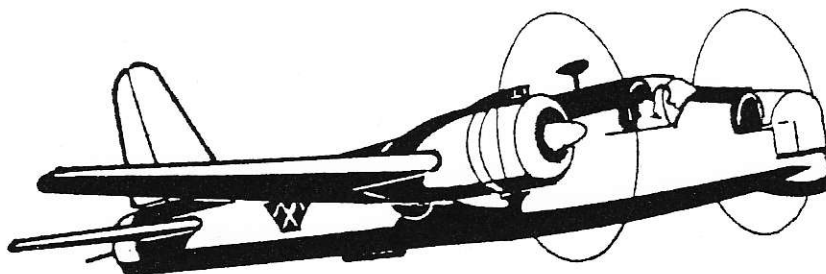


458

SQUADRON NEWS



RAAF

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YEAR 53, No. 211, AUGUST, 2002.

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THE 3rd. EDITION PUBLISHED.

After some period of expectation, the 3rd. Edition of "We Find and Destroy" is now in the hands of those who placed orders, or on the way. It has been welcomed enthusiastically with its wealth of new photographs and additional chapters, collected by Peter Pettit (who has done the work of administration involved). We also thank Len Barton for his advice. It is not for us to review our own publication. There may be some outside reviews and if so, we will try to publish them in the future News.

We have noticed a few inexactitudes in the new edition -- pretty minor and it would be nitpicking to detail them. But we should comment on the Casualty Lists. These, in our opinion have, in earlier editions been unsatisfactory so we approached the various Air Forces (from who we got what

we included in the first editions) seeking updates. They were some time coming but we have been able to include, as a paste-in, a revised and larger Canadian list. The others did not bring major alterations when we got them. More in a future News issue.

THE NEXT ALL-STATES REUNION.

Will be at Orange, N.S.W, between 4th and 10th May, 2003; papers enclosed with this issue give fuller details but there will be an interesting programme--from Mt. Canobolas, Canowindra, Cowra, Carcoar--and Blayney, with other trips organised to Yeoville and Ironbark. This one may indeed be the last--so reserve your place now!

CROWEATERS COMMENTARY from Pat Cribb.

Our lunch together on July 11th at the Kensington Hotel was a success, with a roll-up of 32 members and their families. We were pleased that Barbara O'Riley could join us--her husband Tim died recently. Our best wishes to those who could not attend, some because of ill health. We missed you and hope you are now on the mend.

John Ringwood advises he visited the 458 Memorial Garden at Renmark on a recent trip to the Riverland, and was very pleased to see how well the Renmark Council is maintaining the site. To offer our thanks, John called at the Council Offices to ask that a Minute of our appreciation be recorded at the next Council meeting.

On her recent quick visit to Adelaide it was lovely to hear from Pat Carey, now living in Melbourne near family. John is remembered fondly for his considerable efforts for S.A. Flight over many years.

Flight President Col. Hutchinson, is pleased to have had a phone call from David McMahon of Nicholls, A, C, T., the son of Francis (Frank) McMahon, formerly of Pt. Pirie. Frank was Navigator in George Cowan's crew at Gibraltar, with Col. Upon discharge he gained an Economics degree in Adelaide, then rejoined the R.A.A.F. He died in Canberra many years ago--in 1962. Col is looking forward to meeting Tom Moore at the 2003 Reunion in Orange.

Our best wishes to all old mates.

Our sincere condolences to John Ringwood on the death of Barbara.

Pat adds a personal note "I received the new edition of "We Find and Destroy" and thank you all for your marvellous effort, so valuable to pass on to children and grandchildren. We can never thank you enough for your tireless work over all these years on behalf of 458 Squadron.

THE BRITISH BULLETIN from Norm.Duke.

The Commonwealth Games of Manchester. British T.V. has been taken over by the "Games"--not least by the unstoppable commentators. We congratulate the Aussies on their great victory, not least the great Ian Thorpe, or as he is now known the Thorpedo. The climax was the closing ceremony in the most horrendous downpour with several official types making speeches in the pouring rain (no hats or raincoats) with typical British 'stiff upper lips' looking like drowned rats. Followed by thousands of performers doing their own thing in the torrential rain without any hesitation. I'll bet they wish they'd built a covered stand!

Mo.Borne. Mo tells me he has received his copy of the new 3rd edition of the Squadron History. This is the first 'sighting report' I have had. I hope the U.K. order for 20 copies will shortly follow.

Peter Cochrane. Peter will be pleased to see any visitors from Oz who may be visiting Yorkshire and to give them a guided tour of the 458 memorials and memorabilia at Holme.

Jack Ball. Jack is comfortably installed in a new warden controlled home in Stockport with a friendly crowd of 'old codgers' (his words, not mine). He is keeping fit and plans to visit Winnipeg in January 2003 to stay with old friends Jim and Peg Donaldson, who are not in the best of health.

Leon Armstrong. Leon is settling into his new flat in Birmingham and has recently had a visit from his daughter Mary and son-in-law who is General Manager of Dragonair in Hong Kong. They visited Moreton in Marsh during their stay and the Wellington Museum there. Leon has three grandchildren in his son's family who are all medical doctors. Must be a record of some kind; and the youngest of these is at present on a working?? holiday to Australia. Small world.

Peter Leonard Eileen tells me that Peter is now living permanently in a nursing home in Brecon, which is fortunately not too far from her home address, so she is able to visit Peter every day.

News Items from the Past.

Don Stocks. On landing from his first op at Bone with F/Lt Treadwell's crew in November, 1943, the driver of the garry which met them at Dispersal was Fred Copley, an old school friend of Don's from Wakefield. He emigrated to Australia later on and lives in Perth. He was with 458 at Holme-on-Spalding Moor and went through with them to Bone. He will be remembered.

Charles Humbles. Charles news memory is connected with the announcement of the death of G/Capt. John (Catseyes) Cunningham --top nightfighter pilot and C.O. of 85 Squadron in which Charles served as an FME before being posted to 458 at Holme. After WWII Charles joined de Havillands where John Cunningham was Chief Test Pilot, as a Fitter A and E; also there were Johnnie Wilson and Chris Capper. In 1955, Lew Johnston, then stationed at Valley visited DH at Hatfield to inspect a Vampire. It was Charles job to introduce Lew (last seen in 1942 at Holme) to John Cunningham who commented that in 1955 he was talking to 2 of his former wartime COs and all 3 were still involved with aircraft.

Keith Wilkinson. 458 Pilot Jack Christianson celebrated his 80th

birthday with a present that took him right back to his days at Bone with the Squadron. Keith gave him a blow-up of an aerogram Christmas card his Dad Ken Wilkinson had sent home to his mother in Lancaster. Ken who was Jack's rear WAG, was at Art School before joining up and used his talents to draw his Wellington and the entire crew waving from it. Jack hadn't seen the card since 1943 but his response on seeing it again at his party was: "I well remember it."

Bill Prater. Bill is pleased that he is still able to keep in touch with Carter Jones and Fred Hatchard, former crew members and also with Gillian and Cameron Smith daughter and son of former pilot Harry Smith.

In Memoriam, More sad news. Mo.Borne when recently trying to contact David Duff to arrange a meeting, learned that David died unexpectedly. David was always an enthusiastic correspondent and attender at Reunions who made many friends. Bill Eden; Bill had health problems for some years, including angina but this did not affect his enthusiasm for 458. His wife tells me he died suddenly on July 16th, and we send her our deepest sympathy.

Best wishes to all from the Poms! Norm.

CANUCK CAUCUS. from Bryan Quinlan.

There is absolutely no doubt that the highlight of this report is the arrival of the updated edition of We Find and Destroy, which was immediately distributed to those who had placed orders. Feedback has been prompt and positive and we all extend our congratulations and appreciation to the two Peters for their dedication and successful completion of this treasured and invaluable record of 458's history.

The feedback included news of various activities. Mick and Marge Reid are attending a large family get-together at a Winnipeg nephews fishing lodge, 400 miles north of the city. A catch-release resort so we can look forward to some unbelievable fish stories. While in Winnipeg Mick intends to touch base with Jim and Peg Donaldson and the Lovelaces, who some will remember from reunion visits. He also reports on a recent enjoyable chat with George and Grace Unitt, noting "Grace claimed our cobber was still mopey with sleep, thus his tirade--dumping coals of fire on their irresponsible government". Hmmm.

Frank and Peg Laughlin have just returned from the popular circle route from Victoria north to Port Hardy, ferry to Prince Rupert and south through Prince George to Hope, Vancouver and ferry back to Victoria. Sid Winchester received a favourable report from his eye examination and has been cleared for driving. He also made an exciting find while pursuing his hobby of antique collecting, coming across a glass-mounted collection of negatives of early Vancouver. New Westminster, Stanley Park, etc. At a garage sale, no less!

A June call to Dick Sladen revealed he has undergone angioplasty and was looking forward to a speedy recovery. We also enjoyed some reminiscing about the Protville era. At about the same time in a call to Len Doiron, Len claimed survivor

status for him and his wife, who has overcome cancer and is now battling parkinsons.

Less positive news from Glenn Hoosier who has received difficult news about his health outlook and similarly from Ernie Ireland who indicates some further heart problems but is still trying to make his long-planned trip to Vancouver. A tele-check with Jack Reynolds revealed the unfortunate news that during the past year, wife Dorothy had undergone an operation for cancer. On the plus side Jack reports she is making a good recovery and near completion of follow-up, treatment and in good spirits. A call to Ben Gruenwald found him feeling fine but unable to get around due to his leg problems, so following his favorite pastime baseball, on TV.. Other than a recent enjoyable lunch outing with Tom Lindsay at the local Legion, there only remains for me to express my appreciation to our members who responded so generously to the call for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of producing the Squadron News, and is a clear indication of how much they value and enjoy this vital link with their past association with 450. Bryan.

(Thanks, 458ers of Canada, for contributions duly received and banked--Sqdn Treasurer)

SANDGROPPERS SAY....from Ted Jewell.

With the arrival of the new edition of "We Find and Destroy" which is so wonderfully presented, I have spent many hours re-reading all about what happened so many years ago it is great to refresh one's memory of those years. There are some very good photos of the old Wimpies--hard to believe it was over 60 years ago every one looked so young.

We have been quiet here in the West, the weather has been fairly wet and cold, with plenty of strong winds. I had some strong damage in the first blow.

We had a get together in June at the home of Phil and Shirley Hicks, associate members, :Phil flew Catalinas during the war years. Those who were able to come along for lunch had a very enjoyable day: the 458 Squadron members were, Bill and Joan Clues, Henry and Vera Etherton, Margaret Gannaway, Ted Jewell and friend. I had arranged to bring Val Cormack along, but owing to sickness she was unable to be there.

There are many W.A. Squadron members we very recently hear from --mostly health reasons and ill health are the cause. We send all our best wishes and kind thoughts to all members throughout the State. A few have contacted me saying they can't drive any more and health problems make it hard to go out and about. Ted Jewell.

TRIBUTE TO JACK LEWIS. From Ned Kelly-Q.Flight President.

I would like to pay a special tribute to Jack Lewis, for the work he put in to Q.Flight as Secretary and Treasurer for many years. He kept in touch with all of us with the work of making

sure we had luncheons with our wives and shewed great pride that the balance sheet was up to date and we were financially sound. Thanks, Jack, it was a pleasure to work with you.--Ned Kelly.

(The Squadron Council and the Squadron News join in paying tribute to the great and continuing service Jack gave us all . A major figure both at war and peace with 458, we shall remember him. We welcome Evelyn as Q.Flight News Correspondent in Jack's place. Many thanks indeed to them both. Editor)

Q.FLIGHT NEWS from Evelyn Lewis.

President Eric Kelly asked if I would carry on as Correspondent for "Q" Flight, so bear with me. I'm very happy to carry on where Jack left off.

Not a lot of recent news. Have spoken to Jim McKay recently: he is going along quite nicely despite health problems. Jim tells me Dud McKay is batching as Enid is in Wales visiting their daughter, thinks Dud just likes to stay put.

Sel Williams after so many weeks in hospital was glad to be home--only for a short time, ended back in hospital for a few more days. Bobbie, his wife also admitted--suffered a stroke.

Sel Foote thought he came through his heart operation okay but he is not in the best of health. Bert Garland has completed all his medical tests, now hopes he can relax for a while.

Sadness for those left behind after losing loved ones. Fred Kleckham passed away early May with lung cancer. Fred had enjoyed life travelling overseas on many occasions, enjoying such things as deep sea diving, trekking in mountainous countries along with other interests. Theo Ravenscroft lost his wife Dulcie in May. Don Brandon after a long illness passed away end of June. Then I lost Jack; hard to come to terms with. I do thank so many Squadron members from all States, for their cards and phone calls; their words of comfort helped so much. Thank you all.

I must congratulate Peter on the 3rd edition of "We Find and Destroy"--what an achievement. Meeting so many Squadron members at our reunions one gets to know them more when reading of all their service during the war and the many friendships that grew over the years. One looks back and it is true to say that 458 Squadron is one Happy family. Congratulations to Pete Pettit for his great contribution to this 3rd edition, so beautifully presented.

Will look forward to the reunion in Orange. Our numbers will be down, at this moment there are only three of us.

Sincerely hope in the next News there will be more brightness to come out. With regards Evelyn.

VICTORIAN VIEWS from Neil Dean.

Our regular quarterly luncheon was held on 28th May at the Manningham Club, Bulleen and followed by the Annual General Meeting. Those in attendance were Neil and June Dean, Jack and Margaret Ellis Don and Shirley Granger, Rupert Pearce, Norma Pollard, Roy and Barbara Pearce, June Schoppe, and, we particularly welcomed Ted Love. Apologies from Mick Singe, Ken and Joann

Hinton. Those re-elected were Mick Singe (Flight President), Neil Dean (Senior Vice President), Don Granger (Junior Vice President), Rupert Pearce (Sec/Treasurer).

On 5th August we ventured for lunch at a new venue, "The Bentleigh Club", with all the regulars attending. The meal and surroundings were superb and it was unanimously agreed to have our next luncheon at the same place in November, and an invitation is to more people with an interest in 458 to join us.

We regret to advise that our President's wife Mavis Singe, has been admitted to "Kalimna" Nursing Home, in Darling Road, Darling.

Rupert Pearce recently underwent a quadrupal heart by-pass and returned home after rehabilitation, but was readmitted to hospital for an unrelated back and leg problem which severely restricts his walking. Don and Shirley Granger are currently having health problems. Ken Hinton doesn't keep the best of health and we miss him and wife Jo-Ann at our get-togethers.

Our thoughts are with our sickies.

CORNSTALK COMMENTS from Merv.Hargraves.

The Squadron was represented by Eric Munkman and Peter Pettit at the Annual RAAF Association State Assembly at Canterbury-Bankstown Branch which dealt with various ex-service and Defence issues.

Eric has been in touch with Gordon Vale (the Black Panther). He has been sick but now recovered and enjoying life again. The new edition of the history has recalled many pleasant memories for him and he sends his best regards to all 458ers.

Congratulations to Peg Hull who has been awarded the Order of Australia for her work with the hearing impaired. Well done. Peg! We visited Mudgee Field Days in July. Perfect weather for the Friday, lots to see and very well attended. I believe Tom Moore was there but did not sight him. My navigation skills deserted me at the end of the day, we missed our turn on the way back to Bathurst, and found Lue, Rylstone, and Kandos. Quite spectacular country. We intend doing it again when not pressed for time.

Sadly we have lost more members. Fred Kleckham died of lung cancer but fortunately did not suffer undue pain. Norm Peachey died in early July and also Bob Low. Now we hear that Ian "Farmer" Giles has also passed. We remember them: our sympathies to their families.

We hear Bob Scholes is quite sick.

A luncheon is organised for Ryde Tafe for Thursday 12th. September for 1230. Contact Eric Munkman.

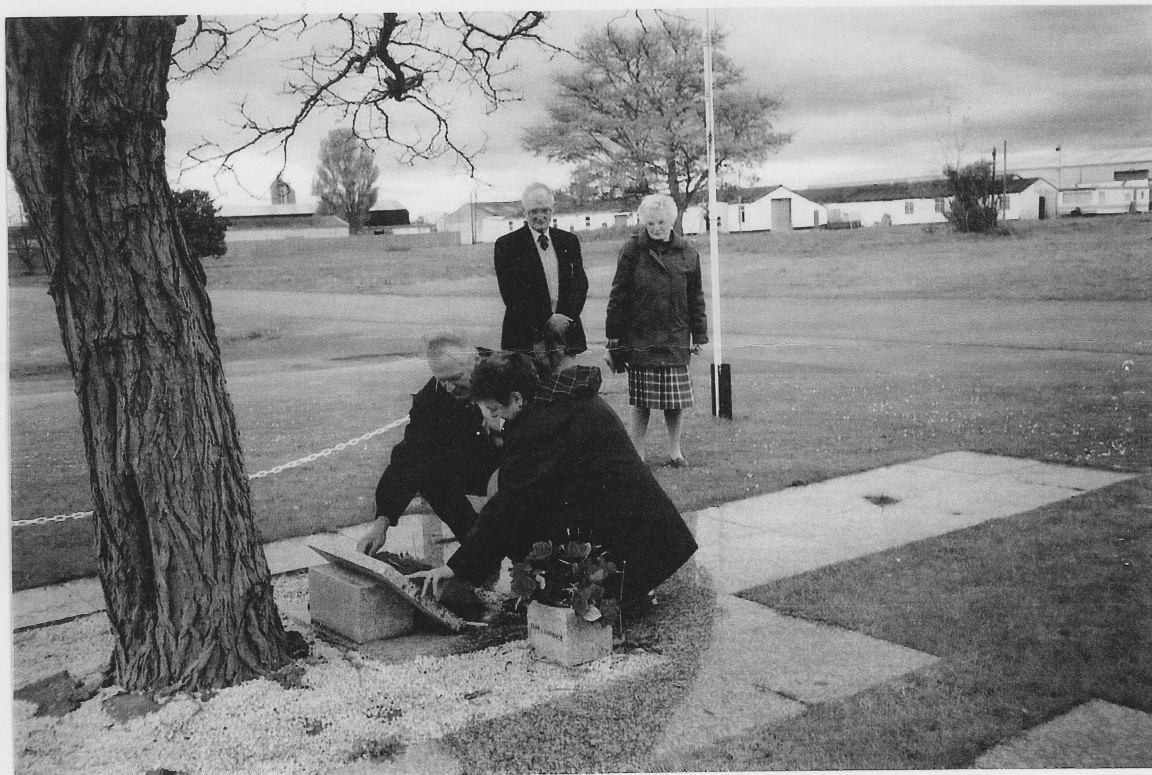
I would be pleased to receive any news before the next Newsletter.

Rita and Peter Alexander, being no longer as physically robust as they used to be (who is?) decided to maaleesh the health and take another overseas trip to see places they had not yet been to--as well as spend a week with Rita's three sisters in England--a wonderful week it was--the sisters, many nieces, three husbands no longer young--much joy. Peter managed three days in Edinburgh. Cool but sunny, stayed in the Old Town

and explored (Rebus scenes!) Climbed up the Castle Mound--no angina now, post-angioplasty. A wonderful few days. Sat in the Gallery of the Scottish Parliament--very impressed Other places visited? Hong Kong--more people, more cars, more buildings, less English-spoken. Went to Macao, most time going in and out of two Immigration and Customs queues, but interesting. In and out of Frankfurt (enough is definitely enough). Malta --could have stayed longer. Visited the Palaeolithic remains. Ljubljana, attractive old city that now finds itself a capital. Prague, historic and dramatic city (like Edinburgh) crowded everywhere with groups of tourists and finally Bangkok, a polluted sauna city with nevertheless its own appeal.
(This para from PCA)

SCENE FROM HOLME-ON-SPALDING MOOR.

Two Australians from Bundaberg placing a wreath at the 458 Memorial at the old Airfield. (Kevin and Fleur Camlin. Peter Cochrane and his cousin watch) Anzac Day, 2002.



KIWI CALL from Kevin George.

The new edition of the Squadron History surpassed expectations; I congratulate you and Pete Pettit in particular for a very good effort. Within its pages I discovered much that I didn't know of the wartime contributions and experience of many old friends. The photograph of my old friend Ken Cupper and his all R.A.F. crew will be treasured. Theirs was a companion crew with ours from when our two crews became the foundation members of 1 North African Air Sea Rescue Flight (on 1C Wellingtons at Protville subsequently transferred to 458 Squadron, on Group Captain Tuttle's initiative) until all became tour-expired at Bone in early 1944.

The photograph on upper page 71 is of the officers mess at Bone in late 1943. I can identify 13 of those present (including the C.O., Adjutant and both Flight Commanders in the centre of the photograph) also some probables, with yours truly in the back row fourth from the left.

The well presented edition should sell well in the bookshops in Australia and possibly also in the U.K., Canada and New Zealand. The timing is appropriate. If 458 R.A.A.F. Squadron is to leave its mark in history, this edition of our history could well be the means. Kind regards, Kevin George.

MORE COPIES OF THE 3rd. EDITION?

While copies will be obtainable from military bookshops, 458 members can get copies (by mail) direct from the publisher at the special price (for 458ers) of \$30 aust. The public pays more. The address of the Publisher is Australian Military History Publications, 13, Veronica Place, Loftus, 2232, N.S.W. Australia. Members in U.K. and Canada might consult with Norman Duke and Bryan Quinlan as there may be bulk postage matters around. The Publishers FAX in N.S.W. 02-9542-6787.

CORRESPONDENCE; Letters to the Editor.

From Pastor Brian Mannion, 270, Maleny Montville Rd, Maleny, Qld

It is with much regret that I write this letter to inform you of the passing of my father, Sgt. Mannion, Clifford William, at 1810 hours on the 16th June. He died in his sleep after suffering a stroke. He had reached the ripe old age of 93 years 10 months and 27 days. He now joins his wife (an ex-WRAAF) who passed away 28 years and 2 days previous. He is survived by his son, 5 grand children and 6 great grandchildren. I found it hard to tell him of Jack Lewis' passing as my dad knew him, but I guess he knows all about that now. To my knowledge, he read every 458 Sqdn. Newsletter he received with the exception of the last one.

Every year I would sit with him on ANZAC Day and watch the March, always on the lookout for the old squadron, so I could point it out to him.

I would appreciate a copy of the Squadron News with the mention of his passing so I can place it with his other memorabilia. Yours sincerely, Brian Mannion.

Letters.

From Jack Hobbs, P.O. Box 51, Burrum Hds, 4659, Queensland.

Dear Peter, At last my conscience has caught up with me. I have for a long time intended writing a note to our late Flight Secretary and report to him our doings here at Burrum Heads, but unfortunately and regretfully our dear mate Jack Lewis has called it a day.

As to the doings of the Hobbs household. Firstly, my dear wife, Sheila, who for some years has been battling heart problems has had a triple by-pass and a hole in the heart attended to, that has extended her life span, and we travel to Brisbane for further checks in the near future. I have become competent in home care, due to her "light Duties" on Doctor's orders.

After 18 years of retirement and residence here in Burrum Heads, we have decided we must get closer to medical attention and presently have our house here in Riverview Drive on the market and our future residence in Eaglemount Retirement Village at Mackay:

it is presently under construction. We hope to move on in the next three months--more accessible for our family to visit. Our eldest son, Dennis and family are in Cairns; Kathleen, our eldest daughter has recently retired to Grasstree Beach near Sarina. Hopefully, our second daughter, Lavinia Kay will also settle in the Mackay region. She has been a world traveller most of her life until recently when she has been working at a Girls College in Sydney. Then to our youngest son Murray, who works in the Electrical design business on the Sunshine Coast and finds life very hectic in that rapidly growing area.

The OLD FELLA--J.H.--is going along fairly well, had to slow down about twelve months ago, after a slight stroke, but still enjoys the odd days catching whiting here locally, or venturing to the Gulf, or Barrier Reef for the BIGUNS.

Thank you, Peter, and Squadron Council for your efforts over the years in keeping our Association going; your efforts have been greatly appreciated--no doubt by all members, and particularly by those of us who have been so far out of touch over the years. In due course, I shall advise you of our new postal address.

yours faithfully, J.Hobbs.

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EDITORIAL COMMENT.

Our very active, united, and worldwide Squadron seems to grow more active--despite the continuing losses of old friends--and copy for this issue has extended it to the longest ever--and we have other things we would have liked to publish (and hopefully will be able to in a future issue). For instance, a letter from Reg. Windett which should not be abbreviated.

Our thanks for your continuing contacts and friendship over the long years in which we have sailed in company (should we say, flown in formation? Perhaps, loose formation.)
