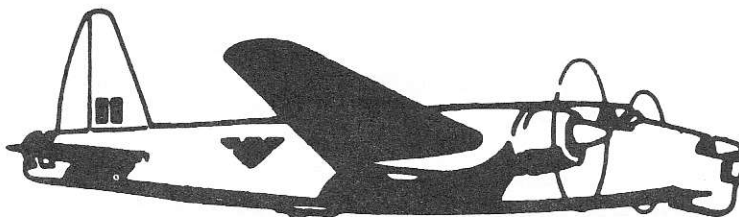


# 458

## SQUADRON NEWS



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JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL, G.P.O.Box 5289, SYDNEY, NSW, 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 .

Squadron President	Bert Ravenscroft (SA):	Squadron Vice Presidents:
Squadron Treasurer	Peter Alexander	Australia: Jim Palmer (WA)
Squadron Secretary	Graeme Coombes (ACT)	Eric Kelly (Q.)
Hon.Squadron Auditor	Frank Ward (NSW)	U.K. Peter Leonard (WALES)
		Canada Jim Donaldson (Man)
		New Zealand Ivan Green.

Editor: Peter Alexander

Publisher: Eric Munkman.

#### Flight Correspondents.

Canada	Jim.Donaldson, 72, Amarynth Crescent Winnipeg, MB R2Y, Canada;
Sth.Australia	Ted Creighton, 33, Farr Terrace, Glenelg East, 5045, S.A.;
Victoria	Rupert Pearce, 46, Mt.Pleasant Road, Nunawading 3131, Victoria;
U.K.	Norman Duke, Orchard Cottage, Guildford Road, Cranleigh, England;
N.S.W.	Jock McGowen, 119, Patrick Street, Hurstville, 2220, N.S.W.;
Queensland	Jacl Lewis, 5, Cupania Road, Victoria Point, 4165, Queensland;
W.A.	Ted.Kewell, 61, Wyaree Road, Mandurah, 6210, W.A.;
N.Z.	Kevin George, 20, Kowhai Avenue, Kaikohe, New Zealand;

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#### HOW THE 30th.ALL-STATES REUNIONAND SQUADRON CONFERENCE WENT.

In a word, splendidly! A large attendance a good, well organised programme have left warm memories and a continuing interest in more of the same. 458ers congratulated President Mick Singe and Victoria Flight on the great success. The Squadron Conference, at which all Flights are represented and which makes policy decisions for the Squadron was held at the Hotel in St.Kilda where delegates and their ladies stayed for the Reunion. It elected Squadron Officers--as shewn above--made arrangements for some Life Memberships of the Squadron Associations, received reports from Flights and discussed if when and where future All-States Reunions should be held. This was a bit controversial--as S.A.Flight news in this issue indicates---but resolved that a) a 5 day Reunion is desirable; b) an offer from S.A.Flight for three plus possible extensions was favoured; and c) that a Reunion should, in principle, be held every 18 months.

The reasons for these decisions advanced were that to justify fairly long and expensive travel for interstate members, more than

The Squadron Conference (cont.)

a few days together was desirable and that more frequently than biennially was desirable as, to put it plainly, our generation's time is not for ever.

Recognition of long and loyal service to 458 was given to Sam Barlow, Stan Longhurst, Jock McGowen and to Rupert Pearce by the award of Life Membership of the Association, in all Flights. Congratulations to them and to newly elected Squadron Office-bearers, Bert Ravenscroft as Squadron President and to Eric (Ned) Kelly as one of the Squadron Vice Presidents. Other office-bearers were re-elected.

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THE CORNSTALK COMMUNICATION from Jock McGowen.

It was with sadness we heard of the passing of long time friend Ron Russell: to Joan and the family we extend our deepest sympathy. (ED. All 458ers will join in that. Ron who lived and worked in Victoria in later years moved to Queensland. He was active with 458 in both Flights and was the 21st. Squadron President in 1987-9.)

\* The Melbourne Reunion is over and it was a great success from all we have heard who attended the full days: in my case due to other commitments I could only attend the Sunday "Meet your Mates" and the final Dinner on the Friday night, both very good functions and well attended in a great venue. The Guest of Honour Peter Isaacson made a great speech which made us all proud to be Australians. Probably one of the nicest things done over many years was the Toast proposed by Al Wheat from Western Australia to the Ground crew of 458. The speech he gave brought tears to my eyes, I am not ashamed to admit. What memories he brought back of our old mate, Tim Dale who with many others built up an uncanny friendship between Ground and Air crews. Thanks, Al.

\* Another nice thing that took place at the Melbourne Reunion was the making of four new Life Members: they were:

Stan Longhurst longtime NSW Treasurer: Squadron President in 1993-4;

Sam Barlow, one of the longest serving Committee members in NSW and a most regular and loyal supporter. Squadron President in 1957-8;

Jock McGowen, long time Secretary in NSW who organised the All-States Reunions in Nelson Bay and Canberra, with help from some others.

and Rupert Pearce--who was honoured in two ways, firstly as an invited member of 458 and then as an Honorary Member.

\* Whilst in Melbourne I called on Lou Silbereisen. Lou is as well as the rest of us, and sends his best wishes to all his mates, and he had plenty. Look after yourself, Lou.

\* Finally, two functions: a NSW Flight luncheon at the Ryde TAFE Catering College on March 12-12 for 1230. Please contact Eric Munkman 9972 0641 or Stan Longhurst 809 4902.

AND Anzac Day, after the March, we will be meeting again at the Criterion Hotel, between Pitt and Castlereagh Streets in Park Street. Downstairs in the cellar Bar Room Watch the Sydney papers for March details.

(ED. Jock has been in hospital with heart/breathing troubles. We wish him the very best.)

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Q. FLIGHT NEWS. from Jack Lewis.

The Melbourne Reunion was a great success: Squadron President Mick Singe welcomed us on arrival and he and his helpers saw to it that we had plenty to do and see for the whole week of the Reunion.

Q.Flight News (cont.)

One of the highlights of the week was a trip to Melbourne Casino where a fine lunch was served. Each member received a complimentary \$20 worth of chips to play at the various tables: some people did very well with their chips--others---well! Another great day was to visit the vineyards of the Yarra Valley; lunch found us at the historic de Bertoli vineyards. We enjoyed a delicious meal with plenty of the old vino; much better than North Africa. Finally, the dinner on Friday night, the closing event of a most enjoyable week.

Personal Pars.

Bert and Isla Garland have moved from their unit at St. Lucia to a Retirement Village, Forest Place, Durack. They also set sail on the "Oriana" for a cruise to Japan and various ports of call, including Guam and Hong Kong. Theo Ravenscroft has had a bad time of late healthwise: he was visiting Townsville and decided on a Medical Check-up: result--a triple by-pass then and there. He was on the verge of a massive heart attack. Medical people in Longreach had failed to pick this up. Recovering in hospital, Theo developed pneumonia. After clearing this up he underwent a further operation for an aneurysm in the abdomen. I spoke to Theo recently: he is O.K. and starting to go for short walks. I phoned Eric Lloyd last week. Eric and Bridie had to leave the All-States Reunion on the Wednesday and return home as Eric became ill. After weeks of tests the diagnosis is Asthma. Eric thinks he is rather too old to become an asthmatic. Too many "smokes" in the past.

Vale.

It is with sadness for me to write of the death of Ron Russell. Ron passed away peacefully in Melbourne on 6th December. After the Reunion the Russells stayed on in Melbourne visiting their family. Joan and Ron were visiting friends, sitting having a Scotch when Ron just suddenly passed on.

Best wishes to all.

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KIWI CALL. from Kevin George.

Once again we can take pleasure in congratulating an Australian Flight for a well organised and most enjoyable reunion. The good attendance at Melbourne was most encouraging: it appears we can look forward to many of the same. Long may they last!

I received a Christmas Card and letter from George McLeod of Nova Scotia. He enclosed a photograph of both of us taken at Ghissonaccia, Corsica in March 1944. George was Claude Bourque's navigator. Their crew was one of the three 458 crews who escorted Winston Churchill's Naval convoy en route to the Cairo Conference in November 1943. George is somewhat isolated in Eastern Canada as most of the Canadian Flight, and other old compatriots, being in Ontario or British Columbia. He advises that Claude died in 1987. (ED. Salute to his well-remembered self!)

VICTORIA FLIGHT NEWS.

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from Rupert Pearce.

Melbourne Reunion 19/25th November, 1995.

We had members from Queensland, N.S.W., Victoria, S. and W. Aust; plus 4 from Wales and 8 from New Zealand. It was a happy time. The Reception on the 19th attracted 143, and 142 attended the Squadron Dinner. The Day trips were well attended. They included a service at the Shrine of Remembrance, visits to the Melbourne Cricket Ground, the National Gallery, the Casino, and Day trips to the Yarra Valley, Ballarat and Daylesford.

March Social Event. A BBQ will be held at the home of Harry and Nell Ashworth, 13, Harverson Drive, Rosebud, (Note an incorrect address was shown in the November newsletter) Harry says bring only your food and drink. He can supply tables, chairs, etc.

VALE. We are sad to report that Ron Russell died suddenly in Melbourne on December 6th. 458 members attended his funeral service and we have sent our sympathy to Joan, Peter and Gillian.

(ED. Ron was a Fitter on 458, one of those who stayed long with us.

From Victoria (cont.) After the war he had a highly successful managerial career in the Oil Industry. He put his heart and very competent mind into anything he undertook: fortunately for us 458 was one of those things. Flight President of both Victoria and Queensland Flights (He and Joan moved to Queensland on his retirement), he was Squadron President in 1987-9. He attended many All-States Reunions and Squadron Conferences and played a major role in the 28th Reunion on the Gold Coast in 1993. He will be missed greatly!!

Anzac Day, Melbourne. The RAAF will move off first at 0920. After the March we will meet at the Melbourne Bowling Club, Windsor. Our ladies are welcome.

Christmas Parcel to Mrs. Matthews, of Holme-on-Spalding Moor.

Mrs. Matthews wrote to President Mick Singe saying "I received your "parcel in time for Christmas and thank you so much" She said there was snow for Christmas: and, sends her best wishes to all for 1996.

The Air Training Corps. Mick and Mavis Singe and Neil and June Dean attended the Flight Parade of No.2 (City of Preston) Flight on December 15th. The "Most Promising Cadet" was Kelly Littleboy, who was presented with a copy of "We Find and Destroy".

RAAFA Annual Ecumenical Church Service.

On March 24th commencing at 1130 a.m, at St. Martin's Church, South Yarra. A Buffet lunch will be available at the Air Force Club, Comwell Road, for \$12-00 each. Please book at the RAAFA by March 18th.

POWs in Europe. Dr. Margaret Barter of 12, Selwyn Street, Artarmon, NSW 2064 and Mr. K.H Hooper of 2B Bindel Street, Aranda 2614 plans to write a book on their personal experiences. We have told Dr. Barter of Jim Holliday's book "RAAF POWs of Lamsdorf."

Personal Par. Bruce Prideaux missed the Reunion because of ill-health and continues to have treatment. Our best wishes to him and Gloria. Dave Firth writes to say he has had cataracts removed from both eyes and is enjoying terrific eyesight again. Val Richards (12, Russell Avenue, Berwick, 3806) has rejoined us and should be on the newsletter list.

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SANDGROPPERS SAY..... from Ted Jewell.

I am sorry to report the passing of Ron Gannaway, of a heart attack. Ron was a very well known member who joined 458 in the Middle East. He was always present with his family at all our functions and will be sadly missed.

Our Xmas Dinner. This was once again held at the Freeway Hotel, South Perth. We had 45 attend. The lunch was great, plenty to eat and drink. It was good to see so many of the old Squadron members who came along---but the ranks are thinning out these days. Many thanks to Doreen McCarthy who presented the ladies and the men with lovely Xmas gifts.

BBQ in Mandurah. I had a BBQ at my home in Mandurah. Nobby Nobbs and his wife Esme are from Mandurah, all the others drove down from Perth. The weather was great and we had a fairly good crowd for lunch. A few members could not make it as it is about 80 kilos each way.

Anzac Lunch. This will be held as usual at the Hyde Park Hotel after the March and service. We would like to ask as many as possible to come along and swell the ranks.

To Singapore. I am off to Singapore in a couple of days for 11 days holiday--I am looking forward to it. All the best, Ted.

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CROWEATERS CHIT-CHAT. from Ted Creighton.

Bert Ravenscroft, along with other SA Flight members who attended the Melbourne Reunion have awarded many plus marks for a good show. Bonus points were given for everyone being under the same roof. Bert



Crowaters Chit-chat (cont.)

found the Yarra Valley winery trip to be particularly enjoyable; and owing to a family connection had a personal interest in the visit to the Convent Gallery.

A family gathering at home helped Ron Fuller to celebrate his 80th birthday on December 1st. Ron was an early aircrew member flying out of HOSM and then to the Middle East. Lack of mobility and other problems have made Ron consider forsaking his Brighton Rd. ¼ acre block and head for a Retirement village.

Just before Christmas Bill Cribb and Kevin Tait said G'Day to Arn. Scholar at the War Vets Home. Not having met Ian Sorell, they felt a bit shy about seeking him out. However Ian got his Christmas present with the news that the Sturt Football Club remains a force within the SANFL.

Val Richards has advised me that Gordon MacDonald who was listed as a "Contact Lost" in our post-war casualty list died some 5 years ago. Gordon served as a W/Op aircrew in Italy and Gib.

S.A. Submission clobbered by Conference. --the Chit-Chat Correspondent says--

Barossa Oct 91; Perth Oct 92; Gold Coast May 93; Canberra Nov 94; and Melbourne advanced from 96 to 95 has meant 5 Get togethers within a period of four years. Obviously the interval between reunions can be varied at will. But the duration is definitely taboo! All Squadron members are now of advanced years and a majority of lateral thinking Crowaters thought that to have the option of selecting any number of days to stay in SA but with official functions restricted to a maximum of three consecutive days would appeal to many and add flexibility and a fresh perspective to All-States Reunions. Conference has thought otherwise. Many of us in SA cannot comprehend and are quite unimpressed that our submission has been rejected. Such rejection causes problems. John Carey has called a further meeting of the SA Flight for Feb. 25th, He has a number of suggestions to protract a reunion. The outcome of the meeting is awaited with interest.

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THE BRITISH BULLETIN. from Norm. Duke.

I'm afraid NEWS is a bit thin on the ground for this edition, but we do have two good items.

We are pleased to report that we have made contact with Wally BEER who is living in Bath, and who was a member of Bryan Quinlan's crew at Protville. I hope we may have the opportunity of a "head to head" meeting later this year. I am in regular contact with Bryan who is an old friend, and who lives in Vancouver.

I reported in an earlier newsletter that Doreen Armstrong was undergoing a hip replacement operation last November. It was good to hear from her that the new spare part is functioning well and she expects to pass her next MOT with flying colours.

Our planned reunion for 1996 is in the early planning stages, and members should be receiving the proposals with this newsletter (i.e. direct from NLD). Kind regards, Norman.

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AT HOLME-on-SPALDING MOOR.

Graeme Coombes has received from Frank Robertson a copy of a project on the history of Holme. Very old that Manor/parish is. The Romans used local clay for pottery in 250 AD. Mentioned in Domesday Book in 1084 The Nave and Bays of All Saints Church date from 1250. The Constable family owned the area from about 1300 to 1537 when Sir Robert Constable led the Pilgrimage of Grace against Henry VIII and was executed. The Constables regained the Manor later during the Civil Wars. Sir William Constable was buried in Westminster Abbey but later disinterred--as a regicide. Holme went to the Langdale family and in 1778 to the Stourton family. In 1802 there were highwaymen--one Snowden Dunhill was transported to Botany Bay. The

At HOSM (cont.) The Blacksmith's Arms mentioned in 1823. A pity we didn't know these things when we were there that snowy winter!

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THE WORLD VETERANS FEDERATION: a meeting and a Journey. from Peter Alexander.

The International organisation for ex-service (Veterans) Associations is the World Veterans Federation. Associations from 60 countries belong. It has its H.Q. in Paris where its Secretary General (M. Serge Wourgaft) has his Office. WVF meets at either a Council meeting or a General Assembly, somewhere in the world, about every 18 months. There is an Executive Board that meets more often. The RAAF Association and the Australian Veterans and Defence Services Council, War Widows Guild and some other bodies belong. The RSL has been in and out but is currently not in. WVF looks after the international (Not National) interests of Veterans and War Victims and has UNO status.

There was a Council meeting in December in Marrakesh, Morocco. I attended as an Honorary (World) Vice President--having been Australian Council member and elected Vice President for Asia and the Pacific over past decades.

It was interesting to note changes coming onto the scene. While WWII representatives are still there, we had bright intelligent young people from such countries as Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia, Macedonia, remnant Yugoslavia, all seeking information and advice (which they said they got). They had difficulty in talking to each other but were not at each others' throats. There were PLO observers, seeking membership, who had a dramatic and moving public handshake with the Israeli delegate. There were sad young men with beards and missing limbs from Afghanistan. There were French-speaking Africans from warring countries in that continent (Guinea-Bissau for example). There were a considerable array of motions: seeking prohibition of land mines, and blinding laser weapons: seeking settlement in the Balkans; seeking advice on Post-traumatic stress disorder (on which Australia is an expert country and which is to assist at a Conference in Zagreb this year). But perhaps the very fact that Veterans leaders--mostly very influential in their own countries, meet, debate, see how their problems are similar--and that the other fellow is a human being--is the most valuable facet of these meetings--to which Australian delegates and no doubt most others pay their own way.

The next will be in Seoul, Korea in 1997 a high-powered delegation (the Minister, and Presidents of both Korean Veterans Associations) persuaded the Council. In 1998 or 1999 there will be a meeting in Krakow, Poland.

Hospitality by Moroccan organisers was warm and lavish. Morocco was seen to be an attractive and peaceful-seeming country and the weather was good.

Rita and I went, via Madrid, to Lisbon for a day or three but I had (being on an Australian passport--Rita had a British) a nightmare journey. TO go from part A to Part B of the Madrid terminal Australians need a Visa. I hadn't got one. In the end after a day of delays I had to fly to Heathrow (Rita went to Lisbon which was just as well as our bags had). Two aborted take-offs from Madrid; arrival around midnight at Heathrow--largely shut down. No Hotel beds, no taxis, fog and rain. Did finally get a Hotel bed at 3 a.m.. No passage to Lisbon for two days. Not recommended, wandering benighted around the tunnels of Heathrow.

There were other, amusing, episodes during this odyssey. For example, at one Banquet in Marrakesh, several delegates including the Secretary General and me were (accidentally no doubt) seated in pools of water. Also several ladies in silk frocks who were not amused!

By the way, do I hear a query (we do get them) what does Australia get out of these meetings as our Repat system is pretty good. Answer (apart from the opportunity to contribute to others help, we did get some very useful information (from USA delegates) on Vocational Rehabilitation.

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