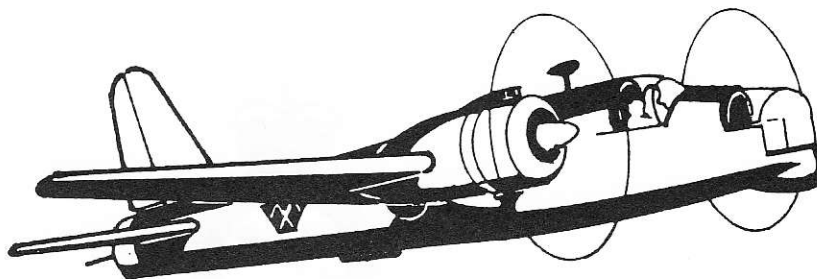


458

SQUADRON NEWS



RAAF

JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL.

C/- Jim Whittem
P.O. Box 239
Port Macquarie
NSW 2444, Australia

Year 56 No 22 **1** May 2005

Squadron President

Tom Moore (NSW)

Squadron Vice Presidents:

New Zealand Kevin George

Canada

Tom Lindsay

U.K.

Leon Armstrong

Squadron Secretary

Jim Whittem

P.O.Box 239, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444

Squadron Treasurer:

Frank Ward,

50 Castle Hill Rd. West Pennant Hills, NSW 2125

Squadron Newsletter:

Editor:

Jim Whittem

Phone (02) 6583 8311; email haslett@midcoast.com.au

Publisher:

Eric Munkman

Phone (02) 9972 0641

Flight Correspondents:

UK

Keith Wilkinson, 23 Ferndale Pk, Tedmore, Stourbridge, W. Midlands. DY90RB

NSW

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

Qld

Evelyn Lewis, 5 Cupania St. Victoria Point, Qld 4165

WA

Ted Jewell, 61 Wyaree Rd. Mandurah, WA. 6210

NZ

Kevin George, 20 Kowhai Av. Kaikohe, N.Z. 0400

SA

Pat Cribb, 2/20 Rochester St., Leabrook, SA 5068

Vic

Rupert Pearce, 46 Mt. Pleasant Rd, Nunawadding, Vic. 313

Canada

Bryan Quinlan, 1460 Haywood Cres. W. Vancouver, B.C. Canada.

Post communications for Squadron Secretary to Jim Whittem, P.O. Box 239, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444, and for the Squadron (and NSW Flight) Treasurer to Frank Ward, 50 Castle Hill Rd, W. Pennant Hills, NSW 2125



Canberra Reunion Update

by John Gibbins and Wendy Whitem-Trunz.

Arrangements are proceeding satisfactorily, the only alteration being to the timing of the Memorial Service at the Australian War Memorial, which has been moved to early afternoon of the Tuesday. A light luncheon will be served in the Memorial cafeteria prior to the service.

Mick Singe will talk about his trip to the U.K and show the official album of pictures.

Design of the Plaque for the Memorial Grove is complete ,using the above logo

Reunion deposits for some 60 persons have already been received. A list (of members) follows.

H Ashworth	J Hamilton	Roy. Pearce
W Archbold	D Holland	Rupert Pearce
W Atherton	C Hutchinson	T Ridgeway
D Bitmead	T Jewell	J Ringwood
J Bilney	W Johnson	M Singe
K Cousins	E Kelly	W Turier
H. Clues	E Lewis	G. Unitt
L Crowley	J McDonald	F Ward
N Dean	R Miller	D Westgarth
J Ellis	C Murray	J Whitem
C Fereday	E Munkman	T. Cosh.
K George	T Moore	

As of 2 May 2005, there were 34 members and 28 associates- a total of 62 registrations.

Flight Reports. *These appear in the order that they were received. Ed.*

Queensland Flight by Evelyn Lewis

Once again we have to cancel our luncheon on the 21st April, our booking for 12 became less & less. Illness, Drs. App.

I myself with cartilage problem getting around with 2 walking sticks hopefully with a lot of physio I may improve. Peg Cuthbertson not well, Kath Kelly a spell in hospital home now & on way to recovery. We wish you well Kath. That is just a few who could not attend.

Was in touch with Earl Hetherington early March he had just come out of hospital after a knee operation - said he is ok. He turned 93 end of March and still drives his Jag. He sometimes is in touch with Allan Atherton I tried to phone Allan with no result. Clive Thorpe is another one we have had no contact with nor has Earl.

Received a letter from Mick Singe in W.A telling me in mid February he had a phone call from Peg Cuthbertson who was in Perth to see her sons, Mick was so pleased to hear from her so arranged to meet for lunch. Peg wanted to see a beach in Perth so Mick drove her to Cottesloe. The day was lovely and Peg was delighted. Birthday Party was the occasion for one of the sons and all gathered in a park beside the lovely Swan River. Peg" invited Mick to attend. A most enjoyable day was had by all. After the party a Stretch Limo turned up to drive all around the posh suburbs of Perth sipping champagne all the way. Mick well settled in Nedlands, plays bowls three times a week & is President of Claremont R.S.L.
Peg phoned me also and she also met up with Jim and Lucy Palmer.

I would like to thank Eric Munkman for forwarding to me nomination forms to complete for a chance to go to France for the commemoration of 60 Years when World War Two ended in the Middle East.

No luck in being selected 180 nominations received. Seventeen Veterans selected & one War Widow. I was happy to be given the chance to nominate.

Anzac Day coming up sadly our ranks depleted. President Eric once again will stand in for those unable to march and as there will be no cadets this year to carry banners Eric's family will be there to do the honours. Control of parade last year was a disaster, Anzac Day Committee received so many complaints as three units were on top of each other and no report coming forth about them. Hopefully there will be a replacement.

Editor's note. Recently I received a telephone call from Randall Ravenscroft, of 13 Heron St., Longreach Qld 4730, advising that his father, Theodore Wilson (Theo) Ravenscroft had passed away in Longreach on 20 April. He did not have Evelyn's telephone number.

U.K Flight by Keith Wilkinson

Once again, 458-ers are preparing to head to the Mediterranean. The annual re-union of the squadron's UK Flight will take place this year in Alghero, Sardinia. Sixty-odd years after the squadron pitched its tents on the beach on this island, members are returning to the very spot. Nowadays there's a nice hotel there, so there should be no need for canvas and billies! We will be in Alghero from October 1st to the 3rd. Various outings are being considered - including a

possible ride along part of the old railway used to bring in many of the ground crews. We will also no doubt be taking a boat trip down the coast. Could the old fishing vessel used by squadron members still be there? You never know! Don Stocks writes: "We leased this boat from the local fishermen. We had it by day, they had it at night." It's going to be a jet-lagging time for 458 pilot Leon Armstrong, who will be logging almost as many flying hours as he did on Wellingtons. He's first flying out for the 2005 Battle for Malta commemorations, then flying back to London, and then straight back to Alghero. Phew!

Now, a personal thank you for some fantastic Aussie hospitality.

My wife, Anne, and I visited New South Wales in March/April - a trip we will always remember for the warmth we received from people with links to 458 Squadron. Squadron pilot Colin Fereday took us in his big old car to the beautiful RAAF Memorial Grove on the outskirts of Canberra. Here there will soon be a metal plaque in memory of 458, alongside many similar monuments. In a woodland setting, it's a place for quiet reflection, and we found it a very moving experience to spend some time there with Colin, who's been at the forefront of this worthy project. We took some water along to quench some of the new plantings.

Anne and I also drove out to the old farm of my dad's second pilot, the late Stuart Currington, known to his crew as Trapper (apparently because he used to shoot rabbits!). We travelled there with members of Stuart's family, who were amazed to find the old house still standing, although only just. Most of the roof has caved in and the walls have been chewed away by white ants. Stuart died in 1974, and we visited his grave, which bears the RAAF crest, his service and squadron numbers. I'd love to hear from anyone remembering Stuart from the squadron days.

In Sydney, we had a few grogs with 458er Jack Powers and his lovely wife at the Legion club overlooking the surf of Coogee Bay. What a superb place to sink a cold beer in good company. Just to prove us Poms aren't all whinging - I can't think of a single bad thing to say about Australia, no matter how hard I try! No wonder my (English, RAF) dad was so proud to serve in an Aussie air force.

Finally, bringing you up to date re the long UK saga of the 458 Plaque...Reg Windett writes: "In 1989, after a great deal of pussy-footing, I obtained the OK to display our plaque in the RAF museum at Hendon. A plaque was sent to me from Australia, mounted on a special wood base made from a New Zealand tree. I took the plaque in person to Hendon and handed it over.

Last year, I took a party to Hendon for an outing...no plaque anywhere to be seen. After enquiries, I found that it is in RAF Stafford - not at Hendon because the design did not fit in with other plaques on display."

Editor's note. Two rogue thoughts have entered into what passes for my mind. The first is: if any reader wishes to attend the Sardinia reunion (I am one) and are able so to do (I am not one), he should get in touch with Keith Wilkinson. The second, directed particularly to members of the U.K. flight, is that in Alghero you are not far from Rome. Rome is not far from Sydney via Alitalia, and you would have a couple of weeks to visit around our continent (OZ) before attending our last reunion in Canberra, our Holy City.

Canada Flight

by Bryan Quinlan

Jim: Sorry to be so late, hopefully not too late, but news seems to be getting harder to find. Hope all well with you and Dorothy. Bryan

To begin with, our special appreciation and congrats to Jim Whitem and all those who are involved in carrying on the long tradition of producing the 458 Newsletter and for the excellent debut February edition. Well done. Not a great deal to report for this period, however, after the return of Dick Sladen's Feb Newsletter I had the usual concern of ominous tidings. A phone call happily revealed that Dick had moved to a new address in Coburg, Ont. following the loss of his wife last year. Fortunately, he kept the same telephone number. Dick was a pilot on 458 in the Middle East.

I have been in touch with Sid Winchester, Jack Reynolds and Tom Lindsay from time to time and they are all plugging along on as many cylinders they can get fired up. Also several e-mail exchanges with Snow Atherton's daughter Di who has been recovering from a broken leg, acquired putting up Christmas lights! Letters from Marg Reid and Betty Hailstone, both are coping with changed and changing family situations.

Canada's "Year of the Veteran" recognizing the 60th anniversary of the end of WW II will see special commemorative events in each provincial capital on VE Day, 8 May, for B.C. in Victoria. Another major event will be VJ Day, 14 August, the final end of the war, when Vancouver will host the VJ ceremony, a date no doubt which will receive greater recognition in Australia. Best wishes to you all from your Canadian mates.

South Australian Flight by Pat Cribb

There was a good turn up in our group at this year's Anzac Day March. Sadly, other squadron representations were noticeably sparse, and it is obvious that next-of-kin may soon make up the majority of marchers. Col Hutchinson led 458 and Luke Verrall (Peter Thorn's grandson) carried the banner. Others in the group were Reg Priest, Lyne Skinner, John Ringwood, Keith Grimshaw, Alec McKinnon, Glen Forgan, Rick Michell, Trish Cosh, Sharon Hobby and Dillon McEntee (Ted Creighton's grandson).

Following the march 33 guests attended the Adelaide Bowling Club for a long, friendly lunch. We are so very pleased that Monica Thorn is back home after successful knee surgery following 10 months in hospital. Apologies were received from Brian & Joan Woodhead, Jean & Max Barnes, Michelle Rowe and Jim Perry. A timely note from Jim reminded us that June 9, 2005, will be the 60th anniversary of 458 Squadron disbanding at Gibraltar. Squadron airmen were flown back to England by crews to be broken up, closing the last chapter of an eventful wartime saga.

458 was well represented at this year's RAAF Memorial Service on the lawn in front of the Vickers Vimy building at the bustling Adelaide Airport. There were 12 of us out of the 100 or more taking part in the memorial service and wreath laying at the foot of the many plaques installed in the lawn, 458 being the squadron to initiate such a move and to provide the first plaque in September 1958 - many others followed.

John Ringwood reports that Ian Showell's 458 plaque and garden remains in good order due to the interest of a local man, Bevan Schiller. Renmark Council has been thanked for its care of the

surrounds and asked to comment on a S.A. Flight idea for the continuing welfare of the block. An Australian flag was flown at the reserve on Anzac Day.

Our best wishes to all, especially those battling ill health.

Victorian Flight.

By Rupert Pearce

A BBQ was held at the Ellis home at Dromana on 6th. March. Those who came were Jim Anderson and friend Marcee, Margery and John Bilney, Neil Dean, Barbara and Roy Pearce, Norma Pollard and Rupert Pearce and June and Laurie McIntyre, friends of Margaret and Jack. Apologies were received from Joann Hinton and June Schoppe. Thank you to the Ellis's for their hospitality and for Jim Anderson's mud cake.

We have been told the RAAF Association Premises on Cromwell Rd has been sold to a developer for \$4.3 Million and the Association will be able to use the premises for a year, This is a sad time for the members of the Association.

The Flight nominated John Bilney, Jack Ellis and Bill Fordyce for a place in the Australian government commemorative mission marking the 60th. anniversary of victory in Europe. Bill withdrew his nomination for medical reasons. John and Jack were not selected. The Minister has extended invitations to 17 veterans and 1 war widow to form the mission party. 180 nominations were received from veterans and war widows and each was carefully considered. All would make worthy representatives.

Tribute to the memory of 458 Squadron and the Victoria flight.

Roy Pearce has restored an old Honour Board made from Australian Fiddleback timber.

A précis of the wording is:

458 SQUADRON
We Find and Destroy.
Formed Williamtown, NSW July 1941
England October 1941
Disbanded Gibraltar 1945
Total Allied Airmen Who Served 1703
Killed in Action 150
Victorians who served 120

The Board has been presented to the Clayton RSL and has pride of place in the members' room. Thank you Roy.

Vale

Harry Godfrey passed away on 21st. January. There was no funeral service as he donated his body to the University of Melbourne for medical research. Harry was a W/op/ Ag with the squadron in England in November 1941, and moved with the Squadron to the Middle East. In July 1942 he was posted to 108 Squadron (RAF) Wellingtons in the desert. Coming back to Australia he served at Morotai and in the Philippines. Altogether completing 67 operations from the U.K., Africa and the Pacific areas. He married Dulcie a WAAF who served at General MacArthur's Headquarters in Brisbane. They were married for 60 years, having a son and daughter, Ian and Helen. Dulcie is now in a nursing home. We have written to the family.

Ken Hinton died on 29 January and his funeral service was held on 2nd February. Present were Margery and John Bilney, Neil Dean, Margaret and Jack Ellis, Barbara and Roy Pearce. Apologies were received from Rupert Pearce, Norma Pollard and June Schoppe. The 458 Banner and Wellington Photo were displayed in the Church. Ken enlisted in 1943 and was posted to the Squadron as a Flight Mech along with 19 reinforcements, including Bruce Prideaux (Deceased) and Bruce McDonald of NSW Flight. When the Squadron disbanded he was posted to 466 in the UK, He served in Belgium and Germany and also with 451. He came back to Australia in 1946. Later reenlisted in 1949 and served until 1970 when he was a F /Sgt. Then joined the Department of Defence and retired in 1987. He served the community as a member of Neighbourhood Watch and was an instructor at St. Bernard's school for the marching girls. We have written to Joann and Mandy.

Don Granger passed away peacefully at home after a long illness on 10 April and his service was held at the Templestowe Cemetery Chapel on 14 April. We were able to display the Banner and Wellington. Members present were Margery and John Bilney, Neil Dean, Rupert Pearce and Norma Pollard. Those unable to attend were Margaret and Jack Ellis, Joann Hinton, Barbara and Roy Pearce. Don enlisted in 1941, was at Bradfield Park before leaving for Canada and the Middle East. He was a navigator with Jim Whitem's crew, having teamed with Jim at OTU Ein Shemer, Palestine in early 1944. He served in the Middle East, Italy and Gibraltar, When the Squadron disbanded, returned to the UK before coming home.. Jim said they met at the Geelong Reunion for the first time since WW11. Don and Shirley were active members of the Flight until ill health prevented them coming to our activities. They would have been married 59 years in May. We have written to Shirley and her family

We will remember them.

. 'Anzac Day 2005.

President Neil lead our marchers who were John and Adam Bilney, Bowen Carey Fung, Oscar Fung (relatives of Pat Carey, South Aust) Hillary Crittenden, Helen Cartledge and Karen (relatives of Stan) Jack Ellis, Mandy Hinton (daughter of Ken and Joann) Ken Fleming, Roy and Rupert Pearce with Linda, David Prideaux (Son of Bruce and Gloria)

Friends who also marched with us were David Bird and Kate Holder who later came to the Bowling Club. Others who came to the Bowling Club were Shorty Bradshaw, Margaret Ellis, Barbara Pearce and Joyce Reeves, a friend of Neil. Among those who came and waved us off were Mrs Pat Carey, Sue Jackson (Daughter of Gordon Nash) with husband Peter and daughter Michelle. Our thanks to George Zagon, who assisted by daughter Stephenie, again carried the Wellington photo and to the Cadets who carried our banner.

Apologies were received from Jim Anderson and Stan Cartledge, (both not well) And from Margery Bilney, Norma Pollard, and Paul Prideaux.

Tom Primrose is now 92 and Rita is 94. Bill Fordyce is 91. All our members are getting on in years, keep safe and as well as possible.

N.S.W. flight.

by Eric Munkman

I received a phone call from Leon Armstrong advising the U.K. Flight are holding a reunion at Alghero, Sardinia on 1 to 4 October, 2005. To date they have 14 starters including Mrs. Croft (widow of Hal).

I sadly report the passing of Cliff Tillack (electrician) his name appeared in the Reveille, on checking I was able to confirm it was our Squadron member.

Another T.A.F.E. Luncheon was held in March, our numbers have dropped but all there agreed it was a good meal and the company was enjoyable. We will be holding another in June or July, I haven't booked yet but will let you know the date and time after this goes to press and you can give me a ring on 9972 0641.

I attended the R.A.A.F. Commemoration Service at the Cenotaph on 31-3-05 to celebrate the 841b birthday of the R.A.A.F, a wreath was laid on behalf of the Squadron.

Anzac Day in Sydney was perfect weather wise. There was a huge crowd of onlookers all with flags to wave and it was a wonderful reception we all received. It made the marchers feel real proud. We marched under the banner led by Bob Smith, our numbers were a little disappointing, but we are not as physical as we once were. To make sure our banner still flies on Anzac Day we depend on those who are fit; let us meet our mates once a year if possible. We were well supported by our young generation and friends. It was pleasing to see Bob Bruce's son Stephen, Adam and Samantha, grand children. Peter Alexander's daughters Julie and Melanie, and granddaughter Karen.

Our luncheon was as usual at the Masonic Centre and afterwards we held our Annual General meeting. I was elected President, Keith Cousins Senior Vice President, Bob Smith Junior Vice President, Secretary David Longhurst son of Stan, Frank Ward Treasurer, Committee Noel Waiter, Don Bitmead, Jack Baker and son Charles, John Gibbins, Rob Wilkinson, Stephen Bruce. You will observe we have five of our younger generation on the Committee. Thank you boys we appreciate your help.

Bob Lyndon finds it difficult to get to meetings now and he asked to stand down from the Committee. Thank you Bob for your years helping on Committee; they were well and truly appreciated.

Editor's note. I have received the following letter from Sharon Hickey, daughter of Clif Tillack.

'I am writing to inform you of the passing of my father Karl "Clif" Tillack. He died peacefully in the Yass District Hospital after a short illness, aged 89 years.

My father lived most of his 'post-war' life in Como and later in Oyster Bay both suburbs of Sydney where my sister Janne, and myself were raised. Some years after retirement, when things became a little too difficult he and my mother moved to Yass, in country NSW, to be closer to me, and my family. They lived happily in the Linton RSL Retirement Village for six years until my mother's death in 2001. After that Dad moved into the hostel part of Linton where he was wonderfully looked after until his death on November 25, 2004. That was 10 years to the day from when they first moved up.

Dad was a proud exserviceman. I think that living in Linton stirred many memories and awakened many feelings he had buried for years. During his time at the hostel he proudly displayed his medals, which had been restored, mounted and framed, in his room. And although he could no longer see them as his eyesight had deserted him he knew them all and could discuss their significance in depth.

He was very interested in the 458 Squadron News, which I read to him. I also believe he ordered and paid for two copies of the latest edition of 'We Find and Destroy'. He wanted my sister and myself to have them. Perhaps you could look into this for me if possible.

Dad had lived a very happy life. He had a long and strong marriage with my mother and missed her terribly after she died. Dad was a cancer survivor but could not beat the arthritis, blindness and Parkinson's that made his later years challenging. I say challenging because he never complained about his lot in life and was forever hopeful. While he and Mum only had two children they had nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren. They were greatly loved and are sadly missed.'

W.A. Flight

by Ted Jewell.

Today is Anzac Day in Perth and for the first time W.A Flight has not fallen in for the March. We have run out of members able to march and have decided that next year members may be able to go in cars. It was a very big day in Perth, with great crowds lining the roadway. It was a perfect, sunny day, as usual in Perth. . Members met after the service at Miss Maud's in Murray St for lunch. Fourteen turned up of the twenty who had said they would be there and only six of them were squadron members:- Bill and Joan Clues, Ted Jewell and friend, Henry and Vera Etherton, Mick Singe, Bill and Flip Kelliher, Jim Palmer and Margaret Gannaway. We all had a great day, a drink or two and a wonderful lunch.

'A piece from Mick Singe'

He went to five schools as speaker on service life, also to Alfred Carsen Nursing Home to see and meet old diggers. Mick is now president of the Claremont RSL, and laid a wreath to the Dawn service in Claremont. He went to the RSL Anzac Service with Bill Gaynor and General Warren pursuant to an invitation of DVA.

" A piece from Bill Clues' (W.A. flight President.) 'who had laid a wreath at King's Park for 30 years but cannot do it any more due to deteriorating health. Instead, at a dawn service, he laid a wreath on the memorial at RAAF Cambrae village, where he lives. The W.A Flight Banner, meanwhile, has been placed on display at the RAAF Museum at Bull Creek, at least until we want it again.

Several flight members hope to make the reunion in Canberra, including Bill Clues and myself (Ted) we hope to share a room.

Weather permitting, flight members will come down to my home in Mandurah to a BBQ on 15 May

Nobby Nobbs had a fall recently, causing some broken bones and bruising; the problem is, we are all getting older and have to watch our steps. All the best, Ted.

New Zealand Flight.

As Kevin predicted last time, there is no news from the land of the long white cloud.

Editorial.

Thank you all for the kind remarks about the last newsletter. There was much to be said, and I did my best. If anyone was offended, he kept it to himself. It is quite a rewarding experience to find myself, sixty years on, at the centre of Squadron affairs.

A word about the current commemorative mission to Europe. The parameters announced in the Repatriation Commissioner's letter fitted 458 Squadron exactly. I know of at least five of our members who were nominated, without success. All the more congratulations to Mick Singe for making the previous such trip, to London.

Each issue of the newsletter seems to contain a special subject - last one was the reunion. This one must be Mick Singe. He pops up in all the most unlikely places and must be very busy doing his good work. He even found time to write to the editor, and agreed that the letter should be published. Here is a major excerpt.

"Although I am approaching my 85th birthday, God willing, that will not stop me from being at the reunion in Canberra.

After all of these years, I learn of your interest in real music; I am sure we could have enjoyed discussing the pros and cons of each other's knowledge of this lovely subject. However it will not be too late to discuss one's musical aptitude when we meet in Canberra. I began my piano lessons at the age of six, but it didn't last as long as I would have liked because of a thing called in those days 'the depression'.

I was born in a country town in Victoria called Maryborough, a railway town where most of the people were forced to accept the dole, but not my dad. He moved the family to Melbourne, where he and my brother and I worked at H.V. Mackay Massey Harris, farm machinery factory at Sunshine. My dad became a foreman while my older brother and I were apprenticed to fitting and turning. At this time (1936) I was sixteen. Later, I was transferred to the government munitions factory in Footscray.

When the war began I applied for release in order to join the RAAF, which was difficult as I was in a protected industry, making brass components for naval torpedoes. After pestering the boss for over three months I was finally discharged, and joined the RAAF in August 1940. In August 1941 I was lucky enough to be posted to 458 from Mt. Gambier, and remained with the squadron till Gibraltar- only a few of us did that. I very well remember my very last squadron flight - from Foggia to Gibraltar, with Jim Whitem and Bev Wallace."