W. Flight as Secretary or in other duties.

The Melbourne Cup. The Cup has come and gone and Eric Munkman would like to thank Peter and Eileen Leonard, from Wales, for their help in drawing the numbers. Winners were: 1st Sam Barlow; 2nd Karen Beashel (Peter Alexander's granddaughter); 3rd Col Fereday. Congratulations to the winners: the usual clean white handkerchiefs to the losers; our thanks to all who sent in their money.

The Sick Parade. Harry Baines has had a hip joint replaced and is doing well; heard that Bill Fiddes has had a bit of heart trouble again, so we wish you well Bill. A lot of old mates at the Reunion were asking after you, as they were of our old friends Chappie, Arthur Jollow, and Lofty Bracker.

At Barossa. The reunion was great and our congratulations to John Carey and his able crew of slaves. A very special thanks to Ian and Fee Showell for the preparation of the fantastic 458 RAAF Reserve, which was dedicated (in the regretted absence of Padre Fred McKay) by Peter Alexander. A special prayer prepared by Fred McKay was used and simultaneously used by all present--so that the Reserve was dedicated by the Squadron as a whole. It was a great pleasure to see M.O. Roger Angove during the visit to Renmark. We were treated to lunch prepared by Ian and Fee. For those not at the Reunion our well-known Squadron artist, Tom Moore, has prepared a drawing of the Reserve--which is with this issue of the News, as a 50th Anniversary Souvenir. The Mayor of Renmark assured us that the Corporation will look after the Reserve in times to come.

Thanks, Tom, for the drawing!

Our congratulations to Jim and Lucy Palmer from W.A. Their 7th Reunion, by car from the West to see their old friends. Has to be some sort of a record!

458 Calendars available. We were selling Squadron Calendars at Lyndoch. Still some left. They shew the 458 Crest and the places we saw action--same as the Banners--just in time for Christmas--\$3-00 each or 2 for \$5-00, both prices including postage. Only three sets of the 458 placemats left. Doubtful if there will be more. \$32-50 each posted. 1st in, 1st served!

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NOTE FROM THE N.S.W. FLIGHT TREASURER.

Please note that annual subs for the 458 Squadron branch of the RAAF Association now due for 1992 are now \$21-00. This includes a fee to the Association for administration costs which, like many other things, have sky-rocketed.

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SANDGROPPERS SAY..... from Ted.Jewell.

All members of W.A.Flight join in congratulations to our Flight President Bill Clues on being elected a Life Member of the Squadron Association. Bill has been President for about 20 years and over that time has been the main person who has kept the W.A.Flight together.

Henry and Vera Etherton have just arrived back from the All-States Reunion in S.A. and are full of praise; say it was a great function, and they enjoyed every minute of it--the weather couldn't have been better.

Our Xmas Lunch. W.A.Flight will be having our usual Xmas lunch on 15th December. I have tried to contact most members to try and make the 50th anniversary here our biggest Xmas turn-out yet. Some members we have not seen for years, so hope they will come along.

As this is the last letter before Xmas, I would like to wish all 458 Squadron members a very happy Xmas and a very bright New Year. Ted.

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CROWEATERS COMMENTARY. from Ted.Creighton.

The S.A.Flight is still trying to let down from the hustle and bustle of the All-States Reunion. There are still a number of loose ends to be tied and it may be a few weeks before we can say everything is squared away.

Overall, it does appear that the 50th Anniversary Reunion was a successful affair. We appreciate the number of congratulatory and thank-you notes we have received. This prompts a message from Flight President John Carey-- a message strongly endorsed by the whole of the SA Flight:--

"A lot of hard work, planning, worry and expense can be put into a reunion to give it the chance to be a successful one. However, all this only provides the opportunity. The success of any Reunion is achieved and ensured only by the wonderful spirit of simple friendship and the warm and happy atmosphere created by those in attendance.

"Therefore, to those who came from near and far, a sincere 'Thank you!' 'You, not us, made the reunion--we salute you!'"

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Q.FLIGHT NEWS from Jim.Holliday.

Congratulations to South Australia for an outstanding celebration of our Fiftieth Anniversary. Imaginative, varied and well planned, everything on time. Congratulations to Ian Showell. His generous gesture created not only a memorial but more significantly a continuing living 458 Shrine. At the next All-States Reunion in South Australia it will be nostalgic to sit in the shade of the trees, reflect and recall. South Australia, you have created a benchmark difficult to better.

A most eager attender at the Reunion was Fred Kleckham. Flew in from Vanuatu (dragged himself from depth-diving on the wrecked US battleship President Coolidge) and straight on to a plane for Adelaide. Of his recreation "marvellous for anyone who is 76 years old" he says. While on age, Erle Hetherington telephoned his apology from Cairns. Unable to find anyone competent to take over as skipper of his charter boat. Not a bad occupation for someone in the shadow of 80!

Personal Pars. Jack Hobbs has been confined to his barracks by the AWAS. His wife, Shiela, attending a Gold Coast Conference, slipped and smashed a knee cap, necessitating wiring and bedrest. Jack was press-ganged into nursing duties. However, he was able to work an odd hour with the winter whiting, who were "anxious to co-operate".

Ian Higlett, on his way with his Pearl to Honolulu. Enid and Dud.McKay

Q.Flight News (cont.) just returned from 5 days in the Carnarvon Gorge with a bus load of Americans. Surprisingly, no comments about comparison with the Grand Canyon.

Honour paid to Thelma Brandon for her years of selfless work with the disabled, particularly with public relations. The Redlands Blue Nursing Service has appointed her to the position of fund-raiser, which includes the popular Strawberry Festival Queen Competition.

Sweeps and Plans. Again in our Annual Melbourne Cup Sweep we sold the full quota of 1500 tickets. Isla (wife of Bert) Garland drew the 1st horse; Shaun (grandson of Dud and Enid McKay) the 2nd; and Jim McKay the 3rd.

South Australia has established a benchmark that will be difficult to reach, let alone pass. But we're working on it for 1992. Jim.

Editor. Readers will be sorry to hear that since writing the above, Jim has been in hospital for major surgery. But he is doing well.

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KIWI CALL.

from Kevin George.

We enjoyed the beautiful rural setting of the Barossa Valley for a Reunion that was, as usual, well organised and an unqualified success. Transport, at times when buses were not available was not a problem, thanks to the efforts of those with cars. Dawn and I were grateful in particular to

Bill and Madge Taylor who gave us a guided tour of the Barossa Valley and to Tom and Val Moore who were frequently on hand with their vehicle.

Arch and Gladys Fell gave this reunion a miss as they have recently been in Queensland visiting a daughter. However they plan to be in Brisbane for the 1993 reunion.

Among the memorabilia at Yaldara we noticed a photograph of "Bluey" Dodds, standing outside his tent. He is well remembered, particularly so as one of the foundation members of the "Vino Veterans" of Bone. Doddsie was one of the three New Zealanders in our crew, the other being Ivan Green. Doddsie died in late 1983. The nominal roll of 458 Squadron lists 10 New Zealanders but Dodds and Ivan are shown as Australians and Verity as R.A.F. Burnie is almost certainly a duplication of Birnie, that A.Fett is a duplication of A.Fell.

Birnie, Kippenberger and Prebble died on Squadron service. So, that leaves 6 who could still be around. I have tried to locate C.W (Cut) Price, formerly of Christchurch without success, but will try again. That leaves only R.G.A. Leslie. Bill Hermansen of Hastings died around 1986. If any Squadron member can add to or correct the above list I will be grateful.

Dawn and I had a most enjoyable fifteen days in Australia. After two nights in Melbourne we hired a big comfortable Holden and drove via Warrnambool and Mt. Gambier to Adelaide. We ended the holiday visiting relations in the Wollongong area. We returned to a very green New Zealand, and showery weather has continued almost non-stop since our return. Kevin George.

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VICTORIAN VIEWS.

from Stan. Tarczynski.

Congratulations to S.A.Flight for superb organisation of the 50th Anniversary at the All-States Reunion: also to Ian and Fee Showell for the generous donation of the 458 Memorial Plaque and Reserve on the Jane Eliza Estate, Renmark. Sorry I was not there to challenge for the Golf Cup, Wal Archbold. After many years break (what happened to it?) the DICK the TICK Darts Trophy was resurrected and returned to Victoria via Mick Singe.

Our normal Cup Day BBQ which was to be held at St. Leonards was cancelled due to the tragic fatal accident at the Regent railway boom gate crossing when Betty Evans' car was struck under unusual circumstances on Nov. 3rd. Our profound and deepest sympathies go to husband Dave and brother Jack Fleming and their families. A very large gathering attended the Anglican service. Dave Evans is Manager of the Preston Club.

It is pleasing to report that Bill Henry's health is much on the improve. Ern. Laming who was to have a hip operation is no longer able to have it.

Victorian Views (cont).

and Ken.Morkham is awaiting a call for a hip operation. Yank Martin is having difficulty in walking. Otherwise everyone else of the few of us left is bearing up O.K.

And Next. Our next function will be Xmas in March--the second Sunday-March 8th. It will be a BBQ-BYO at Stocks Village, No.1, Stocks Avenue, Ashburton, from 12 noon. It is the Community Room, No.24, behind Tarz' place.

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BRITISH BULLETIN.

from Sid.Thompsett.

Flight news at the moment is non existent but what I am extremely pleased about, and I am sure that the rest of the Flight is too, is that at long last a Squadron Crest is to be made available, as soon as possible, for placing in the R.A.F. Museum, Hendon. We had tried for many years to get their agreement but I think Reg.Windett must have that extra persuasion as it was he who managed to get the permission. It will be quite an occasion for me to see our Squadron Crest hanging alongside all the other Squadron Crests. Regards, Sid.

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WING FLUTTER OF THE ELECTRAS: a piece of QANTAS History.

from Keith Cousins.

You may or may not recall the Lockheed Electras were grounded in the U.S.A. during the late 50s or into the 60s due to a wing flutter problem. Qantas had not grounded theirs as they had been operating them for some time on a restricted cruising airspeed.

Sometime during this period Lofty Bracker was a crew member on an Electra flight which commenced aerial gyrations shortly before arrival into Hong Kong. Fortunately control was regained, and the subsequent crew reports proved to be helpful to the Lockheed people in fixing the problem.

I understand that the report coming from Lofty, a Bachelor of Aeronautical Engineering, among other things, was particularly helpful.

Lockheed eventually modified the wings on all Electras and it so happened that I was on the first modified Qantas edition from the USA. The flight from Honolulu in January 1961 was one of the roughest weatherwise that I can recall--the aircraft with its beefed-up wings rode like a high-speed outboard motor through a very rough chop.

Lofty is in the Nursing Home at St.Luke's Hospital. Despite a lot of pain and inability to read he is in notable good humour.

Cassi and I enjoyed the Barossa Reunion very much indeed.

RAAF Edinburgh may be interested in the little bit of history about the Electra, being a forerunner of the Orion.

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PRAYER OF DEDICATION PREPARED BY PADRE FRED MCKAY & USED AT RENMARK.

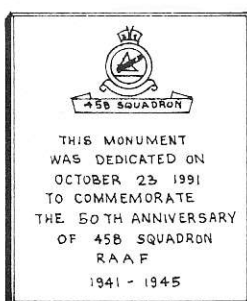
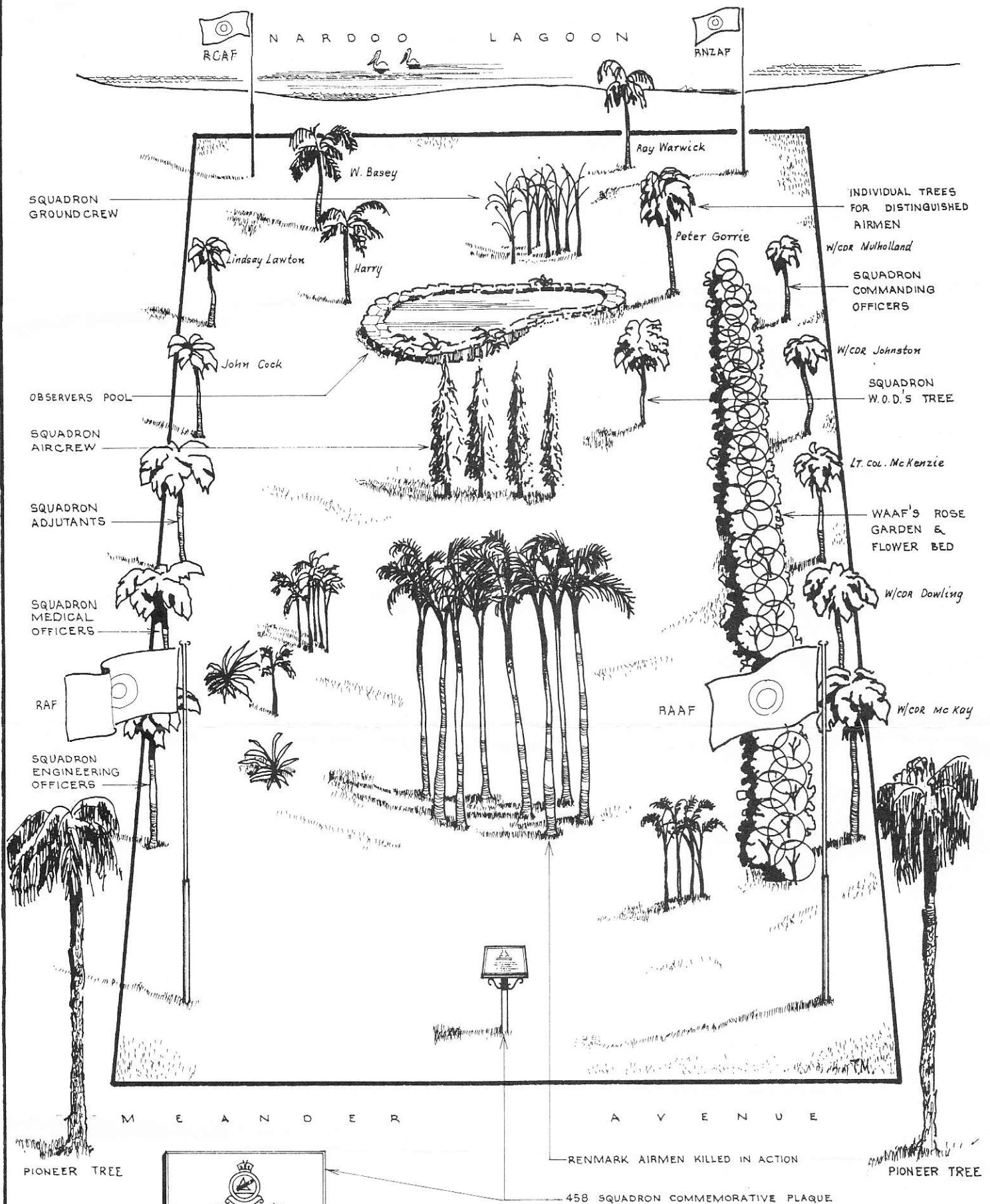
Prologue. This Memorial Area dedicated on the Fiftieth anniversary of the formation of 458 squadron, R.A.A.F., is a symbolic reminder of the open skies where the bomber aircraft of the Squadron operated in the battle areas of World War II.

It also typifies an open-air Cathedral where the names of gallant men are recorded in every living thing of natural beauty in this place.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION. Eternal God we dedicate this Reserve, the gift of the Showell family as a living memorial to members of 458 Squadron RAAF who gave their lives in the cause of freedom in World War II, and we dedicate the 50th anniversary Plaque and monument accordingly and to the work of the Squadron and its members.

AMEN.

SOUVENIR. "AFTER 50 YEARS."



458 SQUADRON RAAF RESERVE
Jane Eliza Estate * Renmark
South Australia