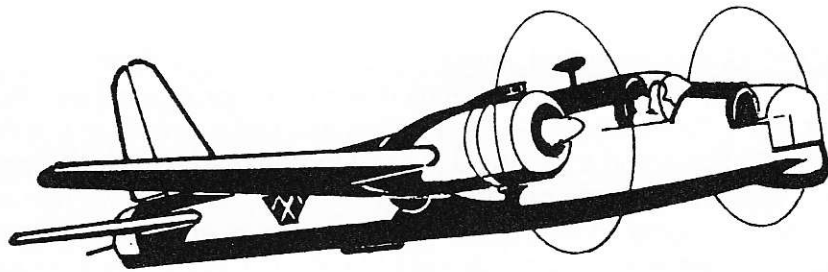


# 458

## SQUADRON NEWS

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RAAF

JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL, GPO Box 5289, SYDNEY, NSW, AUSTRALIA, 2001

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### 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL

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#### UPDATES

##### The Port Macquarie All-States Reunion

Enrolments excellent. While some members will be prevented from attending for health reasons, which we regret, nevertheless attendances are expected to be in three figures. It is not too late to enrol: - Pete Pettit will be glad to hear from you (26 Dudley Avenue, Roseville, 2069, NSW) Tel: 02 9416 5464).

The Squadron History 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition Yes, we know it is taking some time and we know the publisher has not yet presented cheques, etc. but we believe all is progressing steadily – if slowly.

### SANDGROPPERS SAY from Ted Jewell

Anzac Day. Our great WA weather let us down badly for Anzac Day, "It rained". Our President, Bill Clues went to the Dawn Service in King's Park and laid a wreath at the War Memorial. Afterwards in the morning 458 Squadron assembled in town for the march through Perth, then the service on The Esplanade. We all had to use our brollies to keep dry, as usual we had only 3 members marching, Bill Clues, Ted Jewell, Henry Etherton. Gordon Jones sons and Bob Shearman's son and grandson made up the rest. Later we went to lunch at Miss Maud's in Perth. There we had about 20 for lunch and drinks, some present were Olga Jones, Margaret Gannaway, Poss Dale and Len Stewart; Len now lives in Perth, Val Stewart is now in a Nursing Home and is not very well.

WA Flight members came down to my home in Mandurah for a BBQ lunch in March, we always have great weather at that time of the year; good to see Nobby and Esme Nobbs come along, we always have a wonderful day.

I am to mention that David Westgarth, who flew in the same crew as Gordon Jones phoned Gordon as he had not heard from him for 55 years. I believe they talked about old times as though it was only a short time ago. Sadly Gordon is now in a Nursing Home and not in the best of health. Best Wishes to all members.

### CORNSTALK COMMENTARY from Merv Hargreaves

The first luncheon for the year at Ryde TAFE College in March was well attended by members and wives and as usual enjoyed by all. Eric and Dorothy Munkman were warmly commended for their efforts in keeping the Squadron members together, particularly by the distribution of the Newsletter. Dorothy was rewarded with a gift of a plant for her generous support.

Peter Alexander and Bob Bruce are both in hospital at present. We wish them a speedy recovery. Bob Smith and family have recently returned from a successful holiday at Bermagui. Plenty of fish. Perfect autumn weather saw a good turn out of members for the Anzac March. It is pleasing to see the interest of the younger people. Jack Baker was accompanied by his three sons, George Unitt up from Batemans Bay had his son Terry from Cessnock and Noel Walter's son Philip came also. There were thirty for lunch at the Masonic Centre, including several who joined in after the march. Bob Lyndon was marching, he had been on the sick list but is now recovered. We were pleased to see Bill McFadden at the luncheon. A letter from David Westgarth who has planned a holiday in Canada. He hopes to contact Bryan Quinlan, our representative in Vancouver, in early June. Any messages to our Canadian 458ers can be sent to David at Bathurst before the 5<sup>th</sup> June. He sends his best wishes to members and is looking forward to the Port Macquarie Reunion. Jack and Grace Baker are back from the UK and now living at Galston. At the AGM Jack was elected to the committee to fill the vacancy created by the death of Sam Barlow. Eric Munkman and Peter Pettit represented the Squadron at the RAAFA Conference and Keith Cousins was our representative at the Bomber Command luncheon. A letter as been received from the Pensions Officer of the Deniliquin Sub Branch of the RSL inquiring if any members of 458 have suffered from Pernicious Anaemia. The reference is querying whether the diet in the Western Desert may have been a contributing factor. Any information is to be forwarded to Mrs Glenis Gordon, 3/449 Cressy Street, Deniliquin, NSW 2710. Phone: 03 5881 3295. Mrs Gordon wrote: I am the appointed pension officer for the Deniliquin RSL Sub-Branch. In the course of my work I have come across a member of the 458 Squadron who suffers from Pernicious Anaemia. Whilst speaking with him he mentioned that he had been speaking to other members who also suffer from this complaint. I would very much like to hear from anyone suffering from this illness as I feel that the "wonderful diet that you endured whilst serving in the desert" could have some relevance. Please write to me at 3/449 Cressy Street, Deniliquin, 2710 if you think that you can help me to help a veteran.

### REMEMBERING FRED McKAY AC, CMG, OBE

Don Brandon has drawn to our attention as a possible Squadron and Squadron Members Project report of St. Philips College, Alice Springs, an Education Centre where Fred is buried. The address is P. O. Box 33, Alice Springs, NT. 0871. More in future issues.

## VICTORIAN VIEWS from Rupert Pearce

### Social Notes

A lunch was held on 14<sup>th</sup> March at the Manningham Club, Bulleen. Those who attended were June Dean, Jack & Margaret Ellis, Bill Fordyce, Ken and Joann Hinton, Rupert Pearce, Norma Pollard, Mick and Mavis Singe. There were a number of apologies, The Bilneys, Neil Dean, Sue Eggers, The Grangers, The Martins, The Pearces, The Ramsays, Christine Smith and The Yates.

### VALE:

Joan Munday rang to tell that Des Munday, brother of Jim, Squadron Pilot, deceased, had passed away in February. We wrote to Betty and his family. Des and Betty attended the Squadron Dinner at the Geelong Reunion.

John Hardy Douglas, Squadron Pilot, P.O.W. Germany – His son John wrote to Len Netherway, a member of his crew and also a P.O.W., and to me, telling us that his father had passed away on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March after a long illness. His funeral service was held on 12<sup>th</sup> March at Cardiff, U.K. A letter has been written to his family.

Peter Vincent O'Bryan – Peter passed away on 17<sup>th</sup> February and his funeral mass was held on 21<sup>st</sup> February. Peter was one of 19 groundstaff who joined the Squadron at Gibraltar in February 1945. He had not been well for some years and was not a financial member of the Flight.

ANZAC DAY: President Mick was the leader of our small band of members, relatives and a friend. Those who marched were – Jim Anderson, John Bilney, Ed Bradshaw, Ken Brown (from Mulwala, NSW), Stan Cartledge, Neil Dean, Jack Ellis and Roy Pearce. Also with us were Ian Cartledge, son of Stan and Karen Ganley, Grand daughter of Stan and now married to Sue Jackson, daughter of Gordon Nash who died this day 5 years ago, husband Peter and daughter Michelle. Luke Boatman, grandson of Mick Hunter, Lt. Kim Wetterm, R.A.N., granddaughter of Squadron Pilot Arthur Lehdey deceased. Lt. Wetterm has served with the R.A.N for 10 years and will be leaving the service soon. Dressed in full uniform, she graced the occasion and for John Bilney a member of Arthur Lehdey's crew, it was a great thrill for him. Also Murray Weaver, a friend from another Squadron. Our thanks to the A.T.C. cadets for their help with our banner. Those who came to the Melbourne Bowling Club were June Dean, Margaret Ellis, Rupert Pearce, Barbara Pearce, Norma Pollard, Tom Primrose and daughter Eleanor Buzza, Mavis Singe. Apologies were received from Marjorie Bilney, Brett Boatman (on duty), Bill Fordyce, Ken & Joan Hinton, Don & Shirley Granger, Harold & Cath Martin and Rita Primrose.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This will be held at the RAAF Association, Cromwell Road, South Yarra, 12 noon 29<sup>th</sup> May.

### Q FLIGHT COMMENTS from Jack Lewis

ANZAC DAY: Our Anzac Day March attendance is becoming less as the years go by. However, we managed a small contingent to march behind The Banner. After the march we made our way to the Old Treasury, Irish Murphy's Hotel for refreshments and the A.G.M. the result of which was Eric Kelly re-elected President and Jack Lewis re-elected Secretary Treasurer.

Personal Paragraph: - Bernie McLoughlin was unlucky to have a bad fall at the end of January resulting in five broken ribs and a badly injured shoulder. He is OK now and was able to march with the aid of a walking stick. Fred Kleckham felt the results of marching – he recently recovered from a hip replacement. Have been in contact with Kitty Baxter to see how Jack was. He has had another stroke, not aware of too much and not mobile. He was able to be well aware of the outstanding feat of his granddaughter Hayley taking out the Iron Woman event at Kurrawa Beach a few weeks ago. Made Jack proud. Contact was also made with Peter Bailie, Jean not well but Peter is taking Jean to Port Macquarie for the Squadron Dinner. It will be a treat for Jean and Peter to meet up again with friends. Harry Dorge phoned to say hello. Harry is also planning to be at the reunion, he is coming along very well after a long illness. The Royal Australian Air Force Commemoration 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Service attended by Eric Kelly was a most impressive turnout.

### CROWEATERS COMMENTARY from Pat Cribb

Royal Australian Air Force Association President, Kevin Fisher has confirmed that his committee is negotiating costs of access and related matters with the C.E.O of the Adelaide Airport owners. There are several points which give us heart about what is to happen to the above items, including the 458 plaque and tree (which were first on the scene on September 4, 1958, courtesy Ron Badger). These are:-

1. The entire area is "dedicated ground" which, of course, gives it a high value for all time, as well as high security.
2. The Vickers Vimy is now on the Heritage List, also increasing value and security.
3. The whole arrangement – aircraft, housing, trees and plaque – will stay as and where they are, that is as part and parcel of Adelaide Airport, with improved access.

458 People will be very pleased to learn that our memorials and those of other squadrons, are now in safe, permanent tenure and will be available for our Airport Memorial Service functions. ....COL.

We read last year of the Fincastle anti-submarine warfare exercise being held off the WA coast this April, with teams from Britain, Canada, New Zealand and Australia assembling at the RAAF Base, Edinburgh. As a matter of interest, we sent a letter explaining the role of 458 Squadron as an anti-submarine force in World War II. In reply we were invited to come as a group to view the Orions prior to the exercise. This found 17 eager 458ers enjoying a very interesting morning at Edinburgh on March 6, when No. 10 Squadron personnel went out of their way to show us all aspects of their present day service. They were most attentive, and in turn learnt a lot about the planes and equipment used by our men 60 years ago. What a contrast!

A mid-year dinner will again be held this year, at the Kensington Hotel, 23 Regent Street, Kensington (off Norwood Parade) on Thursday, July 12.

It is with much sadness that we advise the death of Ruth, the wife of John Excell, on Easter Friday, April 13, at Murray Bridge. John and Ruth attended and enjoyed most 458 Reunions over the years, keeping up with so many friends in the Squadron. Our sincere condolences to John and their children, Margaret and Kevin, grand-daughters Michelle and Deanna. Ruth will really be missed.

### ----- KIWI CALL from Kevin George

As usual there is little to report from New Zealand. I have recently had a phone call from Ken Verity who still enjoys good health but failing eyesight which has cost him his driver's licence. They will not be going to Port Macquarie. Arch and Gladys Fell keep in regular touch. They have some health problems, which are fairly well under control, however, they will not be going to the Reunion either. Ivan Green battles on but has lost his agility somewhat. He doubts if he will be fit enough to attend another Reunion in Australia. I have recently had a letter from Jack Ellis. Jack had sent a 550 word article to the "Herald Weekly Times" of Melbourne requesting that they feature it in connection with other items on Anzac Day. (It was entitled "No Glory, the Real Story"). Jack has had major health worries but is not too bad at the moment. It appears that Jack has come to realise his long standing battle with the Civil Aviation authorities will be fruitless.

### ----- BRITISH BULLETIN from Norm Duke

We are very sad to report that John Douglas passed away on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, after a long stay in hospital following serious medical problems over several years. Well known to those who served in Malta and Protville, he was an exceptional pilot and flight commander who refused a "rest " after completing his first operational tour. We shall miss him. Also we have noted an In memoriam in Intercom for K.G. Baker an ex wop/Ag with 458. Unfortunately unknown to the UK Flight. Congratulations to Charles and Joyce Humbles who celebrated their Diamond wedding anniversary last November. We hope that



Joyce's cataract operation was a success. Don Stocks and Ron May are still hoping for news of ex-crew members Brian Hann and Gordon Treadwell.

Brooklands Museum home of Wimpey 'R' Robert is recovering after flooding 1<sup>st</sup> November 2000 when the River Wey overflowed its banks. All buildings on site (with the exception of the Wellington Hangar) were flooded to a depth of 2/3 feet (1 metre) and considerable damage amounting to £2million resulted to the buildings, contents and exhibits. After closure for two months, the Museum was reopened on February 1, 2001 at a reduced admission fee. It will be some months before redecoration and remedial work are completed. Refurbishment of the entire Clubhouse has been necessary, but outdoor events have been unaffected.

UK Reunion 2001 – a Reunion dinner is planned for Sunday September 30, 2001 at the Londesborough Arms Hotel, Market Weighton, Yorks. A few miles from Holme-on-Spalding Moor. Best wishes to you all.

#### CANUCK CAUCUS from Bryan Quinlan

Peter: Recent e-mail from Pete Pettit advised that you are in hospital recovering from an operation. Sorry to hear that this was necessary but very happy to hear from Pete that you are progressing well and anxious to get back in the saddle. Don't rush it. Most sincerely, and from all the Canadian members – our very best wishes for a complete and speedy recovery.

I have asked Mick Reid to pass on any news he may have either directly or through me and as I haven't heard from him you may receive something. If so, please combine our reports as one as is our intention.

**Canadian May 2001 Report** It appears that the first year of the new millenium will be a banner year for visitations from Oz. First Jim Whitem e-mailed that he and Dorothy are planning an extended trip across Canada in mid-summer, culminating in New York, to visit family and friends, attend Dorothy's W.D. Reunion in Edmonton and hopefully meet up with as many Canadian Flight members as time and their itinerary permit. Jim met some of the guys when he attended the final Winnipeg Reunion in '92 and, of course currently, in conjunction with Colin Fereday, very abley represents the Canadian Flight at the All States. More recently I received a letter from Davis Westgarth advising that he and his wife Judy are planning an organised tour across Canada and ending in New York this June and hoping to touch base with Canuck 458ers who coincide with the tour itinerary. Alerts have gone out to our thinly spread membership across the country and we are hopeful that contact arrangements can be made, however brief, in Vancouver, Edmonton and the Mississauga area. We look forward to their arrivals. Over the past couple of months I have been in touch via telephone, e-mail and fax on various occasions with Frank Laughlin, Victoria; Glen Hoosier and John Hays, Edmonton; Tom Rowan, Carraganna, Sask.; and Mick Reid, Mississauga, and all appear to be relatively well and happy, except that Glen took a fall earlier this year and broke some ribs. However, this did not stop him from holidaying in Hawaii and now, just returned, says he is almost ready for the golf course. John has already been swinging and other than playing the wrong ball on one occasion, is scoring well. Have assisted Glen, John and Tom inn obtaining the George Cross Island Commemorative Medal for their service in Malta. This is, of course, not through the Maltese Government, but from a UK Commercial source which requires Service Record support documentation plus a personal testimonial. Had a short visit with Jack Reynolds recently and he may be the next candidate. Also keep in touch periodically by phone with George Dunmore in UK and hope one day we can get together again. Sid Winchester advises that things are on a relatively even keel. He and Joyce like to attend garage sales looking for intriguing items and particularly old postcards and postage stamps, particularly any commemorating early Canadian flight. Some of the items garnered have proved unexpectedly valuable. His most recent acquisition – a peanut vending machine!

Get quite a few queries regarding the publication of the updated 458 history and everyone is looking forward with great anticipation to receiving their copies. Pete Pettit advises that there is something stirring on this front and hopefully it will not be too long.

## EDITORIAL

Having currently had a somewhat extended period of sick leave I was unable to march this Anzac Day with the Squadron. Having rejected the kind offer to ride in a jeep I was, most unusually, able to watch the Sydney march on television at home. It was an interesting experience. As no Australian or New Zealander needs to be told, Anzac Day is the great Australasian day of the year. Its purpose is commemoration – unlike Australia Day, which is a day of celebration. The Anzac March attracts many thousands of cheering spectators lining the streets of the Capital cities. A large number of them being children and many of them migrants of the recent, substantial immigration program. Anzac day, indeed, is seen as a great preserver of Australian history and traditional culture. It is important that it continue.

But a march requires people to march and the WWII generation is starting to diminish. In future, no doubt, Vietnam Veterans and the serving forces will march, but their numbers are unlikely to suffice. Therefore it has been RAAF Association policy, warmly accepted by 458 Squadron, to encourage mature age children and grandchildren to join the March. It is not yet the policy of those who control the army section to march (at least in Sydney) to welcome children and grandchildren. My TV watch of Sydney 2001 March showed me clearly that in fact all sections, Navy, Army and Air Force, are attracting the next generations increasingly, (certainly 458 is). Many of the sons marching wearing their fathers medals on the right hand breast, are of course middle-aged men, but there were also many grandchildren similarly honouring their grandparents. It was good to see them, and needs to be encouraged. We are going to want them and they can't be turned on like a tap at short notice. There is a further thought under consideration relating to the many hundreds of young Australians who flock each Anzac Day to Gallipoli for that Dawn Service and that they may be given some form of badge or certificate inviting them if they wish to join the Anzac Marches in some future years. Possibly controversial but, personally, I am for it.

## REMEMBERING DOUGIE

Of the memorable personalities who served 458 Squadron, certainly Pilot and Flt. Commander John Douglas was one. The Squadron History, We Find and Destroy, contains many references to him and we refer readers to page 121 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. As a Belgian by origin and therefore from a country invaded and occupied without provocation by Hitler's Germany, he was a most determined and persevering warrior. There are various other references to his services throughout the Squadron History. He and his son continued to serve the Royal Air Force and, it seems, Dougie retired to Wales.

The Squadron post war did not, to our regret, have contact with Dougie, but he is well remembered. The last time I (PCA) saw Dougie was in London after VE Day when I was waiting in civilian clothes to catch my ship back to Australia. I recall seeing Dougie at an airport leaving for a visit to Belgium resplendent in RAF Group Captain's uniform. I did not catch his eye but I wished him mentally the happiest of visits to Belgium, which he deserved, and I am sure, received. As we know, he had a continued career with the RAF. We remember him as a gallant gentleman.

Stop Press!

## Queensland's Late News!

Danny Dangaard passed away suddenly on 15th May 2001. Our sympathy is extended to his family.

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