



JOURNAL OF THE 458 Squadron Council

Year 62

No 241

AUGUST 2011

Squadron President:	Australia	Keith Cousins (NSW)
Squadron Vice-presidents:	Canada	Tom Lindsay
	New Zealand	Kevin George
	U.K.	Leon Armstrong

Squadron Treasurer: John Gibbins 6 Boronia Avenue, Turramurra NSW 2074

Squadron Secretary: David Longhurst 129A Darling Street, Balmain NSW 2041

Newsletter Editor: Rob Wilkinson 36 Finch Avenue, East Ryde NSW 2113
phone (02) 9878 4518 email: robwilk@bigpond.net.au

Newsletter 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
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	Roland Orchard	78 Edward Road, Chirnside Park VIC. 3116
Canada	Bryan Quinlan	1460 Haywood Ave., W. Vancouver, B.C. Canada.

* *Post communications for Squadron Secretary to David Longhurst (address above), and for the Squadron (and NSW Flight) Treasurer to John Gibbins (address above)*

** *Have you notified Rob Wilkinson, if you prefer to receive your newsletter by email?
Are there others in your family, or circle of friends, who would like to receive a copy by e-mail ?
Please advise the Editor – see address and e-mail details above.*

*** *Contributions and reports for the next Newsletter are due to the Editor by 30 November. Please feel free to send in your story to your NEW editor – see details next page.*

VALE

With sadness, we record the passing of the following members and family of 458.

Harry Ashworth	see VIC flight report
Bill Chapman	see NSW flight report
Veronica (Ronnie) Matthews	see WA flight report
Dorothy Munkman	see NSW flight report
Kingston (Nobby) Nobbs	see WA flight report
David Prideaux	see VIC flight report
Ken Rex	see WA flight report

JOURNAL EDITOR

by Rob Wilkinson

I am very pleased to advise that **Roland Orchard** has agreed to take over the role of 458 Journal Editor, as of November 2011.

Roland is the Victoria Flight President, and from the look of his Flight Reports, I am sure he will do a great job. Please send your reports and articles to Roland forthwith, at rjorch@bigpond.net.au or to 78 Edward Road, Chirnside Park. Victoria 3116.

I took over the Editing role from Jim Whitem, in July 2007, and, given work and other voluntary commitments, I'm more than happy to hand this one over to Roland.

JOURNAL PRINTING

Many thanks to several readers, in particular Hettie Murray, who donated generously towards printing costs for future editions of the 458 Journal. To date, we have received \$ 900 in contributions. Whilst Squadron funds are certainly not drying up, we no longer have Membership fees, and since we all want the Journal to stay in circulation for years to come, those donations will certainly help. If you wish to contribute, please send your cheque to John Gibbins, the Squadron Treasurer (details front page).....*Ed.*

VIC GIBBINS

by John Gibbins

Background: Vic Gibbins (NX 156) first departed Australia for the war in 1939 - and was in Artillery. He served in Egypt, Palestine, Ceylon and New Guinea. He joined 458 Squadron (NSW Branch) at the invitation of his work colleague and long time friend, the late Bob Bruce. Vic's younger brother served as an RAAF Aircraft fitter in overseas operation.

With the surrender of Japan, troops from the USA, Great Britain and Australia were sent to Japan as part of the Joint Occupational force. Vic Gibbins, a Lt. Colonel, was sent to Japan by the Australian Government's Repatriation Department, to gauge what sort of work / education servicemen would like to do upon discharge.

Vic's flight, on a DC aircraft, commenced in Sydney, landed in Alice Springs, then Darwin, before Island hopping to Japan. In Darwin, the civilians and Defence personnel boarded the newly serviced aircraft for the next flight. The aircraft zoomed down the entire length of the runway, barely lifted off the ground, circled and landed back on the strip. The pilot had announced that the aircraft seemed to be lacking power. The RAAF ground crew checked the engines, only to find that the spark plugs had only been inserted by hand, but not tightened - 'lunch break had intervened.' The plugs were tightened, and engines checked. The Commanding RAAF Officer then ordered that one of the 'service crew' accompany the flight to the next point of call. From then on, one member of the ground crew accompanied each aircraft, and no further problems occurred.

A MESSAGE FROM BILL LAUGHLIN

I have recently had transferred to DVD 5 x reels of 8mm film my film my father took when he was in Rhodesia/Africa/UK/US. It is an interesting record of the time, and there is a segment where the trainees received their wings, and there is also some colour film which I would think would have been fairly scarce at that time. The Wings Ceremony took place at No 23 EFTS Heany on the 8th September 1942. I have extra copies available - if anyone would like a copy, please contact Rob Wilkinson.

FLIGHT REPORTS

Canada flight

by Bryan Quinlan

Except for two notable exceptions, our report more closely resembles a medical update, as one can expect, considering the advancing years, and our diminished membership.

One exception involves the hardy Tom Rowan, age 94, who lives in Northern Saskatchewan, curls in the winter and keeps busy in the garden and with his card-playing group in the summer. Tom is now looking forward to early August when he will once again take to the air for a 30-minute sight-seeing trip in a WWII Mitchell bomber at an air show in Saskatoon. A family gift, obviously, in recognition of Tom's active spirit.

The other involves a recent visit from Chris Winchester (son of the late Sid Winchester) and his wife Christine, whose family experienced the WWII Hamburg raids, to fill me in on their visit to Holme Upon Spalding Moor. They were very kind to give me a large set of photos they took while there, including a trip through the "Squadron Corridor" (which I had never heard of), which included numerous shots of 458's presence there (several of those photos appear on the following page). They also visited the restoration centre where the Hendon Wellington is undergoing major refurbishing. On top of that, they kindly gave me a copy of the Wellington Pilot's Notes, and a book on the Wellington, both purchased at one of their stopping points. They are now off again on another overseas visit, the third, I believe, for three straight years.

Jack Reynolds says he has nothing important to report other than he now pilots a scooter for trips of any distance, a far cry from his earlier years piloting Wimpies and, later, Beaufighters.

Tom Lindsay, who can be seen most days exercising with his walker at the nearby major shopping centre in West Vancouver, also has nothing interesting to report, except at 94 he has set his sights on the 100 mark.

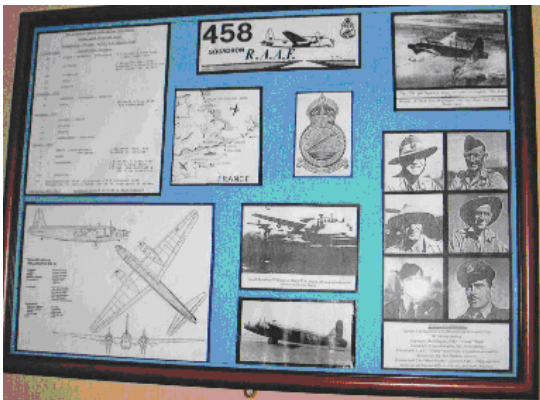
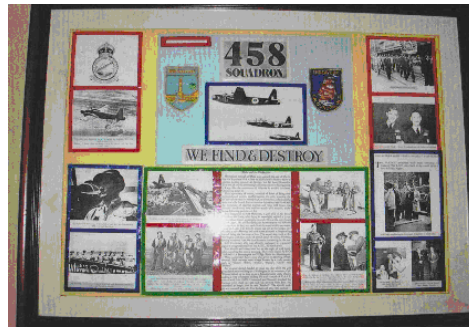
Talking via telephone to Bert Markland's wife, Gladys indicates that Bert remains in a care centre and not faring too well, but still taking an interest in 458 goings on. She herself has recovered from a stroke in March of this year, and fortunately has help from family close-by.

I have not heard back from Dick Sladen's daughter, but am doubtful if there has been any improvement in his condition in extended care, but can only hope that opinion is incorrect.

That only leaves yours truly to briefly report a rather negative health year, starting with two seizures in April, emergency treatment in Bellingham, Wash. USA, further treatment in Vancouver and two more emergency visits in May on unrelated ailments, all of which resulted in postponement of my long-awaited turn for the first knee replacement op, which came up in May. Am now well-recovered and cleared to be reactivated for the first knee job. Oh yes, throw in an upcoming cataract procedure, which about covers things. Wife Joan also not trouble-free with a bad shoulder, sore hip and back, and recovering from a bruised rib fall.

So thank goodness for Tom Rowan's news and the Chris Winchester visit. Our collective best wishes to all our Aussie mates.

Photos from Holme Upon Spalding Moor.



South Australia Flight by Pat Cribb

The annual Memorial Service at Adelaide Airport was held on Sunday, April 17, when several 458 members attended. We are very pleased there has been a change of plans regarding the removal of the 36 plaques there, about which we reported in the last newsletter. The time for them to go, to make way for Airport extensions, will not be 2014, but eight to nine years later, so we can still attend the Annual Memorial Services at the Airport for a few more years.

The returned men of 458 Squadron – Colin Hutchinson, Reg Priest and John Ringwood, proudly marched again on Anzac Day and attended the lunch afterwards at the Kensington Hotel – 15 friends altogether.

On July 7, we met again, this time for lunch at the Hackney Hotel – there were only ten of us. We missed Reg Priest who, for the first time in many years, could not attend. He was admitted to the Flinders Medical Centre for an operation and is still recovering there. We send him our very best wishes for a speedy recovery.

We have had phone calls recently from others now unable to join in our get-togethers, namely Verna Riseley, Keith Grimshaw and Mattie Baker. Our thoughts are with you all.

We are particularly sorry that Dorothy Munkman has passed away, and we extend our sympathy to Eric.

West Australia Flight by Ted Jewell

There's very little to report on Anzac Day in Perth, as we have no members able to march. But, we had Jennifer Clues lay a wreath for 458 members at the War Memorial in Kings Park – a good job, well done Jennifer.

With sadness, we record the passing of three W.A. Members:

- **Kingston (Nobby) Leslie Nobbs**
- **Ken Rex** who was an associate member for many years
- **Ronnie Matthews (Veronica)** who was my partner for 17 years.

Every one of them will be sadly missed.

I had the usual B.B.Q at my home in Mandurah in April. There was a fairly good roll up, but several couldn't make it because of sickness. I had a call from Laurie Crowley who said his nephew lived in Perth, and could he come down. But later I had a call from Joe Crowley to say he wasn't able to make it.

I also had a call from a Nick Bertram, who said his grandfather was in 458 squadron, but Nick said he didn't know much about him, as his father was killed in a car accident when he (Nick) was only 9 years old. Nick lives in Perth and came down to the B.B.Q with his girlfriend Jess. We all had a great day. Is there any member who remembers Nick's grand-father Herbert (Nick) Bertram? He was a WAG in the squadron. Nick Bertram lives at Unit 1/5 Hazel Ave Woodlands Perth WA 6018. His mobile: 0428 509 980.

After we had the B.B.Q, which Nobby & Esme attended, I had a call from Esme, about a month later, that Nobby had a fall and hit his head on the ground, causing bleeding on the brain, from which he never recovered. He was given a private funeral.

I spoke to Jim Palmer on the phone, still in a nursing home in Kojinup, not able to get around much these days.

After all the hot dry weather we have had, at last we are having some good heavy rain.

Best wishes to all.

NSW flight by Keith Cousins and Eric Munkman

We were all deeply saddened to learn of the death of **Dorothy Munkman**, Eric's wife, and a Squadron stalwart. Sincere condolences to Eric, Ron, Beryl, Ian and families, from all in the NSW Flight (tribute below).

Anzac Day in Sydney commenced with typical autumn weather, cool, occasional light showers, forecast to clear about mid-day, and maximum temperature of 19 degrees. So it turned out to be, which suited admirably, fitting in with projected "take off" time from Elizabeth St. A few of our regulars called in sick, so numbers were down, as expected. Despite the shortfall, numbers were topped up with a few "junior ranks".

The provision of wheel-chairs for those in need has become a feature for us, not only for the march, but for seating during the waiting time before the march. With the skirl of pipes from the Knox College band behind us, we marched off, just before mid-day, the 458 banner proudly held by David Longhurst and Rob Wilkinson. The wheel-chairs were put to good use, ably powered by Peter Bitmead and Ron Munkman. On completion of the march, we adjourned for lunch, with family members, to the Masonic Club in nearby Castlereagh St. We were pleased to have the Wardle family (originally from the U.K.) and David Wood join us for the day.

Eric has been advised by Bill's son that his father **Bill Chapman** passed away on the 10th February, 2011. Bill worked in the squadron store. Our condolences to Bill's family.

And, our best wishes go to **Jack Hamilton** who has not been too well in the past few months.....*Ed.*

A special tribute to Dorothy Munkman by Eric & Dorothy's daughter, Beryl Dodds

Dorothy Munkman was a loving wife to Eric for over 65 years.

Dorothy was raised in Roseville, the eldest of 5 children. Her schooling was at Roseville Public School and then at Willoughby Home Science, now Willoughby High School.

Dorothy and Eric met on a blind date. Eric's friend Archie Davey asked him to accompany him on an outing with a couple of lady friends, and Eric would be with Dorothy. Eric was looking forward to this as he had taken Dorothy out the previous week. On the way, they continued past Dorothy's place, at which point Eric queried Archie, who then promptly informed him – "Oh, not that Dorothy". Eric was disappointed. The day continued in that vein for Eric, as Dorothy did not want to spend much time with him, and she chatted to others in the group. They walked to Willis Castle, Castlecrag, and caught a boat for a day on the harbour. Dorothy was not good on water and became sea sick. That's when Eric comforted her and helped her until the end of the trip. That was the beginninghe had won her heart.

Their courtship was lengthy, and the war interrupted it. But for the 12 months before Eric was posted overseas, Eric and Dorothy would sit on the front verandah of Dorothy's home in Roseville to spend time together, and Dorothy's brothers and sisters would sit and watch them. It cost Eric a fortune in bribes. The brothers would get their money, and race down to the shop and be back in a flash – "they were good enough for the Olympics", Eric would say. Even when Eric and Dorothy went into the lounge room, the siblings would get a ladder so they could watch through the window.

Eric was stationed at Williamstown until he was dispatched overseas. The orders came through and the men were quickly loaded onto the train to the city. To inform Dorothy he was leaving, Eric wrote a note asking whoever found it to ring Dorothy. He then wrapped the note up with "tuppence" for the phone call and as the train went through the station, heading for the wharves in Sydney, Eric threw it out the window. Dorothy received the message, and raced down to the wharf to see him before he left, but she missed him. He had sailed.

While Eric was overseas, many letters were written to one another. One day, Dorothy received the telegram “Desire to become engaged”. It was from Eric, and at first she was not sure if he meant, engaged to her or he had met someone overseas! She took the punt and replied with “YES”.

At the end of the war, after being away for 4 years, Eric arrived home, and within two weeks they were married. While Eric had been away, Dorothy was able to collect enough ration coupons, with relatives kicking in a few more, to buy the lace and satin for her wedding dress. Her auntie made the dress and Dorothy still has it to this day.

Eric and Dorothy have two children – Ron and Beryl. Dorothy was very much involved in their lives being the scorer for Ron’s cricket, and President and Secretary at different times with Beryl’s marching girls. She was also President of the P&C Association of their Primary School. While she was the scorer for Ron’s cricket on the Saturday morning, in the afternoon she backed up to score for Eric’s cricket matches.

Eric and Dorothy attended many 458 Squadron functions and reunions, both in Australia and overseas, and formed life long friendships. Dorothy always supported Eric in his various roles and activities in the Squadron.

Dorothy loved her sport, especially the golf, cricket and tennis. She played tennis on Thursdays with “the girls” well into her 70’s.

Her Grandkids – how special were they to her – the 5 of them! That’s when the babysitting started, and she was always available whenever asked. To have her family around her meant so much, and she held “Nanna’s Day” each Easter, when all the family attended her day, for over 40 years.

The Great Grand Kids – 5 in all – the icing on the cake – what a treat. The middle one, Grace – the one who when finally was mobile got Dorothy up and down with her “Doe, come and do this” and Dorothy got up even though it took some effort because that was what Dorothy did. She would not disappoint her family.

Eric and Dorothy have lived in Middle Cove, Willoughby, Forestville and finally the War Vets. Village, Collaroy Plateau. They moved to their town house and were involved in the activities and volunteering their services as they have done so many times before. Dorothy was secretary to the Montgomery Pavilion Volunteers, RSL Retirement Village.

Over time Dorothy has held various positions in organizations and been recognised for her services -

Awarded Citizen of the Year 1982 by Willoughby Council for her Services to Youth & Community

Awarded with the Montgomery Pavilion Volunteers, the Frank McAskill Trophy by Warringah Council for community service in Senior Week 2002

Awarded Joint Certificate of Appreciation with Eric for Volunteer Service from the RSL Veterans Retirement Village 2002

Awarded Certificate of Appreciation for Volunteer Service from the RSL Veterans Retirement Village 2004

Even though Dorothy’s passing was sudden, Eric, Ron, Beryl and Ian, had time to say their good byes and reflect. Dorothy’s comment to them was – and I know she would want this passed onto you – “Remember the good times”.

Rest in Peace, Dorothy.

Victoria Flight by Roland Orchard

VALE: Harry Rotheram Ashworth. It is with great sadness to announce the passing of Harry Ashworth. He passed away peacefully at Darvel Lodge, Noble Park, Victoria on the 11th June, 2011. Sympathies to his wife Nell and daughters, Anne, June, Helen and Lesley and their respective families. Harry was a past 458 Squadron Council President.

Jeremy Orchard, Fred Ayres, Chris Orchard and I represented 458 Squadron at Harry's funeral. It was a moving service, which was fitting for such a devoted husband and father. The service concluded with Vera Lynn's "We'll meet again" which was into its 2nd chorus and came to an abrupt ending when the celebrant announced that "Hang on..... I think Harry would rather this!" What followed was a very loud Sydney Swans AFL theme song. Harry was a devout 'one eyed' Swans fan. This brought a smile to everyone in the congregation.

It was an honour to know you Harry, albeit for such a short time. Vale, mate. You will be sadly missed. Your assistance during the Victoria Flight Committee transition to the current incumbent was invaluable. Your story telling will also be missed.

Special Message re David Prideaux. Son of 458 Veteran Bruce Prideaux.

By Jeremy Orchard. Victoria Flight Secretary/Treasurer.

On July 4th, a Memorial Service was held for Vic Flight member **David Prideaux**, the son of Gloria & the late 458 Veteran Bruce Prideaux. With over 500 in attendance, it was a moving service for all. David was on a hunting trip in rugged bushland in north-east Victoria (a spot he had been to before) and went missing. Despite extensive searching by the family and the authorities in June, very sadly he has not been found. Our prayers and thoughts are with his wife Joanne, daughter Georgia, son Caleb and the entire Prideaux family.

ANZAC Day 2011

Another successful ANZAC Day march this year. Those who marched were:

Karen Ganley, Helen Cartledge, Fred Ayres, Howard & Sally Bertram, Brian Paroissien, Jane Foster, Peter & Sue Jackson, Christopher Orchard, Jeremy Orchard, Roland Orchard and daughter Emily. Eric Foster and daughter, Rebecca and son, David saw us off and took photos of us along the way. Thanks also to the 5 AAF cadets who carried the picture of the Wellington and the Banner: Patrick Loleng, Zeus Shukla, Timothy Byrne, Hannah Vasiliades and Jai Town.

After the March, most of us retired back to the Melbourne Bowling Club in Windsor for a well earned thirst quencher and snack. We held the Victoria Flight Committee AGM and a motion was passed to re-install all serving members.

President: Roland Orchard accepted to continue in office as President

Senior vice-President: Christopher Orchard accepted to continue on in the office

Junior vice-President: Fred Ayres accepted to continue on in the office

Secretary/Treasurer: Jeremy Orchard accepted to continue on in the office.



Those of you who receive MUFTI (RSL Vic magazine) see Pg.11.

458 Squadron Crest Patches.

Thanks to all for your patience regarding the supply of 458 Crest patches. It has been a tricky project to say the least. We want to get it right before we make them available. I am happy to announce, with a new supplier on board, we have a sample which "looks the goods". A couple of more upgrades to it and it should be available for sale by next newsletter. We have to order a minimum of 50 at \$20 a piece. (cash up front to the supplier) I will keep you informed in the next edition. Please consider purchasing one. It would be a great memento to own. Enquires to Chris Orchard. cnjorch@tpg.com.au or by mail 44 Herrington Turn, Caroline Springs, Victoria.3023. or mobile 0418 392 940.

458 Squadron Web site.

No word from Department of Veterans Affairs yet, but hopefully we will have good news in the next newsletter. We are still open to suggestions for input into the web site. Jeremy has done a fantastic job into formatting a draft home page. It looks great and thanks for all your hard work, Jeremy. All enquires re the web site to jgonewday@yahoo.com or mobile 0431 157 406 or 70 Gateshead Drive, Wantirna South. Victoria 3152.

Veteran Visit

On Sunday 19th June, Peter & Pauline Hedgcock, Jeremy Orchard and I visited Bill & Betty Flentje at their home in Bendigo. Peter had some photos he had copied and enlarged for Bill and Betty. Also a photo presentation on DVD had been expertly produced by Peter for their viewing on TV. Thanks once again to Betty and Bill for allowing us to come and visit. It was such a joy to go up and see you all again. Linden, Neil, Rod and Zac were also there to share the day.

Well done to Bill and Betty Flentje's contribution to the ongoing project of identifying names to faces in 458 Squadron photos. When the web site is up and going, this will be a continuing project for all to see and put names to faces.

It's probably a good reminder to us all to have a look at the old Squadron photos, and see if you can put names to faces, write them down and send us copies. This will help keep not just 458 Squadron memories alive but the memory of the brave men who served with the Squadron as well.

On a final note, it is with great pleasure that as from next newsletter, I will be taking over the role of Editor of the Squadron Journal. I'm sure Rob will also mention this in this edition. I'm sure it will be a smooth, seamless transition. Any enquiries please don't hesitate to contact me at

Email rjorch@bigpond.net.au

or by mail, 78 Edward Road, Chirnside Park. Victoria 3116.

Phone: 03 97270106.

Mobile: 0438 366 667.

Fred Ayres hasn't been in the best of health lately, so get well soon, mate.

UK Flight

by Keith Wilkinson

Members of the 458 family here in the UK were sad to hear of the news that Eric Munkman's wife, Dorothy, has passed away. Our thoughts and condolences go out to Eric and his family in Australia.

Our thoughts here have also turned to Canada – and the 130,000 members of the Royal Canadian Air Force who served in World War Two. Among the many thousands of Canadian war dead, were 39 members of 458 Squadron.

Well now, there is a special memorial to all those who served in the RCAF and came over to Blighty in our "Darkest Hour".

I attended the unveiling and service of dedication at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire on July 8th which got quite a bit of publicity in the UK.

While William and Kate were touring Canada, there was a royal visitor paying tribute at the arboretum – HRH, the Duke of Gloucester, grandson of King George V, and an honorary Air Marshall of the Royal Air Force and honorary Air Commodore of 501 (County of Gloucester) Squadron.

It was a very moving ceremony and a Spitfire made five low-level flypasts right over the monument – the sound of the roaring engines made the hairs on the back of my neck stand on end. There were dark black clouds on the distant horizon and thunderstorms not far away. But the aircraft from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight made its way safely from RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire. There could have been no better tribute.

Canadian airmen served all over the UK, and many RCAF squadrons were based not far from the monument – Midland airfields like Digby, Waddington, Coleby Grange, Wellingore and Baginton, near Coventry (so badly destroyed in the Blitz).

This monument is literally a piece of Canada in "a foreign field". The middle section of the monolith is made of granite quarried in Canada and then flown over the Atlantic by 426 (Thunderbird) Squadron. There is a maple leaf shape at the top of the memorial with nine points – each representing the Commands of the RAF in which Canadians served.

There are three granite blocks in total – symbolising the red/white/red of the Canadian flag. The outer ring of the base has 13 stone markers – representing the provinces and territories.

There's a modern day twist to the ideas prehistoric man had for Stonehenge. On the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month each year, the memorial's shadow will align with the eleven o'clock position of the stone circle.

There was some sadness that it has taken so long for this memorial to be erected. The only Canadian WW2 veteran I came across at the service – and he was an *army* vet – told me: "I am so pleased to see it after all this time. It should have been done sooner. The trouble is there are so few of us left to appreciate it now." But the feeling was this would become a place of quiet reflection for future generations, looking back at the heroic deeds of grandparents and great-grandparents. All around are young trees which one day will be a forest.

It reminded me very much of the memorial in Australia my wife and I were taken to see by the wonderful Col Fereday of 458 – although there aren't any kangaroos hopping about in Staffordshire, just foxes, badgers and moles.

An RAF band played at the service and a choir called the Spitfires – made up of members of the Voluntary Royal Air Force. The Last Post was sounded and the RAF padre read The Kohima Tribute: **"When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today."**

Three wreaths were laid on the monument: for RAF Leeming and Linton-on-Ouse, and finally for Canada. In the words of the chaplain in the act of commitment: "It is our resolve to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which many times in the last century brought untold sorrow to many."

A number of elderly British veterans, who had been attached to Canadian squadrons and crews, were there. Their stories were chilling. One told me how his Lancaster had been attacked from underneath, over Germany, and shot down. All his crew bailed out, landed safely and managed to walk to Luxembourg, where they were kept hidden by the resistance. He paid tribute to the bravery of those who risked execution to save them from becoming PoWs of the Nazis.

Another veteran told me how he'd gone sick, and a spare bod went on a bombing mission in his place. His replacement was killed that night, sitting in the rear turret he should have been sitting in. Such was the horror of war.

But here in the English Midlands is a granite tribute (see photo below) that will stand forever so we don't forget the Canadians who fought alongside us – like the Canadians of 458. Thank you.



A REQUEST FROM NICK BERTRAM – in regard to his grandfather

My name is Nick Bertram, and I am the grandson of Herbert Nicholas Leonard Bertram, also known as Nick Bertram. Over the past few years, I have been researching my family history, and during this period my family and I have had many of my grandfather's old war photos restored and digitalised.

Below is a photo of him and his fellow crew members getting picked up in the Mediterranean after their Wellington Bomber had engine trouble and had to ditch into the ocean. The extract out of the 458 history book is below. For anyone interested in the photo, please feel free to contact me for a copy.

The photos on the next page are from the 458 Squadron Meetings in the 1950's. If anyone can recognise these gentlemen, please also contact me and let me know who they are, and to arrange for a copy.

Unfortunately, Nick passed away in a glider incident in 1959 in South Australia, so I never had chance to meet him. If there is anyone still with us today that remembers Nick from their 458 service, I would love to hear from you also.

My contact details: email: nickbert_81@hotmail.com & mobile: 0428 509 980

Thanks for allowing me to run this article in the 458 newsletter.



Herbert Nicholas Leonard Bertram - (Known as Nick Bertram)

Service Number – 407025, Flying Officer RAAF, DOB – 29/02/1916, DOD – 17/10/1959

117 Squadron 26/06/1941 - WAG

458 Squadron 06/10/1942 - WAG

459 Squadron 21/01/1945 - PILOT

“In the early hours of 28th February 1943, F/Sgt Scott and his crew, 4 hours out on an anti-submarine patrol over convoys called ‘Novel’ and ‘Peewit’, had engine trouble and ditched in the Mediterranean. They had minor injuries but got into their dinghy. They had three unpleasant hours of darkness before being picked up by a merchantman (SS Destro) and taken to Alexandria and then, somewhat later, back to the Squadron” (History of the 458 RAAF Squadron Book)

In the above photo - F/Sgt. Frank Baggs, Sgt. Nick Bertram, Sgt. “Tich” Woolman, Sgt. Bob Softly, Sgt. Howard Witaker & F/Sgt. “Scotty” Scott

Here are two 458 Squadron Association photos, taken in the 1950's. Nick Bertram is pictured in both, but DO YOU KNOW ANY OF THE OTHER MEN in the photo? If so, please contact young Nick (see details above)



(Unknown, Unknown, Nick Bertram)



(Unknown, Nick Bertram, Unknown, Unknown)