



## And Next ?

## The Elections

[illegible]

**Social Activities:** Back to the Sergeant's Mess Point Cook 11<sup>th</sup> October. This may be the last time this function will be held. Some of our members came to enjoy the fellowship, the spit lunch and the Museum. Those who came were Neil and June Dean, Don and Shirley Granger, Ken and Joan Hinton, Roy and Barbara Pearce, Rupert Pearce and Mick and Mavis Singe.

Reunion at Caloundra, Q'Land Congratulations to the Queensland flight for a successful reunion which was attended by 5 Victorian members.

**Reunion in 2000:** At the Squadron conference at Caloundra, delegates from the Victorian flight considered Victoria would be able to host the next reunion, either in Melbourne or at a country centre at a date in the year 2000. This will be discussed at the BBQ on Cup Day and advice given in a future Squadron News.

Vale: It is with regret, it is advised that Leslie Robert Russell passed away on 8<sup>th</sup> August at the age of 83. A private funeral was held. Les was a fitter and one of the early 458 members, serving in the UK and the Middle East. He will be remembered by many of our members. In the “We Find and Destroy” history, two of his adventures are recorded, one at Aden when he and others missed the last authorised boat back to the “Mendoza” and swam out and got aboard by climbing the anchor chain, and again at Berka when Horace the goose was adopted as a pet. There were no children from the marriage. We have written to Phyllis expressing our sincere sympathy.

**Personnel:** Mick Singe is making good progress following a successful knee operation.  
Jack Fleming is still having eye problems.  
Christine Smith is feeling better and hopes to attend a reunion in Mildura for English war brides.  
Our thoughts are with others who are not well.

\* We are sad to report the passing on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October of one of our original members, Geoffrey Hyles at Bowral. Geoffrey left Australia with the originals from Williamtown and remained with the Squadron until posted home from the Middle East. With five others Geoffrey was a member of the tent that I occupied for the length of our Middle East stay, and whereas we never saw a lot of Geoffrey after the war, he was certainly in our thoughts. We extend to Joan and all his family our sincerest sympathy.

\* At the Squadron Conference at Caloundra, two of the Squadron originals were elected as the President, Mr Jim Palmer, and Vice President, your current scribe, Jock McGowen. It has taken more than 50 years for two of the originals to gain the top honours, we accept your contratulations.

First	"Jezabeel"	Dorothy Aitken
Second	"Champagne"	Don Bitmead
Third	"Persian Punch"	Pat Lyndon

\* With the support of Peter Alexander, the author of WE FIND and DESTROY, one of our members, Peter Pettit is making a gallant effort to collect a series of anecdotes or items of interest, call them what you may, items that were not available to include in We Find and Destroy.

\* The items Pete Pettit is looking for are things like when one of the Instrument Bashers, Campbell, by name, was exercising his flying skills on a mud soaked dispersal in the Middle East and decided to “come in for the kill” as it were, he pressed the torpedo dropping button with the usual gusto, big problem was the battery was connected and with a “sloughing sound” two 18” torps. dropped into the mud, the exit of the ground crew was very, very sudden, no explosion took place, thank the Lord.

\* These are the sort of stories Pete is looking for, some will be nasty, some funny, anyway rack your brain to compile as many as we can to make up an interesting set of background stories; we all know at least one or two, come on now get cracking, or we will get you on a charge for neglect, send replies to Peter Pettit, 26 Dudley Avenue, Roseville, NSW, 2069 – Phone: (02) 9416 5464.

\* Finally, we must say the recent Queensland Reunion was great. Due to personal reasons Ann and I did not see a lot of it, but what we heard everyone approved. Thanks Queensland from New South Wales.



I was quite surprised to learn of my election as VP Canadian Flight and of course highly honoured to be considered worthy of the post. My congratulations and respects to Jim Palmer on his election as President. My first action of course was to contact Jim Donaldson who has served as our VP with so much dedication for so many years. In the past decade, at a time when one expects to start enjoying the relaxation and the rewards of our senior years and the relinquishing of the more onerous responsibilities to the younger generation, Jim has

Cannuck Caucus from Bryan Quinlan (cont'd)

been faced with far more than his fair share of tragedy and other family problems which have been most demanding of his time and energy. Jim indicated to me that, under the circumstance, it would be a relief to be released from the responsibilities of Canadian V.P. and concentrate all his attention and priorities on family matters, as it would be with all of us.

To Jim from all the Canadian 458ers, our sincere and heartfelt appreciation for your dedication and years of service in keeping the 458 spirit alive among our relatively few and far-flung members. Our very best wishes to you and yours for brighter and happier years ahead. You know you have our full support.

Some months back I thought it would be worthwhile to survey our Canadian members for their 458 record and any special memories/comments of those days, with the intent to send this information to 458 H.Q. in order to preserve personal stories which would otherwise fade into oblivion.

With some misgivings as to the response, I sent out the form with the distribution of the May edition of the News. To date, a 50% response has been gratifying, including some noteworthy and interesting experiences. It is my hope that you may be able to include highlights of these stories in future editions – perhaps when other news is lean. Accordingly, copies will be forwarded to you by mail for use as you see fit and finally for inclusion in permanent Squadron records.

Several updates were received with the above. Bert Markland's response was his first encounter with a computer which Bert describes as "... more frustrating than golf!"

Mick and Marg Reid are now with fax so we should be able to expect copious communications from that direction! They enjoyed a non-stop hectic July vacation with daughter Cathy and her husband visiting Canada from France. A planned trip out West was put on hold due to Marg's long-standing back problems. Hopefully in '99?

Received an interesting letter from Wilf Baynton who has experienced a lot of serious health problems over the past few years, but he continues to battle back and Wilf and Hazel are planning a trip to Hong Kong (have a daughter there), Hawaii and Victoria (BC). In June and after 54 years Wilf was overjoyed to re-establish contact with Alan "Mac" MacDonald in Cape Breton. Alan was a W/AG in their crew, captained by Jack Reynolds (Vancouver), who Wilf thought had been killed in a crash on Bomber command.

Ernie Ireland writes that his recent and very first grand-daughter is the most beautiful in N. America. Some other Grandpas may challenge this claim – but in her age-group, perhaps not!

Cannot conclude without expressing appreciation to Colin Fereday on behalf of our Canadian members for representing our Flight at the Squadron Conference. We know that he would have turned in his usual superb performance, both administratively and socially, and very pleased that Colin could act on our behalf in proposing an Honorary Membership for Frank Robertson for his efforts in preserving 458's memory at Holme-on-Spalding Moor. A most deserved recognition. Thanks Colin – and I owe you at least two letters!

Also, pleased to receive a card from George "Cobber" Unitt – our friendship is deep-rooted and of long-standing. Will write!

Finally, sincere best wishes from all to all for a Very Merry Christmas and a health, happy and productive 1999 – just one to go for the BIG ONE, although the mathematical purists will only accept 2001 as the start of the 21<sup>st</sup>.

CROWEATER CHIT CHAT from Ted Creighton

Once again we owe thanks to Queensland flight for coming up with yet another successful reunion – this time at Caloundra. The Sunshine Coast and nearby hinterland was an excellent choice.

The thin blue line gets even thinner. Sadly every newsletter brings an all too long list of Squadron members who have passed on. The SA Flight in this issues says Vale to Bill Taylor and John Sheerlock. John was aircrew





British Bulletin by Norman Duke (cont'd)

We also have to report that Jim Croft is currently undergoing Radio therapy following surgery for cancer, and Bill Prater's wife Maureen has also had major surgery for cancer. I am sure that you would want me to send out best wishes for complete recovery to these two friends. These members had hoped to be with us for our annual UK reunion, as well as Charles Humbles and his wife Joyce, who are both laid low with sickness at present. The spirit is willing!

A number of other members were unable to "sign on" at Limpley Stoke for '98, namely Reg Bullen, Ed. Carter Jones, David Davies, Fred Hatchard, Hal Lee, Ken Morris and Terry Smith. But all were with us in spirit. Which brings me to the '98 Reunion which was held this year over the weekend of October 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> at the Limpley Stoke Hotel, a few miles outside Bath. Thanks are due to Stewart Kent, who discovered the hotel, and took on the responsibility for all the detailed arrangements. Much appreciated by all and sundry. Not a small part of the success of the weekend was the location of the Hop Pole pub, immediately opposite to the entrance to the hotel. 27 of us turned up for the shindig. As follows: Leon and Doreen Armstrong; Jack and Grace Baker; Jack Ball; Mo Borne; Jack and Audrey Christianson (guest Esme Mclean); Peter Cochrane; David Duff; Graham Arnold; Norman and Joyce Duke; Bill Eden; John Douglas; Norman and Glenis Gilbert; Stewart and June Kent; Frank Wilkinson (Jill Holmes); Peter and Eileen Leonard; Keith Wilkinson; Reg and Betty Windett; Bert Sleight had booked but became another casualty and had to cancel due to a heart attack.

Personalities

Jack Ball. We first mentioned Jack in our February '98 News, after he had 're-discovered' was very pleased that he was able to join us in person this year. John Douglas. Since our last meeting John has had a very delicate operation for detached retina and has a severe problem with a foot disablement. We know he made a great effort to be with us. Full marks to him. Mo Borne. Mo Borne produced evidence of a hidden talent with a framed wool embroidery of the Squadron Badge which he had perpetrated in hospital in Palestine (as it then was) recovering from malaria. Peter Leonard then divulged that he also performed with the embroidery needle when recovering in hospital from his horrendous motor bike prang. Obviously a dark secret as he hasn't shown us the evidence. Bill Eden. Survived a crash landing in the sea when flying as crew in a Beaufort off the coast of Portugal (pre 458). Rescued, and lived the life of Reilly with the help of the British Consul, before repatriation to UK via a Portuguese fishing boat to Gibraltar. Also, on a lighter note, his wife now aged 85 is listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the oldest lady motor cyclist (moped) in the country. What a wealth of talent we can muster! Grace Baker. While talking to Jack's wife during the weekend, yours truly (NLD) discovered that Grace grew up in Beckenham, Kent, only a couple of miles from Catford, my old boyhood home. Small world. Keith Wilkinson. Keith's father Ken, who is no longer alive, was a W/Ag in Jack Christianson's crew at Bone and onwards. Keith's godfather is Fred Briggs who was also in the same crew and also a W/Ag. Jack had no contact with either Ken or Fred since demob. After a great deal of dedicated research Keith managed to locate Jack Christianson and also a further surviving member of the crew, Bill Parnaby in Manchester, who was also a W/Ag. So all of a sudden out of the blue, Jack has found most of his old crew. Still missing is Eric Petty, the Navigator. If perseverance has anything to do with it I'm sure that Keith will find him. A great achievement. Jack Christianson will be visiting Perth WA over Christmas. Watch out Ted Jewell for a fraternal greeting. Jack Baker also plans a visit to OZ in February '99. Hal Lee. Reminiscing . . recalls landing at Alghero after a night op. and flying over the tails of 2 white Wimpys, which had landed in the drink offshore. Anyone else remember? Bill Heeley. Following our ad. In Intercom, the journal of the ACA, we have been contacted by Bill whose 20 days and 5 ops. with 458 in July 1943 terminated with a very bad prang and fire at Protville, which he miraculously survived. He carried on flying and continued in the peacetime R.A.F., completed 5 years on Vulcans, finally commanding the Air Electronics School at Topcliffe. Unfortunately could not make it to the reunion this year but hopes for the future. A very welcome new/old member. Andrew Hendrie, Sandy Ridge, Amberley Road, Storrington, West Sussex, RH20 4JE - Andrew, who is a contact of Leon Armstrong, is researching a book he is writing on WELLINGTON MARITIME OPERATIONS. I have supplied him with a detailed version of 458 Squadron History plus photographs, but he is principally interested in personal stories and recollections. Anyone who can help please contact the above address. Frank Robertson. With the help of Colin Fereday, Frank has produced a super 'storeyboard' with stunning photographs of the famous taxi-ing prang at Holme on January 6, 1942. I am still researching details of the crew of R 1695 and of the intruder Wimpy Z 8418.

I have been corresponding with Adam Wagstaffe of Oshawa in Canada who is researching his uncle's (Michael Wagstaffe) RAF career and his death in an air crash in Malta. He mentions having located "We Find and Destroy" on the internet. Can you confirm this? He also mentions obtaining a copy of Squadron records on microfilm from RAAF HQ Archives.

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

The 1<sup>st</sup> Edition is now selling (second-hand) in Australian bookshops at about \$200. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition at about \$100- so we find from the Internet quite recently – P.C.A.

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□

458ers will benefit from 1/1/99 by getting the Gold Card (they need to apply if not already in possession) – free treatment for all ill-health whether or not war-caused. Not a bad deal!

Other matters AVADSC and RAAF Association are pushing include – recognition for service people exposed to ionising radiation at Woomera, etc – improved compensation for disabled regulars – treatment, etc, for children and grandchildren of men exposed to radiation – children with a statistically large number of strange disabilities (the USA is ahead of us here). We recently met the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Bruce Scott) to discuss these matters.

□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□□



### Delegates at the Squadron Conference - Caloundra