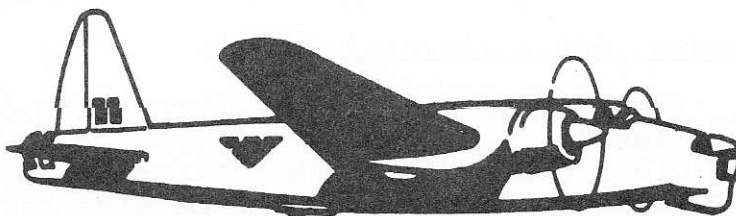


458

SQUADRON NEWS



JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL, G.P.O. Box 5289, SYDNEY, N.S.W. 2001, AUSTRALIA.

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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 .

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SQUADRON TREASURER: Peter Alexander (NSW)----Australia: Stan Longhurst (NSW)
SQUADRON SECRETARY: Graeme Coombes (ACT) Bill Clues (WA)
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THE REUNION IN PERTH A GREAT SUCCESS!

Sandgroppers Say... from Ted. Jewell.

W.A. Flight's Reunion in Perth from Sunday 11th October to Friday 16th. October was attended by the following who came over from other States:

Stan and Jean Longhurst Don and Bev. Bitmead Bert and Lorna Ravenscroft
Jack and Dot Fleming Eric and Dorothy Munkman Ron and Enid Miller
Joe Pratt Jim and Joy Perry Syd and Pat Bartram Vin and Mavis
Clohesy--daughter Lynette. Ernie and Helen Laming. Dave Evans. Bill and Peg Hull

Together with W.A. Members we ranged between 45-55 for functions. Some W.A. Members were not able to come to all functions. The bulk of the credit must go to our Flight President Bill Clues for the success and organising of the Reunion. Bill and I worked out the functions for the week, then Bill said leave the rest to me. He contacted all the people concerned and made all the bookings for the buses, boats, dinner, hotel, and all the other things that had to be seen to. Bill had the help of wife Joan and daughter Vicky. Congratulations on a job well done!
Sunday was a welcoming function at the Wentworth Hotel in Perth where most of the interstate members were staying. A very good night meeting old mates again.

Sandgropers- Say ...(cont.)

Monday. Bus tour of Perth and suburbs, then off to Ray and Marj. Turleys for a BBQ lunch.

Tuesday River cruise on the M V Princess--a lunch cruise to Fremantle on the Swan River; also around the outside harbour after a scenic bus tour of Kings Park.

Wednesday Bus tour of historic Fremantle, stopping at places of interest, then meeting at the Air Force Association, Bateman for lunch and the odd drink or two after lunch; everyone had a very interesting tour of the A.F.A. Museum.

Thursday Coach trip down to Mandurah, there boarding the boat for a river cruise to Yunderup on the Murray river where we stopped for a very enjoyable lunch overlooking the water. After lunch all aboard the bus again for a trip to the town of Dwellingup for a ride on the Hotham Valley tourist train through the jarrah forests; then back to Perth.

Friday was a free day to allow members time to recoup after a long, tiring, day on Thursday. In the evening we all met at the Burswood Resort Hotel for dinner, which was an extensive smorgasbord with drinks provided. From the comments during the evening everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves for the whole reunion. Eric Munkman presented Bill and Joan Clues with a clock in appreciation of all they did. Eric told a few stories of his previous trips across to Perth in the train and how they all played up a little. A few of the members stayed on for a few days extra before leaving for home. Jim and Joy Perry came down to Mandurah and stayed with Nobby and Esme Nobbs for a couple of days.

And Next! We are looking forward to our usual Xmas dinner at the Freeway Hotel, South Perth on 6th. December and hope to have a good roll up. There is always plenty to eat and drink.

As this is the last News before Xmas I would like to wish all 458ers a very happy Xmas and the New Year.

Note. I had a visit several months back from Les Dickerson, who was in Mandurah for a few hours with his wife and daughter. Les was a Fitter Transport; lived most of his life in Albany. First time I had seen him since I left the Squadron. Ted.

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Eric Munkman writes: Congratulations to the West Aussie members for a wonderful Reunion. The weather was good and the friendliness of the members and the people of the West was outstanding. A particular vote of thanks to Bill and Joan Clues for the organisation which went like clockwork. As it was a Reunion on a smaller scale we were able to fraternise more. I will remember it as the Friendly Reunion. My only disappointment was that after travelling 3000 kilometers, some of the local members I wanted to see did not attend. After all we haven't got many years left to meet up again.

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CROWEATERS COMMENTS. from Ted. Creighton.

W.A. Reunion impresses small S.A. contingent.

One way or another Bert and Lorna Ravenscroft, Syd and Pat Bartram, and Jim and Joy Perry crossed the Nullabor to enjoy the hospitality of the W.A. Flight in Perth. Bert reports that congratulations are due to Bill Clues and his cohorts for a well organised and thoroughly enjoyable time. Some of the things that impressed Bert were-- accomodation in the heart of Perth, good trips involving 40-50 people, catching up with blokes some not seen since demob days, receiving a W.A. hardwood memento on departure and, of course, winning the final raffle! All the best to the West!

And we still call the Talbot Home! How time staggers on! 45 years back a call to seek out a better watering hole would have meant beating off the volunteers with a stick, whereas recently a planned pub crawl to find a new home had to be aborted because, on the day, a representative crew could not be mustered. Sick Parade, however, was well attended. Whilst the next sortie was on hold John Carey received a report from a family member (no, it wasn't Pat) that the

Croweaters Comments (cont.)

Talbot was back in full swing and that the debacle last Anzac Day simply an aberration. John therefore had a yarn with the current manager who assured John that he is aware of the long-standing rapport The Talbot has had with the RAAF and in particular with 458 Sqdn and that he is keen for this to continue. The upshot is that we will continue operations from the old home base. Thanks are due to Bill Taylor, Bert Ravenscroft, and Joan Dickson who responded with suggestions for possible alternatives.

Personal Paras. On his way to visit Arn. Scholar at the War Veterans Home, Kevin Tait dropped in to say he and Ivy were gallivanting off to Kuala Lumpur and other parts of Malaysia.

A short while back caught Monica waiting hand and foot on Peter Thom at dinner in a local pub. Seems that after damaging his shoulder ligaments many moons ago and just coming good, Peter, a dog and a swinging seat somehow got tangled together and he has done his shoulder in all over again.

Seasonal greeting to all of you from all of us!.

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CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM THE SQUADRON PRESIDENT.

Squadron President Jack Lewis sends Christmas and New Year Greetings to all members and families from himself and Squadron Council.

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Q.FLIGHT NEWS from Jim Holliday.

All-States Reunion at Mermaid Waters Developing well.

The 1993 Interstate Reunion at Mermaid Waters is shaping into a success. Ron Russell, Organiser, reports numbers have grown steadily. (See List attached to this issue) Final figures could exceed the record. Ron points out that as well as members from UK and NZ there's a surprising number of "Firsts". Ron has negotiated some favourable deals and substantial reductions for a very attractive and economical programme. Sunday night's Reception, the Amberley visit, Jet-away cruise and Brisbane tour are designed to promote nattering time. The Brisbane Tour will be a surprise to many. For further information contact Ron Russell (075 720 831).

The Melbourne Cup Sweep. Once again good support. The popular winner was Kath Kelly. Minor placings went to grand-children--Rhianna Wilks and Nicholas Holliday. We start them young in Queensland. As usual the Sweep brought a flood of correspondence. Shiela Hobbs' smashed kneecap has finally responded and she and Jack are on their annual caravan safari. This time to Miles, the Stockman's Hall of Fame at Longreach and north to Cairns. The Hobbs are to become GREAT grandparents! Erle Hetherington is still lumbered with his steel-hulled boat. So don't believe Press reports that the Japanese have taken over Cairns. Theo Ravenscroft is looking forward to next years Reunion. Indeed, he sent his registration before the Register was opened. Regrettably, Dulcie has a difficult-to-treat hearing problem. Norm. (Shorty) Taylor has recovered from his op. and has now resumed normal duties. Bob Dangaard had heart by-passes in Brisbane being sent there from Mareeba. He has resumed light work, part time.

And More news. Jim McKay is another to have had a heart attack--by good fortune outside his doctor's surgery. After treatment he also has returned to domesticity. Dud. McKay is catching up on sight-seeing after many years of hard work. In the past couple of years he has visited the Solomons, where a daughter lives: Alice and the Olgas, Fraser Island and currently Norfolk. Don Brandon has had tours of the USA and New Zealand. Charlie Warren's grandson Ben is interested in 458 Memorabilia (on his 10th birthday). We dug up a pocket badge, lapel badge, and a few others. The photo young Ben sent in his reply of thanks showed walls plastered with Air Force Aircraft. He wants to join the RAAF (like "Pops") and become a pilot. I was able to answer all the questions he asked about 458 but the "Marks" of

Wellingtons flown by the Squadron. Nice to know we'll have a Warren in the Air Force again shortly.

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VIC.FLIGHT NEWS. FROM Stan.Tarczynski.

Passing of Ken.Morkham.

We have lost a very staunch and active member and immediate past Honorary Secretary for many years. Ken.Morkham had not been well for some time, having made various visits and sojourns to Heidelberg hospital. Our deepest sympathy is extended to Beatrice and family. The gathering at the service was indicative of the high esteem in which he was held. Ken had been an active croquet player together with Beatrice, and a long time committee member of RAAF Europe. (Editor: Many 458ers indeed will remember Ken, who led the Electoral Section on 458. His quiet and loyal friendship made him greatly liked)

Our Recent Social. Our only function to date has been the usual Melbourne Cup BBQ, hosted by Dot and Jack Fleming on the Bellarine Peninsula. Everything was set up for the BBQ on the brick lawn when the well-chronicled Melbourne rain intervened causing a scurry to the spacious lounge room. Under cover (that's not a pun) we carried out our "two bob" sweep for each race increasing it to "five bob" for the Cup--deducting the big deal "percentage" cuts for club funds. The ladies excelled themselves providing salads, etc, and cream cakes and side pieces.

Eric Johnston, writer of the book "The RAAF Groundstaff of the Desert Air Force Squadrons" turned up with some of his Geelong "books" beer--come again, Eric! Farmer Giles and wife Beryl live at Highton, not far away. Belatedly Jack and Margaret Ellis arrived, after the huge trip around Port Phillip Bay from Dromana. An apology was received from Kath and Yank Martin--he was suddenly booked for an appointment with a specialist at Heidelberg. His legs are pretty crook and he has difficulty walking. The rest of the usuals were Dot and Jack Fleming June and Neil Dean, Helen and Ern. Laming, Mavis and Mick Singe, Rupe Pearce, Beat Morkham, Elaine Timms, Bill Henry, Dave Evans, and Tarz.

And Next. The Xmas in March function will be at the Community Room 24/1 Stocks Avenue, Ashburton, where we had it last year. The date is Sunday March 14th. from 11.30 onwards. BYO your own BBQ.

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ROY GILKES PASSES. We have heard from both Q.Flight and NSW Flight of the passing of Roy Gilkes. Roy was in Ralph Bailey's crew on 458. Ray developed Lymph gland cancer and had chemo-therapy. Unfortunately, he developed an infection and did not survive surgery. He was buried in Sydney and 458 was of course represented. A Navigator, Roy wanted to be a pilot. When he retired to the Gold Coast in Queensland he took flying lessons and received his restricted licence in February this year. He was currently studying for his unrestricted licence. Our sincere condolences to Terry and her family.

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CANNUCK CAUCUS. from Jim Donaldson.

All is quiet on the Canadian Front as far as Squadron news is concerned. I have had a few letters from some of the couples who attended our Reunion, telling me how much they enjoyed it. On the whole, from the feedback, we could put it down as a success. Whether or not we shall have another only time will tell.

There are a few of us who flew out of Malta who are in the process of sending applications to join the George Cross Island Association. Knowing the Services as you do, you will understand there is a fair amount of paperwork involved. I at the present time am stuck in limbo awaiting on information from both the RAF and RCAF records, Who knows when I receive them I may even have to contact RAAF records to complete the set. Only time will tell.

(Editor: Members wanting support for applications for such membership or for medals can obtain a certificate of verification from the Squadron Council over the signature of the 458 Historian, if that will help. Apparently it has helped in some cases.)

KIWI CALL. From Kevin George.

We are pleased that the Reunion is to be held in May, as that time of year suits us better. We are looking forward to revisiting Queensland; our last visit being in 1981.

Encouraged by success in locating "Wink" (Cut) Price I have been endeavouring to locate R.J.A. Leslie who, as a Flight Lieutenant was one of the original captains at Holme-on-Spalding Moor. The N Z Defence Force have confirmed that Leslie survived the War, and gave details of his service career. Judging from his Service number, he joined the R.A.F. directly just before the War. The last reference to him in the Squadron History was on page 47 when, as the senior officer on board "Archer" he went ashore to see what could be done. He did not rejoin the Squadron after the dispersal in Egypt but appears to have had a distinguished wartime career, finishing the war as a Wing Commander, with DSO, AFC, and M.I.D. In 1946 he returned to New Zealand but did not stay long, and three months later, at the end of the year, returned to the R.A.F. (presumably) to take up a permanent commission. And there the trail ends. Locating him may be difficult but an insertion in the R.S.A. Review "Lost Trail" column may produce something.

That's all for the moment. Kind regards Kevin.

Ed. Separately, we have heard that Fred Nieman, who, members will recall, moved from U.K. in recent years to be in N.Z. with family, has had hospitalisation there with heart trouble. He is now out of hospital and able to take brief walks. Best wishes to you, Fred!.

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THE CORNSTALK COMMUNICATION

from Jock McGowen.

Always sad news, this month we have recorded the passing of ROY GILKES --the funeral was attended for the committee by Bob Smith. Our condolences to Theresa and family.

On Saturday 31st October, Stan Longhurst arranged a launch and with Kitty Thomson and her family went to the Harbourside near Cockatoo Dockyard, and one of Bert's sons scattered Bert's ashes on the Harbour. Bert was Secretary of Cockatoo Dockyard for many years.

The Melbourne Cupsweep, 1992. Has come and gone and many of us are still waiting; anyway here are the lucky ones. 1st Subzero Tom Ridgway
2nd. Vandercross Col. Campbell 3rd. Castleton John Dunn.
Congratulations!

Honour for Stan Longhurst. The RAAF Association, at its 1992 National Conference, at RAAF Base, Richmond, made Stan a Life Member in recognition of his long service. Stan, longtime Committeemember of the 458 Sqdn. branch of the RAAFA and currently its Hon. Treasurer has also been on the State Council for many years, giving the RAAFA splendid service. Peter Alexander, as National Secretary of the RAAFA, gave Stan his Life Member's badge and Eric Munkman, as President of the 458 branch handed Stan his framed Certificate. The award took place at a well-attended luncheon at the Ryde TAFE School of Cookery. 458 Plaques were awarded to Sam Barlow and Don Bitmead at the same function. Congratulations and thanks!

Another Loss. We sadly report the loss by Jim and Dorothy Whitem of their son Hugh, in a motor cycle accident. This tragedy happened when Jim and Dot were a few hours out from Sydney on their return from the Aircrew Reunion in Canada. This, we understand, was a great success.

On Anzac Day, 1993. Important news for ANZAC DAY, 1993. As most of you are aware the Great Southern Hotel, our meeting place for many years can no longer handle large groups of people, due to strict enforcement of the Fire Protection laws in Sydney. Various other sites were proposed and our thanks go to Bob Lyndon and Sam Barlow for their efforts. Our reliable President hit the jackpot with the CRITERION HOTEL at the convenient corner of PITT and PARK Streets. This is right in the heart of Sydney and very close to the end of the March. We shall have a Room to ourselves downstairs, with its own Bar; a meal will be served and you pay for what you drink. There will be a sign on the side door in Park Street indicating 458 and for those who want accommodation it is available in newly restored rooms for a low price (Single \$40; Double \$50).

< PLEASE
NOTE

Cornstalk Communication (cont)

No real excuse for missing the Reunion now,
is there? Thanks, Eric, for your effort.

And--please! Get your entries in for the Queensland Reunion. It is later than you think.

Join the RAAF Association---458 Sqdn branch in N.S.W. To this day the need to fight for the interests of ex-servicemen (and their widows) is continuing.

Attend, at RAAF Richmond (we'll tell you when--early in the New Year) the planting of a new Memorial Tree and replacement plaque. (The Base seems to have cut down our old tree!)

Send good wishes to those old mates, Chappie, Lofty Bracker and Arthur Jollow. Keep it going, you guys, we keep you in our thoughts.

Get well, Fred. Strom. Fred has had a stay in hospital but is better. Jock.

#

VALE! DICKIE TOMBS!

We have been informed of the passing of Dick Tombs in England. Dick changed his surname after the war but will be recalled well as one of 458's photographers. He kept in touch, writing to us occasionally and never forgot 458. He will be missed.

#

OUR SYMPATHY TO CHESTER JONES.

Chester's wife, Charlotte, who had been ill for a long time passed away, we are advised, in August. Our sympathy!

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IN PRAISE OF CANADA. by Jim. Whitem.

The Commonwealth Wartime Aircrew Reunion. I wish to start with a simple but compelling statement. Neither Dorothy nor I have ever before had the pleasure of sitting down with four thousand wartime aircrew and wives at a banquet. We did not know that so many of us had survived for fifty years.

On the first reunion evening we attended a mini-reunion of 458 Squadron, whose members--some Canadians, one RAF type and Colin Fereday and I (Australians) and some camp followers of exceeding beauty and faithfulness, joined a few other Coastal types in an aquatic adventure which was a dinner-dance on a paddlewheel vessel plying the Red River. It was a good opportunity to meet persons whose names I had read in the History, but had not expected to meet. All in all there were 8-10 458ers--I think we met them all.

The next important occasion was a luncheon for the men, when we were addressed by a number of important guests--including a tape made at the first of these reunions by the late Douglas Bader. It was real theatre.

That evening there was a dinner in the Convention Centre followed by a concert given by the Canadian Air Command band, full of good music and much nostalgia, with young persons singing songs like the White Cliffs of Dover even Lili Marlene!

On Saturday we went to the air show at Portage-le-Prairie, where we saw inter alia a C-5, B-25, Spitfire, several gooneybirds, and a Tiger Moth in the Air! Unfortunately, no Ansons nor Harvards. Then on the last evening of the reunion, a banquet followed by a dance. There were speeches from the High Table--mainly by serving members, mostly of Air rank.

The Final and never to be forgotten event was the March to the Cenotaph on Sunday morning. In this hemisphere, of course, it was midsummer's day. In Winnipeg, we marched in biting, gusty, cold winds and threatening skies, and some of us did not march too well. We marched in units, within Commands. And I had never had the experience of marching in the whole of Coastal Command behind, of course, Fighter Command and Bomber Command. Nor had I experienced marching to such a service beside my wife who served in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

The next day, 22 June, we moved on to a new campground situated between the town of Brandon, Manitoba, and the airfield where Dorothy had spent her last year of the war, serving in the Met. office and tower. The Airport is now the site of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan with a rebuilt Stinson 105 aircraft and memorials to various personages. More nostalgia!

In Praise of Canada (cont.)

There, too we saw a new book containing a biography of every Canadian Airman killed in action or in training during the war. We were proud to be there to witness the ceremonies, hear the Canadian Air Command Band performing and to be there with Dorothy who, as far as we could discover, was the only person present who actually served at Brandon during the war. What a magnificent survivor!

I was disappointed over one aspect of all these Airforce-related activities in Manitoba. I had taken my Logbook with me in the hope that it would help to open the hangar doors with former instructors, Flight commanders, etc from my own training days in Canada. Alas, not one of them attended! Careful inquiry elicited the opinion that Training Command persons tended not to come, presumably a bit negative about not having the chance to operate against the enemy. That, if correct, is sad, because not one of us could have done the jobs we did without the dedication of Training Command, RCAF.

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CORRESPONDENCE: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

From Bill and Joan Clues, 408, High Road, Ferndale, W.A.

Dear Peter,

.....I would like to thank all those members who took part in the Mini Reunion: it was most heartening to have at least fifty guests at each days function and to be able to spend a little time with old friends from those far off service days, together with their wives....
....to all the visitors for the delightful gift and card...this will be treasured by us bothThank you...Bill and Joan.

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From Mrs Christine Smith, 20, Sycamore Road, Frankston, Vic., 3199.

Dear Peter, ... I am writing to tell you that my husband Bert died very suddenly in December, 1991. He was very well at the time and it was a great shock...we both enjoyed the 1989 reunion and were sorry we couldn't make it to the Barossa Valley one.

I have been reading with great interest about the Squadron Banner being passed on for safe keeping in All Saints Church, Holme-on-Spalding Moor. That's where so much happened and holds very dear memories for me. I was a WAAF in the Sick Quarters and married Bert 2nd March 1942 just prior to the Squadron going overseas. We only missed our 50th Wedding Anniversary by 3 months. We were blessed with three children and they have been a great comfort to me and I've had a good life here in Australia(2nd letter in reply)...Thank you for your letter and sympathy: you made the years roll back to 1941 when I was happy to work attached to 458 Squadron. I remember you as someone tall and fair haired....over the years Bert often mentioned your name...
....I haven't received the Squadron News lately but that is because I haven't sent the subscription as I don't know how much this is.

I would like details of the Mermaid Waters reunion (sounds most interesting) and thank you for extending me a welcome to it..Best wishes
yours sincerely, Christine Smith.

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From Mrs. Joan Munday, 67 Glenalva Pde, Cannons Creek, 3977 to Eric Munkman.

Dear Eric, Many thanks for your most welcome letter and my favourite 458 News--Stan certainly didn't waste time in writing to you when I rang him. He sounded fit as a fiddle--plays golf twice a week and very close to his R.S.L. Club Good for him!

I live very close to Tooradan where Woosle Wurr and Pat used to live. Jim and I spent many happy days over the Xmas period, a barbecue was held in the School. Good memories.Remember me kindly to all and sundry. Trust you and yours are well. I am, fortunately...Cheers and Beers
---Joan.

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1 9 9 3 R E U N I O N A T T E N D A N C E .
A S A T N O V E M B E R , 1 9 9 2.

Alexander, Peter and Rita
Atherton, Alan
Baines, Harry and Nita
Barlow, Sam and Maisie
Baxter, Jack and Kitty
Boyer, Les with Joan Turner
Bruce, Robert
Carpenter, Norm and Beryl
Coombes, Graeme and Dulcie
Dangaard, Bob and Vera
Fereday, Colin
Foote, Selwyn and Joan
George, Kevin and Dawn
Green, Ivan and Irene
Holland, Doug and Betty
Hurford, Bill and Ann
Kelliher, Bill and Flip
Kleckham, Fred and Marjorie
Leonard, Peter and Eileen
Lilly, John
Longhurst, Stan and Jean
McLoughlin, Bernard and Helen
Mobbs, Wal and Betty
Munkman, Eric and Dorothy
Palmer, Jim and Lucy
Pearce, Rupert
Ravenscroft, Bert and Lorna
Rigby R. and Olive
Russell, Ron and Joan
Showell, Ian and Fee
Smith Bob and Dorothy
Tucker, D and Christine
Turley, Ray and Marjory
Ward, Frank and Thelma
Wilks, Frank

Archbold, Wal and Dora
Bailie, Peter and Audrey
Baker, Black Jack
Bartram, Syd and Pat
Bitmead, Don and Bev
Brandon, Don
Carey, John and Pat
Clohesy, Vin and Mavis
Cuthbertson, Mrs. Em
Excell, John and Ruth
Fleming, Jack and Dot
Garland, Bert and Isla
Giles, Ian and Beryl
Hamilton, Jack and Leslie
Holliday, Jim and Peg
Johnson, Bill and Gwen
Kelly, Eric and Kath
Lawson, Jack and Gwen
Lewis, Jack and Evelyn
Lloyd, Eric and Bridie
McGowen, Jock and Anne
Miller, Ron and Enid
Moore Tom and Val
Oliver, Bert and Marjorie
Peake Alf and Gloria
Purcill Eric and Gloria
Ravenscroft, Theo and Dulcie
Russell, Ken and Molly
Senn, Mel and Ruth
Singe, Mick and Mavis
Stone, Al and Moira
Turier, Bill and Dorothy
Unitt, George and Grace
Whittem, Jim and Dorothy
Williams, S and Bobby.

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FOOTNOTE. As a footnote to Jock McGowen's urging members to join the RAAFA, the continuing need for organisations to protect the rights of Veterans and their widows is underlined by the current rush by the Commonwealth Government to amend the Veterans Entitlement Act following a favourable judgment by the High Court (favourable to Vets).

The Government has introduced legislation with a great rush that will --our lawyers say-- do far more than reverse the High Court judgment in the (Bushell) case concerned. The amendments if they go through will make it very much harder for anyone to get anything. Ex-service reps, including Peter Alexander, in the past week have spent an entire day before a Committee of the Senate arguing the position. It does look as if we have secured at least some amendments.

But we do need to demonstrate support from Veterans. P.C.A.