


RAAF

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458 SQUADRON COUNCIL

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EDITORIAL

The 33rd All-States Reunion, March 2000

The next Squadron All-States Reunion will be held in March 2000 at Geelong, Victoria. The Intent to Register Form is included with this Squadron News. While full details of the program are yet to be finalised it will extend from March 19 – 25, and will certainly be another of the Squadron's excellent gatherings. We urge readers to fill in and return the form. Who knows how many more of these wonderful Squadron reunions we shall each have.

VICTORIAN NEWS from Rupert Pearce

The A.G.M. was held on May 25 at the Air Force Association, South Yarra. The office bearers are: President Mick Singe; Senior Vice President, Neil Dean; Junior Vice President, Don Granger; Secretary/Treasurer Rupert Pearce. Those present were Neil and June Dean, Don Granger, Ken and Joann Hinton, Roy and Barbara Pearce.

Rupert Pearce, Norma Pollard, June Schoppe and Mick Singe. Apologies were received from Jim Anderson, John and Marjorie Bilney, Jack and Margaret Ellis, Jack and Dot Fleming, Bill Fordyce, Shirley Granger, Harold and Cath Martin, Beatrice Morkham and Mavis Singe.

Social Notes: A pleasant luncheon and meeting was held at the Manningham Club, Bulleen on July 20. It was attended by 17 members: - John and Marjorie Bilney, Neil and June Dean, Ron Eggers, Jack and Margaret Ellis, Ken and Joann Hinton, Beatrice Morkham, Roy and Barbara Pearce, Rupert Pearce, Norma Pollard, Christine Smith, Mick and Mavis Singe. There were a number of apologies.

The next luncheon will be held at the Oakleigh Masonic Temple.

REUNION AT GEELONG, 19th – 25th March, 2000

A decision has been taken to hold the 33rd All-States Reunion at Geelong. It is the largest country city in Victoria. It has a population of approximately 180,000 and is on Corio Bay. It is about an hour from Melbourne by road, has a good train service and Gulls Services run 13 services daily from the Melbourne Airport to the All Seasons Ambassador Motel which has a 4.5 star rating. Geelong has developed from an industrial port to include a leisure centre on the seafront. It has 2 major shopping centres and there are interesting tours of the area.

The first Announcement and Intent to Register Form is included in the Newsletter. We hope you can join your mates at Geelong.

MINI REUNION IN THE WEST: Mick and Mavis Singe were in Northam visiting their family and thanks to their son, David, made a day trip to Perth. Bill and Joan Clues organised a BBQ and they enjoyed the company of Bingy Stewart, Henry Atherton, Ted Jewell, Bill Kelliher and Colin Jones. While there, Unk McCarthy, Jim Palmer, Jack Cobb, Doug Anderson, Al Wheat and Charlie Davis rang and spoke with them. Doug had a fall and was suffering from broken ribs. Al and Charlie have seen better days. Mick and Mavis send their thanks for your hospitality.

PERSONAL: Harold Martin still has a leg problem and is seeking further medical advice. Bernie Moon, Val Richards and Ron Yates are not the young bright eyed 458 members of long ago. Jack Fleming has lost his sight. Our thoughts are with all our members and their partners on the sick list.

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"Q" FLIGHT NEWS from Jack Lewis

News is scarce "Q" Flight-wise. I trust all members are well, with the exception of Harry Dorge. Pat phoned with the news Harry underwent further knee surgery. Knee cap replacement and complication took 5½ hours. Harry has overcome a lot with blood disorder, loss of body skin and now found Golden Staph infection in nasal region from oxygen intake. He is a very ill man and has been these past 8 months. We wish you well Harry.

Bernie McLoughlin rang to say he had one better than Fred James 87 years old. Wally Clarke who has reached the age of 93 years. Wally is in a Narrabeen NSW Nursing Home, he is quite well and has a clear mind. Wally is a survivor of Russ McMillan's crew which crashed in Malta. Bernie also states that Lock Simpson is ill. "Q" Flight extends its best wishes to Lock.

Jim and Joyce McKay are in the process of moving house. Sold their home in Caloundra and will later in August take up residence in a retirement unit in Caloundra. Both Jim and Joyce are not in the best of health, and we send best wishes to them both. Regards to all.

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CANUCK CAUCUS from Bryan Quinlan in Canada's West.

Sad to report of recent learning via the "Last Post" section of the Air Force Association (Canadian) Magazine "AIRFORCE", of the passing of Wilf Baynton on 23 December 1998 after several years of declining health. Wilf had a long and distinguished career in both the wartime and postwar RCAF, as is clearly evident in the enclosed obituary which omits mention of his brief stint with 458 at Malta in February 1943 as a member of Jack Reynold's crew. Jack provided me with a copy of the obituary and advised that he had talked with Wilf on the telephone during the final days when the inevitable was then awaited. Mickey Reid will try to contact Wilf's wife Hazel or other family members to express our unavoidable belated condolences. On a much happier note, earlier in April I enjoyed receiving a phone call from Ernie Henwood in Toronto who said he enjoyed reading the 458 News and

recalled Peter's organisational abilities in setting-up bridge games at Gibraltar. We all recognise that those capabilities extend far beyond bridge sessions! With regard to the 458 history update, there has been some response in the form of a second contribution from George McLeod and advice from Mickey Reid that he is assembling data compiled by Ron Eggers, plus some notations from yours truly on the inclusion/identification of Canadian content in 458. This material hopefully will find its way into the hands of Pete Pettit in the near future.

Lovingly remembered by his wife Hazel, children, Bill, Bob, Kim and Elizabeth, nine grandchildren and surviving brother, Cliff.

Group Captain Baynton was a member of the Canadian Air Force for thirty-two years, starting as an Aircraftsman 2nd Class, retiring as a Group Captain in 1974. He flew the Atlantic in 1942 to deliver a Hudson aircraft to the U.K. for R.A.F. Ferry Command, completed two tours of operational flying, a total of 773 operational flights on 69 Squadron, R.A.F. Malta, and 206 Squadron, R.A.F. in the Azores, England and Scotland, including operations in support of 'D' Day landings in Normandy in 1944. - With 414 Squadron, R.C.A.F. he participated in photographic operations, mapping British Columbia, the Yukon and the North West Territories in 1949/50. - He was the Officer Commanding the Air Radio Officer's School in Clinton, Ontario. As Aircrew on 428 Squadron, R.C.A.F., he flew to Japan and Korea in support of the U.N. operations in the Korean War. - He was a graduate of the R.C.A.F. Staff College, Staff Officer Air Defence Command H.Q., St. Hubert, P.Q., Commanding Officer, R.C.A.F. Station Mont Apica, P.Q.; Staff Officer Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers Europe, Paris, France; Base Commander, R.C.A.F. Station St. Jean, P.Q.; Deputy Chief of Staff, Air Defense Command H.Q./22nd (Canadian) NORAD Region, CFB North Bay; Director, Canada - U.S. Plans and Deputy for Operations, National Defence H.Q., Ottawa. - He was a member of the 422 R.C.A.F. (Nipissing) Wing of the Air Force Association of Canada.

A personal highlight for me was the most welcome meeting with Don Brandon and Mary Wallace during their too-short 3-day stopover in Vancouver following their whirlwind vacation schedule involving an Arctic cruise, a tour through the Rockies and a private boat trip with friends among B.C.'s Gulf Islands. Happily they were able to fit in a lunch date with Joan and I when we introduced them to aldergrilled salmon, the specialty of the local "Salmon House on the Hill", overlooking most of Vancouver and the entrance to the harbour. We trust they are now safely back home. Don delivered the photo for signature and the prints of Q for Queenie taking off – I believe it is a painting of the photo opposite page 33 in 'We Find and Destroy'. Very much appreciated. Bernie and I will see that they are distributed. Don took back the original of the Squadron photo from the Caloundra Reunion with three added signatures – Jack Reynolds, Ben Gruenwald and mine. Was unable to get Tom Lindsay's as he has come down with a case of pneumonia and is currently under Doctor's care. Other Canadian news involves the welcome rediscovery of Jim Lovelace who continues to overcome multiple serious health problems while remaining super active in numerous extra-curricula endeavours. He is truly amazing! An excerpt from Jim's fax to me describes it best – "On the side I have been busy with social work in Kiwanis (Pres-elect Halifax Golden K), Rotary, the Aircrew Association Provincial President, the Past District Secretary of the Legion, CAHS Public Relations Director, Provincial President of the Video Online Lottery Terminators' Society, and religious undertakings (the latter of which I have always been busy at!!!surprised?)". Jim then goes on to advise that he has followed up on his pre-war theological student days and again quoting from his fax: "I have been ordained to conduct a Mission at Halifax, the name of which has been proclaimed as 'St. James Mission' . . . and I was ordained on St. James Day!! The Old Catholic Church is not in the business of sheep stealing; merely finding sheep with no shepherds. We keep it 'cool'." (Failte a' Sheumais! Sin thu! Cha bhi beud ort! – PCA).

[illegible]

Our regular scribe, Jock McGowen is recovering slowly from a major abdominal operation, so the position has been temporarily filled by the above. Another NSW committeeman, Bob Lyndon, has also had a major operation and we wish both a very speedy return to full operational efficiency. Jimmy Whitem has recovered well from his quadruple by-pass and continues (as he says) to busily spend his children's inheritance – this time on a Coral Sea cruise out of Sydney finishing at Cairns. Good luck to him too.

Cornstalk Communication from Eric Munkman cont'd

Pete Pettit was elected Flight Secretary at the Anzac Day meeting and is having a lot of trouble filling the shoes of Noel Walter who has had to retire from the job with eye trouble. Thank you Noel for an excellent job done with great care and immense goodwill – a hard act to follow.

Our congratulations to Bob Smith on being recommended to the National Council of the RAAF Association for the award of a Certificate of Merit for his many years of conspicuous service to the Squadron Branch.

Peter Alexander, Bob Bruce and Eric Munkman lunched with Norm (Gil) Gilbert on his eleventh visit to Australia to see his son and daughter. This must be something of a commuting record. Norm was in charge of the Orderly Room from Shallufa to Protville and still looks very fit.

A TAFE luncheon at Ryde College has been organised for 17th August at 12 o'clock for 12.30. Anyone interested should please advise Eric Munkman on (02) 99720641.

More Squadron anecdotes have been received from or promised by Rupert Pearce, Bryan Quinlan and Bill Turier, but there must be many more out there waiting to be told. We are taking a leaf out of Bryan's book and sending with this issue of the Squadron News an 'Information Sheet' based on the very successful circular he sent to Canadian members of the Squadron Association. The circular brought in a wealth of valuable personal information as well as some good stories of life on the squadron.

We would be grateful if you would spend a little time completing the personal details and adding in any items of interest of your life on the Squadron, *the names of all guilty parties will be blacked out*. Any good stories could be included as part of the addendum to the next edition of 'We Find and Destroy'.

Please return the completed sheet to -

Pete Pettit, 26 Dudley Avenue, Roseville NSW 2069

Vale Arthur Lehdey

Noted, well remembered, greatly admired, Squadron Pilot Arthur Lehdey has passed on. A farmer in the Henty area of NSW, though sick, he carried on. Ralph Bailey and John Bilney attended the funeral - a big one with the 458 badge prominently displayed. To Arthur's widow and family our abiding sympathy.

To Jim Whitem from Greg Jones - Firstly I must apologise for the tardiness in replying to your letter. We have been tripping around this country trying to see as much as we can before the posting tenure is over. So I have to admit it, I have been a bit lazy in the letter writing area. I actually still manage to accomplish a normal day's work though, but it's tuff. I dare say, you blokes would have attempted the same in Europe and Africa, even with a war on. I really appreciated your letter, and the detail you have been able to recall over the incident with my uncle, John Fox. I faxed the letter to my mother, John's sister and only surviving relative. She was very happy we could piece together another part of the puzzle of his life. Before I started looking into his Service history, my mother, Dawn Jones, only knew of the location of where he had been killed (Gibraltar). She was not aware of what Squadron he was with or what aircraft he flew. I understand this was because her family took his death pretty hard and did not pass on much of the information to the rest of the family. You see her other brother was one of the crewmen who perished on the Hospital Ship Centaur. (That's mother's story, but I'm happy to say he is now recognised with a plaque at the Caloundra Memorial). I think my mother was only 16 at the time. Dawn was also unaware if he was to receive any medals, and if he had, were passed on to the family and been lost. We contacted the appropriate people in Canberra to see what would eventuate, and we now have his ORIGINAL medals. Apparently they were never issued to the family after the war. At least some good came out of it. My mother is very happy now she has something more than just photos.

You made mention of the book, We Find and Destroy. I am pleased to say I have secured a copy of the second edition. I was able to get it last year, through a small bookshop in Canberra. It was in mint condition and was not cheap, but the history it portrays is priceless.

Enough of the past, I took the family down to Travis AFB (half way between San Francisco and Sacramento) to see our first air show in the USA. I was impressed, there was a lot of different types of aircraft to see and the day was capped off with a display by the USAF aerobatics team, the Thunderbirds, in their F16s. They certainly know how to impress the general public (tax payers), and the public responds very favourably to the defence forces. I think Australia could take a leaf out of their book. We could even end up with a better budget. I'm starting to get off track, so I had better close and do some work. If there is any thing I may be able to help you with from over here please indicate and I will see what I can do. Once again thanks for taking time to provide the information. Almost forgot – you can contact me through my work address raafsmalc@aol.com or at home on seagulljones@prodigy.net.

CROWEATERS COMMENTARY

SA Flight Secretary, Ted Creighton, has been having a spot of ill health –and we wish him rapid recuperation – but Flight President Bert Ravenscroft has kept us in touch. Flight affairs continue steadily. A most recent event was a well attended gathering of members and friends and families, at Grange Golf Club. A Social on the 29th July. SA Flight is strongly supported by children and grandchildren of members, a fact that the Flight greatly appreciates. As a result of this the Flight is proposing to put interested children and grandchildren on the Squadron News mailing list, starting with the November 1999 200th edition (this is something other Flights might consider).

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BRITISH BULLETIN from Norman Duke

Anzac Day '99 was commemorated and celebrated by the UK Flight at Holme upon Spalding Moor. Long distance travellers, Leon and Doreen Armstrong, Jack and Audrey Christianson and family friend Esme Mclean, and Joyce and myself had driven up to York from London and Surrey for a mini reunion dinner at Ye Olde Red Lion on Saturday April 24, with Frank Robertson as Guest of Honour. On Sunday morning April 25, we were joined at the Church on the Hill by 6 further members (Peter Cochrane, Ken Morris, Don Stocks and his wife, and Keith Wilkinson and his wife Ann) for a church service led by the Rev. David Cook.

Following the service and refreshments, Frank Robertson was presented with the Certificate of Life Membership in recognition of the many years of personal effort in Holme to preserve the memory of the Squadron. Ann Hall had once again excelled herself in creating the floral display which decorated the Squadron Standard.

We then drove to the Squadron Memorial and Tree at the old airfield, where in brilliant sunshine we laid our memorial wreath and observed a minute's silence. Our third and final stop was the Cross Keys Pub for a buffet lunch. This was held in a back room bar/lounge, which the landlord Alec Wild, with considerable help and research from Frank Robertson, has turned into a museum to the memory of 458 and 76 Squadrons, with the walls covered with beautifully framed pictures, photos and news cuttings. To our complete amazement, Alec insisted that we were his guests for lunch, and refused to accept any payment. As a token of our thanks a large print of an oil painting of a Wellington taking off on night ops circa 1941/1942 has been sent to Alec to add to his 'gallery'.

After lunch Leon and myself with our wives took the opportunity to visit the Yorkshire Air Museum at Elvington, formerly the home of RAF and Free French Halifax Squadrons. Wartime NAAFI, Ops room, Air Traffic Control and other huts have been lovingly restored, and together with the Air Gunners Museum and the now . . . fully restored Halifax, and a number of other ancient and modern aircraft, make a truly memorable and worthwhile display. We finished off the afternoon with a visit to Peter Cochrane's house nearby, to inspect the memorial stone to the JU 88 shot down and crashed on the house during wartime in his front garden. A very enjoyable weekend among good friends. We were particularly pleased to see Keith Wilkinson, the son of Ken Wilkinson, who was in Jack Christianson's crew, who had driven up from Birmingham with his wife Ann for the service. Bill Heeley We hear from Bill's wife that he has suffered a stroke which has slowed him down considerably. Our best wishes go to him for a speedy recovery. Jack Christianson It seems that the long arm of coincidence has reached out yet again. Jack travelled to West Australia over Christmas 1998 with a family party to visit his son Kevin who lives in Northam, and is a Doctor and Surgeon at the hospital there. During talks he had with Ted Jewell, Jack learned that Mick Singe's son, who works for the Health Authority in that area also lives in Northam.

Further enquiries revealed that they had met (on medical business) without of course knowing their respective fathers had both served with 458. Small world . . . We congratulate Jack and his wife Audrey on celebrating their Golden Wedding in July. Many Happy Returns !!

George Dunmore . . . We have made contact with George Dunmore, 56 years after leaving 458 in Protville, thanks to the detective work of Bryan Quinlan. George originally flew out to Egypt from the UK in 1942, as a 2nd pilot in Bryan's crew. He joined Bruce McKenzie's crew on 38 Squadron and continued to fly with him after transferring to 458 in Malta, and remained in his crew, completing a memorable tour of operations in August 1943. Hopefully, health permitting, George will be able to join us in Stratford upon Avon in September for some extensive reminiscing.

Peter Leonard We have recently learned that Peter, unknown to us, has been afflicted with Parkinsons Disease for several years. As this is affecting his driving ability he will be unable to join us at Stratford. The first time he has ever been unable to make the trip. We all send our best wishes to him and Eileen, and resolve to try and make convenient transport arrangements for him for 2000.

Jim Croft Pleased to hear from Jim that he is recovering well from another major surgery and several weeks in hospital. He is keeping his fingers crossed that he and May will be at the reunion.

British Bulletin cont'd

UK Reunion, Falcon Hotel, Stratford upon Avon . . . September 19/20th . . . In case you have overlooked the date, there is still time to book your place in our exclusive club. It would be a pity to miss out in '99. Regards and best wishes. . . As ever Norm.

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SANDGROPER'S SAY from Ted Jewell

The Sunday luncheon held at Shirley and Phil Hicks' home on July 4 was a great day for all those who were able to attend, but I am sorry to say that because of sickness Bill Clues and myself were the only Squadron members present, Henry Etherton couldn't make it because of having a bad dose of flu, but Vera was there, also Margaret Gannaway. All others were associate members and friends, I feel that without our associate members there are times when we would not be able to function.

Bill and Joan Clues organised a BBQ lunch at their home during July for WA members to meet Mick and Mavis Singe, who were holidaying in WA staying with their son in Northam, which is about 80 k from Perth. Although it was very bad weather and short notice, we had a good roll up, Len Stewart and myself drove up from Mandurah to be there, about 100 k. Others present were Henry and Vera Etherton, Bill and Flip Kelliher, Gordon and Olga Jones, not as many as Bill would have liked, but every one present enjoyed a great day, though everyone is not as young as they were; wonderful to see Mick and Mavis again, there was lots of talk about old times in the Squadron. Len Stewart brought along his photo album, with all those young airmen looking so smart. It is still hard to believe it's almost 60 years since we all came together in 458 Squadron. Sometimes it only seems like yesterday. During the day Mick had a few telephone calls from members. Charlie McCarthy who is now 86 years, told Mick he had been up on the roof doing repairs. Charlie Davis said he can't get around much these days. Al Wheat is down from Geraldton having treatment for failing kidneys on the dialysis machine several days a week, sends his best wishes to all 458 members. Doug Anderson was hoping to meet Mick but unable to come through ill health.

Things are fairly quiet here in the west with all this cold and wet weather, but should pick up with better weather. I am off to the Gold Coast in a month's time for 3 weeks holiday, I hope there is plenty of that perfect weather they always talk about in Queensland. Best wishes to all 458 members from WA Flight.

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CORRESPONDENCE

From : The Very Rev. J. Fred McKay, AC, CMG, OBE, MA, BD, Hon. LLD
Unit 40, Hawkesbury Village
23 Chapel Street
RICHMOND NSW 2753

31/5/99

Dear Peter, I just want to say a word of 'thank you' to the 458 Mob who showed such abounding kindness to me at the Anzac Day dinner at the Masonic Club. Nobody would take my money! I will get back on Jock McGowen and Bob Bruce some day! And you! Cheers, Aye, Fred McKay.