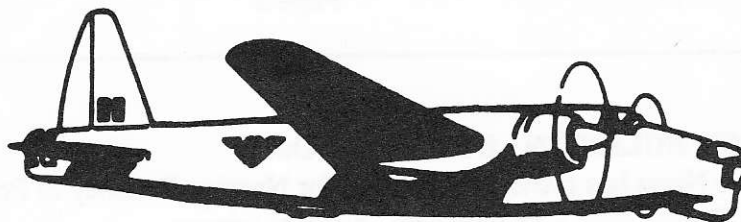


458

SQUADRON NEWS



JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL, GPO Box 5289, SYDNEY, NSW, AUSTRALIA, 2001

Year 49, No. 193

February 1998

458 SQUADRON COUNCIL

OFFICE BEARERS

Squadron President
Squadron Treasurer
Squadron Secretary
Hon. Squadron Auditor

Eric Kelly (Q)
Peter Alexander (NSW)
Bob Bruce (NSW)
Frank Ward (NSW)

Squadron Vice Presidents:

Australia:	Jim Palmer (WA)
	Bert Oliver (SA)
UK	Norman Duke (England)
Canada	Jim Donaldson (Manitoba)
New Zealand	Kevin George

Editor: Peter Alexander (Fax: 9261 8848)
Publisher: Eric Munkman

Flight Correspondents

Canada	Jim Donaldson, 72 Amarynth Crescent, Winnipeg, MB R2Y, Canada
SA	Ted Creighton, 33 Farr Terrace, Glenelg East, SA, 5045
Victoria	Rupert Pearce, 46 Mt Pleasant Road, Nunawading, Victoria, 3131
UK	Norman Duke, Orchard Cottage, Guildford Road, Cranleigh, England
NSW	Jock McGowen, 110 Patrick Street, Hurstville, NSW, 2220
Qld	Jack Lewis, 5 Cupania Road, Victoria Point, Queensland, 4165
WA	Ted Jewell, 61 Wyaree Road, Mandurah, WA, 6210
NZ	Kevin George, 20 Kowhair Avenue, Kaikohe, New Zealand

Organiser-in-Chief Jack Lewis, for Q Flight advises that bookings are coming in well for next September's All-States Reunion at Caloundra - 58 bookings already. However it will help greatly if Squadron members and ladies and friends will book now. This is a wonderful program with no effort spared to make this All-States Reunion one of the greatest yet. Book with Jack Lewis - address as above.

#####

THE BRITISH BULLETIN - from Norman Duke.

Once again the News has provided the link - for Norman Peachey of Point Clare, NSW - to contact his former Skipper, Mo. Borne, after a 55 year gap. Another winner.

Jack Ball, who was mentioned by Brian Quinlan in his Canadian report in November has now been in touch with me. He is overjoyed to have got together with Jim Donaldson again. In Winnipeg after 50 years and is now hoping to hear from Archie Fell in New Zealand. He is inquiring for an old friend of Shallufa Frank Baker a Wop/Ag from Barking, Essex, who finished up as a POW in Italy. Sadly, Jack is recently widowed but tells me he has 2 sons, 3 daughters, 13 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren to keep him on the straight and narrow. I wonder how he remembers all their names?

You will be receiving the sad news, from the Canadian Flight, of the death of Peter Eastcott on 29th November 1997. As one of his oldest friends I would like to add my tribute to his life and friendship. I first met Peter in Malta in March, 1943 when he was flying as Navigator with (the then) Major McKenzie after transferring from 38 Squadron. He was awarded the DFC after a spectacular daylight torpedo attack on a tanker in Tobruk Harbour. We became firm friends and after completing operations at Protville travelled back to the UK together and served on several airfields as Navigation Instructors before our ways parted at the end of WW II.

Following University under the Veterans Rehabilitation Scheme Peter followed a distinguished career with General Electric as an electrical engineer for 36 years during which time he registered 54 patents, receiving a number of prestigious awards. He was also honoured for outstanding community service in creating the Helpme Program for rapid medical treatment in home emergency. Truly, a life of full and active service.

Joyce and I who had spent Christmas in Vancouver with our daughter Tina and son in law Ralph were very fortunate to be able to visit Bea, Peter's widow in Peterborough--thanks to the transport provided by our hosts Micky and Marge Reid. A very sad occasion but also rewarding visit to pay our respects to one of 458's stalwarts and to Bea his constant support.

During our visit to Vancouver we also enjoyed meeting Bryan and Joan Quinlan in their delightful home and again for lunch at a spectacular riverside restaurant. Every time we meet we get younger. Also spoke to Sid Winchester living on Vancouver Island who casually mentioned that back in the UK - after 458 - he had been shot down in a Halifax over the North Sea and spent a year as a POW. Stories we never knew!

Our congratulations to the Editor from UK Flight on the well deserved and prestigious award of the World Veterans Rehabilitation Prize. The Citation says it all.

Best wishes to all and good health in 1998 - Norman.

THE CORNSTALK COMMUNICATION. From Jock Mc Gowen.

*We record the loss of Noel Spurling during last month. He passed away in a Nursing Home in the Blue Mountains. Noel came to 458 as one of "Reos" who reinforced the Squadron when some of the long-serving groundstaff were repatriated to Australia. An Engine fitter with 458 for the rest of its service. Noel was a

Cornstalk Communication cont'd

very quiet lad. In after years, in and around Sydney, he was a "loner" but found something of a family with 458 with who he was a loyal attender. His great friend was Freddy Strom - who passed on a few years ago. Our sympathies to those of his family who remain.

*Members will recall the fact that a year or more ago we obtained from RAAF HQ in Canberra a microfilm of the records of 458. This has been difficult to get reproduced as there are some 600 photos (at about 25c each copy) and not all copies are legible. We were delighted when Rupert Pearce came forward and with his son has nearly finished the whole project. This will be available for members to look over at Caloundra Reunion-- in six-monthly volumes. In fact it deals with flying operations and those who flew them. Groundstaff are mentioned only when killed!

*The placing of the Squadron History Map in the 8 EFTS Museum at Narrandera to commemorate Squadron members who lost their lives has finally been arranged. Tom Moore has made up a beautiful coloured Squadron Map which gives all the details of the Squadron as well as naming the members of 458 who trained at Narrandera. Arrangements have been made with the Narrandera City Council to have the Map duly erected and dedicated on Tuesday March 10 at 1130 a.m. Members and friends are invited to attend. Please make your own accommodation arrangements. It would be great if we could get the six members of 458 that we have to attend - Bert Garland, Pete Pettit, Col Fereday, Ron Miller, Ralph Bailey and Merv Hargreaves.

*We had a pre-Christmas lunch at the TAFE College and some 32 members and wives were present. It was the usual very pleasant lunch.

*Members will recall that there are few Wellingtons around these days. As we all know there is a Mk 10 in Hendon Museum and the famous R for Robert out of Loch Ness and a Mk 1C from the same OTU as R for Robert found on the hills of Scotland, this was L7775. R for Robert was N298. Up to then 3 remaining Wimpeys. Reading a copy of "Aeroplane" dated June 1996 it showed photos of yet another Wimpy in 300 feet of water in the Mediterranean. Who knows, it might be one of ours. It appeared to be white. Perhaps Norm Duke can supply more details?

*How wonderful to read in the Australia Day Honours List that our friend Fred McKay had been given the highest honour in the Order of Australia (AC - Companion) This Fred can add to his CMG and OBE. To you, Fred, and Meg our best wishes and hearty congratulations. It could not be given to a nicer person. We are proud of you both!

*And still they come, after all these years! George Farrey has come to join us. George was a Wop/Ag in Jack Hamilton's crew. Welcome George. We hope to see you on Anzac Day and then all functions.

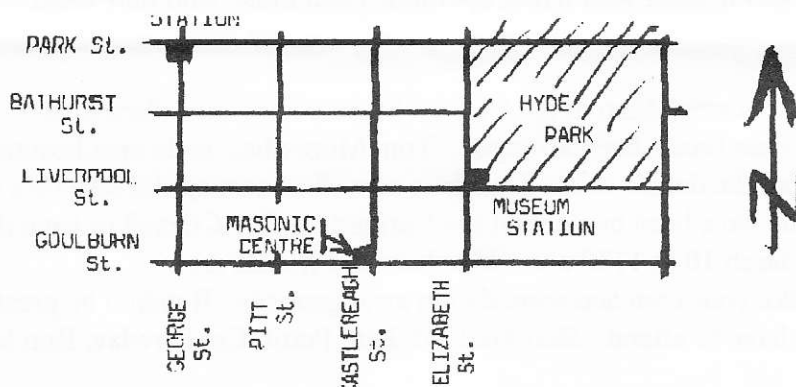
*Now, don't forget about Anzac Day and the new venue - the NSW Masonic Centre. This is NOT the Masonic Club. The Centre is on the corner of Castlereagh and Goulburn streets. The entry is from Goulburn Street. We have a room to ourselves on the Ground Floor.

*We have received some notes from Jim Whittem regarding his visit to the UK and linking up with Norm Duke to inspect progress on R for Robert and its static restoration. He presented Norm with the items we

Cornstalk Communication cont'd

had collected here for R for Robert - a couple of interior lights from my collection and that curtain from Mick Singe he used to protect his piano accordion on its way home we have a photo of the presentation. Jim said he twisted Norm's arm to attend a Reunion in Australia. We all second that invitation. There are a couple of photos--the presentation; and Jim in the pilot's seat. They may be too dark to print in the News but should be in the Album for the next reunion.

*Don't forget Narrandera (give me a ring for information), or the new Anzac Day venue. It should be good--thanks to Eric and Noel. See you there. Jock.



LUNCHEON - T.A.F.E COLLEGE OF CATERING, RYDE 3RD MARCH, 1998 12-1230PM CONTACT
 \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ ERIC MUNKMAN 9972 0641

CROWEATERS CHIT-CHAT. From Ted Creighton.

A final roll-call of 27 for the pre-Christmas get-together and AGM gave a good indication that the S A Flight is likely to rock on for a few years ahead. Current and future matters were discussed at length and a report will be forwarded to the Caloundra Conference in September.

Sad News.

With regret we have to record the loss of another S A Flight member. Mel Senn died on November 22.

Mel was, we think, the only Croweater "Instrument basher" serving on the Squadron. Quiet and unassuming, he was always there in the background and we will miss him sadly. Our condolences to Ruth and the family. In other sad news, Pat Cribb has reported the death of Tom "Billy" Brown of Devonport, Tasmania. Tom and Bill Cribb were great mates on the Squadron.

Good News.

Verna Riseley has offered to repeat last year's successful chicken and salad luncheon at her home, 337 Kensington Road, Kensington Gardens. Similar costs and arrangement to last time, but to avoid the really hot weather the date has moved to Sunday March 15. At the AGM some 20 or so indicated their likely attendance. RSVP to Verna 83326483 by March 10 to confirm numbers. Don't forget a couple of folding chairs and card table, and if you can offer preparation help to Verna, please do so.

Personal Pars.

Before Christmas Pat Carey left to visit with her sister in Canada and expected to return in February. Pat has vacated her previous address and we are awaiting confirmation of a new one.

Croweaters Chit Chat - cont'd**Anzac Day, 1998 cont'd**

number of limitations. Seating is one of them. As more and more of our ladies become involved lunch has become an important part of the day. Rick Michell has said he will make arrangements next door at the Gouger Cafe for numbers approximating those of last year. To avoid the confusion of suddenly crowding Earls Bar with late comers and non-marchers there could be a separate gathering direct to the Gouger from about 1245 to 1.00 pm.

How About a Roster for Sister Anna (or is it Hannah?)

The SA Flight Squadron banner is our equivalent of Regimental or Battalion colours. For a number of years it has been proudly carried by 458ers (some no longer with us) in its place of honour at the head of the Flight. It has a particular depth of meaning to most surviving members. Whilst we may now be scratching to come up with a Squadron bloke fit enough to carry it through the March, surely we have no trouble to come up with fit young relatives of 458ers eager and willing to accept the honour. This year it will be carried by Rick Michell, and we should open nominations for a roster. There should never have been the need to involve the ATC as happened last year.

Subscriptions.

These remain at \$10 and are due on Anzac Day. If you are one of those blokes still dragging your feet on 1997 subs, now is the chance to post \$20 to Bert Ravenscroft 11 Thornton Street, Henley Beach, 5022.

+++++

Q FLIGHT NEWS. From Jack Lewis.

I had received a letter from Fred Kleckham just too late for the last News. Fred writes that he is back from his overseas trip, which included visiting South Africa--Port Elizabeth, Durban and a Game Park. On to UK where he attended the UK Reunion at Stratford-on-Avon. It was great there with 3 from Oz.

After a visit to the Isle of Skye - where he had trouble understanding the locals (ED We didn't know Fred had the Gaelic!) over to Paris where with his (rusty) French he could make himself understood Fred said he did the usual tourist things. Then on to Canada, Calgary, on to a big beef lot on the edge of the Prairies, enjoyed the beauty of the Rockies. Much impressed with the city of Vancouver and a trip to Monterey. Then back home and no luggage (it was in San Antonio, Texas). However, Qantas did the right thing and delivered it to his home within 24 hours. Fred says he needs a holiday now to get over the two months away.

At Bone and elsewhere.

Bernie McLoughlin received a letter from Mo Borne of Bristol - he was given one of the prints (the Wimpy taking off in the wet and slush at Bone) that Bernie had sent to Leon Armstrong. Mo raises the point that there were two Q for Queenies at Bone in 1944. QF278 at the beginning and QF339 later in the year. Mo wondered which was the aircraft in the photo from which the painting was taken. Quote Bernie - I originally thought the photo was taken in April but Lock Simpson has convinced me it was taken on either 24th or 25th February '44 and the plane was QF 278. Laurie Le Guay who took the photo only visited the Squadron once and flew with Lock in Q on the 24th February. Lock did not make a record of the Q he flew but on 23rd February I had flown as 2nd pilot to Mel Priest in QF 278. There seems no doubt therefore that the aircraft in the photo and the painting was QF 278.

Greetings.

I would like to say hello to the following members who have been ill or infirm of late. Q Flight sends best wishes to Jack Baxter after his knee and hip surgery. Jack and Kitty hope to make it to Caloundra. Eric (Tweetie) Bird in hospital. Gordon Dalrymple - who wishes all a happy reunion at Caloundra.

Q Flight News - from Jack Lewis cont'd

Frank Wilks in hostel in Toowoomba and receiving good care and attention - Hilda says that healthwise he is good.

Associate member Cec Bull is not 100%, having various tests and hoping doctor says he can still play his golf. There was word from Theo Ravenscroft at Xmas - he is still having regular medical attention. To any other member I have not heard from - all the best.

At Caloundra.

Response so far very good. Eric Kelly and I would like to thank Kath and Evelyn, also Hettie and Cyril Murray, Eric Lloyd and Jim McKay for their great contributions in organisation. Also to Don Brandon, Bernie McLoughlin, Jack Hobbs and Bert Garland for advice and suggestions. Lyn Reynolds the Convention Manager of the Oasis Complex - we could not have done without her we feel we have catered for everyone to enjoy a happy and relaxed reunion and it will be a great success.

VALE

It is with sadness that I have to report the death of our old friend Clive Wyman after a long illness. Joan and Sel Foote, Bernie McLoughlin, Don Brandon and Jack Lewis attended Clive's Memorial Service later that week. President Eric Kelly was out of town and unable to attend. With regards, Jack Lewis.

^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^^

SANDGROPPERS SAY From Ted Jewell.

WA Flight has been low key since Xmas Dinner/Reunion last December. As in other years we had a good roll-up of about 40 people. It was so pleasing to see many Squadron members there. After a few drinks and a excellent meal every one got down to talking about old and new news. Most seem to have good memories of what they did so long ago when we were serving with the Squadron. Flight members present were Bill and Joan Clues, Ted Jewell, John Lilly, Doug Anderson, Jim and Lucy Palmer, Charlie and Betty Davis, Henry and Vera Etherton, Nobby and Esme Nobbs, Gordon and Olga Jones, Margaret Gannaway, Poss Dale, Doreen McCarthy, Bill and Flip Kelliher. Others there were friends and Associate members. All had a most enjoyable day.

Personal Pars.

Charlie Davis is now driving around in a new electric wheel chair as he is unable to walk with his stiff leg. I had a letter from Charlie McCarthy who said he is having an operation on his eye. Most members seem to be enjoying life in these later years - putting up with a bit of sickness now and then. Its hard to recall all the young airmen of 458 Squadron days, however. But everyone still lives those days in their thoughts - it is something you never forget.

In a week's time I am off to Tasmania with a friend for several weeks. Should be a good trip.

Next.

Squadron members are coming down to my place at Mandurah on 22 February for a BBQ lunch - usually have a good crowd even though it is a 100 km drive down from Perth. I wonder where Slim Smith is living these days, I haven't seen him since I left 458. All the best - Ted.

@ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @

FROM PARTS OF A GREAT COUNTRY - Canadian News from Bryan Quinlan.

You may already have learned the sad news of Peter Eastcott's death on 29th November 1997. We know that all our Australian mates who knew Peter will join with us in heartfelt condolences to Bea and the family. Peter will be sorely missed.

Canadian News - from Brian Quinlan cont'd

Mick and Marg Reid have attended the service in Peterborough - and I enclose Mick's letter which provides a first class account of the impressive Masonic service.

Peter had a distinguished Air Force career during which he earned an immediate DFC with 38 Squadron, flying with Lloyd Wiggan's crew, for his brilliant feat of navigation leading to the successful dusk attack by three torpedo Wellingtons on a fuel tanker at Tobruk, which deprived Rommel of desperately needed fuel. This action significantly impacted Rommel's operations and his ability to resist the 8th army's advance. Peter was wounded by shell fragments during the run-in and one aircraft was shot down. Subsequently Peter went on to become Bruce McKenzie's navigator on 458 at Malta and Protville followed in that capacity by Norm Duke, who fittingly is the subject of the latter part of this report. Peter had in civilian life a brilliant career as an electrical engineer with Canadian General Electric earning 54 patents and numerous engineering awards. In addition Peter was an active humanitarian and was the recipient of several awards for these endeavours.

On a much happier note, it was great to have a couple of get-togethers with Norm and Joyce Duke during their visit to Vancouver at Christmas to see their daughter Tina, and Ralph. We really enjoyed catching up on the intervening years since the 1992 Winnipeg reunion. During the dinner I put Norm in touch with Sid Winchester on Vancouver Island - their chat by 'phone was their first contact since Protville - 56 years ago! Best wishes from the 458 Canucks.

From Mick Reid in Mississauga to Bryan Quinlan.

We said our farewells to our old buddy Peter on Wednesday in Peterborough's oldest and largest Church....we sat in front of a table leading to the chancel on which Peter's gongs were displayed accompanied on either side by two photos: ne, young Peter wearing his pukka stiff-brim flat top a la desert shirt pinned to which was his recent well-earned DFC. Opposite a fine photo of a very mature, healthy Peter. Below his framed medals lay his Masonic apron.

A CGE colleague movingly read the poem "A Man named Peter" - surely portrayed a man called Eastcott. Then "High Flight" intoned to music. Then the Lesson read by a much-bemedalled Legionnaire. The Rector, who could have been a service man, gave a fine eulogy but made no mention of Peter's wartime contribution. The choir led us in a song of praise before we adjourned to the "Great Hall" to express personal condolences to Bea....

+++++

KIWICALL From Kevin George.

I have been planning a visit to my numerous cousins in the Illawarra district (of NSW) in the early autumn and it has occurred to me that this could coincide with Anzac Day, which would enable me to be in Sydney on the Day and march under the Squadron banner. This would make an interesting change from the Dawn service in Kaikohe and I am starting to look forward to it. Present plans are to fly to Sydney on 24th April, spend that night at the Castlereagh Motel which I understand is just around the corner from the Squadron HQ. I will confirm when bookings are confirmed. Two flights to Australia in one year would be a record and I hope it will occur. We look forward to being among Squadron friends in April and again at Caloundra in September. With kind regards, Kevin.

#####

CORRESPONDENCE; Letters to the Editor.

From Sid Winchester, 802 Drew Road, Parksville BCV 9P IX2, Canada.

Dear Peter, Bryan Quinlan phoned the other day to tell me you have a copy of "We Find and Destroy" for me. What great news this was. I have been a long-lost member of the Squadron. Re-discovered when applications were made for the Malta medal. My days with the Squadron were the "McKenzie era", Malta, Blida and Protville. Looking back, they were the memorable days of my war. Many good friends were made. I was posted to Cranwell on my return to the UK. What a change from my life style on 458! Posted to Wigtown as an Instructor. Before I started I got ill. Came home to Canada in '44. Back to England and a posting to 502, the Ulster Squadron., St Davids in Wales - then to Stornaway. Weather terrible, but I liked herring. Roger Lapalm and Hugh "Red" Conin were still with me, ex 458 and now commissioned. Did not last long at Stornaway. Four out of nine were killed when we were shot down in the Skaggerack. Roger and Hugh were two of them. So, I finished my war in Germany.

There are memories of this part of my war but my memories of my 458 days are the best. Bryan loaned me his copy of your book. I knew I had to have a copy. I am enclosing my understanding of the cost. Bryan has asked me for a few stories about my post-458 days. Possibly for future items for the journal. I see that there are a few old timers from the Shallufa to Protville days still enjoying your re-unions.

So for now with much appreciation, Sid Winchester.

@ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @ @

VICTORIAN NEWS from Rupert Pearce.

Cup Day BBQ. Our thanks to the Masonic Temple Company at Oakleigh for the use of their premises again. Roy and Barbara Pearce and Neil and June Dean were the hosts. Those who came were Jack and Margaret Ellis, Harold and Kath Martin, Rupert Pearce, Norma Pollard, Mick and Mavis Singe. There were a number of apologies. There were the usual sweeps on every race. We enjoyed the day.

Point Cook Annual Pilgrimage. Neil and June Dean, Rupert Pearce, Norma Pollard, and Mick Singe accepted the invitation of the RAAF Association to attend the Memorial Service at the RAAF Chapel of the Holy Trinity. Some 200 members and guests came. Wreaths were laid at the Altar steps and later placed at the Australian Flying Corps Memorial. (For overseas information, Point Cook in Victoria, is where the Australian Flying Corps - later the RAAF - began and where an Australian airman first took off - Richard Williams in 1914 in a Boxkite.)

Lunch at Malvern. Our Christmas function was at the East Malvern RSL and President Mick and wife Mavis welcomed Jim Anderson, John and Marjorie Bilney, Neil and June Dean, Ron Eggers, Don and Shirley Granger, Ken and Joanne Hinton, Laurie and Jean Kew, Harold and Kath Martin, Beatrice Morkham, Roy, Barbara and Rupert Pearce and Christine Smith.

Coming Functions. Our BBQ on March 15 at the home of Harry and Nell Ashworth, 13 Harverson Drive, Rosebud. As in previous years, bring your own food and drink.

Our Flight has been invited by the RAAF Association to attend the Annual Ecumenical Service to be held on March 29 at St. Martins Church, Cromwell Road, South Yarra. Meet at the RAAF Association at 1100. Parade to step off at 1115, arrive at the Church and be seated by 1125. Service commencing at 1130. It will be followed by a buffet luncheon at the Cromwell Road premises. Luncheon cost \$16 and drinks at bar prices. Reservation will be accepted with confirmation by cash/cheque by March 26.

No entree cards on the day but these can be collected for those who have paid or to whom they have not been mailed.

After Anzac Day March.

Members and ladies are invited to come to the Melbourne Bowling Club, 138 Union Street, Windsor after the March.

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the RAAF Association, Cromwell Road, South Yarra at noon on Tuesday, May 26. It will be followed by lunch, cost to be finalised.

A pleasing award. It was so pleasing to see that the Very Reverend Dr James Frederick McKay, CMG OBE had been awarded the AC in the latest Honours List. Our congratulations!

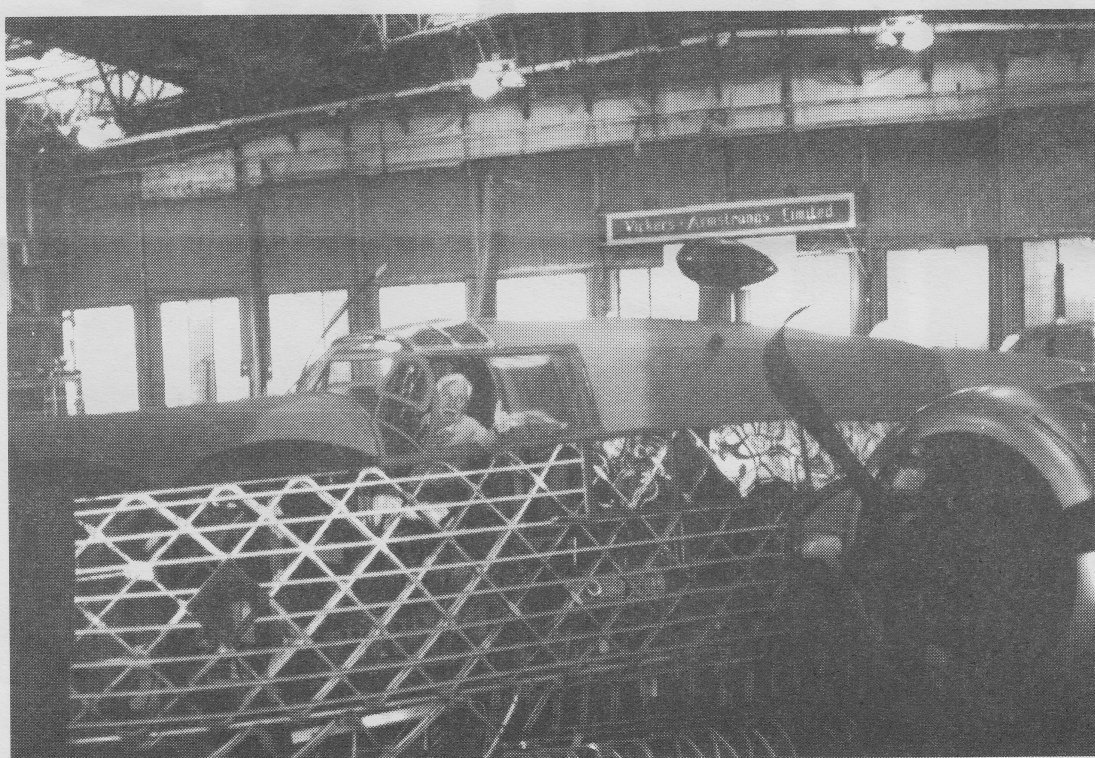
For another photo page - see over!



Norm and Joyce Duke in Canada



The Presentation



Pilot again!