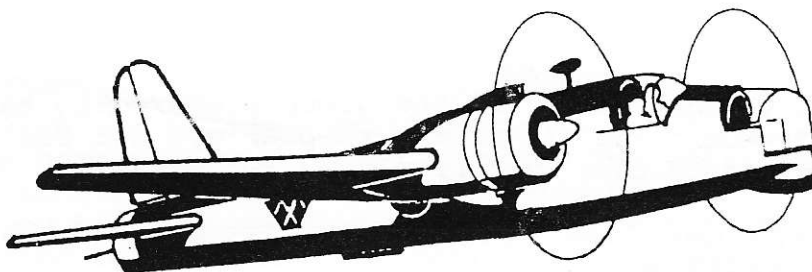


458

SQUADRON NEWS



RAAF

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

Year 55, No.220 Nov 2004

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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

EDITOR

Pete very much regrets that his ill health prevents him from continuing to edit the Squadron Newsletter. However, Jim Whittem, in spite of his over-burden of Squadron work, is prepared to carry on at least until we can winkle out

some younger member of the group prepared to take on the job. Would you all please keep an eye out for someone prepared to take over from Jim.

In the meantime, please send your contributions to Jim Whitem,

Box 239

Port Macquarie. 2444

Ph. (02) 65838311

Thank you all for your past help.

ALL STATES REUNION

November 2005

The site for the All States Reunion has been confirmed as The Rydges Lakeside, Canberra, for six nights from 31 October to 5 November 2005.

Your committee is at present working hard to select a programme from among some very desirable alternatives. There are for example a proposed cruise of the Lake, the Memorial Service and visit to G for George at the Australian War Memorial, a quick tour of the embassies, the Exhibition of Canberra, and a visit to the RAAF Memorial Park for a lunchtime BBQ. These are competing with other attractions which are making the committee's job difficult.

We expect to have a complete programme for you in the next Newsletter with hopefully some idea of costs.

NEW SOUTH WALES NEWS

Eric Munkman

We sadly report the death of Bob Bruce who passed away on 13 October, 2004 and express our deepest sympathy to son Stephen, daughter-in-law Anita and grandchildren Adam and Samantha on their sad loss.

Bob has left us with many memories and we will reflect on them in time to come. He was a brave man who endured pain and suffering during his illness, but never complained. His sense of humour was always apparent; you could have a shot at him and he would come back at you with an answer, a grin and a laugh; he was a man whose company was always welcomed.

Bob joined the Squadron in September 1944 in Italy after completing a Wireless Air Gunner and Radar course in Palestine. Tony Harris, who unfortunately could not attend the funeral owing to illness, was his skipper. The Squadron at the time of Bob's joining was carrying out bombing missions and anti-shipping sorties in the Mediterranean. The Squadron moved to Gibraltar to carry out further anti-shipping operations and on completion of hostilities in Europe the Squadron was disbanded and the aircraft returned to England.

Bob remained with the Squadron until returning to Australia when in 1947 a committee was formed to which Bob was elected, remaining for two years before being posted to country areas by his Commonwealth Department. On his return he was re-elected to the committee eventually holding the positions of Squadron Council Secretary and NSW Flight Treasurer. He also worked very hard for the RAAF Association of which he became an honorary member in 2001. Bob retained the position of NSW Flight Treasurer until sickness overtook him. He supported the Squadron in every possible way, attending all functions and reunions.

The chapel was packed, standing room only, and very well attended by members and wives. It was a fine tribute to Bob and showed the high esteem in which he was held.

Bob was one of the most popular and best known members of the post-war Squadron Association. He will be sadly missed and remembered by all. Farewell Bob.

Orange: On Sunday, 10 October, Tom Moore together with a small group from Orange RAAF Association attended an Air Show at Temora Aviation Museum. Tom had a chat with the Museum CEO, Ken Love, and left with him prints of paintings of 458 Wellington take-off from Gibraltar and 458 Wellington with Leigh Light down on night patrol. The museum, on the wartime site of 10 EFTS put on an excellent flying display - Tiger Moth, Wirraway, Spitfire, Mustang, Vampire, Hudson, Canberra plus numerous smaller aircraft.

Welcome and congratulations to Rob Wilkinson on joining our committee. Rob's father Bill was in Jim Whitem's crew and served at Alghero, Foggia and Gibraltar.

Our sympathies to Bob Smith who made a one point landing off a scaffold, landing on his shoulder resulting in breaking it and cracking three ribs. We all wish him a speedy recovery but hope next time he uses a parachute.
Late news: Bob has more or less recovered but has been grounded by his family.

Keith Cousins represented the NSW Flight at the Memorial Service in Martin Place on 15.9.04 and placed a wreath on our behalf in remembrance of the Battle of Britain.

As mentioned in our August issue of the Newsletter, Pete Pettit resigned from the position of NSW Flight Secretary owing to ill health. I now as President of NSW Flight wish to extend my thanks and appreciation for the work he has done for the Flight and the Squadron, such as the third issue of We Find and Destroy, organising Squadron reunions, and his administrative capabilities in general. Well done, Peter.

NEW ZEALAND NEWS

Kevin George

Our NZ 458 Squadron members are separated from each other by distances which are formidable, even by Australian standards. So we seldom meet but we do occasionally phone each other and write also.

Ron Verity wrote last to me on 7 July - a prompt reply to my letter to him. I am pleased to note that he has recently written to you. He is faring well for a nonagenarian.

I look forward with pleasurable anticipation to Canberra in a year's time, with the feeling that it brings a change but not the end.

In case we are not in touch again pre-Xmas, Dawn and I send our very best wishes for an enjoyable festive season and a happy year to follow. Kevin George

The Squadron Secretary recently received the following letter from Ron Verity who obviously is doing very well.

Dear Friends,

At last I have made up my mind to thank you all for sending me the 'News' regularly. I appreciate all that you are doing to keep the memories alive, especially for those of us who are aged and isolated. I believe there are three Squadron members in the North Island, but I seem to be alone in the South. I live in the Garden City of Christchurch, which is some compensation for the isolation, as those who have visited us will agree.

Most members will also agree that the passing years have taken their toll. Those left, are to be congratulated on their concern for the disabled and aged. History may yet prove that Peace hath her Victories no less renowned than War. Bye then -- and keep up the good work,

Sincerely, Ron Verity.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN NEWS

Pat Cribb

This year has certainly slipped away, and we plan to have our Annual General Meeting and Christmas Lunch at the Adelaide Bowling Club, Dequetteville Tce, Kent Town, from 11.30 a.m. on Sunday, 5 December.

Sadly we report that Peter Thom passed away on 9 July. Our sincere condolences go to his wife, Monica and the family. Unfortunately, on the day of his funeral, Monica had an accident and has had a long spell in hospital since. We send our love and best wishes to her and to the many others in S.A. Flight we know are battling infirmities.

Our special thanks to Peter Pettit for his work as editor of the newsletter. So much news from so many 458 Squadron Association members is very much appreciated.

Please note my phone number is now (08) 8332 9231.

A very Merry Christmas and Happy New year to you all.

(Pat has been in a lot of pain recently with her hip and is to see a specialist at the Repatriation Hospital for diagnosis. We wish her a speedy recovery.)

QUEENSLAND FLIGHT NEWS

Evelyn Lewis

Our proposed luncheon, arranged for 20 August, had to be cancelled owing to a few on the sick list which left our numbers depleted. All being well, we propose to arrange something early New Year.

I was one succumbed to not being the best, middle ear infection. Then both Isla Garland and myself had surgery for Carpel Tunnel, both successful. More on sick list Peg Holliday has not been well, some mini-strokes; she has recovered but not 100%. Peg still in her own home and has much care. Only learnt about Joan Foote on 20 October. Had knee surgery about five weeks ago and next day suffered a serious stroke, was touch and go. I managed to contact Sel and I'm pleased to say he sounded a lot better staying with his daughter. Joan is to be moved to Nursing Home, Cannossa Hospital, for further treatment. They had not long settled into their retirement unit connected with Cannossa, and so happy now this has happened.

Hetty Murray still not the best now has a leg infection will not heal. Hetty was tramping through bushland and thinks she was either bitten or got something in her leg. Cyril carrying on as chief cook and bottle washer. Hetty can see progress ahead.

Joe Bartlett's son phoned me to say his father now settled in Adventist Retirement Home here at Victoria Point where ongoing care is available. Joe junior happy for his father to be more settled and happier as he had a lot of run around to get a place.

I was down in Wollongong once again two weeks ago and on the Friday 15th I happened to read through the Sydney Morning Herald and read of the passing of Bob Bruce. I passed on the news to a few.

President Eric and Bernie McLoughlin will be attending a memorial service 7 November at the Parish of St Thomas Aquinas at St Lucia.

Looking forward to New Year and further editions of News. I hope I have brighter news. Compliments of the season to one and all for 2005. With regards, Evelyn.

WEST AUSTRALIAN NEWS*Ted Jewell*

Social activities have been very little over the winter months as we have had a lot of rain and cold weather and a few members have had the 'flu that has been going around here in the West. It takes a long time to recover.

This coming Sunday we are going to get together for lunch at one of our number's home at Wembly. There will be only four 458 Squadron members present, Bill and Joan Clues, Henry and Vera Etherton, Mick Singe, Ted Jewell and friend, and Margaret Gannaway, plus others. Everyone takes something for lunch.

We were saddened by the passing of Charlie Davis last month, well remembered by all Squadron members.

Sorry there is no more news from the WA Flight. As this will be the last newsletter for the year, from all here in the West I wish everyone a very Merry Xmas and all the best for 2005.

VICTORIAN NEWS*Rupert Pearce***RAAF Association: Victorian Division**

A letter dated 24.8.04 states that the Division has been operating at a loss for 12 years. The Board has decided, reluctantly, that the Cromwell Road property must be sold and the Air Force Centre relocated to new premises. The Board will now move to invite proposals for the orderly disposition of the property and will determine the facilities required in a replacement. The Air Force Club will fulfil existing bookings until October 2 and investigate whether it will be possible to honour bookings beyond that date. An announcement will be made as early as possible. This has been the home for over 30 years and the decision has been made with much regret.

Social Activities

The lunch at the Benthleigh Club on 23 August was attended by John and Margery Bilney, Neil Dean, Jack and Margaret Ellis, Laurie and Jean Kew, Roy and Barbara Pearce and Rupert Pearce. Apologies were received for Norma Pollard and June Schoppe. The proposed lunch at the RSL Frankston for 25 October was cancelled. The BBQ scheduled at the home of the Bilney's, 28 One Tree Hill, Ferny Creek for 5 December has been altered to 28 November. The BBQ at the Ellis home, 5 Heales Street, Dromana, will be held on 6 March 2005. No change.

Personal items

Margaret Ellis has recovered from her car accident. Both Jack and Margaret have trouble in shaking off a nasty virus. Harry Ashworth has had treatment for skin cancer. The Hintons and the Grangers still have their health problems. Don recalls when in the UK after Gibraltar he

saw the Australian servicemen play against the Englishmen at Lords. Keith Miller was in action. Because of Miller's recent death, he has been looking for the programme. Others of our members are not in good health and we think of them.

Vale

We regret to tell that Beatrice Morkham passed away and her service was held on 7 September at Albury. Beatrice was first married to Bob McKinna and then to Ken Morkham who died in 1992. Both Bob and Ken were well known members of the Flight. Beatrice and Cath Martin (widow of Yank) and Elaine Timms (deceased and widow of Jim) were very involved with the 458 Ladies Auxiliary for many years and made a great contribution to our social activities in the early days. Beatrice continued to be active in the Flight before going to NSW. We have written to her family.

Ron Yates was mentioned in our last Newsletter and it is regretted that Ron has passed on. His funeral service was held on 6 September. Ron trained with John Bilney, Harry Ashworth and Ian Alison and was a member of Jim Whitem's crew. Post war he was a man of many interests in the Bayswater community. John and Margery Bilney and I attended the service which was conducted by the Salvation Army, the RSL and Masonic Brethren. We have written to Joan expressing our sympathy.

BRITISH BULLETIN

Leon Armstrong

The very sad death of Norman Duke was reported in the August '04 issue of 458 Newsletter and was the subject of an excellent tribute to his association with the Squadron by Jim Whitem. No words of mine can possibly improve upon it. I have only had the honour of knowing Norman since the end of the war as sadly we served on the Squadron at different times. He worked tirelessly to keep the UK Flight going and arranged Reunions every year for a long time, usually in Stratford-upon-Avon but occasional at Holme-on-Spalding Moor, the birthplace of the Squadron.

The Squadron Standard is laid up in the local church where early Squadron members are buried. A Commemorative Tree has also been planted nearby. Norman, Jack Christianson and I and our wives often used to meet up in a pub at Westerham, Kent, for lunch. Several of us have been in touch on the phone with Norman's five daughters and one of us, Stuart Kent, son of a 458 Squadron. Wop/AG, represented the Squadron at his funeral. In lieu of a floral tribute, we have sent to one of Norman's charities, Cancer Research UK, a donation of £50 from Australia and £50 from us in UK. I have assured Peter Pettit, Vic President, that Norman's work and our support will be continued.

Initially, I distributed to UK membership the latest Newsletter which Eric Munkman sent me. Sadly, envelopes were returned by Royal Mail from D. Duff, Eric

Eden, H. Lee, Ed Carter Jones and Mrs Hufton who have all passed away.

Just before he died, Norman and I discussed our next Reunion, but nothing was decided for this year. However, when I call for our next subscriptions and the dust has settled with a new account, we might be able to organise something. Norman will be sadly missed by us in the UK Flight who survive him.

Keith Wilkinson has been asked to be responsible for collating news of UK members and sending anything of interest to the Newsletter editor. He is a TV reporter and should be able to write a good story. Please send future editions of the Newsletter to him for UK distribution.

(At the moment, Leon is busy organising the 60th reunion for the British Pensacola veterans. He expects about 60 to be present including a US Admiral based in London.)

CANADIAN FLIGHT REPORT *Bryan Quinlan*

Very sorry to learn that Pete Pettit has found it necessary to leave his post as Editor of the Newsletter - our sincere appreciation to P.P. for all the great work that he has put in over the years in so many ways and, on behalf of the Canadian members and for myself, our very best wishes.

Deepest sympathies go to Alan "Snow" Atherton on the tragic passing of his wife while on their motor tour holiday. This sad news I learned from his daughter Diane who is working in Vancouver.

Other than telephone chats with Tom Lindsay, Ernie Ireland, Sid Winchester, Jim Donaldson, Jack Reynolds and Frank Laughlin there was very little that was especially newsworthy on the Canadian front.

Personally, have been well occupied with continuous processing of Veteran's special license plates, participation in arrangements for the September Battle of Britain Memorial parade involving about 700 air cadets, and currently setting up for the annual School Event in conjunction with the November Veterans Week, with the intent to give the school age generation a better idea of their past military heritage - something sadly lacking in our schools. This year Canada's national "Remembrance Theme" is The Italian Campaign, something a good many 458ers were actively engaged in. I have included the Bill Hailstone story as part of our Air Force display.