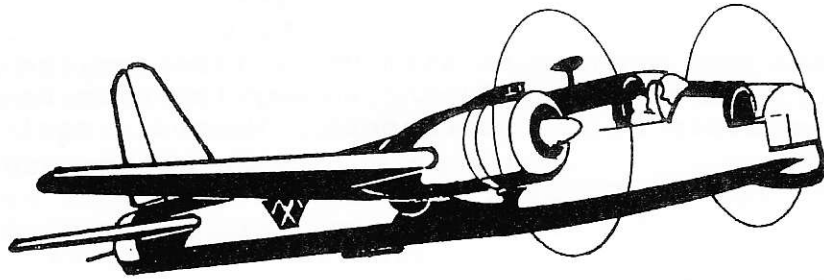


458

SQUADRON NEWS



RAAF

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

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PROGRESS ON THE 3rd. EDITION OF THE HISTORY.

We now have the full proofs of the 3rd Edition to read and are doing that. There is a wealth of new photographs as well as the new matter collected from Squadron members by Peter Pettit. The Publisher of the new book (it is a commercial venture) is aiming at the younger generation which is clearly, these times, taking a considerably greater interest in WWII than earlier generations did.

We have been in touch with the various Air Forces to seek revisions of the Casualty Lists they supplied for our earlier editions and which we have long felt to be incomplete.

Revisions may not be with us in time for the 3rd edition (already sufficiently delayed) and we may therefore have to circulate them separately to 458 purchasers. We shall see!

THE NEXT ALL-STATES REUNION PLANNING.

The NSW Flight Committee has received proposals from 6 different locations and is currently finalising its recommendations. The likely date is the earlier part of 2003.

CROWEATER COMMENTARY from Pat Cribb.

The Annual General Meeting and Christmas Lunch on Dec.2 at the Kensington Hotel was a very happy occasion with 35 attending. All were very interested in the placemat given to those attending the recent Port Macquarie Reunion, being a map of the Mediterranean and Europe, with dates and places stationed by 458 throughout the war.

Congratulations to John Excell on his appointment at the Squadron Conference as a Vice-President of the Squadron Council.

Bert Ravenscroft has offered the text of his diary, kept over five years of warservice to be included in a book "What So Proudly We Hailed" due to be compiled in Britain. The importance of 458 Squadron was acknowledged as having the first jet engine in operation in a Wellington bomber.

Nathan Price is justly proud of his medals and was applauded for his service with the peace-keeping Force in East Timor. He is the grandson of Ned Kelly, a 458er who died some years ago.

Drinks and lunch on Anzac Day after the March this year will be at the Royal Hotel, corner of North Terrace and Hackney Road, Kent Town. A flier will be out soon with details.

A Memorial in the form of an aircraft propeller will be unveiled and dedicated to the memory of those aviators who have served this country since 1915. The Ceremony will be in the Unley Memorial Gardens at 10.30 a.m. on Saturday, March 23rd 2002. As it coincides with the birthday of the RAAF it is anticipated that a full RAAF Service will also take place there prior to the ceremony, and they also envisage a parade of unit, squadron and Association banners. Assembly will be at Frederick Street, proceeding along Unley Road--about 300 metres. We expect 458 will be represented by a few members.

Q.FLIGHT NEWS FROM Jack Lewis.

Once again not a lot to report in way of news. I think the hot

weather we have had these past three months has been very trying for everyone and one has just found the coolest spots to try and keep cool. Then, there has been floods, the terrible Bush Fires down south and severe storms affecting so many,

A note received from Fred, Kleckham at Xmas. Fred says 2001 has not been kind to him and his family: Fred had a hip replacement

and Marjorie has been very sick; his family have been in accidents and suffered many problems. One happy event--Fred and Marjorie celebrated their 61st Wedding Anniversary in December, 2001.

I received a letter from John Lilly, of Wanneroo, W.A. This letter I think was written by a family member, John not in the best of health. He wanted to know why Squadron telephone numbers were not published in the News. I presume he meant of the members. He requested my number, etc. I replied but have not received as yet a reply to my letter or telephone call.

Received a call from Sel. Foote re a copy of the following letter from Mr Ian "Frosty" Williams of Amberley Aviation Museum.

Dear Sel,

In our discussions recently, you indicated the possible disbandment of 458 Sqn. Association. On behalf of our Committee I wish to express our regret that this situation may come to pass through dwindling numbers. Should the Association have memorabilia which it would like to see made available for display to perpetuate the part that 458 Sqn played with its Wellingtons in World War II Ipswich Amberley Aviation would be very happy to take on that task. Our Museum has been established to preserve Aviation history in this district and has the backing of Ipswich City Council, the RAAF Association and RSL in Ipswich, and of the RAAF, Amberley. We would be pleased to include your memorabilia as part of our collection should you so desire.

Ian "Frosty" Williams, Chairman.

I was in contact with Don. Brandon this week. Don has not been in the best of health--as a matter of fact, very ill. He entered Greenslopes Hospital two days before last Xmas and spent 16 days there. He has been having treatment for Myeloma Dysplastic (Bone marrow problems). He has numerous transfusions and is still under treatment as an outpatient. We wish you well, Don. With regards to all, Jack Lewis.

SANDGROPEERS SAY....from Ted. Jewell.

I had a great holiday before Xmas as I said in my last newsletter, went down to Busselton in the south of the State, a lovely place for a holiday. Col Corten lives in the town but I didn't catch up with him.

W.A. Flight's Xmas dinner was held on 2.12.01 at our usual Restaurant, Miss Maud's, in Perth. It was one of our greatest turnouts for a long time with about 40 present. Bill and Joan Clues, Ted. Jewell, Henry and Vera Etherton, Jim and Lucy Palmer, Bill and Flip Kelliher, Charlie and Betty Davis, also Margaret Gannaway and Valeris Cormack, and other friends. Val came up with me from Mandurah for the luncheon.

I called in to see Val last week and she said the cancer she thought had cleared has now shewn up again and is now receiving chemo-therapy treatment. I hope all turns out well (ED.Ted has sent us a letter addressed to the Editor from Val which follows Sangropers Say)

I had a phone call from Evelyn Manton recently. She is going along alright with health and life--was wondering why her cheque for the Book she had ordered was not cleared, but I have explained why it is so.

I haven't seen or heard much from other members for a while, but I am having a BBQ lunch at my home in Mandurah on Sunday March 10th, so I am hoping for a good attendance, every one always has a great day. It is a fairly long drive from Perth but our new Freeway comes nearly all the way now. All the best, Ted.

From Mrs Valerie Cormack--

Dear Editor,

To his Squadron 458 comrades in other States I would like to convey my news of Ben Cormack's passing. Ben had a sudden death (Heart attack) on 18th September. Ben always held his Squadron and his mates in high esteem. It was my pleasure to see all who could attend on Ben's "Special Day". Many thanks to Bill Clues, our W.A. President and all 458ers for making the effort, caring and having sympathy xxxx. Ben and I were married for 53 and a half years. Had boy and girl twins--now 52! We had our moments, funny ones and not so funny! But all in all we had a good marriage, I shall miss him,

Many blessings to you all Valerie Cormack

THE BRITISH BULLETIN from Norm.Duke.

Colin Brain. Colin has been in touch with me asking for any possible information that might be on record, or personally of his father, who was a member of W/Comdr Mulholland's crew which was shot down en route to Malta in 1942. Before joining 458--very briefly--he had completed a tour of operations as a member of Leonard Cheshire's crew on 102 Squadron flying Whitleys. I note his name does not appear in the Squadron history. I understand he flew as 2nd pilot on this fatal trip.

News just received that Terry Smith, the widow of Harry Smith, formerly a pilot and captain who flew from Bone and onwards died last year. Terry joined us as a member at our reunion at Stratford 3 years ago, when she met up with her husband's crew for the first time.

Brooklands Wellington "R" for Robert.

The Museum at Brooklands has been fortunate in being awarded a grant of 996,000 pounds towards the refurbishment of the hangar housing the aircraft. All they have to do now is raise another 450,000 pounds for the partnership funding. The hangar in question is the original building in use since WW2.

Leon Armstrong. It has become necessary for Doreen, Leon's wife, to move to a residential nursing home, located near Birmingham, in order to be near Leon's son and family. Leon is selling his home in Wanstead and moving into a flat within easy reach of the nursing home. My own wife Joyce also has had to move into a residential nursing home for specialist nursing care. Doreen

and Joyce have both for many years been faithful supporters of Leon and Norman in all the activities of 458.

With best wishes to all Norm.

CANUCK CAUCUS from Bryan Quinlan.

First, we hope your times of trial by fire and then by water are over and that everything is back to normal. Natural disasters are bad enough but fires set by "bored" kids are much harder to accept. Some blistered backsides might be in order!

Always lots of news following Christmas and it was most rewarding to hear from so many ex-458 mates in Australia, New Zealand, U.K. and Canada, too many for this report to mention by name but all very much appreciated. Unfortunately the advancing years also bring more instances of declining health and sadly in some cases, the final chapter. Very sorry to hear the sad news of Graeme Coombes--he played a prominent role with 458 over the years and will be greatly missed. Canada Flight extends its sincere sympathies to family members and my personal thanks to his daughters for their thoughtful advice of their loss. Canada Flight also lost one of its enthusiastic supporters with the death of Tony Mauro on 16 Jan. 2002 (see separate tribute).

One common theme to all Aus. greetings was glowing praise for the Port Macquarie All-States Reunion. Congratulations to all involved and for making it so enjoyable that there will be another. One more opportunity for Col. Fereday to present the "Talking Stick" in its ceremonial role before its ultimate retirement. Canadian Flight is much indebted to Col and Jim. Whittem for so aptly representing our input at the Squadron Conference.

After nearly 60 years Sid Winchester and I almost got together when Sid and Joyce attended a family gathering in Vancouver during Christmas. Unfortunately my message machine let me down and arrangements did not click so two telephone chats had to suffice. One of these days! Also two phone calls from George

Dunmore in U.K. were very rewarding. Bert Markland advised that the first of his 8 grandchildren was married in October. Ernie Ireland advises of some additional health speed-bumps but maintains that he will make a long-planned visit to Vancouver this summer. Happy to report that Tom Lindsay's daughter and granddaughter have moved in with him in his house (about two blocks from me), Enjoyed hearing from Bill Hailstone's sister Betty outlining the Hailstone family background, also from Nell Powell who had an interesting Fall trip to the East Coast when she visited the Titanic victims cemetery, and from Anne Markowsky who hopefully may be visiting Vancouver this winter.

We welcome the sudden re-establishment of contact with Jim Lovelace with a call from Sydney, Nova Scotia, explaining a long battle he has had with Veterans Admin. to obtain care and advising that he has been granted his personal Coat of Arms by the Canadian Heraldic Authority--motto--Deum Time Regem Honorificate (Fear God and Honour the King). The badge includes Jim's DFC and a Celtic Cross.

I have written to Bob Bruce expressing my honour at

receiving Life Membership of the 458 Squadron Association.

THE PASSING OF OLD FRIENDS from the Editor.

Graeme Coombes. Graeme was a 458 Squadron pilot at Holme-on-Spalding Moor and subsequently in North Africa with distinguished service. After the War he returned to work as an Accountant with the Australian Jockey Club in Sydney, He and his lady Dulcie (who predeceased him) had two daughters. From the earliest post-war years Graeme re-established contact with 458 and became a devoted member of the NSW Flight Committee and later its President. Everything Graeme did he did with care devotion and thoroughness--as one would expect from an accounting person as such people are at their very best--as was Graeme. He was noted for the elegance and care of his dress (even in the desert of the Middle East).

Graeme took up national duty for the ex-Air Force as National Treasurer not only of 458 but of the Air Force Association--which he held for 24 years becoming a Life Member of both. As I was National Secretary of the AFA through all those years I can pay emphatic tribute both to his commitment to his honorary Air Force work and his personal friendship. Graeme and Dulcie moved to Canberra to be near family members and there Graeme worked with the A.C.T. Division of the AFA.

I last saw Graeme when he unveiled for us a 458 Squadron plaque now installed at the Australian War Memorial. We shall remember him.

TONY MAURO With many others I well remember Tony--with the Radar Section of 458 through a long period of 458 wartime service. His tall athletic form illustrated his sporting prowess: he was an all-star rugby and football player. In peacetime he was a longtime employee of the Canadian Pacific Railway. He and his wife Jean had four children. Being in a different continent we in Australia did not, of course, see much of Tony but I can remember well meeting him again briefly during 458's first group return to the U.K.--at Holme-on-Spalding Moor. Born and residing in British Columbia he enjoyed his retirement--particularly as a golfer and family man. We will remember him.

AUSTRALIAN STATE NICKNAMES.

News readers from without Australia have at times expressed some interest and curiosity about the nicknames used to head some Flight newsitems--Cornstalk for NSW, Sandgropers for W.A., Croweaters for S.A. These names invented by ribbald men from other States go back prior to Australian Federation. We dont have to explain their relevance to the conditions then seen by others as relevant. They are probably self-explanatory, But it has seemed worthwhile and hopefully inoffensive to continue a piece of Australian history. Presumably similar names exist in Canada and the USA. But what, it has been asked, about the

other Australian States-did they not have nicknames? Yes indeed they did though the News has not used them. Queenslanders were called the Bananabenders and Victoria (allegedly) the Cabbage Patch and Tasmania the Apple Isle. And, of course, New Zealanders were the Kiwis and South Africans the Springboks (though these times we seem to be calling them the Proteas). And there were others!

CORNSTALK COMMENTARY from Merv.Hargraves.

At the Squadron Conference at Port Macquarie in October it was decided that any such future Reunion be hosted by N.S.W.Flight. At present that is under discussion as to when such an event is to take place. Progress will be reported and members informed of any decision.

I have just returned from a short stay in Canberra where I visited the War Memorial and was pleased to see the 458 Squadron plaque in the footpath leading to the entrance.

Appearing in the Bathurst and District Veterans Community Newsletter of December 2001 was a report of the presentation of a 50 year RSL Certificate to our member David Westgarth. David also holds more than 50 years membership of the RAAF Association.

To Dusty and Enid Miller congratulations on their Diamond Anniversary. Welcome to John Gibbons, a new Associate member who attended the recent Port Macquarie Reunion.

Vic "Goldie" Bartlett and his wife are enthusiastic bowlers and enjoy life on the Central Coast.

Eric Munkman will be attending the Anzac Service at Gallipoli this year and touring Greece before returning.

We were very sorry to learn of the death of Graeme Coombes in December. Col. Fereday represented the Squadron at the funeral.

The new Edition of the Squadron History will be available soon.

Members with Squadron memorabilia who wish to preserve them may wish to offer them to the Air Force Museum at Point Cook.

A luncheon is to be held at Ryde TAFE on 21st March at 12 for 1230. Please contact Eric Munkman on 99720641.

VICTORIAN VIEWS from Rupert Pearce.

Social. Some of our members enjoyed a pleasant lunch and fellowship at the RSL, East Malvern on 20th November. Present were John and Marjorie Bilney, Neil and June Dean, Jack and Margaret Ellis, Roy and Barbara Pearce, Rupert Pearce, Norma Pollard, Mick and Mavis Singe, Apologies were received from Sue Eggers, Bill Fordyce, the Grangers, the Hintons, the Martins and June Schoppe.

Australian Air Force Cadets. Formerly called the Air Training Corps. Neil and June Dean attended the Annual Prizegiving on December 14th. for 2 Flight. The Squadron has had a link with this Flight through the late Ernie Laming (our records shew as far back as 1964). The 458 Squadron Prizes were given to Leading Cadets Sam Littler and Douglas Newham.

The Annual Pilgrimage to Pt. Cook.

This RAAF Association-organised annual return to the founding place of the RAAF will be held on Sunday March 24th. Details will be announced in the next issue of Contact. Any member interested should speak to the President or Secretary nearer to the date.

The late Dr. the very reverend Fred McKay, AC, CMG, OBE,
458ers who remember Fred will be interested in this extract from "Outback Achievers" published by St. Philips College, Alice Springs. "St Philips College was honoured by a visit from the Prime Minister, Mr. John Howard on July 17th. He announced a contribution of \$250,000 for the Fred McKay Education Centre, He paid his respects to Fred and inspected the site where the Centre is to be built within the year. He also unveiled the plaque which commemorates the site. The Centre is expected to cost \$1 million dollars."

Vale. Mrs Betty Ramsay passed away on January 29th. We have sent condolences to Jack and their children, Len and Sue.

AT RENMARK.

458ers will remember the Squadron Memorial Garden at Renmark in South Australia, inspired and arranged by Ian Showell. This, alongside the river Murray at Renmark was dedicated during an All-States Reunion a decade ago. It fell into a bad condition (the river did not help) but has been restored following representations to the City Council by S.A. Flight. The photo below illustrates how it looked after restoration.

