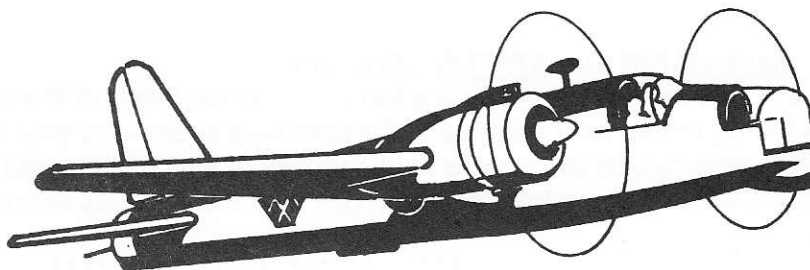


458

SQUADRON NEWS



RAAF

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

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458 SQUADRON COUNCIL

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Editor: Peter Alexander (NEW Fax: 9299 5570 – NEW Telephone 9299 2830)

Publisher: Eric Munkman (Tel: 02 9972 0641)

Flight Correspondents

UK	Norman Duke, Orchard Cottage, Guildford Road, Cranleigh, Surrey, England
NSW	Merv Hargraves, 79 Beach Street, Coogee, NSW, 2034
QLD	Jack Lewis, 5 Cupania Road, Victoria Point, Queensland, 4165
WA	Ted Jewell, 61 Wyaree Road, Mandurah, WA 6210
NZ	Kevin George, 20 Kowhai Avenue, Kaikohe, New Zealand
SA	Mrs Pat Cribb, 3/2 Stuart Street, Burnside, SA, 5066
Canada	Bryan Quinlan, 1460 Haywood Avenue, West Vancouver, B.C. V7T 1V6,
Victoria	Rupert Pearce, 46 Mt Pleasant Road, Nunawading, Victoria 3131

THE SQUADRON HISTORY – 3RD Edition

Our publisher tells us that the new edition of We Find and Destroy will certainly be out by the middle of the year. The orders are coming in well but he is not banking any of the cheques until the printing is under way so don't be concerned if your cheques have not been cleared yet. He has organised the Canadian order to be delivered directly to Bryan Quinlan who will distribute the volumes to individuals at a saving in postage, but we cannot be certain of the final cost until the book has been printed and can be weighed. Norm Duke has very kindly offered to take on the same job for UK members so would all those intending to subscribe for a copy please send their orders with cheques directly to Bryan or Norm. Addresses for both appear at the head of this newsletter.

Some overseas members who have sent remittances to Australia will be supplied from Australia.

THE PORT MACQUARIE ALL STATES REUNION

Separately with this copy of the News is a form setting out details of the well-planned and interesting Reunion of 458 Squadron later this year. The form also seeks also your involvement. We urge all 458ers and their ladies who can do so to come to this reunion – which might well be the last. Attendance with fellow members of 458's Squadron members has over the decades been one of our privileges in life. Let's keep on!

CANUCK REPORT from Bryan Quinlan

At the outset of the new century, (mathematically), some quiet reflection on all those who did not make it through the 20th. *We will remember them!* On behalf of your Canadian buddies, our best wishes to all 458 Flights for a healthy, happy and prosperous 2001!

The Christmas mail brought the welcome plethora of news from all fronts, home and abroad, and it was great to hear from so many old comrades in Oz, NZ and UK. As usual the problem is to compress all the news to an acceptable length, so will try to hit the main items without omitting something important. Before getting to the mail, one important and very welcome development was the discovery of two ex-458ers via the advice of Glenn Hoosier – John Hayes and Tom Rowan, both W/Ags and on the Squadron during the Mackenzie's Air Force era. John flew with George Dunmore and Tom did some trips with John Douglas before he was shot down. Glenn was a W/AG with Aussie Jack Withecomb's crew. Both John and Tom are busy re-calling memories of 458 and Glenn and John, who reside in Edmonton, Alberta, got together in mid-January and, no doubt, opened the hangar doors wide. John's daughter is visiting New Zealand and Oz in February and she hopes to talk to some of her Dad's mates from those eventful days. I recently had an enjoyable telephone chat with George to advise him about John and there should be an exchange of recollections in the near future.

Christmas mail highlights include: - Jim and Peg Donaldson – I enjoyed a long telephone chat with Jim, past VP Canadian Flight in January. Jim is busy re-decorating his house and he and Peg continue to persevere and stay positive despite long-standing health problems. Bert and Gladys Markland – first time great grandparents, a great grand-daughter to add to five grand-daughters. Mick/Margaret Reid - celebrated a significant milestone in Marg's life with family coming from France and the UK. Sid and Joyce Winchester – celebrated a multi-family Christmas, with Sid recalling Christmas '44 spent in solitary confinement in a German prison camp. As he says "No turkey dinner that year!" Frank and Peg Laughlin – advise they are enjoying their new home. Ernie Ireland – keeping very busy with various family celebrations and travels, his New Years resolution – to visit Vancouver this summer. Tony Mauro – his brother Vic advises that Tony is going through a difficult period and is staying at his son's house in the Vancouver area. George and Zee MacLeod – George going strong at 81 and impatiently looking forward to receiving the updated 458 History. Jim Lovelace – have tried unsuccessfully to contact Jim as had expected to hear from him with an order for the history update. Harry Godfrey queried me on Jim's well – being in December and am not sure whether they subsequently established contact. Bea Eastcott – getting back to normal after hosting the family Christmas which included six grand-children, three dogs and a bird! Bea wishes to order a copy of the updated history. Bernice Evans – forwarded a photo of Cam's 458 crew and an Aircrew Association article about Cam's ditching and aftermath experiences. Nell Powell – despite a broken arm, still went on her planned trip to Portugal last summer, sling and all, however, her 2000 gold season was kiboshed. Anne Markowsky – is unhappily facing the eventual prospect of disposing of her lakeside property, which was always Bill's favourite relaxation hideaway. Orders for the updated history have been brisk and now stand at 15 and all are looking forward to its receipt.

I was greatly saddened to receive word from Mickey Reid that his dear friend and ex-458 Navigator, Ron Eggars, had passed on. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him and our deepest sympathies go out to his wife Sue, and all the family, comforted by the knowledge that this close-knit family will provide loving support to Sue and to each other.

We know also how hard this loss will be on Mickey, as he and Ron have enjoyed a close and enduring friendship extending back to their days in training and on 458 Squadron, and rekindled at various intervals in the postwar years.

VICTORIAN VIEWS from Rupert PearceBBQ – Cup Day:

This was cancelled due to apologies received.

2 FLIGHT ATC. C.O. (F/LT. Jenny Brady) Prize Giving:

Neil and June Dean, with Mick and Mavis Singe attended the BBQ lunch on December 10 for the annual prize giving. About 100 parents attended and 50 cadets in 3 Flights were on parade. Mick Singe presented the 458 Squadron prize to Cadet Brendan Hughes for the "Most all round committed cadet".

RAAF Association Annual Ecumenical Service

This is to be held on the 25th March 2001, at St Martins Church, Cromwell Street, South Yarra, commencing at 1130 hours and will be followed by a luncheon at the Air Force Club premises.

Members attending will meet at the Air Force premises at 1100 hours, leaving at 1115 hours to arrive at the Church and be seated by 1125 hours. The cost of the light luncheon will be \$16 per head. Phone reservations will be accepted with payment prior to the 16th March 2001. Phone 9826 8573. Decorations and Medals should be worn.

ANZAC DAY:

No official details are available yet but it is expected we will meet in Flinders Street as usual and after the March at the Melbourne Bowling club, Windsor.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

This will be held on Tuesday, May 29, 2001 at 12 noon at the Air Force Club, Cromwell Road, South Yarra.

PERSONAL:

Mrs Helen Laming will be 90 on February 11. There will be a family gathering and afternoon at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Val. Bennett to mark this great occasion. Congratulations and best wishes from all our members.

Len and Reabie Netherway have moved to: 10/8 Elma Street, Cooe Bay, Queensland, 4703.

Congratulations to Colin Fereday (a member of the NSW Flight) for his award of the Medal of the Order of Australia, in the recent Honors list.

June Dean has not been well. We wish her a speedy return to good health.

We regret to tell you that Lou Silbereisen passed away on December 11. Lou had not been a financial member of the Flight for some years but he was one of the 39 original members of the Squadron and departed from Sydney on August 8, 1941 on board RMS Awatea for the UK Via Auckland, Fiji, Vancouver, Halifax and arriving at Holme on Spalding Moore, Yorkshire. Many of the original members stayed with the Squadron and served in the UK., Middle East, Palestine, Italy and other areas until the Squadron disbanded at Gibraltar in June 1945.

We have written to his widow offering our sincere condolences.

Also Neil Dean, Rupert Pearce, Mick and Mavis Singe attended the service to celebrate the life of our friend Ronald Eggers who passed away on January 29. Ron did his ITS at Somers, was posted to Embarkation depot in early 1941 and went to Rhodesia and later Scotland for training as a navigator. He joined 458 Squadron and in January/June 1943 served at Malta. Later at Protville, Tunisia. He was a member of Micky Reid's crew. Ron was very proud of his service with the Squadron and he and Sue were supporters of the activities of the Flight, even when his health was not good. He was a quiet, gentle man, devoted to his family and we send our condolences to Sue and his children, Tom, Robert and Jane.

REMEMBERING LOU SILBEREISEN

458 Electrical Section Member, Lou Silbereisen has flown on. He was the bass player of Graeme Bell's Australian Jazz Band. He died at his Beaumaris home two months short of his 85th birthday. Born in Sebastopol, Ballarat he and his family moved to Queenscliff in 1918. At an early age he heard the records of Armstrong, Ellington and Beiderbecke, and took piano lessons. Moving to Melbourne in 1936, he joined the Melbourne Swing Club. At this time he met Bud and Harry Baker, Pixie Roberts, and later the Bell brothers and Ade Monsborough. A group was formed and as a bass player was required, Lou Silbereisen was accepted. Lou enlisted in the RAAF at the outbreak of the war. He was not accepted for air crew, but was required as an electrical fitter. Between 1941 and 1945 he served in the Middle East and England, where he played some music. Returning to Australia in 1945, he resumed his friendship with the Bells and became their bass player. For several years he was a full-time musician in the band's overseas and Australian tours. In those heady days, Silbereisen was an important member of the rhythm

section, but seldom had the opportunity to solo. Nevertheless, he won the bass/tuba category in the *Music Maker* poll of 1952. The Bell Band eventually broke up in June 1952, weary of the incessant travelling. Silbereisen was a keen sailor, being a member of the Sandringham Yacht Club for many years, and once won the 14-foot Australian Championship. He also built several of his own boats. A devoted family man, Silbereisen is survived by his wife Audrey, daughter Vicky and two grandchildren. His son, Karl, was killed in a road accident some years ago.

SANDGROPPERS SAY from Ted Jewell

We are now into the New Year and I wonder where the last one went. W.A. Flight had their usual Xmas dinner at Miss Mauds in Perth, we had a good attendance and everyone had a great day. I had a surprise visit a week or so ago from a 458 member I had never met before, his name is Campbell Stacy from Waroona, W.A. Cam joined the Squadron in Italy as a "reo" and went on to Gibraltar with the squadron, then on to England where he finished up with a Fighter Squadron in Germany before going home – do many remember him on the Squadron? I had left when he arrived in 458.

I had a good talk to Olga Jones on the phone last week, and she said Gordon has been in and out of Hospital since May with deep depression plus he has some heart trouble. Olga does not know what the future holds for Gordon. All our best wishes must go to Olga and hope for the best for Gordon.

W.A. Flight members will be coming down to my home in Mandurah for a BBQ on Sunday March 4, I am hoping to see a good crowd turn up, it is a long drive for some, as it is about 100 km from Perth.

The next function will be Anzac Day and we are looking forward to a good roll up for the March and later lunch. I mentioned before that Len Stewart has his home up for sale here in Mandurah and will be shifting to live near the family in Perth. I was told that Val is now in a Nursing Home since before Xmas.

I must remind members that our "subs" are now due for 2001. We have to pay for all members receiving the News Letter, so don't forget to send your money to me. All the best from W.A. Flight.

Q FLIGHT COMMENTS from Jack Lewis

Last get-together for year 2000 was our Xmas Luncheon on the 6th December, at the Irish Club.

It was a very enjoyable couple of hours with those able to attend, illness prevented attendance by quite a few. Those who attended were Eric and Kath Kelly, Jack and Evelyn Lewis, Bernie & Helen McLouglin, Cyril and Hetty Murray, Arthur & May Jones, Cel Foote and his daughter Katherine, Joan was not well, and Peg Holliday. On the sick list were Sel & Bobby Williams, Bert & Isla Garland, Isla was very ill in hospital after major surgery, glad to report that Isla is now progressing well. Bert had medical appointments and is coming along O.K. Don Brandon had medical checks over a period of days. Peter and Jean Bailie – Peter O.K. but sad to say Jean has very serious impairments to her eyes. Best Wishes for a much improved year healthwise. We look forward to seeing those we mentioned at our mid year luncheon.

Greetings received for the season from Theo Ravenscroft, Bryan and Joan Quinlan from Canada, Kevin & Dawn George from New Zealand. Kevin was in contact with Bryan Quinlan and he has almost persuaded Bryan and Joan to come to the Reunion at Port Macquarie. Also heard from Peg Cuthbertson. Peg keeps busy with her interests in Bridge and Probus.

Letter from Danny Dangaard back in October – received too late for inclusion in last News.

Our News report sent early as Peter was going overseas and wanted the report earlier than usual. Danny enclosed a newspaper cutting from the Cairns local paper, Erle Hetherington brought it to his notice about Iceland – it brought back memories when Bob, Erle and myself were in Iceland and places mentioned in the paper where we were. We went fishing at 3 am one morning, the sun still up, arrived back at camp – no fish – crawled into bed under 8 blankets. I faintly remember going fishing and swimming in the geothermal blue lake – and being invited to the USA Army Mess for a decent meal as we were on hard rations. Danny said Erle related the places we went to and what we did, amazing memory he has for 87 years. Danny himself is not enjoying good health.

I must add some news about Evelyn now, I feel proud of her. Back in December Evelyn, along with some other golfers, was one of 40 to receive an Australian Sports Medal for Contribution to Golf. There were ladies from Women's Golf Q'ld. Administration, young golf professionals now on the circuit and State

Captains taking teams to events throughout Australia and overseas. Evelyn was 28 years on Womens Golf Qld. Treasurer for 13 years and also other duties. Her golf career started at Pacific Golf Club in 1961 was 15 years on committee – Captain, President, Secretary, received Life Membership in 1986. We then moved to Redlands where she became a member of Redland Bay Golf Club. Duties in office continued there, and feels proud to put up her certificates signed by the Prime Minister and Sir William Dean, and also to display her 2 medals. Not bad, she says, for an oldie.

As mentioned earlier about Don Brandon having medical checks, I have learned now he has to have blood transfusions every 3/4 months for the rest of his life.

We are sorry to report the passing of Vera Dangaard – Bob's lady. Our sympathies to her family.

BRITISH BULLETIN from Norm Duke

I am sending a further batch of copy photos received from David Duff. More historic recordings from his seemingly exhaustive supply of memories from his long service with 458. I am sure they will revive memories for some of you 'down under', and I hope it may be possible for them to be circulated.

We were very pleased to receive the booking forms for the new Squadron History (or is it Mark 3!)

Another major achievement with many congratulations in order to all the dedicated members involved in this project. I am sure that you will be getting a good response from UK members for this epic production. Jack and Grace Baker, two of our most faithful supporters at reunions, are returning to Sydney before the end of January to move into a new retirement home in the Sydney area. We shall miss them here, and wish them every happiness in their home.

Peter and Wendy Cochrane have also moved house, but still in Dunnington. We wish you joy also.

We are still in touch with Nancy Filley, who tells us she has settled into her new home in Minehead, after moving from Dyfed.

Ron Moy writes that he was finally able to meet up with fellow crew member Don Stocks at the Cross Keys in Holme after 55 years. As he says - we parted as 'lads' and reunited as great grandfathers.

Renee Douglas writes to tell me how pleased John was to receive a letter from Len Netherway, John's co-pilot, and hopefully gave a lift to his spirits while he is undergoing long term care in hospital. Our continued best wishes go to him and Renee.

On a purely historic note, I finally climbed the mountain last December and reached the magic figure 'eight-oh'! Oh being the vital word! Still a bit of life left in the old dog, we hope. 'Bye for now ..Norm.

CROWEATER COMMENTARY

from Col Hutchinson, Flt. President

Several members have commented on the subject of air safety, which is being well-aired in the media lately. Efforts in this regard by 458 people seem at last to be bearing fruit.

The Flight is concerned about the effect that the new Adelaide Airterminal might have on both the Vickers-Vimy Aircraft, at present beautifully displayed in a special building within the Airport carpark, and the Squadron Trees and Plaques next to it: 458's tree was the first of the group, and it was planted by the late Ron Badger on September 4, 1958. We are justly proud of it, and naturally want it to remain viable and significant. Options for both the Vickers-Vimy and the Trees/Plaques are being canvassed now. If you have suggestions, please let me have them so that I can discuss them at the Air Force Memorials Association Annual General Meeting on February 20.

from Pat Cribb, Flt. Secretary

A bus trip to Edinburgh Airfield to inspect the Orions and the base prior to forthcoming anti-submarine exercises has been arranged for Tuesday, March 6. We have hired a Serco bus, leaving promptly at 9.15 am from the Torrens Parade Ground on King William Street, Adelaide: we return by 1.00 pm. Cost is \$10 a head. Those taking the trip can leave their cars parked there. We are limited to 25 visitors to the base and individual members have been contracted – please confirm by February 27 by phoning Col Hutchinson on 8390 1510. We suggest you arrive at 9.00 am. Should be a good day.

CORNSTALK COMMENTS from Merv Hargraves

With this first Newsletter of the new millenium – best wishes to all members for the New Year. As previously mentioned the Christmas function at Ryde TAFE had seventeen members plus wives attending

and enjoying the afternoon. A presentation was made to Eric Munkman for his 50 years membership of the RAAF Association.

The year 2001 marks 60 years since 458 sailed from Australia on 8/8/41.

Congratulations to Col Fereday for his medal of the Order of Australia Award for service to the community through Ryder-Cheshire Foundation, the RAAF Association, Neighbourhood Watch and, of course, 458 Squadron.

Harry Baines has received Life Membership of the State Hotels Association in addition to his National Life Membership. Congratulations, Harry!

I have received a card from Reg Willis from Geraldton, W.A. He is keeping well and is looking forward to seeing his daughter and family from the UK to celebrate his 90th birthday in early April. Best Wishes, Reg. He was a W/Op in Bill Johnson's crew. Some members may remember Johnno and Bill Flentje in a great opening partnership in a cricket match with 458 against a combined services team at Gibraltar.

VALE

Sadly we report the departing of four members. Dick Healey died in December. After his time with 458 as a W/Op with Buck Pedersen he worked in post war years with the Australian Broadcasting Commission as a Sports Journalist. He became a State MP in NSW and a State Minister. He retained his interest in 458 despite his later years of some ill health. His funeral was well attended including by 458 represented by Eric Munkman, Pete Pettit and other members.

Fred James Fred, a member of Jack Aitken's crew and a Commissioned Air Gunner in the RAAF died recently. He had been living on the south coast of NSW.

Ron Eggers passed away at the end of January this year. He joined 458 on December 8, 1942 and flew from Shallufa, Malta, Protville and Blida with Mick Reid, Bob Bolton, George Unitt and Ken O'Reilly.

Brian Quinlan has faxed from Canada the following tribute to Ron Eggers:

I was greatly saddened to receive word from Mickey Reid that his dear friend and ex-458 Navigator Ron Eggers had passed on. He will be sadly missed by all who knew him and our deepest sympathies go to his wife Sue and all the family, comforted by the knowledge that this close knit family will provide loving support to Sue and each other. We know also how hard this loss will be on Mickey, as he and Ron have enjoyed a close and enduring friendship extending back to their days in training and on 458 Squadron and rekindled at various intervals in the postwar years.

Sam Barlow died in mid-January. A great 458 figure, Past Flight President and Squadron President from the foundation of the post war Squadron Association. With one or two others, he was responsible for the early flowering and organisation of 458, travelling interstate and contributing in every way to the Squadron's progress. He will be well remembered and much missed. Our sympathies for Maisie. Many 458ers attended Sam's Requiem Mass.

YOUR EDITOR'S PERSONAL REPORT

Peter and Rita Alexander spent approximately six weeks in Europe November/December. The prime purpose was for Peter to attend the Triennial Assembly of the World Veterans Federation in Paris. He is a (Life) World Vice-President of the WVF. Veterans Association leaders from over 70 countries attended to discuss a Veterans Agenda on the International level including an Australian initiative to do something to improve the lot of Women Veterans, widows and wives and children. On the international level there is much room for improvement. Prior to arriving in Paris (where the WVF Conference was held at the UNESCO Palace) Peter and Rita spent 10 days in Scotland, doing some business in Edinburgh, visiting the ancestral island of Jura (which was wonderful), and the Clan MacAlister Clan Centre at Glenbarr in Kintyre, of which Peter is the Australian Trustee, as well as other notable sites. They saw the Stone of Destiny, now in Edinburgh Castle, having been returned after centuries from Westminster Abbey. The weather in Scotland was good. After Paris, they went to Bilbao to see the Guggenheim Foundation and Barcelona to see the Temple of the Holy Family, as well as visiting Guernica, where the Luftwaffe practiced and which Picasso immortalised. All interesting and remarkable, Europe prosperous and, compared to Australia, very costly. Since returning to Australia Peter has had a short time in hospital with a stent inserted into a heart artery. Now back at work.
