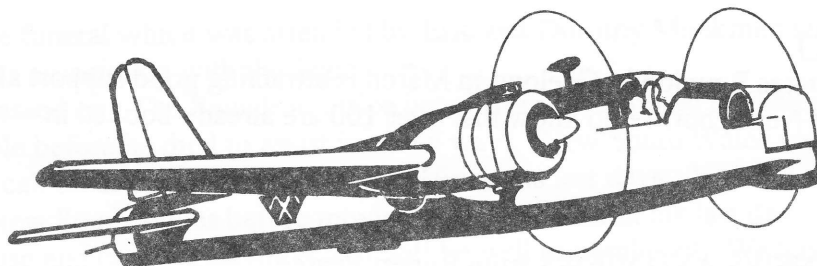


# 458

## SQUADRON NEWS

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RAAF

JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL, G P O Box 5289, SYDNEY, NSW, AUSTRALIA. 2001

Year 51, No. 201

February 2000

### 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL

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#### EDITORIAL

The number 200 Jubilee issue of the Squadron News duly went out with its kind comments (for which the Editor, Publisher and Flight Correspondents say 'Thank you'). Some further comments will appear later in this issue including the Squadron President's warm and generous comments, which were read at the Squadron celebratory occasion in Sydney.

Editorial (cont.)

The 33<sup>rd</sup> All-States Reunion in Geelong in March is attracting good support already. Further details are in Victoria Flight News, but we do know that over 100 are already booked in.

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VICTORIAN NEWS AND VIEWS from Rupert Pearce

The Reunion arrangements are proceeding and a list of members expected to attend for the daily tours and or the Squadron Dinner is attached. There is still time to come and join your mates.

Flight Activities:

Our Cup Day BBQ was held at the Masonic Temple Oakleigh, our thanks to Neil Dean and Roy Pearce for arranging to use the facilities and for June and Barbara for the table settings. Neil ran the sweeps, Roy did the cooking. Our ladies assisted with the food and we all had a pleasant day.

Annual Pilgrimage Service at the RAAF Chapel of the Holy Trinity, Point Cook, was held on November 14. The service was well attended. Cadets from the ATC paraded the colours and the Squadron banners. Chaplain (A/Com) Steve Box led the clergy. Wreaths were laid at the altar by the RAAF and Associations, including 458 Squadron. Lunch was held in the Sergeants' Mess.

2 Flight ATC. Presentation of Awards, December 18

Mick and Mavis Singe, Neil and June Dean attended this evening. The 458 Squadron prize was awarded to Cpl. Shaun Foley as being the "Most Proficient All Round Cadet".

Future Activities:

A BBQ will be held on February 20, at the home of Jack and Margaret Ellis, 5 Heales Street, DROMANA 3936. Bring your own food and drink. It will be our last meeting before the Reunion.

The RAAF Association have invited our members to attend the Annual Ecumenical Church Service to be held at St Martin's Church, South Yarra, on Sunday March 19, at 11.30 hours. At the close of the service lunch is available in the Air Forces Club at a cost of \$25.00. As this clashes with the Reunion date any member interested should contact the Association before March 10. Tel. (03) 98268573.

Squadron of Memories.

Bruce McDonald sent me a Newspaper cutting from the Huddersfield (UK) Examiner which wrote about a meeting with Bruce and another when on a visit. They had not met for more than 50 years. Both were members of 458 Squadron. Ben served as a cook in the Middle East, North Africa and Italy and Bruce caught up with the Squadron in Italy. By chance, when they met, Ben had a photograph from those days. It included three Australians, one was of Bruce. Ben was a good friend of Mick Singe in those wartime days. Mick was pleased to be remembered.

Vale:

It is with regret that we advise that Val Richards passed away on January 8. A funeral service was held at Berwick on January 12. Mick Singe and Neil Dean attended on behalf of the Squadron. Val was in his 80<sup>th</sup> year and had not been well for some time. He was a pilot with the Squadron, serving in Italy and Gibraltar and will be remembered by those members who were at Foggia and Gibraltar. We have written to Florence on behalf of the Flight.

Mrs Lynnette McNaughton of Portland rang and told me that her father Vin. Clohesy had passed away on January 12. In Queensland. A memorial service was to be held at Hamilton, Victoria on January 27. Roy Rabone will attend on behalf of the Squadron. Vin was a member of the Victoria Flight before moving to Shoalhaven Heads in 1994 and will be remembered by many of our members. It is understood that he was in

hospital from November 1999 to his passing in January. Eric Kelly attended his funeral service in Queensland. Vin was 84. We have written to Mavis at her Shoalhaven Heads address on behalf of the Victoria Flight.

### 33<sup>rd</sup> ALL STATES REUNION at GEELONG, VICTORIA, 19 – 25 March, 2000

Expected to attend for daily tours and or Squadron Dinner:-

Addinall, Bill and Mavis  
 Alexander, Peter and Rita  
 Anderson, Don and Joan  
 Baines, Harry and Nita  
 Baker, Jack and Grace  
 Bartram, Syd and Pat  
 Bilney, John and Marjorie  
 Bitmead, Don, Beverley and Peter  
 Boatman, Pauline and Family  
 (Mick Hunters' daughter)  
 Bruce, Bob  
 Cousins, Keith and Cassie  
 Cribb, Pat  
 Crowley, Laurie and Betty  
 Cuthbertson, Peg  
 Dean, Neil and June  
 Ellis, Jack and Margaret  
 Fereday, Colin  
 Flentje, Bill and Bett  
 Foote, Sel and Joan  
 Garland, Bert and Isla  
 George, Kevin and Dawn  
 Gibbins, Vic  
 Giles, Ian and Beryl  
 Granger, Don and Shirley  
 Hamilton, Jack and Elsie  
 Hansell, Grace  
 Holliday, Peg

Hull, Bill and Peggy  
 Hutchinson, Colin and Yvonne  
 Johnson, Bill and Gwen  
 Kelly, Eric and Kath.  
 Lewis, Jack and Evelyn  
 Lloyd, Eric and Bridie  
 Longhurst, Jean  
 Lyndon, Bob and Pat  
 Miller, Ron and Enid  
 Moore, Tom and Val  
 Munkman, Eric and Dorothy  
 Murray, Cyril and Hetty  
 McKay, Dudley and Enid  
 Oliver, Bert and Marjorie  
 Palmer, Jim and Lucy  
 Pearce, Rupert  
 Pettit, Peter and June  
 Pollard, Norma  
 Ravenscroft, Bert  
 Ringwood, John & Barbara & Betty Manning  
 Russell, Joan  
 Scholes, Bob and Mary  
 Singe, Mick and Mavis  
 Verity, Ron and Mary  
 Walter, Noel and Nita  
 Ward, Frank and Thelma  
 Westgarth, David and Judy  
 Whitem, Jim and Dorothy

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#### From the Huddersfield Examiner

A chance meeting at the Moorlands Lodge restaurant at Scammonden the other day reunited two men after more than 50 years. One was Ben Robinson of Newsome, a stalwart of the Fartown supporters' club, and the other was Australian Bruce McDonald back on a visit to this country.

They quickly discovered they have two things in common – they were both members of 458 RAAF bombing squadron during the Second World War and both were friends of the late Fartown "great", full-back Johnny Hunter. Ben served as a cook with 458 Squadron in the Middle East, North Africa and Italy. (Its Wellington Bombers played their part in the victory at El Alamein). Bruce caught up with the squadron in southern Italy. By chance, when they met, Ben had with him a photograph from those days. It included three Australians. One of them was Bruce himself. In further chat they discovered they knew Hunter – one in England, one in Australia. And that is why Bruce will today be taking back with him, for Hunter's daughter, an old Fartown tie, a late 1940s picture of Hunter and an account of Fartown affairs from 1921 to 1971.

In return Bruce – who has visited squadron headquarters at Holme on Spalding Moor – will be sending on a book about the squadron that has been written by an Australian.

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#### “Q” FLIGHT NEWS from Jack Lewis

Recently I received a letter from “Q” Flighter Jack Hobbs of Burrum Heads. Part of his letter states: Whilst compiling a History of my Service Doings etc late last year Sheila turned up a photo I had sent her of two Airmen taken at Gibraltar, which included Jim Brown – unfortunately killed in a road accident in Sydney about 1959 and a Canadian mate Tom Lindsay, who we had lost track of. Thanks to 458 Newsletter his name appeared so I duly got a letter away via our Canadian Rep. Bryan Quinlan who handed this on to Tom. I guess due to the many years which have elapsed all our memories are slowly fading and he could not put a face to the name, however I have since sent a photo to refresh his memory. Tom’s reply was rather lengthy which included an 8 page resume of his life and his time with 458. Tom joined the Squadron in Cagliari, Sardinia about September 5, 1944 and a couple of days later flew to Foggia, Italy, this is where Jim Brown and I teamed up with Tom. Jack and his wife Sheila had a trip to New Zealand last year taking in both Islands, later Jack made a trip to Cairns where son and grandson live. A fishing trip to a secret spot in the Gulf between Arakoon and Weipa caught many fish and large crabs.

Harry Dorge has had a really bad 1999 with all his skin, heart troubles and knee operations, then lost his wife Pat towards the end of November. I am sorry to say Pat died of a stroke. I rang Harry and conveyed our heart felt sympathy from “Q” Flight.

Eric Munkman rang me recently to tell me of a new member for “Q” Flight, Vin Clohesy but at the time was in Southport Hospital. I rang Peter Bailie who lives in Southport and arranged for Peter to visit Vin. Vin was very pleased to have a member of 458 visit him. Eric and Kath Kelly on holidays at the coast were also notified and planned a visit but unsure of the location of the hospital, phoned and were informed by the hospital they had not a patient by that name. Eric then found and rang Vin’s daughter who told them the sad news that Vin had passed away during the night. Eric and Kath attended the funeral and passed on the Flight’s condolences. A very sad situation.

Compliments and good health for one and all for the year 2000. Jack.

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#### SANDGROPER’S SAY from Ted Jewell

With sorrow I have to report the passing of Lock Simpson, who as everyone will know was in the Squadron for some time as a pilot and Sports Officer. Lock had been sick for some time.

We all had a great time at our usual Xmas get together at Miss Mauds Restaurant in Perth. There was a fairly good roll up, but several could not attend owing to sickness; our numbers are very low these days, those present were Bill and Joan Clues, Ted Jewell, Henry and Vera Etherton, Gordon and Olga Jones, Doug Anderson, Col Corten, Charlie and Betty Davis, Jim and Lucy Palmer, Poss Dale, Margaret Gannaway, plus friends. Bill and Joan Clues will be moving soon into an Air Force Unit, north of Perth, so they will have a change of address in the near future. Doug Anderson has been in Hospital for an operation, is doing well. Good to see Col Corten again after some time, drove up to Perth from Busselton which is south of Perth, a distance of several hundred kilometres.

We have been having excess hot weather in our State for some time, and now we are having lots of heavy rain, causing severe floods in quite a few areas. Best Wishes – Ted Jewell.

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### CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Members have hopefully all received their copy of 458 Squadron News Jubilee Issue. Quarterly, for 50 years, without missing an issue, with the same Editor and Publisher, and substantially similar Flight Correspondent personnel, was, the Ex-service world believes, a considerable achievement and one to be celebrated. In Sydney, where publication comes from, it was celebrated at a luncheon at the Ryde TAFE. Here, the National President of the RAAF Association, Air Commodore Geoff Michael, presented Editor Peter Alexander with a splendid, illuminated certificate expressing Squadron Members sincere thanks and appreciation for "his 50 years as devoted editor". The certificate was bordered in colour with the emblems of all Flights and headed in colour with the Squadron News Masthead. Peter responded with his thanks to Publisher and Correspondents and recalled some of the historic events of the Squadron and News post war history. Rita Alexander was presented with a gift to express thanks for her long support. Peter and Rita had a grandson, James and granddaughter, Karen present at the lunch.

New South Wales Flight President, Eric Munkman read a generous message from Squadron President Jim Palmer, which we now reproduce:

"On such an outstanding occasion as this, Peter, it is most difficult to find adequate words to express one's feelings. The tremendous amount of work you have done for the Squadron Association over the post war years in so many ways is commendable but it is as editor of the 458 Squadron News that you have excelled yourself in no uncertain manner.

No doubt in your modest way you will claim to have been backed up by a good team consisting of in the first place the Flight Correspondents, the publisher plus a very understanding and supporting wife in Rita, and possibly others not known to me. This is as may be, but it is always the one at the top who makes the final decisions and inevitably takes all the responsibility.

When thinking back over the last fifty years, one is tempted to wonder if it is really possible to have reached the 200<sup>th</sup> Edition of the 458 Squadron News, but with No. 199 in front of me, there can be no doubt. This must be a unique achievement as far as Australia is concerned and possibly the rest of the world as well. It must have necessitated a great deal of effort and time on your part. One of the highlights of the years gone by has been receiving the quarterly issues of the News which have gained in importance each time. It is wonderful to read news of many fine friends, both here and overseas, in spite of the sorrow involved when one or more have departed. It is to be hoped that the good work can continue well into the future.

In conclusion I feel that it is possible for me to speak on behalf of all recipients of our wonderful Squadron News not fortunate enough to be present at this function, something we all no doubt deeply regret.

There seems little else for me to say but congratulations and to convey our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for a job so very well done. Also I leave all members with this thought - 'What would life have been like without Squadron News'.

With our very best wishes for a long and happy future - Jim Palmer.

Since the Jubilee Issue was published, the Australian Minister for Veterans' Affairs has written to the Editor in the following terms:

Dear Peter

It is with great pleasure that I congratulate the 458 Squadron News on the occasion of the publication of its 200<sup>th</sup> edition representing 50 unbroken years of publication.

I also congratulate you as editor for your remarkable dedication in compiling and publishing all 200 issues. Never to have missed an issue is a truly remarkable feat of commitment to one's former comrades-in-arms.

I am sure the magazine has played a major role in maintaining the close links that still exist among the members of the Squadron after all this time. The ties of mateship forged in the dangerous and desperate times of war,

have become an Australian legend. Your publication and the camaraderie that has endured throughout the years confirm that this mateship is not only a legend but a reality.  
Yours sincerely, Bruce Scott MP – 16.12.99.

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#### THE BRITISH BULLETIN from Norm Duke

News from around Britain is rather thin on the ground this month, after surviving the superhype of the over inflated celebrations of the Millenium – Dome, Wonky Wheel et al. Will we reccelebrate the 'real' event on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2000 ??

Seriously though, congratulations on the super Sydney fireworks display. A fitting introduction to the round-the-World extravaganza to celebrate our survival into 2000.

I am still getting requests for copies of the Squadron History, most recently from Ron Moy, our latest welcome addition to UK membership. Any suggestions will be gratefully received.

I have received a letter from a Mrs Cannon in Cumbria, wishing to contact anyone who knew her late brother, Sergeant Kenneth W. Bennett, who served with 458 during 1942/1944 (she mentions Corsica). She was interested to see the shield on display in Malta during a recent visit last November. Also an account of the Squadron in a book on the siege of Malta obtained from the Aviation Museum.

We have received a letter from Mrs Mona Matthews of Holme-on-Spalding Moore – as follows:

Mr Duke, Once again I am writing to thank you and everyone else who contributed to my lovely gift of a hamper at Christmas. I am so grateful, I never expected getting them all this time after my Bill died, and feel so humble receiving them, but I do appreciate them, especially at Christmas, when everything is so expensive but they keep turning up after all these years. I don't get up the hill so much these days, but when I do go up, the airmen's graves are kept lovely and well cared for; my son David takes me up in the car nowadays. Thank you for the Christmas Card too. Yours sincerely – Mona Matthews.

Best regards to all . . . and Best wishes for a successful reunion at Geelong - Norm.

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#### CORNSTALK COMMENTARY from Pete Pettit

On 23 November the NSW Flight held a memorable TAFE luncheon on honour of the fiftieth publication of the Squadron's Newsletter, an occasion designed to pay tribute to the magnificent effort of its editor for all of those 200 issues, Peter Alexander.

The proceedings were introduced by NSW President Eric Munkman who first mentioned that Squadron identity and long time worker Noel Walter had now been married for 60 years, an achievement which had been suitably recognised by the Queen herself and other dignitaries.

Air Commodore Geoff Michael of the RAAFA presented Peter with an Illuminated Address prepared and decorated by Tom Moore as a small appreciation of his efforts on behalf of the Squadron, not just as editor of the Newsletter but throughout all its activities in the post war years. This was followed by Bob Bruce presenting Peter with a bottle of single malt Scotch whisky which, although not from his ancestral Hebridean island itself, it was hoped would afford him similar pleasure.

[Ed. It did indeed. Even though not Isle of Jura, it was splendid. Didn't last long!]

Peter replied expressing his gratitude and reminding members of some of the post war activities.

The NSW President then presented Peter's wife Rita with a pot plant in recognition of her very considerable efforts in Peter's support. Eric also moved a vote of thanks to Tom Moore for all his work in the preparation of the Illuminated Address presented to Peter, which was carried by acclamation.

In other news, Wal Archbold was recently a patient at RPA for the removal of a melanoma, an operation which proved successful and Wal is now back home recovering. We all wish him well.

#### Vale

One sad item we have to report is that Reg Hansell (Fitter 11a) died recently as a result of heart problems from which he has suffered for some time. A'bloody good bloke'. Reg was never one to complain and retained his

cheerful outlook. He had a private funeral which was attended by Eric and Dorothy Munkman and Frank and Thelma Ward. Eric spoke of Reg's association with the Squadron.

Two other old friends have also passed on. The Squadron office heard from his adopted daughter of the serious illness of Vin Clohesy and was able before he died to assist in a few ways. New South Wales and Queensland Flight members also were able to call on or speak by telephone to Vin in his last days. Vin originated in Victoria and lived for a while in New South Wales before moving to Queensland in his last days. He was in charge of the Squadron's cookhouse and catering facilities and will be well remembered. We have just also heard of the passing of A.J. (Paddy) Walker. A Squadron fitter of the Reo Group who served in Italy and Gibraltar with 458. Post war years he worked as a Progress Officer with a Sydney manufacturing company as well holding Flight and National Office for the Squadron. He was also interested in the horse racing game. We shall miss him as an old friend well remembered.

Pete Pettit would like to thank all those who have contributed memories and stories of happenings on wartime 458 Squadron. These have been collated and are ready to be presented to Peter Alexander for his final editing and approval.

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#### CROWEATERS' COMMENTARY from Pat Cribb

A very happy group of 49 sat down to a Christmas lunch on December 5, 1999 at "The Woolshed – Shear Fun", West Beach, including many children and grandchildren of 458ers past and present. We are so pleased to have them take such an active role and interest in the affairs of the Squadron in which their parent or grandparent served 58 years ago.

The lunch followed a successful Annual General Meeting: Col Hutchinson was elected President, Rick Michell, Treasurer and Pat Cribb, Secretary.

We are extremely well catered for at this new venue, which was built as a replica of a very large country woolshed. The food was delicious, "just like grandma used to make". There was much of interest for diners and tourists, including a sheep-shearing demonstration and, on a special stage, a show of different breeds of rams. A great day at what is, undoubtedly, a super asset for our State of South Australia – many thanks to Rick Michell.

Several members will be going to the Victorian Reunion in Geelong in March 2000, and they look forward to meeting up again with mates of longstanding. The same anecdotes will, of course, be retold with relish, as at each reunion. (I was not married to Bill Cribb for over 50 years not to have heard a lot of them, sounding better with each telling.) Pat Cribb.

#### CANUCK CAUCUS from Bryan Quinlan

Always a pleasure to receive the Christmas Updates from all over and it is one time when you don't have to search for a variety of content. At the outset – HAPPY 2000 and congrats. to all!

Newsy letter from Frank Laughlin, Victoria, BC, advises that his eldest granddaughter is spending one year in Oz after visiting Thailand and Singapore and it is hoped that she may be able to include a 458 contact in her travels. March 1999 saw Frank and Peggy celebrate their 55<sup>th</sup> with a cruise including Los Angeles, Costa Rica, Mexico and Guatemala. They attended the Allied Air Force Reunion in Toronto in September, which George MacLeod from the opposite end of Canada (Scotsburn, Nova Scotia) also attended but the two were unable to make contact. Frank did meet Aussie Eric Cowled, Seaforth, NSW who served on RCAF 407 Squadron (my post-458 Sqdn). Frank sent me a copy of the George Brain's 458 50<sup>th</sup> edition article printed in the Deniliquin Pastoral Times which also refers to other 458ers including Bill Laughlin (misspelled Lachlan) who may just be a distant relation to Frank. Bill flew with Elden Nielsen, a close friend of mine through training and on the Squadron.

Speaking of George MacLeod, he did not limit his activities to the reunion circuit. Quoting from Mickey Reid's letter on other GM highlights, he notes. "He celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday two months after his return from the Airforce reunion. The Medics recommended against open-heart surgery he'd expected this year (had

two heart attacks over a year ago). Unsuitable for angioplasty. Told him – ‘not to worry, we can do just as much with drugs.’ He did have a cataract removed from his left eye, with the right likely this month. But George is not ready to accept the ravages of the Golden Oldies. He wrote “I lassoed a bull two months ago . . . he got me running (which I should never have allowed) and first thing I knew I hit the ground with my shoulder, now I think I have rheumatism – in the shoulder!” (Oh dear when will we ever learn!). His son would sure be upset, too, as he had taken over the farm. George’s letter closes with . . . “You’ll never slow if you keep going!” Mickey also came through with a 458 history item as did Sid Winchester with some additional photos and another Protville episode, all of which is being sent to Pete Pettit.

Received notes from Bea Eastcott, Anne Markowsky and Nell Powell saying how much they enjoyed their copies of the 458 50<sup>th</sup> edition. They are generally keeping well and staying busy but understandably experience periods of loneliness. Further on the distaff side comes the unfortunate news of Dorothy Reynolds’ involvement in a pre-Christmas car accident resulting in two broken kneecaps. Jack advises that this did not deter Dorothy from organising the New Year’s Party for the Senior Centre where they are both active participants.

The Tom Lindsay’s have put the previously reported intended sale of their West Vancouver house on hold, which I believe will not unduly upset Tom at this time. Bert and Gladys Markland are unhurriedly exploring the sale of their Christine Lake, BC home, with lots of enquiries but little financial substance. Regret to pass on Bert’s advice that he has been diagnosed with Parkinsons. Very early stage and slow progression and it is encouraging to recognise the considerable advancement in controlling this disease with modern drugs. Will save the balance of the Xmas mailbag until the May report but cannot omit mention of my great pleasure upon answering on Christmas Day and finding George Dunmore on the other end. Certainly made my day complete. Best wishes. Bryan Quinlan.

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#### BRIEF NOTES ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS : The Squadron History

As readers know there is a project to reproduce desk top copies of the Squadron History to meet a continuing demand, but which is not big enough to justify a full run of a 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. This project is proceeding and will have appended to it the further Squadron stories that Pete Pettit has been collecting for us in recent times. We are grateful to him and to those who have put in stories. When current details as to number, binding, etc. have been dealt with together with a redo of the index (unappealing job) we will be in touch.

#### Anzac Day

Anzac Day arrangements in Sydney along the same lines as in recent years. We hope for a good Squadron attendance. We take this opportunity to emphasise the Air Force view of the great continuing importance to the maintenance of Australian traditional culture by Anzac Marches. One only has to view the large numbers of spectators, many young, many children, and many immigrants waving Australian flags and cheering, to realise the importance. For the March to continue in future it will need marchers. The Air Force Association welcomes the presence among marchers, of mature age children and grandchildren, and we hope this will continue and grow. The Squadron in NSW has already welcomed quite a few sons and robust grandsons, and we hope for more.

#### Mick Reid’s Venture

Well known Canadian member, with the help of Col Fereday in Canberra, has drawn to the attention of the Australian War Museum, the history of a beautiful Parish Church in Ontario which enshrines a memorial to two young Australian airmen who died while flying training over Georgian Bay. They being LAC Colin Tolhurst and LAC Claude Ross. The original painting of the memorial windows hangs in the Canberra War Museum, and the War Museum has accepted a colour brochure giving the history of the Church with the memorial. Mick Reid’s letters deserve better than abbreviation and will be kept for full publication in a future issue of the news.

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