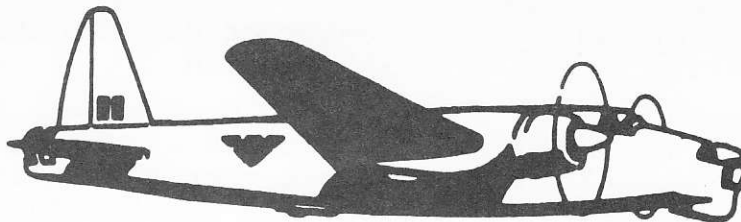


458

SQUADRON NEWS



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

Year 48, No.189.

February, 1997.

4 5 8 S Q U A D R O N C O U N C I L

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ALL'S WELL FOR 458 AT GRIFFITH.

Currently 65 458 members have registered for the All-States Reunion, and with friends and family will carry the number over 100, for the 31st All-States Reunion beginning on March 3rd. See you there?!

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THE BRITISH BULLETIN. from Norman Duke.

Personal Pars.

Norman Gilbert will be visiting Sydney and Melbourne --arriving on March 8th--just too late for Griffith!! He expects to make contact with Eric Munkman during his trip. The main purpose of his visit is the christening of a Great Grandson... Congratulations!--and how time flies. Also visiting OZ will be Jack Baker, now a valued

British Bulletin (cont.) member of U.K.Flight. So we shall have a representative at the Griffith Reunion.

We have heard from Eric Wise via a brother who lives in Perth, W.A. Eric served with 458 starting at Holme OSM and right through to Gibraltar where he was SNCO at North Front when the Squadron was stood down. He tells me he worked with Gordon Vale for the duration, and would be glad to hear from any old comrades.

Bill Prater---another new arrival to the fold. A former Wop/Ag who joined us at Alghero and who stayed with the Squadron until Gibraltar. He flew originally with "Crusher" Jones at Foggia and then as a spare bod with various crews listed---F/S Whittem, F/O Aitken, W/O Lehdey, F/O Slater, W/O Kelliher, F/S Fox, F/O Rosenberg, F/O Smith. He stayed on with the RAF until 1966. Anyone out there remember Bill?

In Memoriam. We report with great sadness the death of our good friend and colleague Eric Phillips, on November 26th last after a long time suffering from strokes and finally cancer. Eric was for many years a staunch and faithful supporter of the 458 Association and he will be missed by all his friends. We send our deepest sympathy to his wife Sylvia and her family.

The next U.K.Reunion? Where? When? Any suggestions welcome from members. Must complete planning soon. Kindest regards Norm.

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THE CORNSTALK COMMUNICATION. from Jock McGowen.

* We must report the passing of Sven Hansen--we offer our sincere condolences---and Ray Turley from the West. Our sympathy from N.S.W.

* There will be no further News before Griffith, so let me add one or two items: Don't forget to bring your medals, these will be needed for the Memorial Service on the Friday;

2, A stock of Pocket badges has been obtained and these will be available for \$20-00 each, so bring your money with you;

3. The self-adhesive windshield badges for your car will also be on hand for sale at \$5-00 each

4. Don't forget it could be hot during the Reunion so bring sun protection gear, big hats and anything else that will protect you from the Aussie sun;

5. And don't forget to bring any item you can contribute to the restoration of the Loch Ness Wimpy;

6. The 458 members who will be attending from the various States (mostly with their ladies, some solo) is as follows:

NSW 38; UK 1; S.A. 8; Q.5; ACT 2; Vict 6; NZ 3; WA 2.

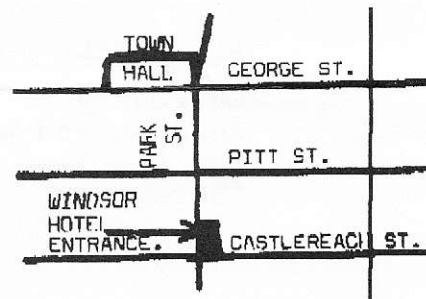
* Don't forget the new venue for Azac Day in Sydney. The correct name of the Hotel is the WINDSOR HOTEL. We enter from Park Street on the corner of Castlereagh Street; upstairs and hard left and there we are.

* I have had a long chat with our old W.O.D./ Adjutant Gordon Vale. He has trouble with his legs but sends best wishes to all the Squadron fellows, and will try to make the Anzac Lunch.

* One more Wimpy? I heard a comment from a chap who travels overseas a lot that another Wimpy has been found in desert areas in Palestine. Anyone else heard anything?

Regards, Jock.

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CANUCK CAUCUS. from Jim Donaldson.

I prefer the word processor to my writing, the reason being that I can read it. Also it has a Word Speller Dictionary that tells me when I punch the wrong key. Why kid myself, time has taken its toll, my eyes, my hands, are not what they used to be. The old chassis is giving out, the

Canuck Caucus (cont.)

computer system needs a new program, the electrical system has no spark. I am not going to get into the plumbing system --that's a story in itself.

It was the war that brought us together. It was a book written by Peter Alexander that has kept us together. I am sure we of 458 Squadron want him to know that we are deeply indebted to him for writing *We Find and Destroy*.

And to all the others who had the foresight to set up the Squadron Council, the Squadron News--I know that those of us who live in other parts of the world thank you for the efforts in keeping the spirit of 458 Squadron alive, and us informed of our mates.

God bless all of you who in any way helped to keep our memories, our spirits and our relationships alive.

You could raise a glass to those that have gone before and another for those of us still here. Have a good one, Matey!

I have lost many people in my life that I wanted to thank for things they have done: unfortunately in some cases it was too late.

Jim.

(ED. Jim's lady, Peg, is having a bad time health-wise. We send her and (him, sincere hope for better things.)

Q.FLIGHT NEWS. from Jack Lewis.

The Flight has been inactive of late. Our members are stacking up the years and the old body is finding all the weak parts which makes members' participation in activities rather difficult. News has become improved from news in Members' letters that accompanied Annual Subs.

"Snowy" Alan Atherton. Has had a trip to Thailand, the main purpose to visit his eldest son who is engaged in the computer business there. He spent some time in the island of Samui, about four miles flight from Bangkok and still blanketed with city smog.

However he found it interesting and had a good time. Another trip, railway to Nam Fok, known to POWs as Tah Soe. He was able to walk over the River Kwai Bridge.

Peter Bailie has had a trip with his wife to Cairns. They travelled back to Brisbane on the slow train that stops every night, a six day trip, very enjoyable. Eric Bird--Mrs Bird says Eric isn't very well, very shaky these days. Jack Baxter--Kitty writes that "John and I are both well" but afraid no exciting news to tell. Just watching the boats sail by these days. Gordon Dalrymple is making slow but steady progress since a quadruple heart buy-pass and lower back surgery. Is happy with progress. Activities curtailed to some extent.

Erle Hetherington. Tried to arrange a trip to Griffith with Danny Dangaard but for various reasons it fell through. Erle says he is pretty good for 84½ years old. (That's what I like to hear--J.L.)

Ian Higlett says he is leading a quiet life until the travel bug bites him. Ian turned 80 last August, but if he follows the lead of his Father and Mother he should see another 16-17 years out. Fred Kleckham will be unable to go to Griffith as his wife has had major surgery she barely survived. Fred has bought a computer and is now on the way to becoming literate in the modern technological way. Jack Hobbs with wife Shiela has had a couple of trips to Northern Queensland, one by car, the second by train to Cairns for their eldest son's 50th birthday. Shiela is planning another World tour for mid '97 while Jack will stay home and go fishing in Hervey Bay. Family commitments will prevent Jack from attending Griffith. Jim McKay says wife Joyce has recently undergone abdominal surgery. Doctor says she made a miraculous recovery. Bernie McLouglin will not be at the Reunion but sends his regards to all. His main interest at the moment is commissioning a painting of a Wimpy taking off at Bone, with all the rain and mud spraying behind it. Theo Ravenscroft has a few medical problems to sort out. He is over all his surgery but has the odd pain or two every now and then. Cec Bull, a long and respected Associate member of 458 has featured in the

Q.Flight News (cont.) Press as a golfer. Cec did not start golf until he was 60 but recently put in a round of 75 on Logan City Golf Course. Pretty good effort!

Kind regards. May 1997 be a good year. Jack Lewis.

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MEDALS--MALTESE AND FRENCH.

Readers will recall the reissue by the Maltese Government of its 50th Anniversary Medal for those involved in the defence of the Island. It was obtainable from Award Productions Ltd., P.O.Box 30, Haslemere, Surrey, England GU26 6UT for 25 pounds and the miniature for 8-50 pounds for those eligible. Some 458ers have obtained the medals but the suppliers have queried the eligibility of others who served but were not based on Malta. We have taken this up through the RAAFA Association with firstly the Maltese High Commission in Canberra and then with the Office of the Prime Minister in Malta. The position is now clearer. The wording of the Maltese Rules is:

Eligibility for the Medal shall be restricted to:

(a) All uniformed members of the Allied Armed Forces....who, at any time in the qualifying period, served:

(i) in Malta; or

(ii) in air or sea operations in the Mediterranean connected with the defence, relief or supply of Malta, including participation in convoys and their escorts....

Clearly being stationed on the Island is not required. Any application for the medal will need to be supported by a certificate which 458 office-bearers can supply and which should be phrased closely in line with the Rule. We are seeking further definition of the word operation. The qualifying period is 10 June 1940 to 8 September 1943.

There is also a French Commemorative Award. This has been discussed with the French Embassy in Canberra and is clearly for service in France under French authority. 458 did not operate under French authority or command. Whether members of the brief 458 service in the south of France may have eligibility may be worth some further inquiry.

KIWI CALL from Kevin George.

On reading of "Wink" Price's death in the News, I wrote to Lee, "Wink"'s widow, and received an appreciative letter in reply. I recalled some of the experiences "Wink" and I had shared. Much of this she already knew. She chose to comment on an incident which occurred at Ghissonaccia in 1944. "Wink" was introducing me to the Fairchild Argus which went with the Ops room role I was taking over from him. He flew it with a casual disregard, no doubt because it seemed so basic after the Wimpy. He chose to take off from a restricted corner of the airfield though larger spaces were available. We cleared the scrub at the edge of the field---just---and someone who had been standing in the line of take off fled fearing to have his head taken off by the undercarriage.

Lee wrote that "Wink" was thrilled when he made contact with the Squadron again and very disappointed when his doctor would not give him clearance to attend the Gold Coast reunion in 1993. She also recalled that during the last few years of his life "Wink" talked more about his time in the Air Force. Yes, we are all doing that. Farewell to a good keen man. Kevin.

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CROWEATERS CHIT-CHAT. from Ted.Creighton.

There was a good attendance at the AGM and pre-Christmas Get-together. Bert Ravenscroft was confirmed as Flight President and Treasurer, whilst Ted.Creighton continues on as Secretary. Just before we started to head for home Verna Riseley came up with the bright idea of carrying on the Season's festivities with an al fresco chicken and salad luncheon at her home on January 5th. On a fairly hot day some 22 Flight members had an enjoyable gathering, Thanks,Verna!

To chronicle the health problems of those who should be fronting up for Sick Parade would involve more names and take more space than the Editor would permit. Suffice to say that if Command called for a Maximum Effort, we would be struggling to set up and crew a solitary Tiger Moth, let alone a Flight of Wimpeys. However I must at least mention a previous Flight Secretary and correspondent, Geoff.Esau. In a pre-Christmas chat with Geoff, he said I could let the blokes know that his health had now reached a stage where attendance at any Squadron gatherings is quite out of the question. Our thoughts are with you, Geoff., and we will keep in touch.

Another sad note we have to record the death of Ian Sorell. Ian was a Navigator at El Shallufa.

Preliminary notice is given that we think a change of scenery might be a good thing for our mid-year luncheon. We are presently negotiating for a room with a view at the Grange Golf Club. More details later but keep in mind the usual time of late July or early August.

Best wishes for the Griffith Reunion.

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

I have to report the passing of two 458 Squadron members who were both in the Transport Section and were with the Squadron most of the time we were away. Ray Turley passed away in December, had hoped to spend Xmas with his family but missed by a few days. Ray had been sick for some time, died of cancer. Laurie "Pops" Grigsby passed away in January after a long illness, also of cancer. We had not seen much of Laurie for many years. Our members who are able to turn up at our functions are getting fewer these days.

Len Stewart is going to Hollywood Hospital for an operation on his knee. John Lilly rang me the other day and said he has to go to Hollywood twice a week for treatment. Peter McCarthy is not too well, I'm told. Doug. Anderson hasn't been well for some time. Bill Clues says he is fairly well and is now riding his bike again--looks pretty fit to me. Charlie Davis' legs are not too good, he was in a wheel chair at Ray Turley's funeral. I went to look up Curly O'Connor during the weekend; he had been in hospital with a busted hip--not the Curly of old. Best wishes to all with health problems.

Xmas Lunch. Everyone had a good time at our Xmas lunch in December. 40 people turned up--12 458 members and the rest wives and friends. It is good to have a talk about old times. I think most get a little confused about times and events.

BBQ at Mandurah. On February 2nd there will be a BBQ at my home at Mandurah. The weather forecast is very hot--hope they can make it. At the moment there are plenty of crabs and prawns here at Mandurah. Have had a few good feeds already.

All the best, Ted.

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VICTORIAN NEWS. from Rupert Pearce.

Dandenong Fires. John Bilney was away when the fires broke out in the (Dandenong) Hills on Jan 20/21. Came home to find his neighbour had saved each house on either side. He lost his back fence, some of his

Victorian News (cont.)

garden and 2½ tonnes of wood he had split for the winter. His neighbour was a good samaritan and John is full of praise.
Congratulations to Peg.Cuthbertson, who has celebrated her 80th birthday.

The Sick List. Les Kennedy phoned to say that Thelma Riddoch has been in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Ballarat for some time. John Fleming has had his ups and downs. Bill Fordyce has had a pacemaker fitted and says he has not felt so well for years. Mavis Singe has been getting good reports from her doctor. Enid Dowling has recently been a hospital patient and we hope is well on the way to a good recovery. June Schoppe has an operation scheduled in February. We wish you well, June.

Social NOtes. The RAAF held a 75th Anniversary Concert at Melbourne Park on December 1st. It was a very enjoyable night, those who came were June and Neil Dean, Sue and Ron Eggers, Joanne and Ken Hinton, Shirley and Don. Granger, Beatrice Morkham, Vivienne Morris, Rupert Pearce, Norma Pollard, June Schoppe, Mavis and Mick Singe.

There will be a BBQ at the Ashworths home--13 Harverson Drive, Rosebud, on Sunday March 16th. A notice has been sent to members.

We hope to see many at the Anzac March--afterwards at the Melbourne Bowling Club for a light lunch. Ladies welcome.

Our Annual Meeting will be at the RAAF Association, 4, Cromwell Street, South Yarra on Friday May 30th at 12 noon, and lunch afterwards

Those attending Griffith are looking forward to it.

Rupert Pearce.

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ON THE REPATRIATION FRONT.

This remains an area of constant action. Current matters developing or being argued about include the current Military Compensation Scheme for current service personnel--shown by the Blackhawk tragedy to be inadequate: the introduction by the Government suddenly, after long representations by the ex-service movement--particularly the Australian Veterans and Defence Services Council (AVADSC)--of a renewed CRTS -- vocational training for discharged veterans--something we of WWII received and has not been given since--Korean and Vietnam veterans were not given it. Then there is the matter of Vietnam Veterans children with Spina Bifida. USA has recognised that being sprayed in Vietnam may have consequences for the children of the Veteran. Australia does not accept that. We think that failure by our Department is a scandal. Finally to mention ---since we framed it--is the proposed Australian Veterans Charter setting out in clear language what Australia over 80 years, many political speeches and Acts of Parliament of difficult language has undertaken to do for its veterans and their families. We think it desirable to protect veterans as their numbers shrink and they and their widows age and they become a less effective lobby group, that such a Charter be formally adopted. After many months of negotiation with a suspicious Department, it looks as if the new Minister, Mr. Bruce Scott, is going to adopt and issue it in Parliament. When that happens, score it up to 458!

AVADSC, incidentally, is the crest Council for interested national Ex-Service bodies to discuss and when they agree, as they normally do, adopt common policies. 36 such Associations, large and small, belong and it works well.

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