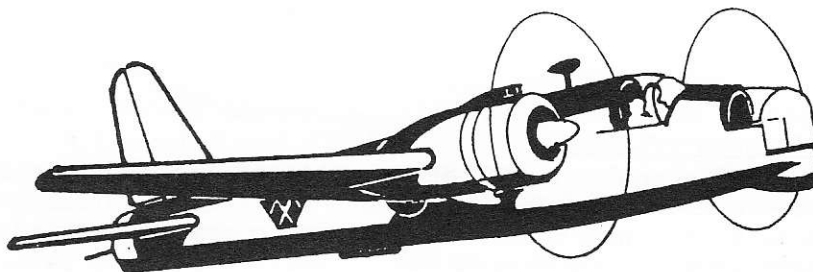


458

SQUADRON NEWS



RAAF

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458 Squadron Council Office-bearers

Squadron President: Norman Duke (UK)

Squadron Vice Presidents: Australia: Peter Pettit (NSW) Tom Moore (NSW)

New Zealand: Kevin George

Canada: Mick Reid

UK: Leon Armstrong

Squadron Treasurer: Peter Alexander (NSW)

Squadron Secretary: Bob Bruce (NSW)

Hon. Squadron Auditor: Frank Ward (NSW)

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

Publisher: Eric Munkman (Tel: 9972 0641)

Flight Correspondents:

UK Norman Duke, Orchard Cottage, Guildford Road, Cranleigh, Surrey

NSW Eric Munkman, 722 Lantana Lodge, Lantana Ave. Collaroy Plateau, 2097

Qld Evelyn Lewis, 5 Cupania Street, Victoria Point, 4165

WA Ted Jewell, 61 Wyaree Road, Mandurah, 6210

NZ Kevin George, 20 Kowhai Avenue, Kaikohe, New Zealand

SA Pat Cribb, 2/57 Sturdee Street, Linden Park, 5065

Vic. Rupert Pearce, 46 MtPleasant Road, Nunawading, Victoria, 3131

Canada: Bryan Quinlan, 1460 Haywood Crescent, West Vancouver, BC, Canada

WALL OF REMEMBRANCE.

458 stalwart Mick Singe has been chosen one of only twelve airmen to be included in the group of 25 service personnel who are to visit London for the dedication of the Wall of Remembrance on 11 November. The Wall is to honour the 1.5 million Australians who served with the British forces during the two world wars and its dedication will take place in the presence of the Queen and prime ministers Tony Blair and John Howard. It is a great honour for Mick and for the Squadron that one of its members should be selected and Mick is both proud and delighted to be able to represent us.

'G FOR GEORGE'

Members may not be aware that 'G for George' has been undergoing extensive refurbishing and is being formally returned to display at the War Memorial, 6 December 2003. Anyone wishing to attend the ceremony should send their names and addresses to the Australian War Memorial (for attention Ms Helen Withnell) as soon as possible. 460 Squadron will be holding a reunion in Canberra at about this time.

SQUADRON PILOTS.

The squadron has an established contact at Narrandera Tiger Moth Museum thanks to Jock McGowen's magnificent display of wartime aircraft models. An opportunity now exists to establish similar relations with the excellent Temora Museum and it would assist to have the name and course number (if possible) of members who were trained at either of these two initial flying schools. Would pilots who trained at either of these two schools please send their details to Tom Moore at PO Box 242, Orange, NSW 2800.

458 SQUADRON ALL -STATES REUNION.

Negotiations are under way to organise THE LAST All States Reunion in Canberra in 2005, the sixtieth anniversary of the year the Squadron was disbanded at the end of the War in Europe. It will probably be held early in the November and we are seeking accommodation of similar quality and cost to that at Orange with a similar series of outings and activities remembering that bus tours should not be of more than three or four hours. Members will be kept informed of the committee's progress.

CORNSTALK COMMENTS. from Eric Munkman.

Flight president Eric presented a Squadron Plaque to the Chapel at the War Vets Memorial Village where it was placed on the Wall of Remembrance and dedicated by the minister on Sunday 24 August. Village residents Eric Munkman and Ralph Bailey attended but John McKellar was unable to join them owing to voluntary duty at the Village Museum.

Eric attended the Battle of Australia commemoration ceremony at the Cenotaph 3 September, a most impressive ceremony. He also attended the Battle of Britain ceremony 15 September while Noel Walter attended the Church Service at St Andrew's cathedral.

Eric also spoke to 'Rinso' Purcill. He and Gloria are keeping well, Rinso just as jovial and cheeky as ever. He hopes to be with us next Anzac Day.

Bob and Pat Lyndon have moved to a new address at North Sydney and we wish them happiness and good health in their new home.

Now for the sad news. Bill Hull has spent three weeks in hospital but is now on the road to recovery. Bob Scholes passed away 19 September after a long illness. Bill and Peg attended the funeral, our sympathies to Mary and family. Merv Hargarves passed away 8 October having suffered poor health for some time. The funeral was attended by many members of the Squadron, our sympathy to Roush and the family.

A Merry Christmas to all and a happy, healthy 2004.

CANUCK CAUCUS. from Bryan Quinlan.

Sadly this report has to begin with the news of the loss of Ben Gruenfeld on 4 September after a long period of deteriorating health at age 89. Ben joined 458 in March 1943 and earned the nickname 'Benny the Bomber'. Postwar he stayed in the RCAF and retired in 1962 with the rank of Squadron Leader and subsequently became a Canada Manpower Counsellor with the Federal Government. Following his second retirement he became involved in his favourite pastime, professional baseball and devoted the next 22 years to greeting fans and taking tickets at local games. Jack Reynolds and I attended the funeral service and expressed personal and Squadron condolences to Ben's family members.

There is little to report elsewhere other than telephone exchanges with Mickey Reid, Frank Laughlin and Sid Winchester. Both Mickey and Sid and their respective spouses continue to experience a variety of health problems and medical tests but retain their upbeat and optimistic outlook on life.

I hope I will be forgiven for interjecting a personal story arising from the reception following Ben's funeral service when a younger generation lady approached the table at which Jack Reynolds, Ben Lawson (ex 221 - Protville) and myself were partaking of refreshments and asked if any of us had flown from Tunisia in 1943 and had flown with her father Roy Bell. This certainly registered with me as it was Roy, a 221 skipper, who made the initial sighting and attack on the merchant vessel that 458 strike force was then sent to attack, culminating in our successful 2-torp attack and sinking of this ship. Considerable animated discussion ensued and resulted in some nostalgic moments of recall for yours truly. I was sorry to learn that Roy had died at age 42 in the early sixties and that Susan is now the sole surviving family member. It subsequently developed that Mickey Reid had visited the Bell family in Vancouver after the war, and had met Susan when she was a teenager. She is looking for an appropriate way to honour her father's memory with his DFC award and I have offered to help in this regard.

Again we will end this report with the Canadian membership's heartfelt wish for positive news on the recoveries of Peter Alexander and Colin Fereday and their early return to 'active duty'. Lastly of course we send our warm greetings to all our Aussie compatriots.

SANDGROPPERS SAY. from Ted Jewell.

WA Flight had a great day out at the home of Bob and Dot Bresslands, both associate members who have been with us a very long time. Everyone took their own lunch but were given plates of a very tasty soup, as much as one could eat. 458 members present were Bill and Joan Clues, Henry and Vera Etherton, Ted Jewell and friend, Mick Singe and Margaret Gannaway. Others present were friends.

Mick Singe was telling us of being picked to make the trip to London with members of other branches of the services for the dedication of the new memorial to the memory of Australian servicemen who served with British forces in both World Wars.

All members of the WA flight offer their condolences to Neil Dean on the death of his wife June, also to Olga Jones and family at the sad loss of Gordon Jones who passed away 21 October after a long illness.

Our Christmas lunch this year will be as usual at Miss Maud's in Perth 30 November. I would like to see a good roll up as in other years as all who come along always have a great time - a few drinks and all you can eat.

We are all looking forward to a BBQ lunch at Mick Singe's home on 7 December. It is great to have Mick with us now in the west as our ranks here are getting very low.

As this will be the last Newsletter for this year, on behalf of all WA members I extend greetings to all 458 members for a very happy Christmas and all the best for the New Year.

I hope next year doesn't fly by as fast as this year has!

BRITISH BULLETIN. from Norm Duke

A very enjoyable reunion weekend was held at the Falcon Hotel in Stratford-upon-Avon on 21/22 September when we proved once again that the 458 spirit is still as alive as ever. The following were on parade: Leon Armstrong, Ken and Kathleen Morris, Reg and Betty Windett, Jack and Audrey Christianson, Esme McLean and Mo Bourne, Ron and Rosa Moy, Don Stocks, Keith and Ann Wilkinson and Norm Duke. Bill Heeley, Ed Carter-Jones and Bill Prater had travel problems and could not be with us.

Ron Moy and Don Stocks who had flown with Tredwell's crew provided some fascinating insights into the flying operations they were involved in at the time of the invasion of Southern France 14 August 1944. Their crew had been posted from 458 to 36 Squadron 11 July 1944 after completing 63 ops. However they were to return to Alghero to take part in a special operation to simulate a sea invasion on Marseilles while the actual landings were planned for a spot much further to the east. At the same time 458 was of course involved in the protection of the real invasion forces. The rest is, as they say, history!

I have had a letter forwarded to me from Ronald Kirk who now lives in Gwynedd, North Wales. He originally joined 458 at Holme on Spalding Moor in 1941 as sergeant aircrew and flew out to Malta in one of the first three aircraft. He served with the Squadron until he completed his operational tour in August 1943 and lists the following pilots he flew with: Sgt Hare, FLTLT Skinner, PLTOFF Walton, SGT Barras, PLTOFF Furey, SGT Lava, SGT Cameron, SGT Fordyce, SQDNLDR Saville, WGCDR Mulholland and SQDNLDR Johnson. He would like anyone who might remember him to contact him at:- Assheton House, 2 Constantine Rd, Caernafon, Gwynedd, North Wales. UK - LL55 2LF.

I have been contacted by Bill McFadden who is visiting UK from Oz and have arranged to meet him also hopefully to visit Brooklands Museum. We are pleased to meet any 458ers who are in this neck of the woods so please get in touch anytime you are here.

I have information that the special relief carving commissioned as the Constant Endeavour memorial is expected to be unveiled in Westminster Abbey during May 2004.

I have to pass on the very sad news that Leon Armstrong's wife Doreen has died in a nursing home, a victim of Alzheimers and I have passed on our deepest sympathy. A few days after this happened his granddaughter presented him with a new great-grand-daughter.

May I wish you all Peace and Happiness for 2004.

CROWEATERS CATCH-UP. from Pat Cribb

We note that the next and last All-states Reunion will be held in Canberra in 2005, organised by NSW and we are happy with that decision. With so many wonderful reunions over the years we must say "Well done and our sincere thanks" to all those who have put their hearts and efforts into organising and carrying out these opportunities for everyone to meet over what is now nearly 60 years. What a marvellous effort.

The RAAF Association building in North Adelaide has been sold and the move to the Torrens Parade Ground is taking place during October.

Sadly Mel Goers passed away recently - sympathy on behalf of our SA members was expressed to Mollie and the families.

We hear Johnny Excell is keeping busy with his many interests. Besides now being a great grand-pa, he enjoys rifle and small bore shooting and is looking forward to the new season at the Murray Bridge Speedway. So many interests John as well as your bike shop - keep up the good work.

Don't forget to put Sunday 7 December in your diaries for our AGM and luncheon at the Royal Hotel, 2 North Terrace, Kent Town, Meet at 11am for lunch at noon - we look forward to getting together again.

O FLIGHT NEWS. from Evelyn Lewis

Some pleasant news some sad news to impart.

On 20 August, 18 of us enjoyed a luncheon at the Sheraton, Brisbane. Peter and Jean Bailie came along from Southport and it was good to see Jean so bright - she has overcome so much since losing her sight. Peter said they had 7 days away recently at Yeppoon with the Blind Dog Association and both enjoyed the trip and company even with the guard dogs

on the coach. Bert and Isla Garland, Jess Helyer accompanied by her son and daughter-in-law, Peg Holliday and friend Ann - good to see Peg looking so well. Arthur and May Jones were there but the day started badly for Arthur when he found he had lost his wallet, most upsetting. However two days later he received a call from the Police Dept in Brisbane to say that his wallet had been handed in and was intact so we still have some good, honest people about.

Eric and Kath Kelly, Evelyn Lewis, Dud and Enid McKay from Caloundra were present as were Cyril and Hetty Murray from Nindery who are selling out and have put a deposit on a Retirement Unit at Buderim. Don't think their place has been started yet as they bought from the plan and have made some changes they needed. Buderim is a lovely place to retire to.

Bert Garland and Dud McKay were lucky to win some nice red wine and other small gifts were won by Jean Bailie, Peg Holiday and Cyril Murray. Our thanks to President Eric and to Bernie McLoughlin for donating the gifts. Bernie could not make the luncheon as he had had a fall and hurt his foot. Other apologies were from Sel and Joan Foote due to their health. The company and food were very enjoyable.

There has been no news from other members but even if their news seems uninteresting, we would like to hear from them.

On a sadder note, Jack Baxter had been ill in a nursing home for over four years and passed away early in August - our thoughts are with Kitty who sends her thanks to all for thinking of her at this sad time. In past years many "Q" Flight members have enjoyed barbecues at their South Coast home. Sel Williams, an associate member, passed away 26 September, he had been in a nursing home for the past year with emphysema. Bobbie is also in the same nursing home after a stroke. It was good for both to have been together and our thoughts are with Bobbie.

Despite so much sadness and illness, "Q" Flight sends Best Wishes to one and all for the coming festive season and for 2004. We look forward to meeting up at the next, the final reunion.

KIWI CALL. from Kevin George

Sadly NZ Flight has to report the death of Ivan Green who was 90 and died peacefully 15 October at a care centre near Wellington. I rang him in May to report on the Orange reunion and noticed a change in his manner of speaking. A conversation was still possible but was not as fluent as of old.

Ivan was a very reliable and competent WOP/AG and was with me through two OTU's (Hudsons then Wellingtons), a ferry training course and operations, first from an Air Sea Rescue Flight and then with 458. He and Irene accompanied us (Dawn and I) on many enjoyable Australian holidays attending Squadron reunions in NSW, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland.

"One by one they slip away, deprive us of their shade."

I have recently been in touch with the other three NZ members and can report that all are well.

VICTORIAN NEWS. from Rupert Pearce

We have been advised by the Point Cook airfield Preservation Action Group that the Defence Department is preparing to enter a sales process to sell off the majority of the base, including the historic AFC WW1 southern tarmac hangars and seaplane base, the Officers Mess and Academy complex, the RAAF Chapel, married quarters and the entire airfield area consisting of both sealed runways, grass runways and taxi ways.

While the Commonwealth will retain ownership of a Heritage precinct inclusive of the parade ground, Headquarters Building, several married quarters, WWI Memorial and RAAF Museum the rest of the site will transfer to a private owner. It is of concern that while the government has stated repeatedly that the airfield will be retained as an operating airfield, it now appears that it will place a covenant on it, that will require the owner only to maintain the north/south runway for the use of the RAAF Museum (this can hardly be called an operating airfield).

The action Group opposes the outright sale process and believes that a long term lease is a more appropriate method of retaining public access, preserving the heritage and maintaining the whole operating airfield. Without publishing the entire letter, the Action Group advise that their website can be reviewed at www.pointcook.info for more information. A "Save Point Cook" petition is available from the Action Group if other flights are interested.

OF INTEREST TO THOSE WHO KNEW THE LATE FRED MCKAY AS A CHAPLAIN IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

The Fred McKay Education Centre at St Phillips College Alice Springs was officially opened 15 August and was a memorable and significant event in the history of the College. More than 150 of Fred's friends came from all over Australia and joined three generations of the McKay family in celebrating the life of an extraordinary man. His name now graces a most fitting and symbolic memorial.

Meg McKay was unable to make the journey from Sydney - Meg passed away 24 October.

REMEMBRANCE DAY IN LONDON.

Congratulations to Mick Singe on his selection to go to London - he is one of two West Australians. The party of 25 plus carers will meet in Canberra before leaving for Sydney and London. They will be present at the opening of the Wall of Remembrance 11 November. It is an honour for the Squadron and Mick and he is delighted at his selection. It will be a great experience and we wish him a safe return

PERSONAL

Tom Primrose tells us he is spending a lot of time in bed right now - he is unable to put any weight on his left leg.

Joan Munday, widow of Jim had a bad fall and broke her pelvis but is now back home recuperating.

Christine Smith, widow of Bert is now at the Aged Care Facility at Shoreham.

Norma Pollard had a fall in the street requiring medical attention and a short stay in hospital.

Neil Dean (through Veterans Affairs) is making a contribution to the salaries of those in the medical profession and the upkeep of our hospital system.

Barbara Pearce had a fall.

There are other members who are not well - time is not on our side.

VALE.

We regret to report that June Dean passed away peacefully 11 September after a long illness. The funeral was held 16 September at the Uniting Church, Glen Waverley and was attended by her family and many friends. Members who came to the service were Jim Anderson, John and Marjory Bilney, Jack and Margaret Ellis, Shirley Granger, Roy and Barbara Pearce, Rupert Pearce, Norma Pollard and June Schoppe. Illness prevented a number of other members attending.

We also sadly tell of the passing of Helen Laming widow of our friend and comrade Ernie on 7 October at the Garden Grace Nursing Home. Helen had been in care for some years and had not been able to come to our activities. A service of celebration for her life was held at the Rosanna Uniting Church 10 October. Some members of the flight were unable to attend but she will be remembered by those who knew her. A letter of condolence has been written to her two daughters.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.

Jack Ellis arranged for a representative (Lyn) from Mannatech to speak to members about the deficiency of minerals, sugars and vitamins in our systems and what was needed to keep us healthy in this modern age. The discussion was followed by afternoon tea. Present were Jack and Margaret Ellis, Roy and Barbara Pearce, Rupert Pearce and June Schoppe. There were apologies from Neil Dean, Ken and Joan Hinton and Norma Pollard. The afternoon was arranged at short notice.

There is to be a luncheon at the RSL Frankston Monday 27 October and a BBQ 7 December at the Bilneys' home at 28 One Tree Hill Rd, Ferny Creek, also a BBQ at the Ellis home at 5 Heales St, Dromana 7 March 2004.

GALLIPOLI.

In September Peter and Rita Alexander received medical approval for a brief further overseas trip. They went to Vienna and Krakow in Southern Poland. In the latter place apart from inspecting the monstrous remains of Auschwitz where the very ground still reeks of suffering, they visited the Polish sanctuary of the Black Virgin of Czernovitz which illustrated how the church has enthused and protected it as a nation over the centuries.

From there they went to Turkey and down to Gallipoli. This was an emotional and stirring visit. The ancient battlefield has been well looked after by governments and we understood better Australia's history. Those first ANZACs really had little hope of success with poor commanders but if any Squadron members are looking for a destination of this sort we recommend it.

On the way back, Peter had a mild stroke.

A FINAL EDITORIAL - HAIL AND FAREWELL.

Over fifty years ago I suggested to the NSW Flight Committee that the Squadron should have a quarterly newsletter. Alan Piggott then Flight President welcomed it and every quarter since then we have never missed one, the Squadron News went out under my editorship. The Squadron warmly expressed its appreciation of the work of the editorial team.

As some Squadron members know, in the last two or three years I have had a series of serious illnesses which have forced me to retire from various activities and now from the Squadron News. Fortunately Pete Pettit is available to take over for the moment.

Let me conclude by saying to you all it's been a long and happy half century from my point of view. Thank you for your friendship and that of your families, I shall of course be keeping in touch with the Squadron as time goes on.

Peter Alexander.

POSTSCRIPT.

Peter has asked me to take over the editing of the Newsletter for the time being but we all very much hope that when he returns home after his present convalescing, he will be able to take over the job for a time at least. At this stage he can make no commitment. Peter's misfortune brings home the comparatively short working time now available to us all.

Peter Pettit.