



## JOURNAL OF THE 458 Squadron Council

Year 63 No 245 November 2012

**Squadron President:**  
**Keith Cousins (Australia - NSW)**



### **Squadron Vice-presidents:**

|                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Canada:</b>      | <b>Tom Lindsay</b>    |
| <b>New Zealand:</b> | <b>Kevin George</b>   |
| <b>U.K:</b>         | <b>Leon Armstrong</b> |

**Squadron Treasurer:** John Gibbins 33 Bridge Street, Lane Cove NSW 2066

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

**Newsletter Editor:** Roland Orchard. 78 Edward Road, Chirnside Park. Vic. 3116

Phone (03) 9727-0106 email: [editor@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:editor@458raafsquadron.org)

**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. 0405

SA- Rick Michell 5 Armson Ave. Magill. SA.5072

VIC-Roland Orchard 78 Edward Road, Chirnside Park VIC. 3116

Canada- Bryan Quinlan 1460 Haywood Ave., W. Vancouver, B.C. V7T 1V6. 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 Roland Orchard 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.*

***PLEASE TAKE NOTE.....NEW EDITORS MAILING ADDRESS.***

***ANYTHING THAT YOU WISH TO APPEAR IN THIS JOURNAL MUST BE MAILED OR EMAILED TO ROLAND ORCHARD (address above)***

***Contributions and reports for the next Newsletter are due to the Editor Roland Orchard by 30<sup>th</sup> March 2013. Please feel free to mail or email in your stories, articles or enquires to Roland. All are welcome.***

## **VALE:-**

Hettie Murray.....QLD (widow of the Late Cyril Murray)  
Charles 'Chic' Furness Ruthven.....NSW Report  
Monica Thom.....SA Report (widow of the Late Peter Thom)  
Lawrence (Laurie) Charles Kew... Vic. Report  
Cassie Cousins.....NSW Report  
Kevin Aloysius Walsh..... NSW Report

### **Message from Our Squadron President Keith Cousins.**

"It's that time again" – famous or infamous words from an erstwhile Australian Prime Minister, depending on your political leanings. Seriously, it is a momentous annual event, the celebration of Christmas, that has stood the test of time, and I take this opportunity to wish all "458-ers", their families, and friends, a Happy Peaceful Christmas, and most sincerely, a Healthy New Year.

My thoughts go back to the Yuletide season of 1943 when at Shallufa, the Squadron had been alerted that in nearby Port Tewfiq, a ship laden with Christmas mail for our Mid.East forces, was waiting to be unloaded. There was no shortage of volunteers to unload said mailbags. There is a photo in the family archives of a heap of mailbags outside the Orderly "Room" Tent, being inspected by our Adjutant, F/Lt. "Ceasar Baird, and F/Sgt. Albert "Butch" Power, which I hope to locate for future publication in the Journal. A similar rally for manpower had occurred just weeks before when a shortage of locomotives in the nearby marshalling yards found no shortage of volunteers to manhandle trucks of ammunition into trainloads urgently needed by our land forces proceeding successfully in the west. It was night when the call went out to our off duty men to assist in marshalling the trucks, and they physically made up trainloads until a locomotive arrived.

The past year has been a sad one for several of us. Our thoughts go out to Pat Crib's family and friends following her departure for the great unknown. Her contributions to the JOURNAL with South.Aust. activities were in important link in the chain of events which helped keep our association alive and well; thank you Pat. (also see SA Report)

Closer to home, I have to mention the passing of my beloved , 'Cassie', and I sincerely thank the many words of condolence received – I'm still responding personally. Although the inevitable was with us, it came as a great shock when a doctor arrived on 15th October on a scheduled visit and announced she would have to be returned to hospital. The words I was to have with my wife of over 64 years on that morning of 15th, were the last before her finale on 20th.

**Keith Cousins.**

**FLIGHT REPORTS:**  
**New South Wales Flight report by David Longhurst.**

To start with the good news, I am pleased to report that our "Immediate Past Flight President"- Eric Munkman is in fine form and as ever a chat with him is sure to generate plenty of laughs, good natured ribbing and the occasional bit of advice.

Eric also organised our last lunch at Ryde Catering School. There were only about a dozen of us, but what a magnificent meal, cooked, served and presented by local and international students. I've only one question, when is the next one?

However, it is my sad duty to advise you that our current President –Keith Cousins' dear wife Cassie passed away a few weeks ago after a long illness that she defied to the end. Cassie was an active and independent woman, of strong resolve, who freely shared her opinions on life and how it might be lived. Her memorial service was marked by wonderful eulogies by her sons and grandchildren



Don  
Bitmead

Don Bitmead is settling into a nursing home in order that he might have better access to appropriate care. I understand that our cheery little mate Eric Purcill ("Rinso") from Orange hasn't been in the best of health lately.

As most of you will be aware Rob Wilkinson handed the editorial reins of this newsletter to Roland Orchard a while back, not that he is any less busy as a result. A couple of weeks back my wife and I had the good fortune to be invited to attend a music recital by Roger Woodward. It was organised with the express purpose of raising funds for ROMAC (Rotary Oceania Medical Aid for Children). Rob is the NSW director of this wonderful project that assists children with life threatening and/or life compromising defects. The results are truly miraculous, achieved by highly skilled clinicians with ROMAC paying for transportation, accommodation and the myriad of other costs that would otherwise deny these children a better life. Roger Woodward donates his time freely to his project, just one reason for him being named an "Australian Living Treasure". Well done Rob.

I found a way to finish on a positive note so let me add to it by wishing everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



**Email from Chic Ruthven's step-daughter, Beverley.**

To: [NSW@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:NSW@458raafsquadron.org)

Sent: Thursday, August 30, 2012 10:43 AM

Subject: Charles 'Chic' Furness Ruthven

Re RAAF Flight Sergeant, No. 14944, enlisted 29th April 1940 for the duration of the war (and Reserve 12 months after.).

Just to inform you that my stepdad, "Chic" died 7th August 2012 at Tewantin, Qld, aged (almost) 97 years.

He resided in NSW for most of his life, so I am sending this note to your branch rather than the Qld. address, so that you can adjust your records.

Yours faithfully,

**Beverley Combes**

Name Rod MacLean

Email [rsl@goulburn.net.au](mailto:rsl@goulburn.net.au)

Phone 0248216292

Enquiry It is with regret we inform you of the passing of one of your Squadron members 424074 WO Kevin Aloysius Walsh on 02/12/2012

**Rod MacLean JP**

**Hon Secretary Goulburn RSL Sub Branch**

## WA Flight report by Ted Jewell



**L-R Standing - Cliff Williams. Stan Smith. Pop Gridsby. Les Lockhard (rear). Others n/k  
Front Row – n/k, John Davies, Ted Jewell.**

I have often wondered over the years when I was with the 458 Squadron why certain events did happen, there has never been a mention in any news in Squadron history. While at Shalufa camp a group of mixed fitters were told to pack their gear as they were to proceed to Heliopolis air base in the morning. I was one of those fitters who were going. When we arrived we were put in tents at the transits area, when we were asked why we were there, someone said maybe we were going home as we were in the transit area. There was a parade each morning, but for the rest of the day we did nothing. We had a pass out of camp and could catch the train in town to go into Cairo for the day, mostly sightseeing around the pyramids etc. We also spent some time at the Kiwi club for good cheap meals and cold beers.

We were there for some time when the higher ups said we could do some guard duty, I was with Don Daniels doing the last patrol in the morning, they gave us a pick handle each, what we were to do with then I don't know? May be to throw at any intruders. It was one of those cold nights you get over there, part of our tour was past the cook house, which was open early doing breakfast. So Don and I spent some time there with a big mug of tea and a special breakfast from the cooks.

The orderly room said as we were not doing anything we could help doing work repairing Wellington's air craft that had been in crashes, most of the work so far has been done by the RAF people. One of the planes that had been completed was taken up for a test run, but crashed killing the pilot. We had with us for a while a Alf Thomas from Perth as we were always short of money he said it would be a good idea to run a raffle to raise some money. Alf went to one of the chaps and said lend me your camera, "I want to raffle it, don't worry you will get it back as you are going to win it, plus a few pounds". There were plenty of young RAF chaps in the camp eager to buy tickets.

I can't remember how long we were at Helio, maybe 4 or 5 weeks, some others may remember. One day we were told to pack our gear as we were re-joining our Squadron again at Amiriya. We arrived there and were told the Squadron had been posted, it was the start of our travels to North Africa but that is another story.



Who remembers that period at Heliopolis?

By Ted Jewell WA

(Thanks for transcribing Jess©-ed)

**WA Flight Continues –  
Nick Bertram writes:**

Hi All,

Lunch was held at Bob & Dot Bresland, in City Beach, WA, Sunday 28/10/12. There was a big spread of Soup, Sandwiches and more desserts than you could poke a stick at. I had a talk to Vera Etherton and have discussed copying her husband's photos, apparently there is 2 large albums full of 458 wartime pictures. Vera said he had a personal camera during this time. I will try to find a spare day and go around to set up the scanner one weekend.

I have also attached a story Ted would like to run in the next newsletter please

Cheers

Nick



L-R : Bob Bresland, Bob Kelliher, Stan Watts (Tanya's Husband)  
Bob B was in the 170 Squadron RAF, Bob K is the son of 458er Bill Kelliher



L-R : Jo McArther, Tanya Watts, Vera Etherton. Vera is the wife of 458er Henry Etherton, Jo and Tanya are their grand-daughters



Dot & Bob Bresland



L-R : Sandra & Terry Williams. Terry's father is Cliff "Bunny" Williams of the 458.



**Soup, Sandwich and Desert. Perfect 458 afternoon.**



L-R : Bob & Bill Kelliher Bill was a pilot in the 458 Squadron. Bob is his son



L-R : Ted Jewell, Jess McIver Ted was a 458er, Jess is Nick Bertram's partner



L-R : Ted Jewell, Nick Bertram  
Ted was a 458er, Nick's grandfather is Herbert "Nick" Bertram of the 458

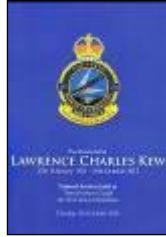


L-R : Joan Clunes, Doreen Wozencroft, Vicky Ham. Joan is the wife of 458er Bill Clunes, Doreen's husband was RAAF and Vicky is Bill & Joan's daughter

**ed note:** Big thanks to Nick Bertram for doing what he does over in WA. Cheers mate you have encapsulated the essence of what the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> (& beyond) generation within 458 is all about. You and your partner Jess are champions.

## **Victoria Flight report by Roland Orchard**

### **Email from Ian Kew**



Our dad Laurie Kew passed away last week (18/10/12) and his funeral is next Tuesday (23/10/12)

Just wanted to let you know that another member of 458 has gone

Thanks and regards

Ian Kew & Marillyn Curtis (daughter)

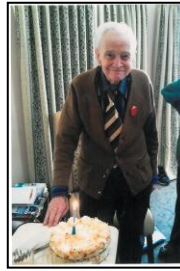
*Born Lawrence Charles Kew 27/02/1921 Strathfield, NSW. Enlisted in Sydney. Service Number 133529. Served with distinction throughout the war with 458 Squadron.*

Victoria Flight Secretary/Treasurer Jeremy Orchard represented 458 Squadron at the Funeral. The 458 Banner was displayed. Condolences to Mrs Kew and the Kew family. Thank you Mrs Kew for your most generous donation of \$500. This will help with the ongoing costs of our website.

### **Happy 91<sup>st</sup> birthday to Eric Jewell.**



Eric Jewell 1941



Eric Jewell 2012

On a personal note I would like to say thank you to all who have written and emailed. It is such a pleasure to be able to help and continue such an important part of the history of 458 Squadron, the 458



L-R Dad (Gordon Orchard), Barry Brooke & Ray Sawyer in Malta April 1942

Journal. My brother Jeremy who works tirelessly on the website cannot get enough praise. Well done Jeremy and thanks from all of us.

It was great to talk to Elaine Irwin who wrote on behalf of Barry Brooke and herself. Elaine also rang and I'm sorry to say Elaine, I didn't make it up to Sydney due to a number of constraints. I will definitely catch up when there next. Barry was my Dad's Navigator at Bassingbourne UK and 70 Squadron RAF.

I must mention Pat Cribb as well. In the short time we communicated firstly by post and then email, it was an honour and pleasure, Pat. I hope all goes well with you. Thank you for your many years with the Squadron.

### **QLD Flight:**

I thought I would let you know that my mum, Hettie Murray, passed away last Friday night. She was married to Cyril Murray who spent a lot of time in the 458 Squadron. Dad passed away in early 2008. I know mum had some good times and met some wonderful people at your reunions over the years. I'm not sure who would still have known her recently, but I thought I'd ask if you wouldn't mind passing on the news.

It was all fairly sudden as she was only diagnosed six weeks ago with pancreatic cancer. She had no pain and no secondaries, but needed a gastric bypass operation. She sailed through that and was meant to recover to go home to months of normal life, however there were complications and she was never able to eat properly again. She was so weak that by the time she acquired aspiration pneumonia, she was ready to go. She still had no pain and was well cared for and made comfortable. She was very brave and very accepting.

Thank you for the enjoyment Mum and Dad had being part of the Squadron gatherings again these later years.

Best regards

Alexa Murray

*Anyone from QLD interested in mustering up some family support and submitting a report would be more than welcome. Please contact Roland Orchard. [editor@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:editor@458raafsquadron.org)*

### **South Australia Flight report by Rick Michell**

#### **Pat Cribb-Thank you**

I can say she was a dedicated secretary to SA 458 Squadron during the years that I have known her. Since July, 1999.

We had the sad loss of Monica Thom in November, her husband was the Late Peter Thom.

We are had a Christmas Lunch at the Kensi on December 2

## Canada Flight report by Bryan Quinlan

JACK REYNOLDS, WHO WAS BRIEFLY WITH 458 AT MALTA CLOSE TO THE END OF HIS TOUR WITH THE SPECIAL DUTIES FLIGHT (SDF) KNEW WALLY BAIRD WHEN THE LATTER WAS ON 455 SQUADRON AND QUARTERED IN A NISSAN HUT WHERE THE PIPING WAS INSTALLED AT THE CEILING LEVEL. JACK RECALLS THAT UPON ENTERING WALLY'S DOMAIN THE FIRST THING YOU ENCOUNTERED WAS A LARGE NUMBER OF DEAD GAME BIRDS SUSPENDED FROM THE PIPING AND PERIODICALLY WALLY WOULD PULL ON THE BIRDS' CLAWS TO CHECK ON THEIR READINESS FOR COOKING, (I ASSUME THAT IF THE CLAWS CAME LOOSE THAT WAS THE TIME). ONE MORE ITEM TO ADD TO WB'S UNUSUAL REPUTATION!

A CALL TO TOM ROWAN REVEALED THAT HE HAD HAD A FALL WHEN THE LEGS OF A STOOL HE WAS STANDING ON COLLAPSED AND HE FELL AND HURT HIS BACK, RESULTING IN A VERY PAINFUL BACK, A TRIP TO THE HOSPITAL AND X-RAYS WHICH SHOWED NO SERIOUS INJURY AND ALLOWED A QUICK RECOVERY. THIS FALL AND PROBLEMS WITH HIS LEGS AND HIS CURLING ROCK DELIVERY ARM HAS FORCED HIS RETIREMENT FROM HIS FAVOURITE WINTER CURLING PASTIME WHICH HAS BEEN REPLACED BY WEEKLY CARD GAMES WITH SOME OF HIS BUDDIES. TOM ALSO HAD A NEAR ENCOUNTER WITH A DEER, ONLY UNUSUAL IN NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN BECAUSE IT HAPPENED IN HIS DRIVEWAY.



First left - Don - number has been  
2nd left - J. Harris  
3rd left - J. Anderson  
4th left - Spudwin - number 516 - Bird  
5th left - myself - Sunday 10/16/98  
6th left - S. Thompson

SANDY MCGAW'S DAUGHTER SHEILA E-MAILED ME THAT HER DAD IS DOING WELL AND HAS SIGNED-UP FOR WEEKLY PHYSIO SESSIONS TO REMAIN ACTIVE. HE IS ALSO KEEN TO HAVE HIS 458 CREW PHOTO APPEAR IN THE NEWSLETTER IN THE HOPE THAT SOMEONE WILL REMEMBER SOME MEMBER OF HIS CREW AND MAKE CONTACT WITH HIM.

A CALL TO BERT MARKLAND'S WIFE GLADYS REVEALED THAT BERT'S MAIN PROBLEM IS WITH HIS PARKINSON'S AFFLICTION WHICH MAKES HIM RESTLESS AND UNSETTLED. SHE INDICATED THAT BERT IS INTENT ON WRITING A LETTER TO ME AND I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM HIM. THE MARKLANDS AND JOAN AND I HAVE HAPPY MEMORIES OF HOLIDAYS AT CHRISTINA LAKE IN BC'S SOUTHERN INTERIOR WHERE THE MARKLANDS

USED TO LIVE AND SOME GOLF AT THE DELIGHTFUL GOLF COURSE THERE.

A LOCAL CALL TO TOM LINDSAY INDICATED THAT HE IS RELATIVELY WELL AND IS HAPPY THAT SOME MAJOR RENNOVATIONS TO HIS HOUSE HAVE NOW BEEN COMPLETED, (NEW ROOF, KITCHEN, ETC.). HE IS ALSO PLEASED THAT HIS SON AND WIFE HAVE NOW MOVED TO THE ADJOINING NORTH VANCOUVER MUNICIPALITY, SO BOTH HIS DAUGHTER AND SON ARE NOW CLOSE-BY. HIS TWO GRANDSON'S BOTH WORK IN THE USA, ONE IN CHICAGO AND THE OTHER IN SEATTLE.

FINALLY, MY SECOMD KNEE SURGERY HAS HEALED REMARKEDLY FAST AND I AM NOW IMPATIENTLY AWAITING NEXT SPRING AND A RETURN TO THE GOLF CLUBS. JOAN AND I CELEBRATED OUR 62ND WEDDING ANNIVERSARY IN NOVEMEBER AND IN SEPT I PASSED THE 90-YEAR "GO" SIGN BUT DID NOT COLLECT THE \$200.

ON BEHALF OF ALL OUR SMALL CANADIAN CONTINGENT I SEND OUR SINCERE BEST WISHES TO YOU ALL FOR A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A TROUBLE-FREE NEW YEAR.

**Bryan Quinlan**

(Happy 90<sup>th</sup> last September, Bryan) ☺

## New Zealand Flight report by Kevin George

Hope all is well with Kevin. No report received. All the best from us all, Kevin. ed.

## UK Flight report by Keith Wilkinson



Two of our squadron's pilots have had a very moving, and very rewarding, visit to London.

On a misty Autumnal day, as the leaves fell in Hyde Park, Leon Armstrong and Jack Christianson saw, for the first time, the new RAF Bomber Command Memorial.

As I photographed the 458-ers, now both in their 90s, a guy came up to them and shook their hands and said simply: "Thank you!"

The memorial really has to be seen to be truly appreciated. It

features seven aircrew, nine feet tall in bronze, in full flying kit. Above them is an open roof in the geodetic style of a Wellington bomber.

The roof was made from metal taken from a Royal Canadian Air Force Halifax which crashed in 1944 - recovered from a swamp in Belgium with the bodies of three crewmen still inside.

We visited soon after Remembrance Day and the figures were decorated with poppies and wooden crosses.

The sculpture work is phenomenal, the detail remarkable.

Some people had attached photos and stories of loved ones, and among the many warm tributes left by members of the public was a Royal Australian Air Force plaque.

There was a great sense of reverence and respect from the people queuing to take pictures - and several were touching the life-like figures to connect in some way to these brave young men, so many of whom did not return from their missions.



Although Leon and Jack were Coastal Command men, 458, of course, began life in Bomber Command and played an important role in the bombing of enemy targets.

After the visit to the memorial, we walked across the road to the RAF Club in Piccadilly, where we had dinner. Leon has been a member for many years and we were there as his guests: Jack, his wife Audrey, my wife and I.

Just five of us, but it kept alive the long tradition of an annual reunion for the 458 UK Flight. And as UK president, Leon proposed a toast to the parent unit and to absent friends. Two squadron veterans from the London area were unable to join us due to mobility problems - but they were with us in our thoughts.



Leon had been pressing for some time to get the 458 Squadron crest displayed in the historic corridors at the RAF Club - and I am delighted to report this has now happened. It's among dozens of others, but it's in a really good position and we all felt proud to see it up there on the wall - and Jack and Leon were pleased too to see two paintings of Wellington bombers on the walls.

We dined under a large portrait of Sir Winston Churchill and close to another sculpture of a WW2 airman.

**November was a remarkable month too for 458-er CHARLIE HUMBLE and his wife Joyce.**

They celebrated no less than seventy-two years of married life.

I wonder if any other couple in the 458 Squadron family have been together this long?

Charlie and Joyce married on November 25th, 1940 under special licence - the year before Charlie joined 458 at Holme upon Spalding Moor in Yorkshire.

Charlie - who'll be 91 in February - was an aircraft engineer, fitting engines. They met on the dance floor and have been together ever since.

It was at the time of The Blitz on London, and Charlie remembers five bombs falling about half a mile away as they came out of a dance at Watford Town Hall.

Congratulations to both of them!



## **ARTICLES OF INTEREST.**

### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND DONATIONS to 458 Squadron Association.**

Peggy Hull from Port Melbourne, Victoria

Myra Gunn from Forbes, New South Wales

Barbara O'Riley from Crafers, South Australia

Elaine Irwin from Double Bay, New South Wales

Barry Brooke from Double Bay, New South Wales

Mrs Kew from Victoria

All donations are gratefully accepted for ongoing website hosting costs and our ever expanding printing, postage expenses.

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### **458 Squadron Website:**

[www.458raafsquadron.org](http://www.458raafsquadron.org)

NEWSLETTERS/JOURNALS COMPLETED! .....*almost*  
We are 5 away from having a COMPLETE SET of Newsletters/Journals from the very first edition, #1 in October 1949 to the current one, #244. ALL editions can be downloaded/read at the [Newsletters](#) page. Our original Editor, Peter Alexander CMG, OBE, OAM and his brains trust were true visionaries & heroes amongst all our 458 heroes.

We still need:

#23 and #24 from 1955,

#32 from 1957,

#35 from 1958 and

#39 from 1959 (the copy we currently have is difficult to read)

If you have copies of these, please [Contact Us](#)

Don't forget our '[Servicemen's Stories](#)' page on the website. We can upload your loved one's military service for everyone to read or reminisce.

*Thank you On behalf of the Website Project Team, Jeremy Orchard*

#### **Comment about our Website by the rep from Veteran Affairs**

[Morning Jeremy](#)

[That website is great! Very informative with some useful links for your members.](#)

[The Photo of the Squadron in Egypt is fantastic...Great photo!](#)

[Keep up the good work!](#)

**James Wilkinson**

**Grants Project Officer**



## Embroidered patch of the 458 Squadron Crest (with Velcro backing)

**Badge + Postage within Australia:- 11.50AUD**

(Prices for New Zealand, UK & Canada are based on the fluctuations in the Aussie Dollar)

Order via website [www.458raafsquadron.org](http://www.458raafsquadron.org) or write to  
Roland Orchard. 78 Edward Rd, Chirnside Park. 3116. Victoria, Australia.  
*Victorian Senior Vice President Chris Orchard.*



## 458 Squadron "COFFEE TABLE BOOK"

Expressions of interest are being sort from anyone who would like to purchase a hard cover 'coffee table book' published by Peter Hedgcock son of 458 Veteran Peter Henry Hedgcock. Peter has published, at his own expense, a large hard cover book with full page pictures of 458 Veterans taken during the war. This book features over 90 photographs and additional books may be created if more photos become available from Squadron members. Price has to be negotiated, however, there has to be a minimum order of 5 books. Current prices are about \$90.00 and subject to quote. Contact Peter Hedgcock for further information. 0414831746



## EMAILS via 488 WEBSITE

### **Alan Surgin**

Nanaimo British Columbia V9V 1L5

Canada

Hi Roland,

Thank you for the question, My late Wife's Father, Sgt Edward Anstee, was a crew member with 458 Squadron. His aircraft (Wellington AD539 crashed into the sea near Malta, after an attack by enemy aircraft Feb 16th 1942. The pilot was the C.O. of 458 at the time W/Commander. Mulholland DFC Sgt Anstee W/Commander. Mulholland are both buried at Catania Sicily.

Sgt Anstee was a native of Belfast Northern Ireland, and was with RAF Volunteer Reserve. Apparently their flight was the beginning of 458 Sqdn moving to the Middle East from UK. Bomber Command.

The Badge will be used in a frame complete with Medals and photo as a Memorial for Sgt. Anstee's Grandchildren, and their Children.

Regards and thanks. Alan K. Surgin.

### **Email from Eric 'Rinso' Purcill's Granddaughter Emma.**

October 29, 2012

Good Morning,

My name is Emma Forde and my grandfather, Eric 'Rinso' Purcill, was a member of RAAF Squadron 458. Yesterday, he took a turn for the worst and it saddens me to say that he might not be with us for much longer. I was wondering if you could tell me **any** information regarding his time at war or if you have any photos etc. If not, thank you for your time anyway. Thank you so much for the reply. Yes he was also known as 'Rinso'. I have a copy of the book (We Find & Destroy) already so if anyone has any memories/stories I would be very grateful.

Kind Regards

Emma Forde

**From:** [Valter Battistoni](#)  
**To:** '458 RAAF Squadron'  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 20, 2012 6:46 PM  
**Subject:** R: 458 Squadron August 2012 Journal

Hi Roland,

Since you have first-hand information I would like to ask if somebody recalls something about the airfield organization.

In other terms: was there a unique air base commander or every squadron had its own and all acted more or less independently from each other? I mean under the point of view of field organization: dormitory, food, health etc.. Was the airport used as a common space by the squadrons or did somebody take care of organizing their life (apart from operational issues)?

Hope to be clear J

Regards

Valter



Hi Roland

I went to see Eric (Jewell) today & took him the newsletter I'd printed for him although I think he may get a hard copy anyway. I'd read the Journal & was asking him about the emails from the guy in Italy & whether he recalled the incidents. He had some knowledge of them &, funnily enough, mentioned the fog before I'd mentioned what was in the article. He recalled

one happened a night & as far as whether the ditched planes were salvaged, didn't know as they'd moved on, but he did remember guys swimming out to retrieve stuff from it.

Anyway, I thought this may be of interest. If you do get out to see him sometime, you may want to see what he recalls.

Cheers

**Peter Gray**

**Sent:** Tuesday, October 02, 2012 8:35 PM  
**Subject:** RE: 458 Squadron August Newsletter.

Dear Mr Orchard,

Thank you for the 458 Newsletters.

I am a new subscriber but am very interested in the squadron as my father Flt Sgt Guy Johnston (now deceased) joined 458 as a WAG from the RAF. He flew with Sgt Pilot 'Chas' Richardson out of Protville in Wellingtons from September 1943. He later joined F/O 'Lock' Simpson's crew in January 1944. We still have his log book.

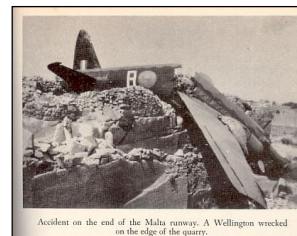
Lock and his wife Margaret (both now deceased) visited my parents here in the UK in the early 1960s and they kept in regular contact until their passing away.



F/O Lock Simpson and his crew, Bone, North Africa, 1944.  
Back, left to right: F/Sgt. G. Johnson (W.A.G.), F/O Simpson (pilot), Lt. R. Duffy, SA.A.F. (fuel pilot), F/Sgt. G. Ring (observer).

There is a picture of F/O Lock Simpson's crew on page 116 of Peter Alexander's 'We Find and Destroy' (2nd edition) and my father (surname in fact spelt wrongly without the 't') is standing at the back on the far left. We believe the picture on the same page of the crashed Wellington at the end of the Malta runway is one flown by F/O Simpson - my father told

us of a bad crash on take-off, fully loaded with torpedo and depth charges and always said this could be picture of their crash. I wonder if this could be confirmed.



Accident on the end of the Malta runway. A Wellington wrecked on the edge of the quarry.

I was amazed to see on your web site the picture of the full squadron in Egypt in 1943. We have located my father in it and wonder if the photograph is available. My mother is still alive and I know she has not seen it. It would be a great Christmas present for her and our children if we could obtain one.

Thank you and I hope you find the information above of interest.

Peter Johnston

Thank you Peter. It is extremely interesting and valuable information. I hope one of the Veterans read this and replies to your enquiry. It may pay to try and get in touch with Keith Wilkinson, our 458 UK Correspondent. ed.

**From:** [Lesley Hutchins](#)  
**To:** [editor@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:editor@458raafsquadron.org)  
**Sent:** Monday, October 22, 2012 7:23 AM  
**Subject:** WEBSITE FORM: Online Enquiry

**Name Lesley Hutchins**

Enquiry- ref R1785 crew. I am the niece of Fred Hinton and want all the families to know that we go to the crew's war graves every year and put flowers on their graves.

*Ed Reply*

Hi Lesley

Thanks for your email via the 458 Squadron Web site. I am sure that the Hickey, Johnstone, Birnie, Austin & Forgan families who read this will be happy and grateful for your thoughtful and heart felt yearly vigil.

Kind Regards

Roland Orchard

458 Squadron Association

[www.458raafsquadron.org](http://www.458raafsquadron.org)

**As a reminder to all about the tragic death of Fred Hinton and crew.**

Wellington R1785 took off from RAF Holme-on-Spalding Moor, Yorkshire, at 0435 hours on the 8 January 1942 to bomb Cherbourg, France. Nothing was heard from the aircraft after take off and it failed to return to base.

**Crew:**

RAAF 404431 FO Hickey, B P Captain (Pilot)

RAAF 400716 Sgt V W Johnstone, (2nd Pilot)

RNZAF Flt Sgt R Birnie, (Observer)

RAF Flt Sgt A S Austin, (Wireless Operator)

RAAF 407639 Sgt W W Forgan (Front Gunner)]

**RAF Sgt F Hinton (Rear Gunner)**

Post war it was reported by a Missing Research and Enquiry Unit that the aircraft was hit by flak and crashed in the target area at the village of Colleville which is approx 14 miles south east of Cherbourg. All the crew were killed and they are buried in the Cherbourg Old Communal Cemetery, Locality Manche, France. Cherbourg is a town in the north of the Cherbourg Peninsula and the cemetery is on the western side of the town. FO Hickey had previously survived after baling out from a damaged aircraft when returning from a mission on 22/10/1941.

**From:** [kym davies](#)  
**To:** [editor@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:editor@458raafsquadron.org)  
**Sent:** Sunday, December 02, 2012 8:21 AM  
**Subject:** WEBSITE FORM: Online Enquiry

Name kym davies

Enquiry I am the John Davies who served with 458 Squadron. I have kindly lent the local RSL here in Port Pirie (SA) photos from dad's time in the squadron. I remember him showing me these from when I was a small boy. I have also served with the Armed Forces. Unfortunately dad has passed on but my memories will last forever.

**From: Tom Sutherland To: editor@458raafsquadron.org Sent: Thursday, August 02, 2012 Subject: WEBSITE FORM: Online Enquiry**

Name Tom Sutherland

Enquiry I belong to the Melbourne Branch of the RAF Association. In our newsletter was an appeal for any Information relating to 458 Squadron. This is my contribution.

I was a member of 5MSU(T) which was a torpedo unit attached to 458 for the purposes of providing torpedoes for night attacks on the Italian Fleet. We were associated at Protville which lay half way between Tunis and Bizerta and the time was the interval between the expulsion of the Africa Corps and the invasion of Italy.

458 was a cosmopolitan Sqdn.: it had a South African C.O - Major McKenzie, and Dutch and Polish pilots in an Australian outfit. They were a mad bunch. Although our mob had no

contact with the air crews, word got around to add to personal observation; for instance, we could see that on a scramble night, some of the Wellingtons took off in a cross wind at the same time as others took off into the wind. Major McKenzie was the chief culprit. As C.O. he should not be flying on Ops anyway. This reckless spirit pervaded the flying personnel, especially the European pilots who wanted to wreak vengeance on the enemy for misdeeds committed against their families in occupied Europe. A Dutch pilot bought it for going in too hard the night after he torpedoed and sank an Italian cruiser.

Wellingtons could be loaded with 2 torpedoes, or 1 torpedo and bombs, or all bombs.

I had a special relationship with that torpedo that sank the cruiser; I managed to drop it off the stationary aircraft at loading time. We had loaded up the port fish, done the test drop, and done the final harnessing. The starboard fish failed the test drop, so an electrician was sent for - this was about 11.30 p.m.

Unwilling to to be kept up till the wee hours, I decided to recheck the test drop. I pressed the button and the port fish fell off! With 1 ton unloaded, the Wellington began to bounce up and down; full air blast was applied to the gyroscope, generating a piercing scream at 20,000 revs, and all my mates on the ground fled in all directions. Fortunately, chiefy Ancombe had the presence of mind to return with a key from his pocket and turned off the air thus restoring peace.

The outcome of all this was that the fallen torpedo was removed and another substituted; the electrical fault corrected and all was ready to go at about 1.30a.m. - then the whole operation was called off anyway. Much ado about nothing!

Next morning, our C.O. Flt. Lt. Sheppard came up to me and said that in a similar incident he knew of an airman who got 6 months in the Glasshouse.

I was lucky that the glasshouse was hundreds of miles away and he decided to take no action. I was also lucky that nobody was under the torpedo when it fell. Lucky again that the propellers were not in starting position or there would have been a molten mass without sea water to cool the engine - there could have been a very big bang! Luckier still that the warhead did not explode on impact with the ground;

The fallen torpedo was checked over and on its next excursion got the cruiser referred to earlier.

Major McKenzie had a fighter aircraft at his disposal to attend Air H.Q. for briefings; I think it was a Hurricane. One day, he lent it to another pilot, who, on returning, managed to crash it. Not only did he crash McKenzie's Hurricane, but he managed to collect McKenzie's Wellington too with the result that there was a decent blaze. I have a photograph of it.

McKenzie was quickly on the scene and joined the fire-fighters. He had a pump action pyrene extinguisher and while he let the fire-fighters deal with the heart of the conflagration, he was busy skirting pyrene at the badge just below the cockpit window - a shield with Henrietta, his wife's on a scroll under it.

An event occurred which has defined my attitude to Royalty for the rest of my life. King George VI came out to visit us.

Normal activity involved a very casual attention to dress - scanty khaki clothing. We were ordered to dress up in blue serge and line either side of the road which separated the airfield from the encampment. Not only was this a bad idea for a hot day, but when the grand approach was imminent and the lads leaned into the road to get a preview, the Army M.Ps. in their advance jeep drove recklessly by, nearly taking our noses off. Following on, the King was chauffeured in a black car and he made no acknowledgement of our presence whatsoever as he sped by in a cloud of dust.

The fleet for the invasion of Italy was assembled in Bizerta harbour and duly put to sea. Shortly afterwards 5MSU(T) follows in an LST to disembark at Taranto, onward bound for Grottaglie. We noted that the Italian Fleet was cosily berthed in Taranto Harbour. so some of the credit for bottling them up must be given to 458.

That was where we parted company and I know nothing more of their history.

I hope this is of some use to you.

**Legend: (see next page)**

**Top left** .....the size of the torpedo used by 458

**Top right**.....5 MSU (T) the unit servicing 458 with torpedoes

**Centre**... .....Self (Tom Sullivan)

**Bottom left**.....L/Col. McKenzie's Wellington going up in flames

**Bottom right**... Fockwulf 190 inherited with the airfield. Things like this were often booby-trapped but this was one that got away



(Thank you Tom for a most interesting and informative reminiscence. ed.)

**From:** Ian Dunmore

**To:** rjorch@bigpond.net.au

**Sent:** Saturday, September 22, 2012 3:28 AM

**Subject:** George Dunmore - WW2

Dear Roland

Please find attached a 2 page account of my father's squadron involvement in relation to some correspondence he received from you recently. Should anything not be legible or you require, please do not hesitate to get in touch and I will pass it onto my father.

Kind Regards **Ian Dunmore**

Hi, Roland.

This is a personal incident rather than one of squadron involvement. However it may provide a light fillip for the web-site.

"It was 1943. The 8th Army had advanced from Alamein through Egypt & was now in Libya. The Squadron following in support of the army, was in tented location outside of Benghazi prior to crossing over to Malta.

An Italian aircraft had been shot down in the desert close by. Some of us decided to visit the crash site & collect small pieces of aircraft as mementoes. I unscrewed & took an altimeter which I subsequently deposited in my kitbag.

Several months later, having completed my operational tour I was posted back to Egypt to fly Wellingtons for a bombing leaders course at El Ballah in the Canal Zone. This necessitated a stay for a couple of days at a transit camp. Whilst there a surprise search of the camp by Military Police was carried out. Whatever nefarious activity was going on, the search was very thorough & they found the afore mentioned, long forgotten altimeter in my kitbag. After taking full personal details & the story of my

Obtaining the altimeter the Military left. Some time later, I was settled in my flying duties at Ballah. I was instructed one morning to report to the Wing Commander in his office which I did forthwith. As I stood in front of the Wing Commander seated at his desk he said: "You have been charged with illegal possession of enemy property."

The altimeter was back in play! It was agreed that the facts of the case as quoted were correct.

The Wing Co, an ex-operational pilot, stared down at his desk for a few moments - this was probably the first time he had handled a case of such magnitude. He then looked at me nodded his head & said "You are admonished." At which point we all went back to our duties. I never did find out what happened to the altimeter!

With Best Wishes  
George Dunmore

(Thank you George. A very interesting story. Bad luck you didn't get to keep the altimeter. Ed)

# FEATURE STORIES

## Henry Etherton Story

Thanks to Vera Etherton for the pictures and story of her Husband Henry.



Wimpy built by  
Henry. 4 foot  
(1.2m) wingspan



Christopher Henry Etherton

Henry as he was called was born in Northampton WA on September 15th 1920. He was the second eldest of 8 children. The family farm was at East Bowes and all children walked 3 miles to school.

Henry left school at the age of 14 to work on a dairy farm for 5 shillings and keep a week. Rabbits were a big pest problem so he moved to a farm and was employed as a rabbit trapper. His next employment was on a station near Port Gregory where he was jack of all trades. His next place of work was on a wheat and sheep farm called 'Eastbrook'.

There he stole the boss's youngest daughter Vera. He was here when World War 2 started in September 1939. Henry volunteered at Northampton in the Air force. Because he worked on a farm he was on reserve until March 20<sup>th</sup> 1941 when he was called up at age 20.

He left Australia to join 458 Squadron on September 7<sup>th</sup> 1941. His next 4 and half years were spent with the 458 squadron.

Henry was discharged on January 29<sup>th</sup> 1946. Upon his return, he purchased a farm and that was his life for several years.

He married Vera in August 1946 in Northampton. They enjoyed 61 happy years together.

Owing to ill health he gave farming away and spent several years working for Massey Ferguson in spare parts in Geraldton and Perth until he retired.

While in Geraldton, he built our family house and a hall for the Girl Guides. We both moved to Perth in 1966.

In his retirement he spent his time in the gardens, fruit trees, and his hobby was restoring old toys into new for underprivileged children.

Henry passed away July 22<sup>nd</sup> 2007.

Survived by his wife Vera, 3 children, 8 grandchildren and 21 great grandchildren. He was a Pop to a step granddaughter and 4 step great grandchildren.

Henry made a wooden Wellington to scale <sup>4 ft</sup> across the wings; it hung from the ceiling in full flight. This model and 2 albums of 1400 photos and 1 album of memorabilia, he has left to his family. The memories of 458 squadron and his mates were a great part of his life.

Thank you Vera for your letters and kind thoughts. – ed.

## Tim O'Riley Story

Story and photographs kindly provided by Barb O'Riley.

The following story and pictures were mailed to Barb by Micky Reid (RCAF) not long after Tim's passing. Micky Reid was Tim's captain.

TIM O'RILEY

W/OP - A.G.  
458 Squadron, RAAF

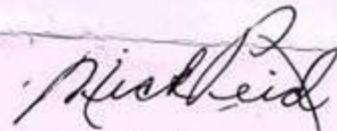
Tim joined our crew, in Wellington torpedo-bombers in January, 1943, when we began anti-shipping strikes from Malta, at night; against convoys supplying Rommel's North African offensive. One of the crews three Wireless Operator-Air Gunners, Tim chose to fly in the aircraft's rear turret. A highly valued, dependable member of the crew; quiet, unassuming, dependable; always, it seemed, with a twinkle in his eyes and a ready chuckle.

Tim and his crewmates flew 24 night ops from Malta during the last five months of the Island's "siege-blitz" for which the Maltese people were awarded "The George Cross". Malta, in turn, 50 years later, struck a "Malta Medal" that was awarded to all, such as Tim and his crewmates, who had served on Malta during the island's two years of siege and intensive bombing.

We with 458 RAAF Squadron were moved back to North Africa at the end of May, 1943 at which time Malta was readied for the Allied invasion of Sicily and Italy. With enemy forces then cleared from Tunisia, 458 Squadron recommenced night operations, in June, from Protville, near Tunis. A farming area where the Germans had created airstrips, it became quickly serviceable when abandoned vehicles, petrol and oil drums were cleared from the vicinity. It was while flying operating from here, 458 Squadron adopted the name "McKenzie's Airforce". A dedicated, fearless South African pilot, Colonel, Bruce McKenzie, DSO, DFC, had been appointed the Squadron's new leader. Highly respected by all, he attributed the Sqdrn's success to the character of its groundcrew. It was while flying under his command that Tim and the crew completed their operational tour, in September, shortly after the Italian Fleet surrendered to the Allies.

Tim O'Riley, Bob Boulton WOP and Ron Eggers, our navigator, were posted back to England where Ron became Tim's "Best Man" at the marriage of Tim and Barbara to whom he referred in his first post war letter to skipper, Mick Reid, as "one of England's fairest." Reid and George Unitt were posted to No 5 METS, Shallufa, nearby the Canal and town of Suez.

It was our greatest privilege to have flown with Tim  
and his fellow Aussies



Flt/Lt M.D.Reid,

July 27, 2002



Tim & George Unitt at bats  
backed by a happy lot.



Tim far left. Ron Eggers seated  
centre Bob Boulton in doorway



Bob Boulton defying the low flyer



Malta Chapel

Bob Amour. KIA  
29/4/43. Messina  
Scicily.



Aussie Rules game Shallufa



Meleesh wog  
dog Shallufa  
Dec. '42



## Barbara O'Riley

# War bride recalls first months in Hills

On September 6, 1945, Barbara O'Riley and her five-month-old son Ian arrived at Outer Harbor from Liverpool, England, to be reunited with her husband Tim.

The ex-WAAF from Blackburn met her Australian-born husband in Scotland during World War II when he was a flying officer with the RAAF.

Mrs O'Riley was in a party of 47 wives and 23 children who travelled to Australia on the "Nestor".

Five of the women and three children disembarked in SA.

While at sea they heard of the victory in Japan, and celebrated with a victory dinner that evening.

Four days later they were told the first victory message had been premature, but this time it was correct - so they celebrated with another dinner.

From Outer Harbor, the young family travelled by train to Adelaide and then to Mt Lofty station, where neighbors picked them up in a truck and drove them to their dairy farm at Bradbury.

"The roads were dirt tracks - I thought I was at the end of the world," Mrs O'Riley said.

But she soon realized how friendly the Hills residents were (especially those from Bradbury) when neighbors gave her a surprise 21st birthday party a few months later.

"Although I sorely missed my parents, three sisters and my brother, I came to love the Hills," she said.

### 50th anniversary

"We have been here 50 years now; the first 15 at Bradbury, then 30 years at Aldgate and now Crafrers."

The couple celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary last year and have four children,

Ian, Phillip, Peter and Gayle, and six grandchildren.

Mrs O'Riley said it had been very hard at first to settle to such a different way of life.

"We have been blessed with family, good friends and good health," she said.



Barbara O'Riley looks back on her war-time memories.

ABOVE -Barbara's Story as appeared in a local newspaper in South Australia.

### Light My Fire

IN 1943 I was posted to an RAF station near Stranraer as a projectionist. Taking a break in the recreation hut one bitterly cold morning, I attempted to light the pot-belly stove, to no avail. Then a rather snazzy Australian Air Crew officer offered to help.

The fire burned brightly as he invited me to the pictures in Stranraer. We were married six months later and blessed with three sons and a daughter.

Now a war widow, I live in the lovely Adelaide hills of South Australia.

Barbara's winning entry in the Scottish Magazine 'The People's Friend'

Mrs B.O'R., S. Australia.

Thank you Barb for your letters and kind thoughts. -- ed.

## **Jim Whitem's latest cruise – around the Pacific Rim.**

During early 2011, Wendy and I discovered that that Princess Lines was offering a 75 day cruise around the 'Pacific Rim' commencing 27 July 2012, on the Dawn Princess. This interested me a great deal – something we had not done, the old navigator awakening, and the fact that I had read a most revealing book on the subject, the main theme of which was to postulate that the new centre of world politics, trade, and development would likely be the Pacific Rim. So we booked a stateroom.

On the appointed day for boarding in Sydney we got a taxi down to the ship at Barangaroo wharf. We wandered through a large temporary canvas structure to go through all the procedures before boarding with the other 2000 passengers! I was taken by ship's crew in a wheelchair, simplifying our boarding procedures by jumping us to the head of every queue. So we boarded within an hour and were conducted to our cabin or stateroom as it is now misnamed. This was on the port forward area of the Caribe deck, one deck above the boat deck and we had an unobstructed view from inside the cabin, as well a small balcony.

We spent a day with friends in Darwin, now the nicest city in Australia, in my view; thence to Singapore, where we berthed opposite the very busy container dock. The passenger facility was only a few weeks old, and was shining and spotless. We went off on an organised tour of three relicts of the Japanese occupation. These comprised the 'Battle Box' whence the Pommy general Percival surrendered the island and his armies, quite unnecessarily to the Japanese, the Tranji war cemetery and the Changi prison.



We thereafter visited ports in Thailand, Vietnam, China and Korea: I enjoyed the first two – the people were friendly and welcomed tourists, but I did not enjoy Korea. China was most interesting. Hong Kong had grown, but seemed little different to the city I used to visit in colonial days. We enjoyed our trip to the Peak (once again I went to the head of the 1.5 hr queue with my walker), shopping in Stanley market and a beery lunch at the waterfront there.



Shanghai was an eye-opener - one city with the population of Australia, with infrastructure leaving our cities for dead; and Tianjin, the port city for Beijing. In Shanghai, the sun set around 6pm local time; we were to sail at eight, and in the meantime there was a long colourful procession of local holiday and tourist craft up and down the reach where we were docked. These were decorated beautifully and differentially, lit with Chinese motifs and with lights-all the colours of the rainbow. We sailed more or less on time among this fleet of pleasure craft and the stream of powered working barges which had been using the waterway all day and night. We actually sailed out stern first and proceeded a little way downstream turning 180 degrees before getting under way conventionally. So ended our stay in Shanghai. We sailed down the tributary, into the Yangtze, eventually turning north onto our course for Tianjin, the port of Beijing, arriving before dawn two days later. Viewed from the upper deck of the Princess, the port of Tianjin was extensive though with none of the visual and architectural delights of Shanghai. It was simply a cargo-working port. Tianjin is really two cities, the new and the old about 40 mins from the port. I stayed on board while Wendy went ashore to spend a very pleasant day in old Tianjin with friends of one of her Chinese student boarders.

After a very brief, wet, foray into Busan, South Korea I returned rather impatiently to the ship, but Wendy stayed ashore to explore, especially the fascinating Ladies' Fish Market.

We sailed into Vladivostok before dawn, and enjoyed a ship's tour of the beautiful old city. It is built on a hilly area, like Sydney. Vladivostok is much more European than any of the other ports we visited, albeit northern in style, with many Orthodox churches, some a little the worse for wear. It was a Saturday, a holiday spirit was abroad, the Dawn Princess's arrival was the highlight of the day, and several brides in their long white wedding dresses paraded around the shipping terminal prior to our departure. We visited a major monument to the heroes of various conflicts, a historical museum for the region, and a war museum inside a large stranded and gutted submarine. There was evidence of much current and recent infrastructure building, including huge French built bridges; and frantic city clean up and beautifying efforts for the following week's APEC meeting.

We departed Vladivostok across the Sea of Japan for two days then found ourselves at a dock in the port of Yokohama. Wendy toured Tokyo and hour or so away. I declined to go ashore because of my attitude to that nation.

The captain had informed the passengers that he proposed to cross the North Pacific to Alaska along the rhumb line, as the great circle route would take us too far north and into unfavourable cold weather and rough seas. This worked fine for the first three of the six day crossing but there after we ran into cold air, strong winds and slightly rough seas although the latter created no problem as the ship's stabilisers were most efficient. As it was blowing half a gale, raining part of the time and little sun, I spent most of the last three days below decks catching up with some writing and reading. We had two Thursdays crossing the International Date Line.

On 4 September we duly arrived in the port of Seward, Alaska about three hours from Anchorage, which we chose not to tour. It did not matter very much because the weather was still too wet, cold and miserable for me. We were treated to a morning harbour cruise as the sea was too rough to go outside the large estuary on the planned excursion. However, we did see otters, humpbacks, a colony of sea lions and the occasional interesting group of local seabirds. Wendy later toured the Exit (land) glacier in rather misty weather. The next day was



spent cruising up to and along the Hubbard glacier - quite an interesting experience and my first. However, I came to the conclusion that watching cows



calve is more interesting than watching glaciers do the same (i.e. hive off large chunks of ice into the bay).

The following day we awoke docked at Juneau, the state capital. The weather was 'atrocious'; it rained on and off - mostly persistent moisture in the air. The ship's bus tour of Juneau, took us to three very interesting places. The first was a salmon hatchery on the banks of the local waterway where we saw a 450ft fish ladder and the whole system of sorting returning salmon, gutting the females, collecting the ova, and fertilising them with sperm collected from the males. The second visit was to the Mendenhall glacier just a few miles north of the city. Here was a high quality National Park Service visitor's information centre with all the bells and whistles; we spent an hour or so both inside and outside of this facility.

The third was a beautiful arctic garden, built on a steep hillside, which we explored from a golf cart. We enjoyed the hanging flower baskets positioned in the roots of tree trunks planted upside down, the steep rain forest and views of the valley, even if I was nearly frozen stiff in the process. Wendy didn't suffer the cold as I did, and she went shopping downtown in the afternoon and visited the Red Dog Saloon.

We also visited Russian influenced Sitka, the city of the handover of Alaska to the Americans. The next day was spent cruising past numerous glaciers of all sizes in spectacular Glacier Bay, and where the weather cleared for us. After a while, they all began to look the same to me. It would be fair to say that by now I was no longer impressed by looking at glaciers, despite the fact the weather was much better for our sightseeing than for other cruises earlier in the season. I was glad when the ship turned westward and steamed out of Glacier Bay, then, turning south we left Alaska behind and looked forward to a couple of days in the inside passage between British Columbia and Vancouver Island.

We had hoped to see friends in Vancouver but that did not eventuate, due to illness, absence, or ageing. We missed Bryan Quinlan who was on his way to hospital. The next morning we awoke in the port of Victoria, Vancouver Island, where we had coffee with an old friend Mary Williamson, who had written her account of a circumnavigation in a 37 ft. yacht. We had first met them when they sailed into Port Macquarie a decade or more ago. Well, Mary had to go off to conduct her choir so we went again to the Victoria waterfront, where after a little searching Wendy found a small tourist aviation business. We took a short flight over the city and surrounding waterways in a twin Otter float plane, a very pleasant interlude. However, it was a little confusing as to the tracks and courses flown. Our final excursion in Victoria was by harbour taxi the size of a large dining room table which took us across to the so-called Fisherman's Wharf of floating houses, and from which we walked back to the ship. From Victoria harbour, we sailed the strait of Juan Fuca and then turned southwards.



As this story is too long for the newsletter, just let me say that en route to our native land we visited Napa Valley with cousins in San Francisco, four Hawaiian Islands, French Polynesia including Bora Bora, Apia in Samoa, and Auckland. I really enjoyed the warm weather for most of this leg. If you wish to get more detail, watch out for my next book, "Sail About", which I hope to publish on the net by mid-2014. **JHW (ed WWT).**

### **Orch's Orate**

Once again thank you everyone for the privilege of being able to edit the 458 Journal. Going over previous Journals I'm pretty sure this is the longest. The website has certainly contributed to this. Signing off for another year and here's hoping you all have a

**Merry Christmas and Happy & Healthy 2013 to Everyone.**

