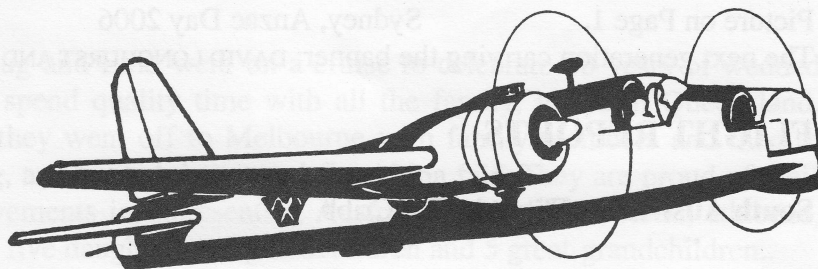


# 458

## SQUADRON NEWS

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RAAF

### JOURNAL OF THE 458 Squadron Council

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

Year 57

No 227

November 2006

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458 REJUVENATED

## FLIGHT REPORTS

### South Australian Flight by Pat Cribb

South Australia has eleven surviving wartime members of the Squadron, and two Associates:

Sid Bartram, Keith Grimshaw, Colin Hutchinson, Alex McKinnon, Buck Pederson, Jim Perry, Reg Priest, Bert Ravenscroft, John Ringwood, Ken Russell, Lyne Skinner, Kevin Tate, and Brian Woodhead.

We send out 47 newsletters, including those to widows and family members.

Re the 458-memorial garden at Renmark, the Council has advised that

- New ropes will be installed on the flagpoles.
- A seat will be placed near Meander Ave
- A plaque will be placed on the new seat, inscribed as follows.

“This reserve was given to the Renmark-Paringa Council by F/Lt Ian Showell, Engineering Officer, 458 Squadron RAAF”

We requested a rose garden, a pathway to lower levels, and that the pool be filled with large boulders and reeds planted. When funds are available Renmark Council will consider these requests. We are pleased that we now have flags for the flagpoles.

We send our best wishes to our treasurer Rick, son of deceased 458er Colin Michell. Rick has had health problems this year.

Since our last report we held a luncheon in July at the Kensington Hotel, with 33 guests. Our AGM and Christmas luncheon will be on December 3, again at the Kensington, 23 Regent St, Kensington. We are sure that the choices on the comprehensive Christmas menu will please everyone. Cost \$ 28

We take this opportunity to wish all our newsletter readers a very merry Christmas and a happy new year from all of us here in South Australia.

*(A letter accompanying this report to me expressed thanks to all at the newsletter, and condolences for the loss of Dorothy, my wife. My thanks are due to all readers and other squadron members who expressed condolences. Ed.)*

### Queensland Flight by Evelyn Lewis

In past years Eric Kelly and Bernie McLaughlin attended a special Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas at St. Lucia in early November, for all armed forces. After many years, it has now been discontinued.

Late news is better than no news: I received a very newsy letter from Enid and Doug McKay in late August. Enid went on a trip to Vietnam, which she enjoyed immensely. Doug was unable to go because of back trouble- stenosis of the spine, and he finds it hard to stand for even a minute. Hopefully his problem will improve after an operation planned for 31 October in Brisbane Mater hospital. Best wishes, Doug.

Earlier in the year Doug and Enid went on a cruise to celebrate 60 years of wedded bliss. Home again to spend quality time with all the family, in North Queensland. Back home and then they went off to Melbourne with family members and then to Sydney and Mittagong, and visited the annual fine china fair. They are proud of their grandchildren's achievements in representing Australia in cricket, football, athletics, and so on. They have five daughters, 13 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren..

Thank you for your letter, Enid, it will encourage others to send family news for the newsletter. I could write and tell you all about being a great, great, great ,great-aunt.

Thanks to John Gibbins for sending the CD's of the reunion; I sent copies to Joan Porter and Glory Peake, both war widows who had never been to a reunion, and they were pleased to view our activities in Canberra.

All the best to Cyril Murray who had a serious operation but has made good progress. Isla Garland has a broken wrist, Bert has on-going back problems.

Christmas is approaching – best wishes to all newsletter readers, especially wishing you good health in the New Year. We all look forward to that, and to the on-going Squadron Newsletters.

#### **U.K Flight** by Keith Wilkinson

I should have known better than to make fun of *Friday the Thirteenth* in the last Squadron News. Yes, this was the date the UK Flight's ageing stalwarts boldly went forth to their annual reunion. Resolute, stoical, patriotic and air-punchingly proud, this merry band - who 60-odd years ago brought Hitler crumbling to his knees - made it cheerfully to Stratford-upon-Avon. Meanwhile, their hitherto-trusty flight correspondent (more than 30 years their junior, and more wimp than Wimpy) was nowhere to be found.

Good taste and sheer embarrassment prevents me from going into too much detail regarding my excuse. Suffice to say, I spent Friday the thirteenth nursing a war wound. In truth, a wound caused three days earlier by a hospital surgeon rearranging my "plumbing" with his knife; an unforgettable experience which still brings tears to my eyes and a shudder to my nervous system, on recollection. Therefore, I shall move on from this delicate area.

Spookily, thirteen people made it to the annual dinner in William Shakespeare's hometown in Warwickshire. Among them were the 458 "old brigade", all former aircrew: Mo Borne (who's had his 90th birthday this year and a few health problems), Leon Armstrong, Jack Christianson, Don Stocks and Ron Moy.

Ron's lovely wife Rosa, aged 86, who last year joined the UK Flight on its reunion on the island of Sardinia, was unable to make it this time, due to health problems, having just spent three weeks in hospital. We all wish her a speedy recovery. As for 84-year-old Ron, he says he has rather an attachment to the 13th. He tells me: "We met on the 26th, were married on the 13th, it's Rosa's birthday on the 13th, I had a prang at Malta on the 13th in a Mark 13 Wellington and another prang at Bone on the 26th!!"

Luckily for Ron, his granddaughter Caroline and her partner John accompanied him to Stratford, adding to the young contingent at the table. His old crew buddy Don Stocks



went along with his daughter Ann and her husband Dave. The Flight was also delighted to see, once again, May Croft, the widow of 458 pilot Jim Croft, and their son Dave. They had both flown out for the memorable 2005 trip to Alghero. Also at the reunion were two of the most familiar faces at our do's: Jack Christianson's wife Audrey, and their good friend Esme McLean. Audrey brought down her lucky mascot, Wellington the teddy bear, from RAF Hendon, complete with his flying jacket, helmet and goggles. She too almost didn't make it - as she had got a black eye and cut head during a recent fall down some steps on the Isle of Wight.

Leon Armstrong wasn't able to attend on Friday the thirteenth itself - also for unexpected health reasons. But, he surprised everyone by showing up the next day, in time for the official annual dinner. Temporarily unable to drive his car, he got there by train. It would have been a rare thing indeed for Leon - aged 86 - to miss a reunion. His face is well known at many RAF functions, like the Pensacola veterans' reunions, and his RAF services have already deservedly won him a gong from Buckingham Palace. So, good on you mate!

As has become a bit of a custom, the reunion was held at the Falcon Hotel in Stratford, an olde worlde inn which hosts many similar events - in fact former members of RAF 151 Squadron were there on the same weekend. The superstitious waiter apparently turned up with 14 starters at the dinner to avoid the dreaded number. Well - it's better than 12, which would have been unlucky for one poor so-and-so. The 14th portion was shared out without incident.

Six of the 458 group took a trip not far away to the Wellington Aviation Museum at Moreton-in-Marsh in Gloucestershire, where there was once a wartime airfield used for training Wimpy pilots and crews. It's a small museum, but you can get close up to some excellent Wellington bomber memorabilia - and our 458ers spent ages getting all nostalgic about a compass. There's also a tail there with its geodetic frame on display. Newcomers Caroline and John were amazed at how big it was.

Discussions on the Saturday evening centred on where to hold the 458 UK Flight Reunion in 2007. It's certainly the intention of the Flight to have one. Various ambitious overseas locations have been raised and debated - among them, Corsica, Egypt, Malta, Sardinia (again), and Gibraltar. The feeling was we would never be able to repeat the success of the 2005 Alghero trip, so we are looking at meeting somewhere in the UK. One place we are investigating is Grange-over-Sands on the stunningly beautiful shores of Morecambe Bay in south Cumbria. This has the advantage of being close to England's most dramatic scenery - the Lake District (sorry, whilst this idea has nothing to do with me at all, I am biased as I used to live up there and it's where I met and married my wife Anne!). The UK Flight has many members who can't make the annual reunions (for one thing because of the distance to travel, and of course, the cost) and we'd like to hear from anyone\* who has a view on possible venues. Would Grange be a suitable place?

Hopefully, my restored plumbing will remain fully functional for next year, but perhaps the 13th should be avoided. You never know.

*\*How about the Editor? How about Oz?*





## **458 SQUADRON - N.S.W. FLIGHT**

### **REUNION**

**NOVOTEL NORTHBEACH, WOLLONGONG**

**MARCH 11 – 16, 2007**

#### **DRAFT PROGRAMME**

SUN MAR 11	Arrival at Wollongong – by car or train (transfer provided to hotel) Check in at the Novotel, Northbeach Welcome BBQ & drinks on the terrace
MON MAR 12	Day trip (1100-1600) to Stanwell Tops; lunch at Woonona-Bulli RSL Club and visits to Janet's Royalty Rooms, for afternoon tea, and Articles Fine Art Gallery
TUE MAR 13	Visit to Nan Tien Buddhist Temple, and lunch
WED MAR 14	"Cockatoo Run" – ride on the 3801 steam train from Wollongong to Robertson, possibly in our exclusive "458" carriage Lunch at Robertson Hotel or Bowling Club Return on the 3801 to Wollongong
THU MAR 15	Lunch at local Club or at Kiama Visit to the Wollongong Cenotaph Reunion Dinner
FRI MAR 16	Depart for home

Whilst this is a NSW Flight reunion, as always, we would warmly welcome attendance from interstate and overseas mates.

Approximate cost (based on twin share, city-view accommodation at the hotel) will be \$800.00 per person. This includes accommodation, daily buffet breakfasts, two dinners, four lunches, three full day trips and one half day.

Cost for single accommodation would be an additional \$ 463.

Upgrade to ocean view rooms is possible, for an additional \$10 per person per night; or to an ocean view room with balcony for \$15 per person per night.

A deposit of \$250 per head is due at the time of registration, and can be made by:

- cheque (made out to 458 Squadron Reunion)
- Bank transfer (please contact Rob Wilkinson for NSW Flight bank account details)
- credit card (with a 1% merchant fee surcharge)

Please register NOW, by completing the slip below and mailing to:

Rob Wilkinson

458 Squadron Reunion

36 Finch Avenue, East Ryde 2113.

(02) 9888-3625 or 0418-969241

[robwilk@bigpond.net.au](mailto:robwilk@bigpond.net.au)

**WEDDED  
BLISS**  
Millers  
celebrate  
65-year  
milestone



All those years ago, Enid went to Ron Miller's house in Yenda with friends on a Sunday night to play tennis. Ron walked her home and tried to kiss her, but Enid wouldn't have any part of it.

After just 11 months of marriage, Ron was sent to war and didn't see his sweetheart for another two years and four months, when he landed back in

"We used to write to each other so much, we had the letters numbered, 101, 102, 103.

The couple has two sons, two daughters, 11 grandchildren, three great grandsons, and two great granddaughters.

"We have a great family and we always look after each other."



That's our boy . . . well done Ron



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60 Years  
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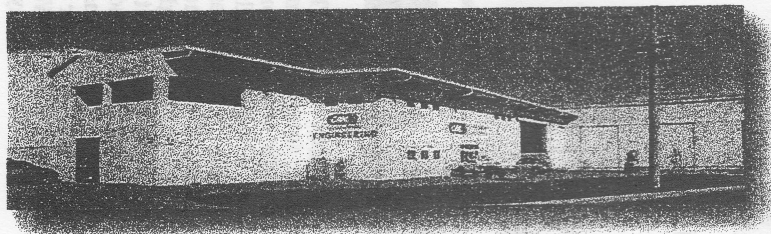
# ENGINEERING OPENING

October 2006

**WELDING \* MACHINING \* REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE \* NEW EQUIPMENT \* STRUCTURAL STEEL**

## Announcing Engineering Division Completion

Customers may be aware that over the past twelve months we have been building a brand new Engineering facility. With great pleasure we announce it is now open and ready for business.



## An open invitation to celebrate.

An open invitation to our customers and community is extended to attend our grand opening on October 20 2006 from 3.00pm 'till 6.00pm. We wish to join with you to celebrate the construction and commissioning of the most modern manufacturing facility in New South Wales. Refreshments will be provided.



" Winner of the 2002 Ministers  
Award for Excellence, Rural &  
Regional Employers of New Apprentices"

## OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU....

For over Sixty years Collier & Miller Engineering has built a reputation for quality products and services. Some facts about our business include:

### Our Staff

37 Staff in Trades of, Machining (14), Welding (16), Sheet Metal (2), CAD/CAM (2), Administration (3)

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Centre Lathes, Milling Machines  
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Brake Press, Digi-Bender, Folder, Roller,  
MIG, TIG, Plasma, CNC Bandsaw,  
High Capacity Bandsaw, CNC Oxy/LPG  
Profile Cutter, CNC High Definition  
Plasma Profile Cutter.

### Our Technology

Computer Modelling and Design  
Computer Assisted Manufacturing  
CNC Profile Putting  
High Definition Plasma Cutting

### Our Facility

6000m<sup>2</sup> Total Area  
4 Overhead Cranes  
Improved Customer Foyer  
Modern Staff Facilities

**Official Opening  
Friday October 20 2006  
3.00pm - 6.00pm**

13-19 Harris Road Griffith NSW 2680  
Tel: (02) 6969 4500 Fax: (02) 6964 1908

**Collier & Miller Pty Ltd**

**Manager**

Dennis Tagliapietra  
(02) 6969 4572

**Machining**

Michael Reginato  
(02) 6969 4575

**Welding**

Paul Giovinozzo  
(02) 6969 4574

**Drafting**

John Sillis  
(02) 6969 4578

*Incidentally, though not intentionally, in 1943 I spent a November week onshore at Morecambe Bay, which was then an RAF pre-embarkation depot. We never saw the windward shore for the fog. It was there that I learned about English landladies and their problems in feeding flying men on the then rations. Washing (of bodies) was also rationed. I remember the disbelief generated by the notice to airmen glued to the wall, informing us that Saturday was bath night, and threatening stern disciplinary action against those who did not avail themselves of this privilege. Do not rely on me turning up at any reunion in that part of the world. JHW.*

### **New South Wales Flight by Eric Munkman**

I received a phone call from Bill Johnson inquiring about the Squadron. He is keeping reasonably well, but like most of us is slowing down, I know the feeling, He wishes to be remembered to all the members.

I was saddened to hear of the passing of Mick Singe and Rupert Pearce. They were stalwarts of the Squadron, Mick a dedicated member from way back and past president of Vic Flight and Rupert, who was a great acquisition to Vic Flight and served as Secretary for many years. They will both be sadly missed. My personal sympathy to Rupert's friend Norma.

Keith Cousins, Frank Ward and myself, together with our wives, attended the Battle of Britain ceremony at the Cenotaph and on behalf of the Squadron I laid a wreath. We then attended a luncheon at Parliament House.

In a letter I received from Tom Moore I learned that Harley (Harpo) Marks passed away on August 4 in Belmont Hospital after a couple of years of slowly deteriorating health. For many years, Harley was proprietor of RAN Built Industries, a successful engineering and fabrication business based in Newcastle. The business produced farm sheds for Rural Australia and overseas export.

Harley Marks was second pilot in Doug Mcguigan's crew, probably one of the last crews to join the squadron at Gibraltar.. He made very few appearances at squadron activities but kept in touch with Tom Moore.

Not a lot to report from Eric in Orange except to say it has been bloody cold. Rinso Purcill and I recently attended the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner of Orange RAAF Branch, a well organized and well attended function.

*And from the Editor. I received a letter from Kerry Brain informing that they had a great holiday in California early in the year. In August/September, Curly (George) had been seriously ill and in Deniliquin hospital. While there, Don and Joan Anderson drove down from Hay to see him. He was home again by early October. We hope you recover fully, young feller.*

### **NSW FLIGHT REUNION – WOLLONGONG – MARCH 11-16 2007**

Planning is underway for a NSW Flight Reunion, to be held at the Novotel Northbeach Hotel, Wollongong, from March 11-16. Further information and registration details are included on an enclosed flyer.

An invitation is extended to all interstate and overseas mates to join in, and we hope that registrations will be received from far and wide.

## **New Zealand Flight** by Kevin George.

*Writing in July, Kevin expressed an interest in attending the proposed NSW Flight mini-reunion in 2007 (see elsewhere for more data – Ed)*

“ I have not been in contact with Arch Fell, Jack Pryde or Ron Verity since early in the year, so the sole N.Z good news comes from me. Two weeks ago I renewed my medical certificate validating my private pilot's licence, valid for the next two years”

*Kevin's son and daughter-in-law have been swanning around the Whitsundays in their yacht, but were expected to sail home in October. He concluded with a pat on the back for the editor, having very much enjoyed the last newsletter.*

## **Victorian Flight** by Neil Dean.

It is with deep regret that we have to advise the death of our esteemed flight secretary and correspondent, Rupert Pearce. Rupert held the office of secretary for some fifteen years, and was particular and thorough in everything he did. He had his finger on the pulse of the Squadron. Rupert will be sadly missed and we send our deepest sympathy to Roy and Barbara.

A large number attended the funeral as Rupert was involved with his church, Probus, freemasonry and the RSL. Attending to pay their respect from the squadron were Neil Dean, Joyce Reeves, John and Marjory Bilney, Jack and Margaret Ellis, Harry and Nell Ashworth, Ken Fleming, Roy and Barbara Pearce, and Norma Pollard.

We were also saddened by news of the sudden passing of friend, comrade and ex-president, Mick Singe, in Perth on 22 September. A service was held in Perth soon after his death and Mick's son David, brought his ashes to Melbourne where an interment service was held at Springvale Rose Garden Cemetery on 16 October. The ashes were laid to rest beside those of Mavis, his late wife.

458'ers who attended this service were David Singe, John and Marjory Bilney, Jack and Margaret Ellis, Ian Alison, Neil Dean, Joyce Reeves, Norma Pollard, Roy and Barbara Pearce. We appreciated the attendance of Barry Cuthbertson, son of Peg and the late Gordon; we have invited him to attend future squadron functions.

Shirley Granger has had a bout in hospital but is now convalescing. I will be undergoing major surgery on 20 October and will be out of action for several months. On a brighter note, our next function will be a Xmas Barbecue at the Bilney home at One Tree Hill Rd, Ferny Creek in the beautiful Dandenong Ranges on Sunday 26 November, at 1200. BYO Food and drink.

## **Western Australia Flight** By Ted Jewell.

We were all saddened by the death of Clarence Desmond Singe or Mick, as we all knew him on the Squadron. Mick had a hip replacement but heart problems developed, and he died unexpectedly in Hospital on 22 September 2006.

Mick had moved to Perth about two years ago to be with his son David, his daughter-in-law Gillian, and his two grandsons Hugh and Edward. Mick was full of life and 458 Squadron was a very important part of it. Bill and Joan Clues, Olga Jones and I attended the service.



We have been fairly quiet here in the West over the winter months but had a luncheon get-together on Sunday 8 October at the Breslands' home. Squadron members present were Bill and Joan Clues, Henry and Vera Etherton, Margaret Gannaway, and Ted Jewell and friend. We had a great day. Our Christmas dinner will be at Miss Maud's restaurant in Perth on Sunday 3 December and we are hoping for a good roll-up.

Bill Kelliher's wife Flip has been ill for a long time; looking after her became too much for Bill, and she is now in a nursing home.

I was talking to Nobby Nobbs some weeks ago; he had had a fall, ripped his hand open to the bone, and needed lots of stitches

Best wishes for a merry Christmas and happy New Year to all from the West.

### *Vale, Mick and Rupert.*

#### **Canada Flight** by Bryan Quinlan

Sadly, this report has to lead-off with the unexpected loss of Alan Ruggleson on 11 August following a lung operation which was successful, however, while recuperating in hospital he contacted pneumonia and was unable to fight it off. I have tried several times to contact his wife Val but without success to date. Our deepest sympathies go to Val and family members.

I also received disturbing news from a friend of Betty Hailstone, who has remained in contact over the years via the Newsletter, that she is seriously ill in hospital. Betty spent her life as a nurse and a dedicated caregiver and in the last few years taking care of her sister. Our thoughts and best wishes go out to Betty now in need of care herself.

Over the summer months I have been in touch one way or another with Ernie Ireland, Tom Rowan, Jack Reynolds and Tom Lindsay, all with various and inevitable age-related problems, but still retaining some spark from the distant days of yore.

As a long-time member of his local Royal Canadian Legion branch Tom (Rowan) was asked to write the branch's history from its formation by returning WW I veterans when, under a Federal government land development scheme, they were building a new community in the isolated and undeveloped areas of Northern Saskatchewan. Tom sent me a copy of his work which presents an interesting story of perseverance and comradeship during the pioneering era. I understand that all Legion branches across Canada have similar projects in an effort to preserve their respective histories.

Have also been in touch with George and Grace Unitt and Colin Fereday by telephone and/or letter and always enjoy those too-few sessions. Colin kindly sent me one of the Leigh Light Wellington place mats from the final All-States reunion and recently, the CD of that event which I look forward to viewing in the immediate future.

On a personal note, '06 has not been my favorite year as both knees have developed osteo-arthritis that curtailed the golf season in July. Then a slip on stairs at home with a heavy landing, then shortly after, when babysitting our daughter's dog, my fingers engaged his teeth and came out on the losing end. Not complaining though, as I am very much aware that many others have far more serious problems to contend with. Any sympathy should go to Joan who has had to add to her already heavy workload in the house and garden.

Seems too early, however, on behalf of Tom Lindsay and the rest of the Canadian gang we will take this opportunity to wish all our Aussie mates a very Merry Christmas and good health and happiness in 2007.

### ***Editorial.***

*I recently received a letter from Leon Armstrong, and quote matters of interest:*

.” Yesterday my branch of the RAF Association ran two coaches for its members to the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in Staffordshire, near the cathedral city of Lichfield. The Arboretum is an amazing and vast memorial created on a 150 acre site (60.702 hectares if you're metricated now in Oz,) on open land gifted by a gravel company and supported by the Royal British Legion and charity.

Actually, there are many memorial sites dedicated to the Royal Navy, various Army units, the Air Force, women's organisations, the Royal National Lifeboats Institution and ordinary civilians. There are hundreds of trees in the names of various squadrons. It was quite impossible to see it all in the one afternoon we spent there.

To quote from the blurb I was given :- "It is a home to over 100 major memorials both Military and Civil. It has been created as a living tribute to all who served - to those who made the supreme sacrifice and to those who served and came home." There is a Millennium Chapel of Peace and Forgiveness in which my RAFA branch held a brief service conducted by our Padre. I asked at Reception to locate for me my old squadron (612 Sqdn.) tree, but it is not there, and whether a 458 Squadron tree existed. Lo and Behold, it's on the register as tree no.117 and a staff member and we found it amongst the hundreds of trees there.

We found the tree, the 458 tree along the tree-lined Millennium Avenue- it's a young eucalypt and should be alive long after we have gone. What I'd like to know is who planted it and when? Also why wasn't 458 UK Flight told about it? If I'd known, I would, without doubt, have been there with, perhaps, some of our UK members. There was no record as to when it was planted.” *Can anyone help? -Ed.*

*Leon also asked whether anyone knew what had happened to the Peanut Club. None of the Sydney hierarchy knows any more than what appears in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Squadron History at p. 245.*

*Finally, your editor and his daughter Wendy are about to embark on a commercial cruise that, with a bit of luck and good navigation, will circumnavigate Australia. Last opportunity to fine-tune my dead reckoning skills over 12,000 nautical miles!*