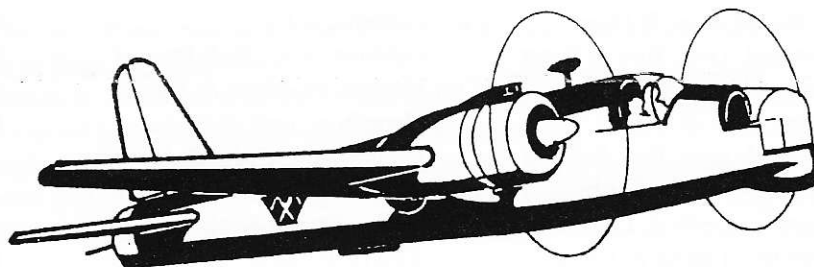


# 458

## SQUADRON NEWS

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RAAF

JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL, GPO BOX 5289, SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA.  
YEAR 53, No. 212 FEBRUARY 2003

### 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL

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		Canada: Bryan Quinlan
		U.K. Norman Duke

Editor: Peter Alexander (Fax 9299 5570 or 9419 5090)

Publisher: Eric Munkman (Tel: 9972 0641)

#### Flight Correspondents

Canada Bryan Quinlan, 1460 Haywood Crescent, West Vancouver, BC, Canada  
Victoria Rupert Pearce, 46 Mt Pleasant Road, Nunawading, Victoria, 3131.  
U.K. Norman Duke, Orchard Cottage, Guildford Road, Cranleigh, Surrey, England  
NSW Merv Hargraves, 79 Beach Road, Coogee, NSW, 2034  
Qld Evelyn Lewis, 5 Cupania Road, Victoria Road, Queensland, 4165  
W.A. Ted Jewell, 61 Wyaree Road, Mandurah, WA, 6210  
NZ Kevin George, 20 Kowhai Avenue, Kalkohe, New Zealand  
S.A. Pat Cribb, 2/57 Sturdee Street, Linden Park, S.A. 5065

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#### REUNION AT ORANGE

The All States Reunion at Orange is attracting considerable and satisfying participation – though the inability of some members to attend due to health problems is much regretted. Currently the following are the acceptors:

Archbold, Wal & Dora  
 Bitmead, Don, Bev & Peter  
 Baines, Harry & Nita  
 Baker, Jack & Grace  
 Bitmead, Don, Bev & Peter  
 Bruce, Bob (Vic Gibbins)  
 Cousins, Keith & Cassie  
 Crowley, Laurie & Betty  
 Dean, Neil & June  
 Excell, John  
 Fereday, Col  
 Garland, Bert & Isla  
 George, Kevin

Gibbins, John  
 Gibbins, Vic, (Bob Bruce)  
 Hargraves, Merv & Raushi  
 Hamilton, Jack & Elsie  
 Hutchinson, Colin & Yvonne  
 Johnson, Bill & Gwen  
 Kelly, Eric & Kath  
 Lewis, Evelyn  
 McKay, Dudley & Enid  
 Miller, Dusty & Enid  
 Moore, Tom & Val  
 Munkman, Eric & Dorothy  
 Murray, Cyril & Hettie

Palmer, Jim & Lucy  
 Pearce, (Rupert) Norma  
 Pollard  
 Pettit, Peter and June  
 Pollard, Norma (Rupert  
 Pearce)  
 Purcill, Eric & Gloria  
 Ravenscroft, Bert  
 Smith, Bob & Dorothy  
 Unitt, George & Grace  
 Walter, Noel  
 Westgarth, David & Judy  
 Whitem, Jim & Dorothy

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#### "Q" FLIGHT NEWS from Evelyn Lewis

Here we are and the first month of the New Year has passed. Looking back to November, 15 of us attended a luncheon at the Irish Club, those present – President Eric and Kath Kelly, Peter and Jean Baillie, Bert and Isla Garland, Jess Helyar we welcomed for the first time accompanied by her daughter Jean, Arthur and May Jones, Bernie & Helen McLoughlin, Cyril & Hettie Murray, and Evelyn Lewis. We had a most enjoyable couple of hours, trying to get a word in edgeways and devouring food. A winter luncheon planned for June or July. Eric and Kath have been holidaying up on the South Coast, and then in March they are off to the United Kingdom for a month with daughter Barbara, and catching up with another daughter already over there, then back home and prepare to go to Orange. We look forward to the Reunion, seven from Queensland are going. The touring Murrays: Cyril & Hettie returned home just in time to join us for the luncheon after 5 months touring round Australia. Their motor camper they call the Shoe Box travelled well over 19,000 kilometres. Hettie compiled a lengthy report of their trip, which made great reading. Meeting interesting people in the areas visited: Northern Territory, The Kimberleys, Bungle Bungle, Western Australia, the Nullabor, South Australia and many other places. They visited Jim & Lucy Palmer and accepted their hospitality to spend some time with them and show us around their wonderful part of their area and to enjoy Lucy's cooking. In Melbourne they visited Sue Eggars who they found to be keeping very well. Further north to Tenterfield they stayed the night with Jack and Elsie Hamilton on their cattle property. They will have lots to impart to friends at the Reunion. Spoke to Bobby Williams to inquire of her and Sel. Both in a Nursing Home – Bobby suffering a stroke, Sel not at all well, on oxygen all the time. Haven't heard any news from 458 members in the Far North for some time. Trust they are well and out and about. We would like to hear from them. VALE: received a call that Bob Helyar passed away 3.2.03. Bob had been in a Nursing Home for 4½ years. Our thoughts are with Jess and her family.

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#### CORNSTALK COMMENTS from Merv Hargraves

As this is the first Newsletter for 2003, I send greetings to all 458ers and their families and a sincere hope for a happy and peaceful year. At the last luncheon in November, Life Membership of the Squadron was presented to Noel Walter and Peter Pettit in recognition of their service and dedication to 458 over many years. Eric Munkman has been in contact with Col Fereday to enquire if any of the Canberra members had been affected by the recent fires. To his knowledge all were safe, Col sends his best wishes to all and is looking forward to the Reunion in Orange. Peter Alexander and Rita have had a recent holiday on Lord Howe Island, also Peter Pettit and June have just returned from Norfolk Island. Our good wishes to Mick Singe who is moving to Western Australia from Victoria, and also to Tony Harris moving from Tuncurry to Galston. Eric and Dorothy have visited Jean Longhurst who has moved recently to a nursing home in Leichhardt. They were pleased to see how well she had progressed. Her speech is good and they chatted for an hour. She maintains her interest in 458 and is

keen to hear news of any activities. Her new address is 16-18 Freebert Street, Leichhardt and she would be pleased to hear from any members.

As usual, the Anzac Reunion luncheon after the March will be held at the Goulburn Street Masonic Centre. Up to date over 60 have made bookings for the May Reunion in Orange. We are all hoping that this dreadful drought will be over by then and the Central West will be green and beautiful. There will be a luncheon at Ryde TAFE in March, Eric will let us know. I spoke to Reg Willis in Geraldton, WA in January. He has passed his 92<sup>nd</sup> year, is looking after himself, and still driving.

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#### CROWEATERS CATCHUP from Pat Cribb

The Annual General Meeting and lunch on December 1, 2002, at the Royal Hotel, was a happy gathering of thirty members. Many children and grandchildren of our original 458 men have become members. Through their interest our S.A. Flight continues on and their support makes a great contribution to the success of our functions. Next of kin are very welcome to march with our 458 group on Anzac Day, gathering at 9.15 am at the Pulteney Street end of Rundle Mall. As last year, a Metroshuttle has been organized to bring marchers back for drinks and lunch at the Royal Hotel, No. 2 North Terrace, Kent Town. The bus will be waiting for you at the end of the march near the Womens and Childrens Hospital.

We wish everyone a successful and happy time at the Reunion and Conference. Our President, Colin Hutchinson, looks forward to the occasion, and to meeting his second pilot, Tom Moore, who lives in Orange. Col also looks forward to meeting Davis McMahon, the son of the late Frank McMahon who was navigator in George Cowan's crew at Gibraltar. Frank died in 1966 aged 42. David intends going to the Reunion, and will bring photographs and memorabilia of A-Flight on Gibraltar: his address is 3 Ponsford Place, Nicholls, ACT, 2913

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#### BRITISH BULLETIN from Norm Duke

Peter Leonard Sadly we have to report that our dear friend and colleague Peter has died in a Nursing Home after enduring Parkinsons for many years. He was one of our original UK members and we send our love and sympathy to his wife Eileen. Frank Baggott, a cheerful letter from another 'young' 81 year old, tells me he is recovering from a mild stroke in March, and also his wife after a quadruple heart by-pass. Our mention of David Duff in August reminds him of the time they shared a tent in Egypt. What would we do without our memories? Peter Cochrane, asks that we print his telephone number for any members visiting Yorkshire in future: ... 01904 489009 ...

We have been anxiously watching TV broadcasting reports of the devastating bush fires in NSW and more recently in Canberra, and hope for a quick end to these disasters, and especially hope that none of our members have been affected.

Many compliments have been received from UK members on receiving copies of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of the Squadron History, particularly in respect of the many photographs included. Frank Baggott tells me that the 'missing name' in the photo of the signals section on page 71 is H(Bert) Alford whom he believes came from Catford in London (where strangely enough I grew up and went to school). All the four members in the front row of the photograph shared tents for long periods – a true test of friendship?

Reg Bullen has written to me with his thoughts which I am sure many of us would agree with . . .

'The more I see the 458 Newsletters and these Squadron Histories, the more I admire the strong sense of comradeship and pride which is so evident in everything that is written. I am sure that there is no other squadron or regiment anywhere which has such a fine Association. Many congratulations to all the members, relations and friends.' Regarding the report of the fatal accident reported on pages 142/143. Reg tells me that he and Wal Clarke correspond every year on 19<sup>th</sup> April, the anniversary of that fatal day in 1944 (not 19<sup>th</sup> May) when they crash landed in Malta in darkness, a day they will never forget. Charles Humbles, one of our original members from Holme, loved the book and hopes that he gets on the nominal roll in the 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Best Wishes to All and Peace in 2003. Norm.

### SANDGROPPERS SAY from Ted Jewell

Happy New Year to all members of 458 Squadron and their families. I hope 2003 does not disappear as fast as the last year 2002. I can't believe how quickly the years have slipped by since we were with the Squadron overseas.

We had a great day for our usual Xmas lunch at Miss Mauds in Perth. I must say our members are thinning out as so many members find it harder every year to attend functions, owing to bad health etc. We had only 20 turn up for lunch, but everyone had a wonderful time. Present were Bill & Joann Clues, Bill & Flip Kelliher, Ted Jewell & friend, Olga Jones and son, Henry and Vera Etherton, Jim and Lucy Palmer, Nobby and Esme Nobbs, Margaret Gannaway, plus some associated members and friends. I was told Mick Singe is now living here in Perth but was unable to attend.

I am sorry to advise the Squadron that Bill (Curly) O'Connor has passed away, he was not in the best of health for several years but was a real identity on the Squadron. Bill Clues and myself attended his funeral and met some of his family.

I am having a barbeque at my home in Mandurah on March 9<sup>th</sup> and hoping to see a good roll up, everyone always has an enjoyable day. Best Wishes – Ted.

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### VICTORIAN NEWS from Rupert Pearce

Vale: It is regretted that we have to report three deaths:

Ian (Farmer) Giles died on August 13 and a private service was held at Geelong. It was briefly mentioned in the last Newsletter (NSW Flight) Beryl and Ian had been married for 56 years and had 3 children. One boy and two girls. A letter of sympathy has been written to the family. Beryl told me she had applied for a War Widows Pension, but it had been refused despite two appeals through Legacy. Bernie Moon died on August 26. An RSL service was conducted on August 30 at Blackburn. His widow, Gwen, intends to live at Salford Park, Wantirna. The Flight was not told of his passing but a letter of condolence was written to Gwen.

Mavis Singe died on October 14 after being ill for 3 years. Members of the Flight who attended her service at Ashwood were John and Marjorie Bilney, Neil Dean, Jack and Margaret Ellis, Roy and Barbara Pearce, Rupert Pearce and Norma Pollard. Their son David and one grandson came from W. Australia and Mick went back with them for a short break. Mick and Mavis had been married 54 years. Mick has told me he intends to move to the West before Easter. He will be greatly missed by the Victoria Flight, of which he has been President for 13 years.

### 458 Squadron History 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

We would like to add our congratulations to all who made this Edition possible, especially to Peter Alexander and Pete Pettit.

Vale: Cec Percy, Cec died at Heyfield, Victoria on November 12. His wife Louise died some time ago. Cecilia Temple, his daughter, wrote to tell of his funeral service and how impressed she was. The RAAF East Sale refurbished his war medals and mounted them in a frame. The Australian Flag was placed on the coffin and it was led from the parlor by a lone piper. At the internment RAAF members and the RSL paid their respects. We have written to Mrs Temple and expressed our sympathy.

### AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE CADETS:

Neil and June Dean attended the 21 Flight cadets presentation on December 7. Leading Cadet Matthew Olsen was presented with the Squadron book prize "Glorious Summer", the Story of the Battle of Britain.

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### SOCIAL MEETINGS

Members met at the Bentleigh Club on December 18 for a Christmas Lunch. Present were Jim Anderson, John and Marjorie Bilney, Neil and June Dean, Jack and Margaret Ellis, Ken and Joann Hinton, Roy and Barbara Pearce, Rupert Pearce, Norma Pollard and Mick Singe.

Apologies were received from Don and Shirley Granger and June Schoppe. Thank you Joann for providing the table decorations. Mick Singe told us he expected to leave Victoria for Western Australia early in the New Year. A farewell luncheon was held at the RSL Glen Waverley on January 7 to farewell Mick Singe who was going west on January 14. We were joined by his son David, his wife Jillian and his two grandsons, Edward and Hugh. Jim Anderson, John and Marjorie Bilney, Neil and June Dean, Jack and Margaret Ellis, Ken Fleming, Don and Shirley Granger, Ken and Joann Hinton, Laurie and June Kew, Ted Love, Rupert Pearce and Norma Pollard came to wish him well. Apologies were received from Bill Fordyce, Sue Eggars, Yank and Cath Martin, Roy and Barbara Pearce and June Schoppe. Joann provided the pictures of the Wellington. Mick thanked the members for attending and all members of the Flight for their great support over many years as President. He was sad to leave Victoria but Victoria's loss was Western Australia's gain. He will be missed for his leadership, his tactful and pleasant attitude to everyone, for his fund of anecdotes about 458 Squadron personnel, which provided a lot of interest and laughs. He was a friend to all and we wish him well in the West. His service to the Flight and Squadron will not be forgotten.

His new address will be 1 Cecil Road, Northam, WA, 6401. Tel: 08 9622 3697. He rang to say the trip was uneventful and he will tell me when he moves to Nedlands. Neil Dean as Senior Vice-President, will assume the duties of President. His address is 6 Margate Crescent, Glen Waverley, Victoria 3150, Tel. 03 9884 6210

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### RAAF ASSOCIATION FUTURE EVENTS

1. The Church Service at St. Martins South Yarra will be held on Sunday March 16 at 11.30 am.
  - (a) Members should assemble at 4 Cromwell Road at 10.30 am to march to the Church
  - (b) Following the Service, lunch will be available at Cromwell Road at a cost of \$15 plus drinks, and will be of Quiche or Fish with chips and salad, tea, coffee and mints
  - (c) Entertainment will be available after 2 pm
  - (d) The RAAF Association has suggested members attending should advise them by February 28, if they intend to march, come to the Service and lunch and remain for the entertainment.

Cheques should be made out to the RAAF Association.

Perhaps any members of the Flight if attending could contact me and I will make arrangements with the Association.

### PILGRIMAGE TO POINT COOK, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9

Details will follow

### PERSONAL NOTES:-

Cath and Yank Martin are still not well. Yank is waiting to be admitted to a Nursing Home. Tim Primrose will be 90 on June 10, and Rita will be 94 on February 24. Barbara Pearce is now home and recovering slowly. Joan and Ken Hinton are not well. Ken reached his OBE on November 9, Shirley and Don Granger continue to support each other. Bill Fordyce has spent some time in and out of hospital. Harry Ashworth was 82 on January 29. He and Nell will reach their Diamond Wedding Anniversary on March 6. Rupert Pearce has recovered from his heart operation but has an ongoing problem with his walking due to his spine degenerating.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This will be held at the Manningham Club on Tuesday May 27, following the lunch at 12 noon.

I had a call from Veterans Affairs, Melbourne, since I sent the Newsletter on. A lady in England is making enquiries re a Maxwell George Parker, a member of 458 Squadron.

# INFORMATION REQUIRED;

No. 416227, F/O Maxwell George Parker, enlisted in South Australia in 1942 a member of 458 Squadron, killed 6.9.1943. Believed off Sicily.

Does anyone remember him? And who were other members of the crew and was it Sicily.

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## CANUCK CAUCUS from Bryan Quinlan

The Christmas mail brought its welcome collection of news and greetings from Australia, UK, New Zealand and from across Canada, tempered unfortunately by notification of loss and declining health of 458 members or wives. Dianne (Powell) Santiago advised the sad news of the sad loss of her mother, Nell, unexpectedly on November 8, 2002, predeceased by husband George in 1994. George was a W/AG in Bruce McKenzie's crew at Protville. I was surprised and pleased to receive a telephone call and have a good chat with Mickey Reid on January 21 but dampened with the news that an operation for glaucoma had not gone without problems, and the results still awaited, although the Doctor's prognosis appears favourable. At present Mick is limited to one eye but still maintains his perennial upbeat attitude and we all wish him a full and speedy recovery. In his and Marge's earlier greetings he described some happy memories from a family reunion last August in northern Manitoba and included a story about grand-nephew Philip Reid Jnr. who exhibited a philosophical maturity far beyond his nine years as follows: Philip and I shared a log in front of a roaring fire. Awed by the beauty of the lake, clouds, sky, trees, rock-moss and small wild flowers I asked young Philip what he liked most of all this splendour? 'Everything' he replied quietly, 'everything' and then added 'I don't have everything, but I have everything I need' as he headed off to watch the water lapping at the shore. A lesson there for sure. It may be too cold in Winnipeg for opening the hangar door, but something akin to that took place in mid-January during Jim Ball's visit with Jim Donaldson. They were crew mates on 458 on L.V. Johnston's crew in 1943. Word from Bert Markland indicates that he and Gladys may have sold their long-time home in Christina Lake and, if so, will be moving to Kamloops and close to family members. Bert notes receipt of a card from his old Skipper Leon Armstrong in the UK. Bea Eastcott confirmed her and her son's enjoyment of the updated "We Find and Destroy" and advised that she had spent Christmas at her daughter's, a gathering which included 4 teenagers, 5 dogs, 8 horses and 4 cats! I understand from Mickey that Bea was contacted last year by a David Ross Bertran who lives in the USA and is researching information on his Uncle, Ross Bertran, who was in one of the three 38 Squadron crews led by Lloyd Wiggans and brilliantly navigated by Peter Eastcott in the memorable and successful raid on Rommel's last remaining fuel tanker anchored at Tobruk in 1942. His uncle survived the raid but subsequently was lost on a search operation with 221 Squadron from Malta. David has visited Oz and talked to Lloyd. A card from Betty Hailstone (Bill's sister) contained a photo with information which I do not recall being previously aware of, concerning the earlier dedication of Hailstone Lake in Northern Saskatchewan as a memorial to his name.

It was a pleasant surprise to receive a call from Alan "Snowy" Atherton's daughter Diane who is training at a Vancouver Hospital, followed by an exchange of e-mail messages with Alan, courtesy of his son Ian. Unfortunately, due to a number of circumstances, I have not yet made direct contact with Diane, but hopefully plans for a get together will materialise in the near future. Our Canadian membership collectively sends best wishes to all the 458 membership for good and/or improving health in 2003 and, in response to recent notification, particularly to Jean Longhurst and David Westgarth who have encountered respective health problems. Our belated but sincere sympathy to Mick Singe on his sad loss, along with our good wishes on his move to WA. A number of us have memories of happier times with Mick and Mavis in 1986. Finally, it goes without saying, that we are greatly distressed by the on going news of your disastrous drought and fire conditions and hope that relief will soon arrive.

## KIWI CALL from Kevin George

There is little to report from New Zealand that would be of interest to Squadron members. Arch and Gladys Fell stayed with us for a night in November when on their way to rededication of the historic Memorial Arch of Kohu Kohu, near where they both grew up. This memorial to Hokianga soldiers killed in both World Wars was opened by Governor General Charles Ferguson in 1927, and

was recently returned to its original site at the entrance to Kohu Kohu wharf on the Hokianga harbour. The Ceremony was held on Armistice Day and attracted visitors from far afield. We found time for reminiscing on 458 and a flight in our venerable JODL over to Hokianga on the Sunday morning. The long life of my mother finally came to an end in September, just four months short of her 105<sup>th</sup> birthday. It appears that the only New Zealand representatives in Orange will be Jack Pryde and yours truly. Dawn will be staying home on this occasion to nurse invalid household pets. Kind regards.

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CORRESPONDENCE: Letters to the Editor and others

Norman Skinner, 12 McDonald Street, Berala, NSW, 2141

Dear Sir, Being a member of 456 Night Fighter, on a Bolton Paul Defiant Squadron based at Valley Aerodrome in Anglesley for some period, when I transferred to 458 Squadron on Wellington Bombers at Holme on Spalding Moor. Our crew were: A.E.(Mick) Mather (captain), Joe Lynch (2<sup>nd</sup> Dicky), Colon Corton (Observer), Geoff Hayes (Wireless Op.) deceased, Peter Symond (Rear gunner) deceased, Norman Skinner (front gunner). I think we were named the gen crew, after being elected the best for operations such as locating and destroying our enemies supplies, such as railway tracks and transport carrying explosives and arms. As well we were the first to use two engine aircraft to carry large, high explosives on different targets such as Tobruk. Yours faithfully, Norm Skinner.

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From Keith Grimshaw (on 38 Squadron) 84 Samson Road, Semaphore Park, SA, 5019

November 12, 2002, to 458 Squadron Council – Dear Peter, Herewith a copy of the letter received from RUSI-SA LIBRARY SERVICES – explaining itself. ‘It is appropriate that the work of the compilers and producers of such an outstanding work of art and history should be recognized. Congratulations and “Thank you”’ Yours sincerely, K Grimshaw.

‘On behalf of our President, Colonel Neville Bergin, and members of the Royal United Services Institute of South Australia wish to thank you most sincerely for your most generous gift of *We Find and Destroy, A History of 458 RAAF Squadron* to our Library. Without the generosity of our members the Library, which has a very limited budget, would not be able to sustain a level acceptable to our members. Recognition of the donor is made in the front of each book and I am sure many of our members will be most grateful indeed that you have seen fit to give this wonderful book to the RUSI-SA Library’.

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From Dewi Davis, 44 Brecon Road, Pontardawe, Swansea, West Glamorgan, SA8 4PD

Dear Peter, Thank you for replying (via Peter Pettit) to my son-in-law's fax to you. I had only recently read of your travels over here so I was surprised to hear of your op. I sincerely hope you are making a steady recovery (We usually say ‘speedy’ but this does not apply at our age – recovery itself will suffice!). A year ago I had an op. – not a pleasant event but it has solved that immediate problem. My other problem is blood pressure, a common complaint over here, but it did not stop me from playing Badminton for many years after retirement (1985). Unfortunately it came to an end when we ran out of partners. I am confined to Snooker nowadays, a game I have always enjoyed, and gardening. Kathleen looks after the flowers whilst I try to grow vegetables- very much dependent on the weather and this year the late mini-summer this year has enabled the results in both cases to be quite satisfactory. I was in regular correspondence with Bill Facey (Bideford) until a few years ago – he passed away in a Nursing Home having developed Parkinson's disease. Also I was in touch with Bob Spencer but he too has also left us. I had the feeling that Bob really enjoyed his time with 458 – with his two stripes and ‘pipe’ he gave me the appearance that he had ‘arrived’. Family wise I have six grandchildren. My daughter Barbara, living in West Sussex has two sons – Mathew graduated in Chemistry at Edinburgh last year and Alex graduated in Law at Oxford this year. My other daughter, Carlin, who lives near us has 4 children, the latest arrival being only six years old. Sammy, the eldest, graduated in Environmental Biology last year and has recently completed a post graduate Masters Degree in Swansea. Her brother Jansen, is in his final year in optometry at Cardiff University. Fiona the younger daughter will probably be in College next year, whilst Ryan, the junior, has a long time to

the younger daughter will probably be in College next year, whilst Ryan, the junior, has a long time to go. To complete, I should mention Norman my own son, a graduate Accountant is married with no children. Both he and his wife are working and are ardent golfers. I have two snaps – one the Wireless Section the other Wireless plus Electrical. If I can enlarge them successfully I shall send them to you. I am looking forward to reading the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (which I have yet to order) - you have indeed done the Squadron proud – and by reading various Mag. Letters from various parts of the globe you will know how much your work has been appreciated. I remember how you and I and Frank Baggott visited Jerusalem etc. Also we went to Haifa. I remember Facey discovering a scorpion in his bed-space. I remember George Garfield and myself detailed to find what the ticking noise was in a Wellington, reported by air crew doing ground training - it was no other than a loose accumulator lug 'making and breaking' contact setting at a relay in a TR9. I guess I could go on and on now – looking back they were sometimes tedious and trying times but overall those bring back happy memories. Nice to spin a few lines to you Peter, Kathleen and I send you and Rita our fondest regards. Cheers for now. Dewi.

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#### EX-SERVICE AND OTHER EVENTS IN AUSTRALIA

One of the two most immediately concerning matters currently is the outcome of the Clarke Committee Review. This was established by the Minister with a wide ranging authority to enquire into anomalies in the system. Chaired by John Clarke QC – former Judge, and also consisting of Air Marshal Doug. Riding (ret'd) and Dr David Rosalky, it attracted over 3,000 submissions from the ex-service world – and certainly did its best to handle them. Its report is now out, very lengthy, costing \$70 to buy, it is now being analysed. At first reading it appears conservative – the attitude appears to be if I wasn't policy before it isn't now. It does offer something for British Commonwealth Occupation Forces (some of them), and for those irradiated at Woomera etc in the Atomic Tests there. No concessions on onus etc for home service – only WWII people; nothing much for, British and Allied Veterans; no quick extension of the Gold Card. The other is the proposed new system for future ex-service compensation - of which we await the bill.

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Personal Peter Alexander has retired as National Secretary of AVADSC, the crest ex-service Council after 32 years as founding Honorary Secretary (41 as Hon. National Secretary of the RAAF Association). The Minister for Veterans Affairs (Ms Donna Vale) accompanied by the 3 Repatriation Commissioners, the Heads of the Veterans Review Board and of the Repatriation Medical Authority (from Canberra and Brisbane respectively) came to the AGM concerned and the Minister made a generous tribute to Peter's service (calling him a "Living National Treasure"!)

Peter intends to continue membership of various ex-service committees as health may permit – and will continue to serve 458 Squadron.

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