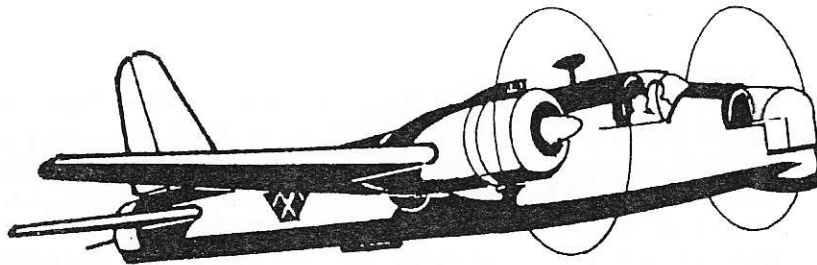


458

SQUADRON NEWS



RAAF

JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL, C/- Pete Pettit,
26 Dudley Ave.,
Roseville
NSW 2069 Australia.

Year 55, No.218 May 2004

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: Tom Lindsay
UK: Leon Armstrong
Squadron Treasurer: Frank Ward, 50 Castle Hill Rd, West Pennant Hills,
NSW 2125
Hon. Squadron Auditor:
Squadron Secretary: Jim Whittem PO Box 239 Port Macquarie, NSW 2444
Squadron Newsletter.
Editor: Pete Pettit Phone/fax 9416 5464
Publisher: Eric Munkman - Ph: 9972 0641

Flight Correspondents:

UK Norman Duke, Orchard Cottage, Guildford Road, Cranleigh, Surrey
GU 68 PF
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 0400
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

Would members please note that the old Squadron Post Office Box number 5289 has been cancelled. Newsletter material should please be sent to Pete Pettit at the above address.

Communications for the Squadron Secretary should be posted to Jim Whittem, PO Box 239, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444 and for the Squadron (and NSW Flight) Treasurer to Frank Ward, 50 Castle Hill Rd, West Pennant Hills, NSW 2125

All STATES REUNION.

Your committee is still in process of deciding on a site for the All States Reunion to be held in Canberra in November 2005. Upwards of 10 hotel/motels have been investigated each having advantages and disadvantages, the one common factor being that this reunion will certainly be more expensive than the one held in Orange. For example top quality accommodation with dinner, bed and breakfast for two people could be about \$1500 for six nights without any special arrangements for a Meet Your Mates evening, a conference room, any tours or our final dinner. At Orange about the same figure covered all extras in a package deal.

It is proposed to revert to earlier times and draw up a programme detailing the cost of accommodation and of each item which would allow members to select those they wish to attend. The committee is of the opinion that the quality of the accommodation and its location is important for our last Reunion even if we have to shorten the time from 6 to 4 nights.

To be able to negotiate prices etc it is important to get some idea of how many attendees can be expected so we have attached a tear off slip to this newsletter asking members to please give us some idea of their intentions. At this stage we are not asking for a deposit simply an indication that, having regard to their current state of health and any other commitments, they think they will be able to attend.

CORNSTALK COMMENTS. Eric Munkman

I will start off with the pleasant news of a nice luncheon being enjoyed by members at TAFE Catering College at Ryde on 17 March. The food was excellent and included pre-lunch drinks (which included beer!), a choice of three entrees, four mains, three desserts and wines and soft drinks at the table and tea and coffee to follow for the giveaway price of \$25. The time of the luncheon is 12.00 for 12.30 and the next one will be in June this year so anyone wishing to be placed on the list should contact Eric Munkman on 9972 0641 .

George Brain has been in touch. He has had a spell in hospital following a suspected stroke but everything is now OK and he is back on the road again. He has heard from George Bradd's widow and is pleased to say she has been enjoying good health.

Tom Moore, Dusty Miller and Pete Pettit recently visited Temora Aviation Museum and presented administrator Kenny Love with a framed copy of the map of 458's operational bases on which Tom had engraved a Leigh Light Wimpey in flight with Leigh Light down and operating. Our gesture was very much appreciated and the Squadron has since received a warm thank you letter.

Now for some sad news. Bob Millar passed away 7 March after a long illness. He had a private funeral but I was invited to represent the Squadron. Bob joined us in Foggia serving there and in Gibraltar. After the war Bob and Pat were great supporters of the Squadron and attended all reunions and other activities. We extend our sympathies to Pat and sister-in-law Sue. We have also heard of the passing of Len Barton who will be remembered as one of those attempting to rescue American airmen in a crashed Liberator at Lydda. Len was awarded an American medal for his efforts. Our sympathy goes to his family.

On the sick list have been two committee stalwarts Bob Lyndon and Bob Bruce. Bob L. has suffered a recurrence (again) of the meningitis first suffered following an ear operation soon after the war and has been on an extended course of antibiotics. He seems to have made a good recovery and attended the last committee meeting. Bob the Bruce has also been undergoing extensive treatment for a malignant condition which seems to be responding to radiotherapy. His condition is much improved and we hope he will soon be returning to stir his fellow committeemen.

NEWS FROM SA FLIGHT: Pat Cribb

Several SA Flight people attended the Airforce Memorial Parade at Adelaide Airport on Sunday, April 18. President Colin Hutchinson laid our wreath on the plaque at the base of SA Flight's memorial tree. This annual function, initiated by the late Ron Badger in 1958 and taken up by many other RAAF Squadrons, continues to attract RAAF people. Construction of the new Adelaide Airport Terminal was seen to be underway only a few hundred metres away from the Memorial Garden. Times are a changing here too.

There were twelve marching with 458 SA Flight on Anzac Day - Reg Priest (who carried our treasured banner), Syd Bartram, Glen Forgan, Keith Grimshaw, Alex McKinnon, John Ringwood and Colin Hutchinson, with five next-of-kin proudly joining them. We had a good reception from the Adelaide street crowd, and TV watchers reported that our little squadron looked good. The weather was dry and cool, and because of the fewer marchers the march seemed much shorter than usual. It was somewhat sad to see two squadron places empty of marchers ahead of us in the march. Our two ATC cadets marched proudly on our flanks, and we thank them for their services. The local RSL still requires next-of-kin to march in a separate unit to the rear of the march. We have tried in vain to influence this policy. We always have believed that next-of-kin should march within units, and we continue to do so.

The lunch after the march, at the Royal Hotel, was attended by 28 members and friends. It was great to see old friends, especially secretary, Pat Cribb, back on deck again. On the personal side, Monica Thom and Pat Cribb are well again, but Lyne Skinner was not well enough to march. We hope Lyne gets well soon. Our best wishes to others whom we know are not feeling 100%. Kevin Tait attended the funeral of Ron Fuller, one of our lesser-known members.

Freida Creighton's son, John, reports that the 458 Renmark Memorial Garden is in good shape, and well regarded by occupiers of surrounding houses.

VICTORIA NEWSLETTER Rupert Pearce

Social Activities: 29 January, Mick Singe came over from WA and met with some of our members at the home of Neil Dean. He spoke of his experiences at the dedication of the Australian War memorial in London. Unfortunately his photos were not available when he left. Members present were Jim Anderson, Neil Dean, Jack and Margaret Ellis, Roy and Barbara Pearce, Rupert Pearce and Norma Pollard, June Schoppe, Mick Singe and his good neighbour Josie. Apologies were received from Bill Fordyce and Ted Love.

7 March. The BBQ at the Ellis home was attended by John Bilney, Neil Dean, Roy and Barbara Pearce, Rupert Pearce and June Schoppe together with friends of Jack and Margaret's. Our thanks to Jack and Margaret for a very pleasant day. Apologies were received from Ken and Joann Hinton, Don and Shirley Granger, Norma Pollard and Jack Ramsey.

Point Cook: it is believed that the Point Cook airfield, Museum and Heritage buildings will be kept in public ownership and managed by a non-profit trust for the next 49 years. The Defence Department will retain control of 33 hectares, the RAAF College, the Parade Ground, the Australian Flying Corps Memorial and the Air Force Cadets. Hopefully almost 98 hectares of foreshore and coastal land will be earmarked for public open space.

World War 11 Defence Service Records and the National Archives of Australia: Some of our members have given interviews about their service history

Anzac Day 2004. Gordon Nash's daughter, Sue Jackson, husband Peter and daughter Micheale together with John Carey's daughter Pat, her husband and children came to our assembly point to speak with members before the march to wish us a 'good day'. Those who marched were Jim Anderson, John Bilney and grandson Adam, Stan Cartledge with son Ian and granddaughter Karen (a regular), Neil Dean, Jack Ellis and Roy and Rupert Pearce with son Geoff. At the bowling club we were joined by Margaret Ellis and Barbara Pearce, Ed Bradshaw and an old Squadron member John Jenkins who was delighted to see John Bilney after many years.

Several members spoke with me during Anzac Week to wish us well and to apologise for not being able to come. Stephen Martin rang on behalf of Yank and Cath also Ken and Joann Hinton, Don and Shirley Granger and June Schoppe. John Primrose and his daughter Eleanor both rang to tell me that Tom would not be present at the bowling club and that Rita was in hospital expecting to be back in the nursing home soon. Our thanks to George Zagon, to Cadet Daniel Peric and CPL Eragulous of the Australian Airforce Cadets 402 Squadron for their assistance with the Wellington photo and banner.

I am sure other members will be thinking of past Anzac Days and better times when they marched to the Shrine of Remembrance

"O" FLIGHT NEWS. Evelyn Lewis

Anzac Day will be over by the time the Newsletter comes out however it is one day that will always be remembered. Sadly our ranks in the March will be very depleted. President Eric will have the honour to head those very few who will march behind the 458 Banner carried by the two cadets allotted to 458. Accompanying Eric will be Peter Jones and two of his friends - Peter is the son of the late Chester Jones and Rob Helyar, son of the late Bob Helyar has marched before. Jack's nephew Ron Lewis and his two young sons hope to join the march. Bert Garland and Bernie McLoughlin will not be marching owing to health problems.

Dud and Enid McKay were to set sail on the cruise ship 'Super Star Leo' sailing from Brisbane. Unfortunately Dud took ill with a gall bladder problem but Enid was persuaded by the family to join the 1300 passengers on what turned out to be a very bumpy trip sailing into near cyclonic conditions in early March. The cruise was for a week up the coast to the Whitsundays and return - fortunately all survived. Dud later had surgery for his condition and is recovering nicely so both now plan to set off for Tasmania. Myself, I am off to Yamba for a week with a Probus club, nice to have a break. I will come back to take on another small job as treasurer of the War Widows Guild of Cleveland. I want to keep alert and my mind active.

Received a call from Joe Bartlett, son of Joe senior of Lake Sherrin retirement village. Joe is 92 and after many years at the village had to move out as there was no on-going care available when he became very ill. Temporary accommodation was found for him at Mt Olivett. It is sad when one has to be moved around at that age. Joe junior has promised to keep me informed.

VALE: Sadly we report Jack Hobbs of the retirement village at Mackay passed away peacefully 15 March after a sudden heart attack. 'Q' Flight extend thoughts and sympathies to Sheila. I've since spoken to Sheila and she is now settling back into the village where she and Jack had retired.

SANDGROPEERS SAY: Ted Jewell

We are all saddened by the passing of Peter Alexander, the mainstay of 458 being such a successful postwar unit and he will be totally missed by so many people. In the last few months, we here in the West have lost three 458 members, well known on the squadron, Len Stewart, John Lilly, Peter McCarthy - condolence to all their families. I only hope there will be enough members left to attend the reunion in Canberra next year.

Val Cormack has had a fairly rough time for the last six months with breast cancer but is now starting to feel much better after all the treatment.

I was to have had a BBQ at my home in Mandurah during March but a few days before, members in Perth said it was going to be too hot to travel to Mandurrah, I guess it was slightly hot at 42 degrees C for several days. Maybe we will be able to get together later in the year.

Anzac Day this year will be very much the same except for work being done on the underground rail link in the city, which will be coming down to Mandurah. There will be the Dawn Service in Kings Park later on the march through the city then lunch at Miss Maud's in Perth.

At the beginning of May, I am off to South Australia for a few weeks holiday - I have not been away for twelve months and am looking forward to the trip
All the best, Ted

KIWI COMMENTS. Kevin George

Our four NZ Flight members are well.

Arch Fell phoned me recently and during the conversation enquired about our subscription to the Squadron for this year. Due to the ever increasing costs of bank drafts, I have latterly made it a habit to pay the collective NZ subs in cash at reunions in Australia. I propose to do likewise next year if this is acceptable to our treasurer.

In late February I flew down to Hawkes Bay to visit my old friend and association member Jack Pryde. I was the recipient of warm and generous hospitality but the flight home due to a sudden change in the weather was less than pleasant. However it was something of an adventure, a bit like old times.

Found it necessary to change my planned refuelling stop and landed at a controlled airport *without radio!* This unauthorised procedure resulted in a protracted official enquiry. This was in fact 'much ado about nothing' but ultimately the fuss died down and there was even some praise for "a prudent and justifiable decision" - my words.

Yours , with kind regards, Kevin George

CANUCK CAUCUS: Bryan Quinlan

Coincidentally with trying to come to grips with the sudden loss of Vice President Mickey Reid, the entire Canadian membership finds consolation in extending our congratulations and appreciation to Tom Lindsay on his appointment as Mickey's replacement in this position. Tom is the first Canadian ground crew member in this role, having served as a Radar Technician on 458 from Sept '44 to July '45 at Cagliari, Foggia, Rosignano and Gibraltar. He was an ardent member of the Peter Alexander bridge club during the wind-down days at Gib. Postwar, Tom formed his own business as a Customs Broker.

In several telcons with Marg Reid it would appear that she is weathering this difficult time with her usual fortitude and has the strong support of her family and friends. One final word on Mickey deals with his philosophy on life which is so accurately summed-up in a quote

included in his Memorial Order of Service and which hung above his home workbench, as follows:

"I shall pass through this world but once; anything, therefore, that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now; let me not defer it or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

(A copy of the Memorial Service for Mickey Reid is available on tape direct from Bryan Quinlan or Squadron secretary Jim Whitem. Ed)

The newsbag still overflows from Christmas mail and subsequent communications from our members. To encapsulate: Thankyou to Al Ruggles who represented 458 at Mickey's Service and expressed our collective condolences to Marg and her family. Bill and Peg Laughlin are off on another cruise, this time to the Panama Canal. Tom Rowan is wrapping up another busy curling season and looking forward to putting some miles on their camper (caravan). Jim Donaldson and Ernie Ireland have respectively acquired souped-up wheelchairs, improving their mobility and the prospect of speeding tickets.

Sid and Joyce Winchester have endured a rather difficult winter with the flu bug and various other health problems. Sid and I stay in touch fairly regularly by phone. Bert Markland advises that his heart troubles are under control but has to consume a daily onslaught of pills in his battle against Parkinsons, offset by his pleasure in a growing brood of great-grandchildren.

In signing-off, and although unhappily inspired, it was very heartwarming to talk directly to George and Grace Unitt, Colin Fereday, Norm Duke and George Dunmore, as well as most of our Canadian members. The numbers diminish but the bond strengthens.

Best wishes to the new executive and to 458ers everywhere.
Bryan

BRITISH BULLETIN: Norm Duke

Nance Filley, widow of Harry Filley, is now being cared for in a nursing home in Minehead, Somerset. After suffering a stroke and in spite of handicaps to her speech and writing and with the added difficulties of arthritis, her daughter Pat tells me she has lost none of her spirit. She is a great example to us more fortunate folk and to all members of the 458 family. Harry, Nance's late husband, and I first met at OTU at Moreton in the Marsh, flew many operations together and remained firm friends. When you read this Nance, we will be thinking of you.

Anzac Day 2004: Peter Cochrane will again be supervising the laying of our memorial wreath this year at the memorial at Holme upon Spalding Moor. Anne Hall is also providing a floral display for the 458 Squadron Standard which is displayed in All Saints Church.

I have asked the new vicar at the Church on the Hill, Nigel Stafford if he will mention the significance of Anzac Day at the church service on 25 April and the connection with 458, especially in respect of the Australians who remain in the churchyard.

Constant Endeavour Memorial - Westminster Abbey.

On Tuesday 16 March 2004 the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh attended a dedication service at Westminster Abbey for the unveiling of a memorial tribute to those who served with the RAF Coastal Command and Commonwealth Air Forces throughout the world during and since WW II.

I was able to obtain tickets and it was a privilege for me to attend the service of thanksgiving together with Jack Christianson and Mo Borne. The memorial, which is mounted on a wall in the south cloister of the Abbey is a relief carving in Carrar marble from Tuscany, of a symbolic seascape surmounted by an eagle and a map of the world. As a point of interest, the marble comes from the same source as that used by Michaelangelo in his most memorable sculptures.

Leon Armstrong was also present at the ceremony and had the honour of taking a personal part in the tribute, as a member of the group escorting the Book of Remembrance, paraded to the altar during the service. The Book contains the names of 10,875 members of Coastal Command who gave their lives in service. Leon has been personally involved for more than 50 years in maintaining close contact with a large number of veterans who trained at the US naval base at Pensacola, Florida and also in organising annual reunions. Most of these pilots were destined for Coastal Command and Leon organised a very substantial subscription from their association for the Constant Endeavour project to fund construction of the Memorial.

By the end of the WW II, Coastal Command had sunk 195 U boats from a total of 785 lost by the German navy and accounted for 366 surface ships totalling one half million tons.

After the service a Nimrod from 206 Squadron flew over the Abbey escorted by 2 Tornados of 9 Squadron.

(Norm has enclosed an illustration of an artists impression of the Memorial. It depicts the sky and sea, with the sky overlaying an outline of the world set above a breaking sea and separated by a horizon line. An eagle symbolises mastery of the skies and the Coastal Command badge is shown to one side in the style of a watermark with a legend carved in undulating letters to pick up the rhythm of the sea. The feature spans about eight feet. Ed)

Sergeant Thomas Eric Musto (1316142)

I have been contacted by Mr Andy Medland who is the nephew of the late SGT Musto who died in action on a trip from Malta, 27 April 1943. Andy Medland has obtained some information from RAF records about his uncle's service with the RAF but if there is any possibility that there is someone out there who may remember him, Andy would be very grateful to hear from them. While on the Squadron he flew second pilot in crews with Tuckwell and F/SGT Keith. Andy can be contacted at 86 Mount Pleasant Rd, Camborne, Cornwall TR14 7RJ, UK.

(Norm has enclosed a photograph which is too dull to reproduce here but a copy is available for anyone who would like one - Ed)