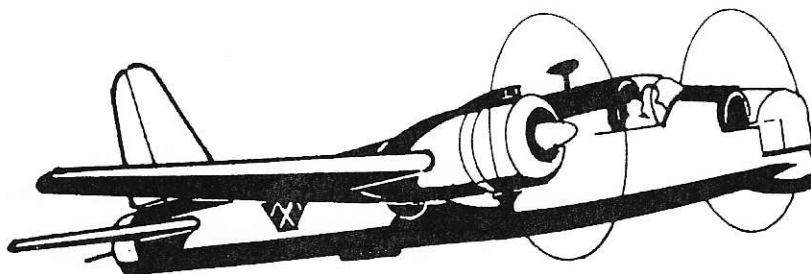


458

SQUADRON NEWS



RAAF

JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL

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

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Squadron President Keith Cousins (NSW)

Squadron Vice-presidents

New Zealand	Kevin George
U.K.	Leon Armstrong

Squadron Treasurer: Frank Ward, 50 Castle Hill Rd. West Pennant Hills, NSW 2125

Squadron Secretary Jim Whitem P.O.Box 239, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444

Squadron Newsletter:

Editor:	Jim Whitem	Phone (02) 6583 8311; email haslett@aapt.net.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 Whitem, 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

This issue contains all that needs to be told about the final Reunion in Canberra, and related matters.

The Final All States Reunion in Canberra.

A personal account by Jim Whittam

Well, the much-publicised final reunion in Canberra is over and now deserves to be called the much-lauded reunion by all who were there. We certainly did not go out with a whimper; in fact it all reminded me clearly of the last days of the Squadron itself in Gibraltar after the end of hostilities in Europe. It proved to be a judicious mixture of the joy of seeing old friends once more, all under the one roof, tinged with sorrow that so many of them could not be there, a little more formality than we have been used to, enough non- physically demanding activities, and the opportunity for ceremonial remembrance in Australia's capital city that has grown from a bush town into a smaller but purpose-built city similar to but quite unlike Ottawa and Washington, D.C.

In round figures, eighty of us including 30 of our ladies gathered at the Lakeside Hotel, most stayed the whole week. One hundred persons attended the final dinner, and some twenty hardy souls stayed over for the Squadron Conference. at the end of the week. Of especial note was the presence of almost twenty '458 Brats', the children and grandchildren of the former airmen. These youngsters, some of them almost of retiring age, were responsible for the organization, planning and running of this never-to-be-forgotten last reunion, and we originals and our ladies are especially grateful to them for their hard work. If the 458 Squadron Association continues to exist, and I think that it will, it will be in the hands of these, our descendants.

Here are a few highlights of the reunion functions.

The welcome party, 'meet your mates', informal as ever, was graced by the presence of Air Chief Marshall Angus Houston, recently appointed Chief of the Australian Defence Staff and former Chief of the RAAF, who stayed the whole evening and spoke to every one of us. When I introduced him to my wife I said

'Sir, this is Leading Aircraftswoman Haslett of the RCAF, who taught me all the meteorology that I know, more than sixty years ago. She also taught me to look into her eyes and tell weather'. Dorothy took his hand and said 'Sir, I have never shaken a hand wearing so many rings on the sleeve.' That was the level of informality on that first evening.

On Monday we visited an exhibition devoted to the development of our capital city in a saucer-shaped depression of inland Australia. Many of those attending would not have been aware that the lady who greeted us is the wife of a senior member of the ACT legislature. Then we had luncheon aboard a ferry on Lake Burley Griffin, which had been the Canberra racecourse when I was at university seventy years ago. One squadron member, who shall remain nameless, won \$100 on the pokies at what used to be the Canberra Yacht Club, whence I sailed a Heron dinghy many decades ago.

On Tuesday, we dodged light rain showers to enjoy an al fresco lunch at the Australian War Memorial before our formal remembrance service. There, in the commemorative area of the forecourt, we gathered to remember our fallen comrades. I gave a short commemorative address (reprinted below) and Eric Munkman laid a wreath within the Hall of Memory.

On Wednesday we were bussed to the northern edge of the territory, to the Hughie Edwards, V.C. memorial grove, where a bronze plaque commemorating 458 Squadron and two trees were dedicated. Our hosts were the ACT Division of the RAAF Association, including importantly our own Colin Fereday. Our Guest of Honour was His Excellency Dr. Ivan Fsadni, High Commissioner of Malta, and Doyen of the Canberra Diplomatic Corps, who spoke, acknowledging the squadron's role in the defence and relief of Malta, some years before he was born.

This was followed by luncheon at the Maltese chancellery, where, in the garden, a group picture was taken of Dr Fsadni with the five squadron members present who had served in Malta. Incidentally, his excellency commented upon the phrase 'final reunion', suggesting 'perhaps one more – in Malta!'

On Thursday we visited the old Parliament House where so much Australian history had been made; and where I had spent no little time in my Northern Territory days. We enjoyed a conducted tour including the Portrait Gallery.

In the evening we forgathered at the hotel for our final Dinner, where the guests included Dr Fsadni and senior serving and retired members of the RAAF. Four squadron members were honoured by the award of life membership certificates. The guest speaker was Air Commodore Lee Roberts, presently Director-General of personnel in the RAAF, and the function concluded with a farewell address by Squadron President Tom Moore.

During the week we had a room full of memorabilia in our own hotel suite, so I am able to say from personal knowledge that it was a great success. Many older members pored over the albums and other material, but it was especially heart-warming that so many of our '458 brats' spent hours researching the doings of their dads all those years ago.

On Friday, the Squadron Conference met, probably for the last time. These proceedings are summarised elsewhere in this newsletter, and changes in Squadron office bearers are reflected on the front page.

Thank you to all who helped to make the reunion the success it was.

Eric Munkman, as president of the host state, Tom Moore, squadron president, and I as squadron secretary wish to record our gratitude to all those members, helpers and others who worked so hard and effectively to make the reunion a success. They are too many to list here, but Wendy Whittem Trunz and Colin Fereday of Canberra, office bearers of the ACT RAAF Association, John Gibbins and the NSW flight Committee deserve special mention.

Decisions of the Squadron Conference.

Life Membership

Conference confirmed the award of life membership made public at the final dinner, to the following members: Pat Cribb, Colin Fereday, Evelyn Lewis, Jim Whittem.

Archival material.

The fate of this material was further discussed. The Squadron material including the albums are still in the care of Keith Cousins. The meeting resolved tht they be retained, and that the secretary take up the matter of their final resting place with AWM through Ms. Nola Anderson, Assistant Director, who had taken part in our Ceremony of Remembrance.

Flight memorabilia is a matter for the flights. Bill Clues reported that they had an arrangement with the WA RAAF Museum at Bull's Creek, at least for storage in the medium term.

Wartime Diary. W.O. Ted Gore.

The secretary formally presented to the conference this bound diary, which had been tabled with the other memorabilia during the reunion. It had been the target of much interest, and the secretary will thank Ted's Widow and David Irons for the gift. Keith Cousins undertook to store it with the albums.

Squadron Newsletter.

The meeting ratified an earlier decision that the balance of Squadron (not flight) funds should be used to finance newsletter publication. Each issue comprises about 270 copies and costs about \$350 for printing and postage. The present balance of \$2973 would be sufficient for two more years at 4 issues per year. It was agreed that that the newsletter frequency be three per year

Jim Whittem pointed out that while he was able to continue as editor pro temps, it would be wise to have in place a substitute arrangement. Conference agreed that an Assistant Editor should be appointed.

Future Council meetings

It was agreed that Council should meet in Sydney as necessary, and that its executive members should be members of the NSW Flight.

Election of Squadron office bearers.

The President announced that he would find it difficult to continue to hold the office indefinitely, and Keith Cousins was nominated as President, sine die, was elected to applause, and took the chair. Jim Whittem was duly elected as Secretary, and Frank Ward as Treasurer.

Amendment to Constitution.

As Squadron Council could fold up due to a quick succession of deaths among the officers, to enable the 458 'brats' to carry on if the membership wished, the following sentence was deleted from Clause 4 of the Constitution. Only persons who have served on 458 RAAF squadron may become a Squadron Officer or member of the Council".

Conference Decisions. The meeting agreed that the Editor should summarize the proceedings of the conference for the forthcoming newsletter. Herewith.

Commemorative address at the Australian War Memorial on the occasion of the final 458 RAAF Squadron Reunion, on Tuesday 1 November 2005. by J.H. Whitem.

I will remind you of the men of 458 Squadron, living and dead, who came from many lands – Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom, I will not talk of their extraordinary dedication, or their deeds of valour, nor will I name them all; both my memory and my allotted time are inadequate. Instead, I will mention several categories of airmen to represent us all and ask you to join me in remembering them.

In the beginning, at Williamstown, in the winter of 1941 some forty airmen were chosen to form the nucleus of 458 RAAF Squadron. Many more followed them. They all enjoyed ground staff musterings, and most spent 3-4 years on the squadron without home leave. Two of the members of this backbone of the squadron are still alive; Jim Palmer and Eric Munkman who is here today, representing and reminding us all of his mates, and their successors on the Squadron.

A second group, of aircrew, operated from England in Bomber Command, in early marks of Wellingtons, after the Battle of Britain. One of them, Bert Garland, is here today. I ask you to join me in respecting them and their bravery in the air.

A majority of 458 aircrew served in the Mediterranean Allied Coastal Air Force, destroying enemy shipping, U-boats and shore installations with torpedoes, bombs and depth charges, from bases in North Africa, Sardinia, Italy and Gibraltar, with many important detachments, especially in Malta. Many died in or over the waters that the Romans called 'mare nostrum'.

My own crew - Bev Wallace, Bill Wilkinson, Ron Yates, Ray McDougall, and several navigators, are representative of these. Our magnificent training, operational competence, our dedication, and a little bit of luck enabled us to serve, to help to defeat tyranny, and the Australians all returned to our homeland to marriage and the begetting of at least seventeen children, several of whom are here today to help us celebrate our wartime life and times,

458 had five commanding officers, W/C N. Mulholland, DFC, W/C L.L. Johnston, DSO, and Gp.Capt J Dowling, AFC, who were permanent RAF or RAAF Officers; W/C R. Mackay, DFC who trained in Rhodesia within the E.A.T.S, and, of course, Lt.Col. B.Mackenzie, DSO, of the South African Air Force. All were decorated; none has survived to be here today, and three of them died in the air. Please join me in remembrance of their inspired leadership.

Finally, I lead you all in remembrance of our comrades who served 458 Squadron Association for six decades after hostilities ceased, in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United Kingdom, helping to keep us and our memories alive. Those office bearers elected at our last reunion in Orange but who cannot be here today deserve special mention. Let us remember Norman Duke, Mickey Reid, Pete Pettit, Bob Bruce, and Peter Alexander.

In conclusion, let me remind you that we have agreed not to meet again, that this is our final All States Reunion. So it is appropriate that we are meeting in the centre of remembrance in Australia's capital city.

I feel humble indeed to have delivered this last commemorative address.

Battle For Malta" Reunion

by Leon Armstrong

The Island of Malta, together with its baby sister, Gozo, was besieged and about to surrender to the enemy in 1944, when a convoy, carrying greatly needed provisions, came through. The End of the Siege Reunion was held there from 22nd - 29th September 2005 together with the 60th Anniversary of the End of the War and of the Battle for Malta. They were commemorated by all the residents of the island and were joined by well over 300 British, Commonwealth, Allied and Maltese Veterans of the Royal Air Force, Army, Royal Navy, British Army and Merchant Navy all of whom were presented with a silver Malta Commemorative Medal.

The programme started with an International Air Show at the airfield of Luqa and lasted for 3 hours. Many foreign aircraft took part and the RAF Red Arrows presented a brilliant display. The show also featured "Merlins over Malta", a display by a Hurricane and a Spitfire, both, of course, powered by Merlin engines. Later that day, Veterans were invited to the Presidential Palace for the President's Reception.

On the following morning, an Ecumenical Service was held at St. Paul's Cathedral and in the afternoon, Veterans paraded for the Wreath Laying Service at the War Memorial. Under the command of a Sergeant Major of the Armed Forces of Malta, between 300 and 400 Veterans, proudly displaying their medals, all over 70, some in wheel chairs, and their ladies and carers, marched in 3 ranks to the War Memorial, 400 yards away. Unfortunately, the rain came down in buckets just as the Vets formed up and everyone arrived like drowned rats but they were greatly encouraged by large crowds applauding as they lined the streets to watch. The open air service was conducted by a priest in a white cassock standing beneath a black umbrella, a comical sight! Seated on rain sodden chairs, the Vets were soaked to the skin, proudly taking part and happy to be back in Malta to celebrate the historic event together. During the Service, President Eddie Fenech Adami of Malta, High Commissioners and various Ambassadors laid wreaths at the foot of the monument.

Because of the rain, the Public Address system had fused and the hymns were sung unaccompanied. The Hurricane and the Spitfire flew over the Memorial in tribute to the Fallen. The Last Post was sounded by a bugler and salutes by a 25pounder gun marked the start and the end of the 2-minute Silence. A Scots piper played a lament. A helicopter bearing a Maltese flag at half mast appeared and the Reveille was sounded. The Blessing was drowned out by the drone of the Red Arrows which flew overhead in salute, trailing red and white smoke, the Maltese colours. All this took place in the pouring rain from which there was no cover. The Vets felt proud to have paid their tribute.

Boat tours of Valletta Harbour were available and many Vets, who had travelled a long way, joined them. Unfortunately, a football match between an English team and the Maltese was cancelled because of escalating costs. On the final day, the "Air Battle of Malta" Memorial Hangar at the Aviation Museum at Ta' Qali was opened and inaugurated by the President. On display amongst badges of squadrons and units which had served in Malta during World War II was that of 458 (RAAF) Sqdn., the writer's old squadron

Flight reports *In view of the timing of the reunion and this newsletter, I have taken the liberty of combining, where appropriate, data from the regular newsletter reports with that supplied to the Squadron Conference. Ed.*

UK Flight by Keith Wilkinson.

UK Flight 458 Reunion in Sardinia

Sixty-one years on, still proud, still going strong with the exception of a few misfiring cylinders 458 Squadron has been back on the Mediterranean island of Sardinia. From 1st October, fourteen of us took part in the UK Flight reunion at Alghero. It was an enjoyable event that went better than our expectations. Not one of us Poms whinged - not even once!

As 458-ers will recall, the last time the squadron was on "Mussolini's other island" was in 1944. Our small group returned to the exact spot where the men were billeted in a tented camp on the silvery sands of Bombarde Beach, now surrounded by tall pine trees. We spent three nights in a hotel that has been built on the former encampment.

Five veterans aged between 82 and almost 90 - who'd actually served at Alghero - were among the enthusiastic party. They were pilots Mo Borne, Jack Christianson, and Leon Armstrong; wireless operator/air gunner Don Stocks; and observer Ron Moy (who, like his pal Don, was in F/Lt Tredwell's crew). Basically, if someone had laid on a serviceable Wimpy for us, we could have had it up - no trouble! Also present was May Croft, widow of 458 pilot Jim Croft (he was wounded by shrapnel in an explosion at Alghero when there was a bomb hang-up on the runway).

Don Stocks was accompanied by his daughter, Ann, and his son-in-law, Dave; Ron Moy was with his wife Rosa and their daughter Lesley. May was with her son, Dave. And I was there with my wife Anne to represent my late father, Ken Wilkinson, who flew as a WOP/AG in Jack's crew at Alghero. Jack - who played an invaluable role in tirelessly organising this trip - was with his wife, Audrey.

The highlight of our happy reunion turned out to be an unplanned visit to the (still in use!) military aerodrome at Fertilia - the same one used by the squadron's Wellingtons. Here is a remarkable story we still find hard to believe ourselves. Uninvited and unannounced, we drove there in a convoy of four hired cars, spoke to a couple of bemused sentries guarding the gates about our wish to see beyond the walls and barbed wire. Not a hope in hell, we thought. To our delight and utter astonishment, after Don's daughter spoke to one of the Italians in French, the man in charge came to the gates and showed us round in person.

We were treated to a brief flying display by a Jaguar GR3A ground attack aircraft, which was returning to the UK from an air show at Malta. We were then driven out in a military minibus to see the jet refuel, and to shake hands with the Italian pilot who was on attachment to the RAF. Next, we posed for a group photograph on the exact spot where official squadron photos were taken in front of a Wellington in 1944.

Here we could observe 61 years of progress. They are still using Rolls Royce engines, but this little beast (soon to be retired and replaced by the amazing Eurofighter) was able to fly at nearly

1,000 miles an hour at 46,000 feet. The pilot had on his arm the 41 Squadron badge with the motto "Seek and Destroy". Our vets were quick to point out that 458's motto was almost the same. And Leon was actually wearing the badge at the time. It was a triumph for international relations, and the welcoming officials at Alghero aerodrome became our heroes forever! Several of us had to rub our eyes to make sure we were not dreaming!

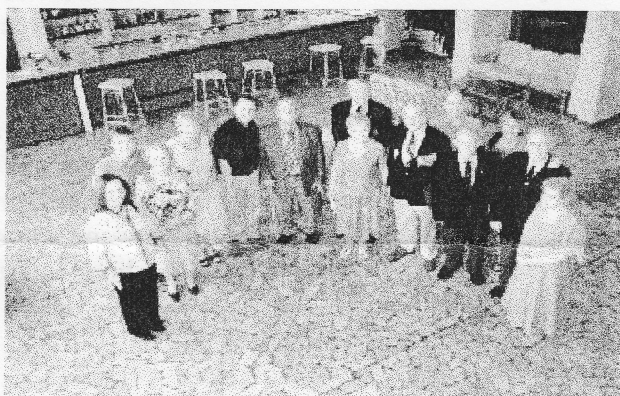
The night before, at the official reunion dinner, we paid tribute to 458 RAAF Squadron with a toast, and we remembered our many absent friends with a minute's silence. We also took the unanimous decision that this should not be our final UK reunion: that we'd do our best to hold another reunion, probably back at its customary location in Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon.

Although 458 membership numbers are, quite naturally, dwindling around the world, as 007 James Bond once said we'd like to "keep the British end up" as long as possible. To assist with this aim, we want surviving veterans or their widows to seek the views of their younger family members about whether they would like to get involved in the squadron association. To carry forward the UK torch well into the future! If you do, make yourselves known to us!

Meanwhile, back to Alghero - and our reunited veterans observed that things seemed almost as dicey as in 1944. We went for a thrilling ride on a boat which was tossed around in a swelling sea. Later in the middle of the night, we were treated to a massive, crashing thunderstorm (though some of our intrepid friends slept like logs right through it!).

Talking of intrepid - Leon Armstrong set the record for flying hours logged during the reunion. Immediately before joining us in Sardinia, he went on a wartime commemoration trip to Malta (where he had written off his Wellington in a quarry 60 years earlier!)

And so, the fine spirit of 458 lives on. And long may it continue.



Left to right. Anne Wilkinson, Dave Croft, May Croft, Ann Chatburn, Keith Wilkinson, Don Stocks, Jack Christianson, Audrey Christianson, Leon Armstrong, Dave Chatburn, Mo Borne, Lesley Atkinson, Ron Moy, Rosa Moy.

New Zealand Flight

by Kevin George

Our membership of four has not changed since 2003, when we ceased to collect annual subscriptions. In the interim, the flight has been unfunded. Members of the flight meet only at

long intervals but remain in close contact by telephone and mail. Archie Fell is the only flight member unwell, his condition gives cause for concern but not alarm.

Canada Flight

by Bryan Quinlan

How surprised and delighted I was to discover my old treasured buddy Col Fereday on the other end of the phone. We had a great chat during which Col gave me an informal review of the highlights of the All States Reunion and Council Conference where he had acted as the Canadian Flight representative. He also transmitted greetings from other well-remembered old friends. I look forward to the full record of the proceedings and what was obviously a resounding successful event. I tried to contact all surviving Canadian members by phone, obtaining updates on everyone except George MacLeod in Nova Scotia,

LEN DOIRON is once again battling cancer and will know more on 14 Nov.

ALAN RUGGLES (Nav, 1943) - Al reported in on all cylinders with no major complaints and is still actively engaged in his favourite past-time, golfing.

DICK SLADEN - Dick has moved into a condo and is comfortably settled and has family members fairly close at hand in Toronto, Kingston and Montreal. MARG REID - Marg has just returned from a very enjoyable month's visit with daughter Kathie in France and is settling back to home-life once again and continuing to play with her bridge group.

JIM DONALDSON (WAG, 1942-43) - Wife Peg answered the phone. Jim went into hospital in October and depending on an upcoming assessment may have to enter a care centre.

TOM ROWAN (WAG/ASV, 1943) - Tom is still actively engaged in Senior curling. He and his wife attended a grandson's wedding in Edmonton in July with a swing through Prince Albert and Saskatoon. He has an unusual vocation lately working for the Municipality catching rats.

ERNIE IRELAND (RADAR TECH, 1944) - Ernie has had a hard time shaking off bouts of pneumonia but maintains his cheerful demeanour. He had hoped to pay a visit to Vancouver to see Tom Lindsay and myself last summer but his illness interrupted his plans.

BERT MARKLAND (WAG/ASV, 1944-45) - Bert has encountered a number of health problems which have slowed him down somewhat and resulted in the loss of his driving license, so wife Gladys is now his chauffeur. Bert advises that his family is growing fast and now includes his two sons, wives, 5 grand-daughters, husbands, 3 great grand-daughters with three more g-g children enroute. One of Bert's grand-daughters is a registered nurse working in Sidney, as is her husband, an architect.

JACK REYNOLDS (PILOT 1942-43, EX-69 SDF) - Jack reported relatively stable health for himself and wife Dorothy,

PEGGY LAUGHLIN (Frank's widow) - Frank and Peg were the last Canadians to visit the Squadron a couple of years back on a cruise to New Zealand and Oz, where you kindly arranged a lunch get-together with Frank. Peg is now in a care centre in Victoria. She was delighted to hear news of the Squadron.

SID WINCHESTER (WAG/ASV, 1943) - Sid and Joyce are still adjusting to their new assisted-living situation, a considerable change from having their own home. Sid's eyesight is not what it used to be and he no longer can drive.

TOM LINDSAY (RADAR TECH, 1944-45) - Our Canadian Flight VP indicates he is keeping well but says he is not doing anything too exciting these days. He attends informal lunch meetings with other radar types. And believes that radar won the war! He was pleased to hear that the 458 Newsletter is to be continued.

DIANE ATHERTON Snow Atherton's daughter is nursing in Vancouver, BC) - recently she advised me of an unusual contact with a Suzanne Maiden whose father, now deceased, was also named "Alan" and nicknamed "Snow" and also served on 458, mustering as a fitter in July 1940. She listed all his postings and trade advances. They both appear to have had a friend named "Redpath", whether the same man is uncertain. Suzanne and friends are carrying out extensive research about 458 with the idea of perpetuating their ancestor's stories and are contemplating starting a 458 website. Strangely, they do not seem to be aware of the existing 458 organization. it may be worthwhile for someone to make contact with this group. Suzanne lives in Adelaide, GPO Box 1316, S. Australia, 5001. E-mail < >

NSW Flight by Eric Munkman

With regret I report the passing of Stan Simpson on 2.6.05. He had suffered poor health for some time, but he and Marie had attended several reunions. He was a member of Clive Wyman's crew, of which Frank Ward is the sole surviving member. I also report the passing of Jack Preston, Equipment Officer, on 13.7.05. Jack Joined the Squadron at Foggia and remained until disbandment. Our sympathies go to Marie, Ester, and their families

Keith Cousins and I attended the Battle of Britain ceremony in Sydney and placed a wreath on the cenotaph. Bill Johnson had a multiple bypass operation and is now firing on all five! Jack Bevan wrote to say he would not be at the reunion due to Lucy's poor health. They had attended many reunions; the last one was at Griffith. He spoke highly of the newsletter, congratulated all on its achievements, and extended wishes for a happy reunion.

The reunion, of course, was very successful and I wish to congratulate all concerned, especially Wendy Whitem-Trunz and John Gibbins. You excelled, and I am sure that all of the variations from previous reunions were received with appreciation by all attending.

On 10 November the flight held another luncheon at the Ryde Tafe College; a great three-course meal and drinks for \$25. If you want to be put on the list, please call me (Eric) at 9972 06431, The flight is quite active. Committee meets bimonthly. Due to the foresight of Pete Pettit, we have recruited a number of '458 brats' now comprising half of the ten members. Flight financial position is very good, thanks to treasurer Frank.

Queensland Flight by Evelyn Lewis.

Home again after a most enjoyable and memorable week in Canberra and the final All States Reunion. The trips that were organised were very interesting and not too long for us oldies to attend each day. I for one wished I had been more agile and some more life in me, having inner

ear problem affecting balance. I would not have missed the Reunion for anything. Final dinner was excellent and most enjoyable and emotional. A few tears were shed. Congratulations to those for organising the programme: the younger brigade, sons, daughters and friends was an amazing effort and it gave the older ones in N.S.W Flight Committee a break even though they were in the background and realised a job was well done. Since Orange Reunion we all had aged somewhat and had the walking canes to prove we needed them. Congratulations from "Q" Flight to Tom Moore outgoing President for job well done and the gift he has to present his art- such great work. Congratulations to incoming President Keith Cousins who is also ideal to take over the position

. President Eric Kelly has been very ill, but is responding to treatment after a serious operation. I'm sure he will be his old self again. We wish you well Eric from "Q" Flight and hope to see you soon. Peter Bailie from Southport is in respite care a place called Southport Lodge, cheerful though he will not be able to go home I spoke to Jean this morning and she is marvellous overcoming her handicap of losing her sight We wish Peter & Jean all the best. Charles Ruthven undergoing a serious operation 11 Nov a worry for Charles as he is over 90. We wish him well.

We have seventeen members, seven widowers, twelve widows and nine associate members .I would like to take this opportunity to thank 458 Squadron council for honouring me with Life Membership. I was so moved & overwhelmed . I have to the best of my ability enjoyed every moment in carrying out the work for "Q"Flight and 458 and for my husband Jack Lewis. Thank you .and compliments of the season

.Victoria Flight

by Rupert Pearce.

We had lunch at the Manningham Club on August 26th. Those present were Jack and Margaret Ellis, Neil Dean, Joann Hinton, Shirley Granger, Roy and Barbara Pearce, Rupert Pearce, Nonna Pollard and Joyce Reeves Apologies were received from: Jim Anderson, John and Marjorie Bilney and June Schoppe

BBQ's were held on the 28th. November 2004 and 6th March 2005 at the Bilney's Ferny Creek home and at the Ellis's home at Dromana. A lunch was held at the Bentleigh Club on 23rd. August 2004 .

Neil Dean and Rupert Pearce attended the 402 Squadron Australian Air Force Cadets Dining in Night on 6th. August 2004.

On Anzac Day six members marched, two friends and seven relatives came with us. The family of Gordon Nash and Mrs Pat Carey were there to wave us off. At the Bowling Club lunch we were joined by one member and three of our ladies. Our thanks to our friend George Zagon and his daughter Stephanie, who carried the Wellington Banner and to the cadets who carried the Squadron Banner

Sadly our members, their partners and our widows are getting older and their health is of concern to their families. Some are in their homes, some in retirement villages and nursing homes. Our thoughts are with you all. We have three life members, Harry Ashworth, Neil Dean and Rupert

Pearce, We have seventeen members, seven are 'widowers. We have twelve 'widows and nine associate members

This year has been a sad one for many members and families. We will not forget them: Yank Martin passed away on 27th. July 2004, Beatrice Morkham on 4th. September, the funeral service for Ron Yates was held on 6th. September, Harry Godfrey passed away on 21st. January The funeral service for Bruce Prideaux was held at Kilmore also on 1st January .Ken Hinton passed away on 29th. January, and The funeral service for Don Granger was held on 14th. April. Roy Rabone wrote to say that Charlie Harding passed away in December.

The annual general meeting was held at the Bentleigh Club 31st May 2005 and the present Office Bearers were re-elected: Neil Dean President, Rupert Pearce, Secretary/Treasurer, Jack Ellis, Senior V.P. and John Bilney Junior V.P.

Les Kennedy was awarded an OAM for service to the community of Ballarat. Beryl Oiles sent me a photo taken by the War Memorial of a group portrait of RAAF personnel photographed at the races at Algeria Africa c.26th. May 1944. The group includes Ross Ourran of Sydney, Ron Short of Melbourne, Nonn Swain of Melbourne ,Murray Cleveland of Adelaide, Ian Oiles of Mildura, Jack Ingate of Sydney,- John Fox of Sydney and Spencer Philpott of Sydney. Fox, Spencer and Oiles are 458members. Are the other persons known to any of our members.? A copy of the photo has been left with the memorabilia in Sydney.

The Ashworth's, the Bilney's, the Ellis's, Neil Dean, the 3 Pearce's, Norma Pollard and Joyce Reeves represented the Victoria Flight at the final reunion. Credit for the success of the reunion must be given to the N.S.W. members and their relatives. Someone was always on hand to help and for all those who came it will be a never to be forgotten week although there are sad recollections of those who have passed

Western Australia Flight by Ted Jewell

I have been back a couple of days from the reunion in Canberra.. I went across with Bill Clues and would not have missed it for anything, it being sixty years since the Squadron was disbanded at Gibraltar, and being the very last reunion. I was most impressed with the whole show. As on other occasions it was very well organised and we had a great time at the functions; something to remember always. Jim and Lucy Palmer were looking forward to it, too but Jim became ill.

Our members went to lunch on 9 October at Bob and Dot Bresland's home, where we all had a wonderful day.. They are associate members, a great couple, and every year we get together at their home. Squadron members who were there were Bill and Joan Clues, Henry and Vera Etherton, Ted Jewell and friend, Mick Singe and Margaret Gannaway.

The next meeting is our Christmas Dinner at Miss Mauds in Perth on Sunday 4 December. It is booked for 25 persons; we hope to have a good roll up of members and friends. Meanwhile, best wishes for Christmas and the New year to all members and families from the W.A Flight.

REPORT FOR NOVEMBER 2005

FROM COL HUTCHINSON (President) - 458 FINAL REUNION

Five S.A. Flight people attended - Colin & Yvonne Hutchinson, John Ringwood, Rick Michell and Trish Cosh. They agree that the organisation and conduct of the Reunion was of a high standard and congratulate those responsible. For Rick and Trish this was their first reunion and they were quite impressed. Rick attended the Conference as Flight Treasurer while Trish sought out mates of their father, Colin Michell, for information on his life on Squadron.

It was quite sad, especially when reflecting on previous Reunions, to see how time has thinned the ranks and how it has slowed the mobility of some of those who are left. But it was heartening to observe the friendship and pleasure between friends at Bobby McGee's breakfasts in Rydge's Hotel and at Squadron functions.

It was nice to be assured by the Chief of the Defence Forces, Air Chief Marshall Houston, on Sunday night, that the R.A.A.F. is still in good shape. Everybody was impressed by his sincerity, friendliness and interest in veteran airmen.

Of special interest to Col and Yvonne Hutchinson were Tom Moore and the sons of Gibraltar navigator, Frank McMahon, and several friends in Vic. Flight. The absences of Sid Bartram and Bert Ravenscroft were noted by many. The Crowleys, especially, sent their good wishes.

The dedication of the 458 plaque and sappling English oak in the R.A.A.F. Memorial Grove evoked memories of a similar event at Renmark in 1991. It was quietly and respectfully done, adding 458's name to those of the other Australian squadrons recorded there.

The Maltese High Commissioner assisted in the dedication, and later provided lunch for the entire 458 party at his office. The offer by Dr. Fsadni of special hospitality to Squadron people visiting Malta will certainly interest those of us who still have a yen to travel, e.g. Trish and Rick.

The Final Dinner was sumptuous, with many guests of honour. We will long treasure Tom Moore's exquisite placemats and coasters which graced all tables.

The Secretary of SA. Flight, Mrs Pat Cribb, was honoured with Life Membership of 458. Her certificate, presented by Eric Munkman, was accepted by Col Hutchinson, for later presentation to her at SA. Flight's AGM. /2

Col Hutchinson reported to the Conference and was pleased with the approval to recognise the service of Bevan Schiller to 458 in respect of the Renmark Plaque. An inscribed copy of the Squadron History will be presented to Bevan by S.A. Flight at a date to be decided.

Resolutions of Conference will be outlined in the Squadron News. The main thing is that there will be no more Squadron Reunions but Flights are quite autonomous in what they do about their local affairs. Some will, no doubt, continue to meet and enjoy functions as they have in the past.

The elected 458 Squadron executive will continue to operate from N.S.W.; the newsletter will be produced for some time yet, and there is still power to call a conference if necessary.

So, at the end of an eventful era, we reflect on what has passed and who we have lost. We can look back with pride that the job was well done, that we were all part of its doing and that peace may yet come to all the world.

From Pat Cribb (Secretary) -

The Annual General Meeting, followed by lunch, will be on Sunday, December 4, 2005, from 11.30 a.m., at the Kensington Hotel, Regent Street, Kensington.

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL from us in South Australia, and may the New Year find everyone enjoying life and improved health.



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Pat Cribb, Sec.