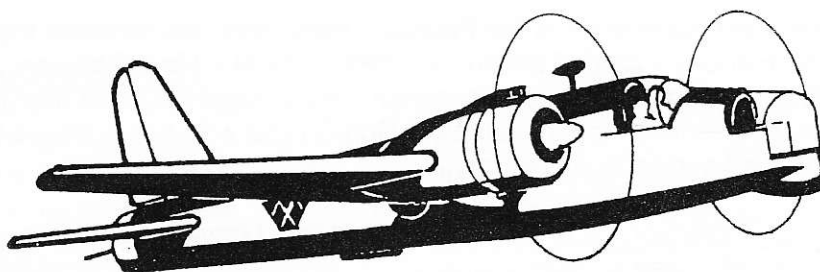


# 458

## SQUADRON NEWS

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RAAF

JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL, GPO BOX 5289, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA  
YEAR 53, No. 210 ----- May 2002

### 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL

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#### BRITISH BULLETIN from Norm Duke

Peter Leonard Eileen writes to tell me that Peter is increasingly frustrated at the restriction in his activity caused by Parkinson's disease, particularly as he was such a keen golfer and gardener. Be sure that the thoughts of all your friends are with you, Peter.

Following publication of the February Newsletter we received the sad news from Steve Lee, Hal Lee's son, of the sudden death of Hal. He will be sadly missed as a friend and staunch supporter of our Association, which meant a great deal to him. We also send our condolences to Don Stocks who has suffered the loss of his wife Ida, who died suddenly in January.

Frank Robertson It is with great regret that I have to report the sudden departure of Frank, who died suddenly on April 15, apparently due to renal failure. The funeral was held at Holme, at the Church on the Hill on April 22, and Peter Cochrane and Don Stocks were able to attend as representatives of 458, and to meet Frank's daughter, Lynn Finnie.

Frank had flown with 77 Halifax Squadron of Bomber Command, and although he had never served with 458 was tireless in his efforts to record the history and preserve the memory of the Squadron, and particularly its association with Holme on Spalding Moor. For these efforts we certainly owe him a debt of gratitude. He also undertook the maintenance of the Squadron Memorial at the former airfield site. He was deservedly made a Life Member of the 458 Squadron Association..

He would have missed not being able to be present for the annual wreath laying in commemoration of Anzac Day. Peter Cochrane officiated at this ceremony this year. He had some visitors at his home from OZ whom he invited to attend: - Kevin and Fleur Camlin, 'Sunrise' 98 Reads Road, Bundaberg, Queensland, 4670, and he suggested that, as Australians, they might like to lay the wreath, which they were delighted and privileged to do. Photographs were taken and will be sent later.

During a later visit to the Yorkshire Air Museum at Elvington, Peter Cochrane was talking to Ian Reid, a Director of the Museum, about the Squadron Memorial and its future maintenance now that Frank is no longer with us. Ian suggested that the Yorkshire Air Museum would consider carrying out this duty. I am writing to him to accept this generous offer. Press on regardless ... Norm.

## UPDATES

### The Squadron History

The publisher's indication is for delivery by the end of June – here's hoping!

### The All-States Reunion 2003

Our next all States Reunion will be held at this time next year in Orange, NSW at the Oriana Motor Inn between Sunday May 4 and Saturday May 10, 2003. The stay is being planned along the same lines as that at Port Macquarie on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis and we will have our own setup for meeting, dining and displaying our own memorabilia. The Inn is set on level ground and it is quite possible to accommodate all comers on the ground floor.

Orange at this time of year is a very beautiful city with the autumn colours of the golden and claret ash, silver birch, liquid amber, scarlet oak and all the elms. We are planning three relatively short coach tours including one to view the city and its surrounding country and a round trip to Cowra to view the Japanese Gardens and other features of the town and its environs.

The city is accessible from Sydney by coach, train and air and from Canberra but by coach, but it is a little early to publish timetables which may well alter in the next twelve months. We expect to have all the details for you in the next Newsletter and will then be asking for a deposit of \$100 per person.

CROWEATERS COMMENTARY from Pat Cribb

It was great to see children and grandchildren of old mates joining with the few stalwarts who can still march on Anzac Day. The local RSL is still trying to put all next-of-kin in one separate block. SA Flight believes this is pointless and that next-of-kin should march in the Squadron ranks where it is clear who they represent and where they are comfortable. Sadly, without next-of-kin 458 ranks would be extremely thin. Advice from other Flights is sought. Drinks followed the march at the Talbot Hotel, with a good roll up of forty for lunch next door at the Gouger Fish Café. Apologies from Buck Pedersen, Brian and Joan Woodhead, John Excell, Jim Perry, Marjorie Oliver, Ruth Senn and Monica Thom. We send get well wishes to John Excell after his spell in hospital, also to Max Barnes and Monica Thom.

President Col Hutchinson says it was good to see Malcolm Kemp in the March. Col has located crew member Frank Mill from Monbulk in the Dandenongs and is awaiting further contact. He would still like to hear from Francis (Frank) McMahon, who remains anonymous. They were all members of the late George Cowan's crew.

The next get-together will be on Thursday, July 11, at 12 for 12.30 pm at the Kensington Hotel, 23 Regent Street, Kensington (off The Parade, Kensington). Bookings with Pat Cribb by July 4 (note phone No. 8338 1002)

Editor's Note The NSW Flight – and indeed the RAAF Assn National Office – actively encourage children and grandchildren (over 14) to march, and to march in the Squadron Ranks. It now happens quite substantially.

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'Q' FLIGHT from Jack Lewis

The report from Queensland not so bright.

ANZAC DAY MARCH The March once again showed the great interest and representation of those who marched. Unfortunately I viewed this Anzac March from my hospital bed at Greenslopes. The week before I had a major bowel operation, thank God it was very successful; however, my heart decided to go up and down and I was admitted for Coronary Care for a week and ended up with a pace maker. Back to Anzac Day – Thanks to our President, Eric, who proudly marched behind the banner for every one of us, also Bernie McLoughlin showing great courage to be able to support Eric; it was good to see the two of them - Bob Helyar's son marched along with them. Unfortunately our members who usually march were on sick parade.

Don Brandon is still very ill, and having ongoing treatment. Bert Garland is undergoing extensive tests with more to follow. He and Isla called in to the heart ward to see me while he was at Greenslopes, to say hello. Fred Kleckham is having ray treatment, has been diagnosed with lung cancer. Hal Williams has Emphysema and depends on his oxygen supply. His wife, Bobby, is just out of hospital after a major operation. Sel Foote had heart surgery some six weeks ago, is recovering slowly but is not quite his old self.

Unfortunately all our age group seem to be having problems. I came home this weekend (27/4/02), very frail, but with care from Evelyn will soon be on deck again. Next News I hope will be brighter.

Regards to all  
Jack Lewis

Note from Editor: Unfortunately Jack has returned to hospital – our best wishes to him. On Anzac Day only 2 marched behind the banner, we are told. More support please! Including children and grandchildren.

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#### CANUCK CAUCAS from Bryan Quinlan

Once all ready to be sent, it has been necessary to rewrite this report upon learning of the sudden loss of John Hays on April 27 following esophagectomy surgery in mid-April. This sad news was a shock in view of earlier advice by his son John that he was making good progress and in good spirits, although scheduled for further repair surgery when sufficiently recovered.

The past few months have been heavily bordered in black, with the passing of Les Matthews, Jim Lovelace and now John Hays, added to the loss of Tony Mauro, which was reported in the February Newsletter. Tributes to Les, Jim and John appear separately in this edition. Glenn Hoosier who lives in Edmonton, as did John, has advised that he has recently undergone lung surgery and is now recovering at home but in a weakened condition which will not allow him to attend John's funeral. A call from Ernie Ireland advised of a recent angioplasty, but he claims to be feeling OK and retains his positive outlook despite his many adversities over the past few years. On a lighter note, a call from Frank Laughlin that with Peg's successful recovery from last year's hip operation allows them to depart on a two week tour through California, Nevada and back home by cruise ship by mid May. Tom Rowan also telephoned with good news that his wife is recovering from a stroke last year and they are now able to attend various entertainment functions together. Mick Reid and I stay in touch by phone and fax and enjoy a lengthy chat. He and Marge are staying on top of things despite some health drawbacks. Also have enjoyed hearing from Sid Winchester, Bert Markland, Alan Ruggles and Bea Eastcott, and glad to say that they and all others referred to above confirmed their orders for the updated history.

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#### VICTORIAN NEWS from Rupert Pearce

Some of our members came to the RSL Club, East Malvern, on February 19 for lunch. Present were John and Margaret Bilney, Neil and Jean Deane, Jack and Margaret Ellis, Roy and Barbara Pearce, Rupert Pearce, Mick and Mavis Singe and June Schoppe. We had a number of apologies: Harry and Nell Ashworth, Sue Eggars, Bill Fordyce, Harry Godfrey, Don and Shirley Granger, Ken and Joann Hinton, Laurie and Jean Kew, Ted Love, Yank and Kath Martin, Norma Pollard and Jack Ramsay.

Personal: Tom Primrose fell and has had a hip replacement. Tom and Rita are now living at Brunswick Manor, 17 Eggington Street, Brunswick West, 3055 (Tel 9383 19951) Bill Fordyce was seen on TV on Anzac week, speaking his part – 84<sup>th</sup> in the tunnel of the Great Escape.

#### ANZAC DAY

It was not a good day for the marchers. We were pleased to welcome Ian Cartledge (son of Stan and Karen, granddaughter of Stan and proud mother of old Ebony), Hilary Cruttenden (daughter of Audrey, who was marching with the WAAF at Geelong) Melanie Guiney (daughter of Kevin), Pauline Boarman (daughter of Mick Hunter, with husband Doug and son Luke).

Jim Anderson, John Bilney, Neil Deane, Jack Ellis, Ken Fleming, Roy Pearce, our President - Mick Singe and Murray Weaver, a friend from another squadron. Our thanks to the Cadets who carried the banner.

Later at the Melbourne Bowling Club, we were joined by June Dean (we appreciated her biscuits and cake), Margaret Ellis, Rupert Pearce, Barbara Pearce, Norma Pollard, Tom Primrose and daughter Primrose with daughter Primrose and daughter Eleanor and son in law Eddy Buzza and Mavis Singe.

We missed Shorty Bradshaw and Stan Cartledge from our ranks, they sent their regrets. Apologies were received from Margaret Bilney, Don and Shirley Granger, Ken and Joann Hinton, Yank and Cath Martin and June Schoppe.

#### Our Members:

We know many of our members are having health problems. We send them all our kind thoughts, especially Helen Laming.

#### Notice of Annual General Meeting:

This will be held on Tuesday, May 28, at 12 noon at the Manningham Club, 1 Thompson Road, Bulleen.

#### KIWI CALL by Kevin George

Ron Verity and Archibald Fell are quite well and busy. Ivan Green likewise, but he has become immobile and is now in residential care. Dawn and I are well and busy. I still maintain my private pilot's licence and manage to fly regularly and average better than an hour per week. This is good for the aeroplane (and for the pilot). As they used to say in the Air Force 'You have to fly aeroplanes to keep them serviceable' With kindest regards - Kevin George.

#### THE PASSING OF OLD FRIENDS from Bryan Quinlan

While still grieving the loss of Tony Mauro reported in the February Newsletter, We now sadly have had to add Jim Lovelace, Lea Mathews and Jim Hays to the lengthening list of those who have completed their earthly journies. Our sympathies to their families.

#### Jim Lovelace DFC,

After happily reporting renewed contact with Jim Lovelace in the last Newsletter it was a great shock to receive a letter from his sister Mary that Jim had passed away suddenly on February 16, 2002, just two days after his telephone call to me enthusiastically informing me of the granting of his personal "Coat of Arms". Jim had a long history of serious illnesses and afflictions, and time and again had demonstrated his resiliency and determination to battle on against his many handicaps, but finally succumbing in his 81st year. Jim was a W/AG member of Jack Leslie's crew which had the distinction of being one of the two first "experienced" crews seconded on a volunteer basis from 103 Squadron during the initial formation of 458 Squadron at Holme on Spalding Moor in 1941. He completed a tour of operations with 458 in the Middle East (his second) and returned to the UK to complete a third tour with 150 Squadron, after which he served in a wide-ranging succession.



with U.K. postings until repatriated to Canada in 1945. He was awarded the D.F.C. in 1943. He stayed in the R.C.A.F. postwar and had a distinguished career in a variety of roles, including Command, planning and international responsibilities until his retirement in 1961. Thereafter Jim was active in widely varied pursuits--as a writer, author, municipal officer, and with the Air Cadets. He was active with the Canadian Legion and in ministering to a Seamen's Mission in Halifax.

#### Lea Mathews

Earlier this month I received the sad news that Lea had passed away four days after open heart surgery in Victoria, BC., at age 79. He is mourned by his loving wife, Carole, of 57 years and his daughters and grandchildren. He served with the R.C.A.F. on 38 and 458 Squadrons in the Middle East and later in Korea with the Royal Canadian Engineers. He graduated in Architecture in 1950. He was a lifetime member of the Royal Canadian Legion, the Korean Veterans Association and the Kiwanis Club.

After completing a tour on 38 and instructing at 78 O.T.U., Lea "inherited" a crew from a former Skipper who had unfortunately put his hand too far out of the window to signal to the groundcrew and encountered the whirling prop blades. Joining 458 at Bari, he almost immediately found himself repatriated to Canada. His memories of his short stay on 458 were of tents in a windy, soggy field. His Australian connection was continued in Korea where he developed a great admiration for Australian sappers.

John Hays Only a few weeks ago I was exchanging E-mails with John about the start of the Golf season so it was a great shock to learn he had passed away on 17th April after an operation. He is survived by his wife, Barbara. John served as a W/Ag with 458 at Malta and Protville and flew some trips with George Dunmore. After 458 he returned to Malta with the Air Sea Rescue Flight and 283 Squadron. He was commissioned in April, 1944. His daughter and son-in-law visited Australia and New Zealand in 2001 and were in touch with Ron Verity. Jim and Dorothy Whitem will have pleasant memories of their visit to Edmonton where they spent a day with John and Barbara at their lakeside cottage.

I know I speak for all 458ers in extending sympathy and condolences to all members of their families. WE WILL REMEMBER THEM!

#### ..... CORNSTALK COMMENTS from Merv. Hargraves.

The first occasion for 2002 was a luncheon held in March at Ryde TAFE, about 20 in attendance. As usual this was a very pleasant lunch. Eric has suggested that any member interested in coming to these gatherings let him know and he will make contact when the next one is planned. At the last Committee meeting it was decided to investigate Orange as a venue for the All-States Reunion in 2003. Tom Moore a resident of Orange is checking availabilities.

At the 81st Anniversary of the formation of the R.A.A.F. at the Cenotaph 458 was represented by Keith Cousins and myself. We admired the NSW Police Band and were impressed by the rendition

Last Post by Able Seaman Kirstin Samson.

Unfortunately, Eric Munkman had to cancel his projected trip to Gallipoli for Anzac Day due to an unpleasant bout of shingles. It was good to see him sufficiently recovered to join us for lunch after the March. The Squadron was well represented at the Anzac March, about 30 bods taking part: we are finding George Street is getting longer but we lasted the distance. It was pleasing to have a few wives at the luncheon at the Masonic Centre: Ron and Enid Miller, Eric and Dorothy Munkman, Bill and Mavis Addinall, Don and Bev. Bitmead. Country members present were George Unitt, Bateman's Bay and son Terry from Cessnock, Eric Purcill from Orange, Laurie Crowley from Wagga, M. Kirkham and wife; also my son Roger from Bathurst. Jack Baker had his three sons with him and Stewart Ricketts son Graeme represented his late father. It was good to see Ralph Bailey at the March and Lunch. All office bearers were re-elected unopposed.

Our Next Function. At the Ryde TAFE on June 6th--12 for 12.30 in the Ambassador Room. \$20 per head including beer wine and soft drinks--3 courses. To book, ring Eric Munkman 9972 0641.

A Memory. Col. Fereday has reminded us of the passing of Tony Spooner--who will be well remembered by those who served with him.

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SANDGROPPERS SAY..from Ted.Jewell.

Our main news at the moment is all about Anzac Day in Perth. By the newspaper comments it was the largest turnout for many years, lots of young people lining the streets and cheering; but sorry to say 458 members were very low; our President Bill Clues laid a wreath in Kings Park at the Dawn Service. At the March afterwards there were only three 458 members present--Bill Clues, Ted Jewell, Len Stewart. We had Dudley Etherton, Henry's son, as Flag Bearer, then included Bill Clues grandson, Len Stewart's grandson, and Gordon Jones sons. We wonder how long we shall keep going. (Editor: as long as there are children and grandchildren--and others who remember--to march). We did expect a good crowd for lunch at Miss Maud's but only had about 14 to sit down for lunch--Bill and Joan Clues, Ted Jewell, Len Stewart, Henry and Vera Etherton, Olga Jones and sons, Margaret Gannaway, Dudley and Sue Etherton,

I had a letter from Jack Cobb saying he and Ethel don't get around much for health reasons; wishes to be remembered to all 458ers. We all had a great day down here at Mandurah last month for a BBQ at my home. We had about 15 come, mostly from Perth. Len Stewart picked up Val Cormack who had an enjoyable time. Val is going through a bad time at the moment with cancer. Best wishes to all--Ted.

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LATE NEWS RECEIVED.

The Squadron News deeply regrets to advise that Jack Lewis has passed. Jack was a well known, greatly liked member of 458's groundstaff during the war years as well as being for

so many years the centre of 458 in Queensland. He had a long and respected peacetime career as a teacher. He was a constant welcome presence at All-States Reunions and, of course, a Life Member of the 458 Squadron Association. We shall remember him too! To Evelyn and family our sympathy.

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#### AS THE YEARS PASS.

The notable and continuing devotion of Australian Governments, media, and public to the welfare of those who served Australia at war and that of other Commonwealth countries to their servicemen is remarkable and recently illustrated with the passing of the last Australian Gallipoli veteran. The Australian Repatriation system is a generous one and is constantly reviewed. The current review--there have been half a dozen in recent decades since the Toose Report--will be by a retired Judge-Clarke, J, a retired Air Marshal and a retired civil servant. They have called for evidence (your Editor is being interviewed by them this month in the RAAF Association office). A monumental amount of ex-service work has been done (over 1000 submissions) --one hopes something will come of it! Extension of the Gold Card--free treatment for all ailments--is one benefit being sought.

While thinking of the outcomes of the past half century and more --and it hardly feels so long, does it?--there have been physical changes--witness the photo below of the (very good) 458 cricket team at Gibraltar. Who were they?

Front L to R. Doug. Bennett, Bill Flentje, Bill Johnson (Capt), Owen Crompton, Lloyd Letcher.

Back L to R. Bert Oliver, Ted Creighton, C. Hanlon, J. O'Brien, D. Field and Roger Rodwell.

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