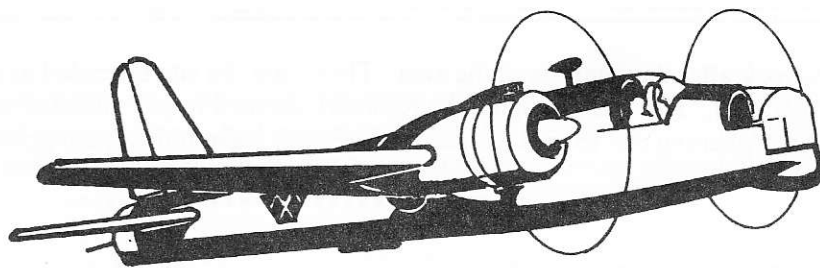


458

SQUADRON NEWS



RAAF

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

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August 2000

458 SQUADRON COUNCIL

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Squadron President	Kevin George (NZ)	Squadron Vice Presidents:	
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Squadron Secretary	Bob Bruce (NSW)		L.M. (Mick) Singe (VIC)
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		New Zealand	Ron Verity

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SA	Mrs Pat Cribb, 3/2 Stuart Street, Burnside, SA, 5066

CROWEATER COMMENTARY from Pat Cribb

On July 13 we once again met at the Grange Golf Club for our mid-year luncheon, organised by Peter Thom. The venue was delightful, and 48 guests enjoyed a lovely meal. A welcome opportunity to once again catch up with old mates, friends and families. During the 1991 Barossa Reunion, a bus trip was arranged for a day trip to Renmark for the dedication of a plaque in memory of all fallen RAAF airmen. This was placed on land generously donated by Ian and Fee Showell. An approach has since been made to the Renmark council to upgrade the site, and they have now agreed to plant more trees and to create a public park. This will also be appreciated by the residents of the Jane Eliza Estate. At lunch we were addressed by Lyne Skinner, who is Treasurer of the SA Branch of the RAAF Association. He suggested it would be to the advantage of 458 members to join the Association, as with their support it could continue the valuable assistance it provides to any member with a problem. This has been available since the men came back from the war in 1945, and they are endeavouring to still continue. Their address is 78 Finnis Street, North Adelaide, SA 5006, Ph: 82955813. The next opportunity to get together will be the Annual General Meeting and Luncheon at The Woolshed, West Beach, on Sunday, December 3, 2000.

After much letter-writing and phone calls, Fee Showell called on the Mayor of Renmark and the end result is that the plaque will not be shifted into the city centre but remain where it was dedicated in 1991. It happens that Fee and Ian's nephew live on the Jane Eliza Estate (now pretty-well completely built on) where a committee has been formed

of residents to look after the interests of the area. They want the site upgraded as a park, (I wish they had let us know this a year ago). This has prompted the Renmark Council to pay attention to the condition the land is in, and they promise tree-planting etc. to make a nice park. So we leave it there, but good news.

'Q' FLIGHT COMMENTARY from Jack Lewis

News from Queensland members is very quiet so we do not have a lot to impart. Don Brandon and Mary Wallace are off to Sydney on August 24. Don hopes to look up Frank Ward and another of his crew, Bob Low, Don will then hire a car and will motor to Mt. Gambier; from there he intends to travel to the Flinders Ranges so he has a few kilometres to cover. The trip should be interesting. Doug Dalrymple has retired to Caloundra, we wish Doug and Maggie a happy retirement in their new unit. I rang Jim McKay and asked him to ring the Dalrymples to make them welcome in their retirement and keep in contact. Jim has phoned them. Doug has impaired vision so has difficulty in doing many things. I have received a telephone call from a Mrs Thelma Salmond of Teppoon, her brother-in-law was a navigator in 458. He passed away last year. We had no information of him and he was not listed on our books. Mrs Salmond evidently heard on the radio session from West Australia about 458. Jim Palmer was the contact, apparently Jim gave her my phone number, she made contact, but unfortunately I was away fishing and Evelyn took the call from Mrs Salmond which she had made on behalf of her sister. She would like to have any news of 458 Squadron members known to Lex Porter. I have arranged for her to be put on our mailing list. Eric Kelly telephoned, has at last got the upper hand. Chief Housekeeper/Nurse etc, and whatever. Kath plays tennis and chased a ball, slipped and broke both wrists and cannot do a thing. Our thoughts are with you Kath, and we hope you are back on deck a.s.a.p.

VICTORIAN VIEWS from Rupert Pearce

Re the Annual General Meeting: This was held at the RAAF Association, South Yarra on May 30. Mick Singe was re-elected President, Rupert Pearce, Secretary/Treasurer, Neil Dean and Don Granger as Senior and Junior Vice President.

Next Meeting and Social Function: Lunch at 12 noon, August 29 at the Manningham Club, 1 Thompsons Road, Bulleen.

Missing Mates: 1) Inquiry re P H Hedgecock. Jack Ramsay has spoken with Peter Hedgecock and Jack and Peter's father joined the Squadron at Bone and were at Algiers together.

2) Inquiry re Louis Muschialli from his brother Maxwell of 14 Katjustha Court, Pakenham, Vic. 3816, Tel: (03) 5941 5115.

From information given by Maxwell Muschialli, a Wellington crashed in the mountains in the Cape Bougaroun area on November 27, 1943. All the crew were killed. They were Flt. Sgt. Richards, J, Pilot and F/Sgts. Muschialli, L.J., Freeman, R.T.A., Reid, G.K., all RAAF and all WOP/AG's. Also RAF Sgt. Bungler ad RCAF W/O. A. Aikmen. F/Sgt. Mushcialli was buried at Bone War Cemetery and probably all of the crew. Maxwell would like to hear from any member of 458 who knew his brother in the short time he was with the Squadron, 3rd/27th. November 1943 or perhaps attended the funeral service of the crew.

3) Re John Douglas and the UK note in the May Newsletter:

Following an inquiry, his son James, has written to Bill Fordyce and Len Netherway (both POWs with John Douglas in Germany), Bill and Len have replied. His father was very ill and still in hospital in June.

REV. FRED MCKAY The final resting place of his ashes and the dedication of Fred and Meg McKay Peace Garden will take place on August 6, at Alice Springs.

MEMORIAL TO ALL POW'S AT BALLARAT Our member Les Kennedy reminds us that the memorial has been designed and will be constructed in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. Donations can be made to: - The Australian Ex-POW Memorial Appeal, C/o Ballarat RSL, 2 Lyons Street, Ballarat, Vic. 3350

RAAFA Pilgrimage to Point Cook, 12th November 2000 The Flight has been invited to participate in the Annual Pilgrimage to Pt. Cook as in previous years. It is expected that transport will be available, leaving RAAFA, Cromwell Road, South Yarra at 10 am and departing Pt. Cook Chapel at 3 pm. Lunch will be available at Pt. Cook. Costs of transport and lunch will be advised. Bookings close October 21. Inquiries RAAFA, phone 9826 8573, or myself.

OUR MEMBERS Bruce Prideaux writes that he had a spell in hospital but is now in better health. Roland Orchard writes that his mother speaks of trips around Victoria and Interstate Squadron Reunions in the fifties and enjoys reading the Newsletter. Neil McPhee writes that he was 85 in June and hopes to go to Queensland in July and see Allan Rackham and Rex Tyson, both on 38 and 458 Squadrons. Beatrice Morkham has settled into her Retirement Unit at Albury East. Enid Dowling has been overseas and is home safely. Her visit included Oberammergau (a wonderful experience), Germany, Italy and 5 days on Malta. Christine Smith has not been well and is waiting on Veterans' Affairs re her War Widows pension. Cath and Harold Martin are not in good health. Mavis and Mick Singe are visiting family in Western Australia. Betty and Jack Ramsay have gone to Northern NSW to escape Melbourne's winter.

Vale Jack Fleming We are sad to tell Jack died on June 28 after a long illness. Mick and Mavis Singe, Neil and June Dean and Beryl and Ian Giles attended the service as well as representatives from the Masonic Lodge and the RSL who assisted with the service. Our banner was displayed. Jack was President of the Flight in the 1980's and Cup Day BBQ's were held at Dot and Jack's home at St. Leonards before he took ill. We send our sincere sympathy to Dot and family.

Editor's Note: Through Rupert Pearce's initiative we have received, principally through his son James Douglas, the story of the post-squadron activities of well-known Belgian based pilot John Douglas. These will appear as part of the additional copy in the forthcoming 3rd Edition of the Squadron History. 'Dougie' is still around but apparently in poor health. His son James was himself an RAF officer.

KIWI NOTE from Kevin George

I do not have anything newsworthy for the forthcoming Newsletter. Dawn has her right arm in a sling following surgery to reattach the ligament to her shoulder bone. It is generally agreed that this is a very painful procedure. It is, but the worst is over. I am currently having to assist in the kitchen, an area where I am quite unskilled. Otherwise, we are quite well. I have just had the flight test known as the 'biennial flight review'. So I can now be considered 'legal' (to fly), as someone said, 'lethal'. Kind Regards, Kevin G.

JACK ELLIS's LONG BATTLE

Squadron members in all Flights will have become aware of the long struggle Jack Ellis – Squadron and post war pilot has had with various aviation organisations and others over the last decade. The Squadron President, Kevin George, and Secretary, Peter Alexander and Flight Officers have contacted the Senate Committee currently inquiring into the dubious activities of various aviation organisations to urge that Jack be given a proper hearing and a fair go. Jack Ellis, a loyal 458er, has had a distinguished aviation career and currently suffers from poor health no doubt at least in part attributable to his battle with the authorities.

CORNSTALK CALL from MERV HARGRAVES

(Ed. We welcome Merv Hargraves as NSW Flight Correspondent. Merv, a Squadron pilot and subsequently pharmacist, has recently joined the NSW Flight Committee).

A gathering at Ryde TAFE on the 8th August was well attended by 458ers, wives and friends, 25 in all. As usual a excellent lunch and good fellowship was enjoyed by all. Exactly 59 years since the first members of 458 Squadron left these shores for overseas service – 8/8/41, and to mark the occasion Eric Munkman proposed a toast well supported by all present. Our Secretary, Bob Bruce, received a reply to his letter to the Minister of Defence on the future of Point Cook. The diminished defence presence there does not call for further occupation, but the RAAF Museum is to remain. A report in the 'Tiger Rag' newsletter of 8 EFTS Association describes a very successful 55th Reunion. A gathering of 200 extended a very warm welcome to the Guest of Honour, war hero Mrs Nancy Wake. Peter Alexander, Eric and Dorothy Munkman attended the RAAFA Annual Assembly hosted by Albury-Wodonga branch. Bob Bruce was recommended for Life Membership and Noel Walter for Certificate of Merit Awards to be approved by National Council. Barry Brooke resigned as State President after 30 years of continuous and dedicated service. The new State President is Group Capt. Rex A. Austin (ret'd). At the last committee meeting on 14th June it was decided the next Squadron Reunion would be held at Port Macquarie – date and details to be determined and advised. The Munkmans are delighted that their daughter Beryl has been chosen to carry the Olympic Torch and granddaughter Belinda is to carry a country banner at the Opening Ceremony. Both are also volunteers during the

Games. Peter and June Pettit are doing a lot of travelling – not long back from two weeks in China and soon to set off for France, Spain, Gibraltar and North Africa. Bon voyage. Thelma and Frank Ward enjoyed a pleasant trip down the east coast on the Norwegian Star, previously the Royal Viking Sea. Six days from Cairns to Sydney and calling at various ports in between. I caught up with Alan Yuille recently, son of Arch Yuille our MO from Foggia and Gibraltar. Arch is doing well in spite of deteriorating eyesight which is upsetting his golf. Alan says the neighbours were surprised to see Arch with a white cane climbing the ladder to clean the gutters. Still plenty of get up and go. Best wishes go to Cassie Cousins, Sam Barlow, Noel Walker and Jean Longhurst on the sick list. Hope all are soon restored to good health. Sad to report the passing of Grace Hansell on 22nd June. Dorothy and Eric Munkman, Thelma and Frank Ward attended her funeral. Reg passed away last December.

CANUCK CAUCUS from Bryan Quinlan

In June I received advice from Bea Eastcott that Peter's outstanding multi-faceted lifetime achievements in the Military, in the fields of Engineering and Science, in humanitarian endeavours, philosophical research and for his overall contributions to society in general have been recognised by his posthumous induction to Peterborough, Ontario's *Walk of Fame* joining a very select and distinguished group of earlier inductees. Peter's grandson was selected to accept this Award on behalf of the family. Peter was C.O. Bruce McKenzie's navigator at Protville until relinquishing this role to Norman Duke. More complete details of this award have been sent to Colin Fereday and Ron Eggers.

Other news includes word from Jack Reynolds that his granddaughter, Alison Warren is on a reciprocal exchange operating ski lifts at Mount Buller – so anyone visiting this there should say 'Hi'. Ernie Ireland's family staged a big surprise 80th birthday bash for him on 17th June, with a 'Book' theme, as Ernie is an avid reader. Another June 2000 birthday belonged to Sid Winchester, but his was the 85th milestone. Congrats to both Ernie and Sid. I am sorry to report that Sid's wife Joyce encountered a health problem which has limited their summer activities while in the recovering mode. Frank and Peg Laughlin report being happily settled in their new town house abode, and are planning a month's cruise to Bermuda from New York in September, sailing on the Pacific Princess, the original 'Love Boat'. Those familiar with the TV series may recall the standard background shot with a magnificent moonpath – ideal for a torp drop! A telephone call to Ben Gruenwald reveals that late problems have curtailed his attendance at his beloved baseball games, but is otherwise in good health. The Tom Lindsay's have just returned from a week's visit at their son's place in Calgary where they were able to enjoy some grandparenting. Tony Mauro soldiers on upon his return to his home in Osoyoos, BC. (a popular resort town) after his stroke earlier this year. A change of address from Ewart 'Buckey' Cather advises of his move in May into a very nice looking 'life-style retirement community' in Don Mills, Ont. Buckey should be settled in by now and hopefully has happily adapted to his new home. Mickey Reid has turned into a super sleuth in relocating Canadian members who for one reason or another disappear from the radar screen. He has now successfully 'reacquired' Alan Ruggles and, most recently, Dick Sladen. Mick and Marg are recovering from a bout of redecorating and almost back to normal. Your Canuck mates wish you every success for the coming Olympics and the big aircrew reunion (Ed. Regrettably cancelled – lack of support). We'll be watching the TV for familiar faces – you'd better wear BIG nameplates! Cheers and best wishes, Peter, Bryan.

CORRESPONDENCE – Letter to the Editor

From Graeme Coombes, 21/99 Groom Street, Hughes, ACT, 2605.

Doesn't seem long since we were closing this last year – as we get older the time passes ever more rapidly. Peter I was most impressed with the 50th issue of the Squadron News – you are to be more than just congratulated, it is quite a memorable feat, and I well remember the early days when you were searching around for news for the 'News' and for the History, of course. I am pleased to have been, in a very small way, a part of this story – did enjoy my years as the Association Secretary – no doubt it will progress equally as well without my aid! Peter, I reluctantly decided not to attend the forthcoming Reunion in Geelong – at 85 I now find that time is catching up with me in some ways – not quite as steady as I was and travel is something of a problem. Hope it all goes well with you as always – please give my regards to the fellows – Colin I know attended as usual. Yours in very fond memories. Graeme.

SQUADRON HISTORY

Arrangements for printing and publication are proceeding somewhat more slowly than we would have liked but at the convenience of the printer, and full details we shall approach readers for their support. The publication of a 3rd Edition on commercial terms is an achievement and indicates the present day growing interest in WWII Air Force History.

THE BOMBER COMMAND MEMORIAL

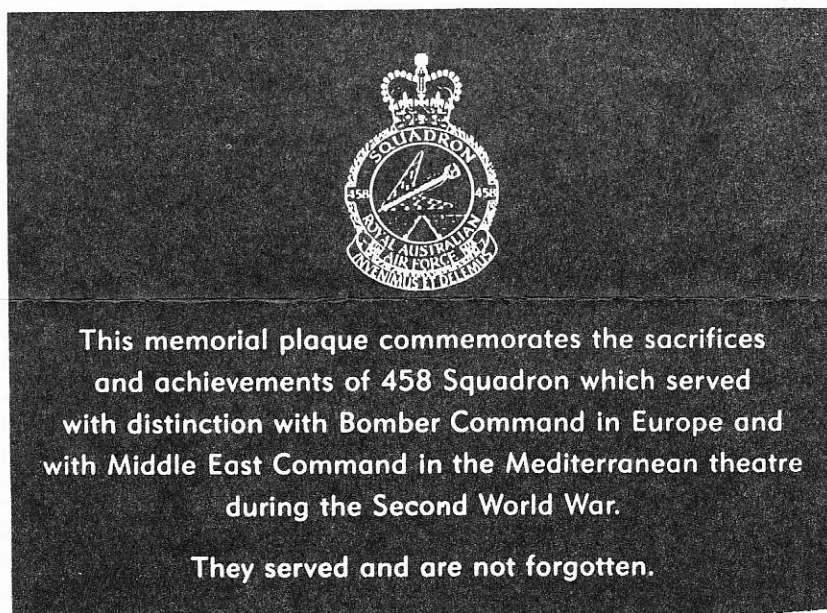
This long drawn out endeavour to achieve in Australia an appropriate memorial for the 3,500 young Australians who died with Bomber Command (the largest Australian casualty list of any WWII theatre) now approaches finality. A design by a New Zealand designer has been accepted by the Bomber Command committee and the Council of the Australian War Memorial. Funding may yet be a concern but we are progressing – at last.

THE RAAF ASSOCIATION ADDRESS IN SYDNEY

This will change shortly to 32 York Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000. At the present premises, a Uniting Church Organisation has increased rental to about 260% - so a move!

THE 458 SQUADRON PLAQUE

Readers will recall the recent creation of a 458 Squadron Memorial Plaque – including the recently recognised Crest – which is now installed with other Australian Squadron Plaques near the great Australian War Memorial in Canberra, the National Capital. This Plaque is near similar plaques of other Australian Squadrons which served in the Middle East when we were there. It was largely financed by a grant from the Minister for Veterans Affairs, the Hon. Bruce Scott MP. We now for worldwide Squadron information reproduce the Crest below.



SANDGROPPERS SAY – from Ted Jewell

News from here in the West is rather short on at the present, with all our cold and wet weather people don't get around very much, maybe because we are all getting older which could account for some of it. We had a great day at Shirley and Phil Hicks home for a Sunday lunch, with the ladies bringing a plate. Squadron members were very few as there was only Bill & Joan Clues, Henry & Vera Etherton and myself, also Margaret Gannaway, all the others were associates and friends. Jack Cobb rang me to say he was not well and couldn't make it.

The Clues have now moved into their new Air Force home at Merriwa, have a few minor problems to sort out, but are settling in OK. Their new address is: H.G. Clues, 27/28 Hester Ave., Merriwa, WA, 6030. Tel: 0893045027. I had two very enjoyable weeks in Canberra a short time ago but had to come home in a hurry as my son-in-law died of Cancer, he served in the army in Vietnam and like so many of the men in his unit he suffered with so much sickness, but the government still didn't recognise this as war caused, but put it down to my son-in-law's sickness being because he smoked – though he hadn't done so for twenty years.

I had a phone call from Wal Archbold who was over in the west, but I was unable to see him because he was short of time. Best wishes to everyone – Ted Jewell.

BRITISH BULLETIN from Norm Duke

I have heard from Reg Windett with the sad news of another gap in our ranks. Ron Vernon Lewis Lavender, who flew in the same crew as Reg as a W.Op/Air/ASV/G, through to Bone and Italy, has recently died. Reg had kept in touch with him although Ron had not been an active member of the association. Following the Council meeting at the Geelong reunion, I was very pleased to receive a comprehensive list of current members names and addresses in Australia, NZ, Canada. UK members please contact me for help. Joyce and I recently made a trip south to Pevensy Bay for a most enjoyable day with Jack and Grace Baker. The intention was for that old English custom – the 'pub lunch' but Grace did us proud with a proper family lunch at home which put our expected pub grub in the shade. A grand day out. Jack tells me he is not planning to visit OZ for the Olympics this year! As a result of a letter I received from Rupert Pearce of Victoria Flight, I passed on his letter to John Douglas enclosing the addresses of Bill Fordyce, who was a POW with John, and also of Len Netherway, John's second pilot. This was a truly memorable event and a great boost to John who is still in hospital undergoing long term care for a series of strokes. After 55 plus years John has not been able to contact Bill and Len. Thankyou Rupert and the Squadron Newsletter. John's wife Renee tells me he has now been moved to a long term care hospital where he is very well looked after. Not very mobile and sorry he cannot join us for our next reunion. Very pleased to re-enrol Bill Robinson, former cook, and crucial member of the 458 team, who is also a member of that select group who joined 458 at Holme on Spalding Moor and stayed with the Squadron until Gibraltar. I think there should be a special badge for these old – old sweats. Best wishes to all – Norm.

NEW VETERANS BENEFITS PLANNEDDVA to Provide HACC Services

Members will be familiar with the type of services provided to veterans of our age group and others in need of assistance by way of cutting grass, cleaning windows etc. by Home and Community Care. Ex-Service people have sometimes experienced difficulty in getting these services and now the Department of Veterans Affairs has decided that from January 1, 2001, it will itself provide such services for ex-service people with assessed needs. This is a very good departmental venture in our view.

Household Repairs

Another departmental venture for veterans will, if the Senate passes the legislation, enable additional loans to be made over and above Defence Service Home Loans for such necessary ventures as gutter replacement.
