



JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL
Year 77 No. 283 August 2026



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Queensland – Brett Taylor

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TAS, NT, ACT, SA and New Zealand – Looking for volunteers.

* Email all communications for Squadron Secretaries to Stephen Bruce & Jeremy Orchard secretary@458raafsquadron.org and for the Squadron Treasurers

to Beryl Dodds & Jeremy Orchard treasurer@458raafsquadron.org

Are there others in your family, or circle of friends, who would like to receive a copy by e-mail? Please advise the Editor–email Roland editor@458raafsquadron.org

Contributions and reports for the next Newsletter #284 are due to The Editor by 30th November, 2026.

Vale

**Mr. Paul O'Leary-son of Bert O'Leary. Vic. Flight.
Mrs Marie Simpson wife of the Late
Stanton (Stan) Simpson.....NSW Flight.**



Vale – Mrs. Marie Simpson

It is with sad news I announce the passing of Mrs. Marie Simpson, wife of the Late Stanton (Stan) Eric Simpson, respected member of the NSW Flight. Mrs. Simpson was from Scone NSW and passed away on the 10th of April, 2026. She was 93 years . Photo on the left is Marie and Stan taken on 23rd September 1989– Stan's 65th birthday.

Our sincere sympathies to Kerry, Wendy and families.

Recollections & Memoirs of
Stanton Simpson of his
War Service Days
1942 - 1945
by Lorry Keegan (Brother-in-Law)

Preface: * The following information was recorded almost verbatim from a conversation between Stan and myself on Tuesday, 24th April, 2001. I have written it in the First Person as related to me by Stan.

* Before I commence I will record a few remarks from Stan's

Certificate of Service & Discharge:

Stan's Full Name: Stanton Eric Simpson

Date of Birth: 23.9.24

Date of Enlistment: 2.1.43

Date of Discharge: 25.1.46

Occupation in Civil Life: Shop Assistant (George Taylor: Groceries: Scone)

Description of S.E. Simpson (as per form)

Height: 5'6"

Colour of Eyes: Hazel

Colour of Hair: Brown

Complexion: Medium.

Service Record:

Aircraftman II 2.1.43 Aircraftman V Wireless Badge

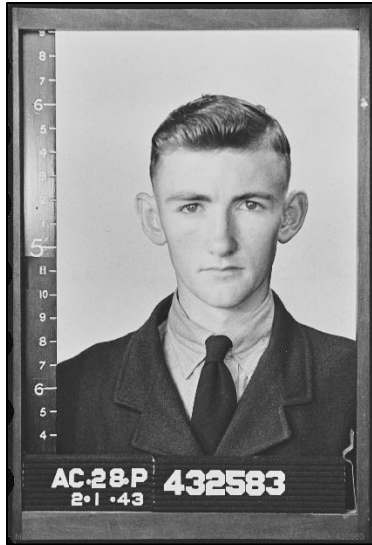
Leading Aircraftman 27.2.43

Sergeant: 11.11.43

Flight Sergeant: 11.5.44

Warrant Officer: 11.5.45

Italy Star; Defence Medal.



Warrant Officer Stanton Eric Simpson.



Stan second from right with his crew.



Stan second from right with his mates in the UK



Stan Simpson (right) with John Griggs. Venice, May 1945



FLIGHT REPORTS

Victoria Flight Report by Roland Orchard



ANZAC Day 2026 at Melbourne CBD was another resounding success. With brilliant blue skies greeting us on a classic autumn day, ten of us marched to the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. Earlier some of us attended the 5.30 am

Dawn Service at The Shrine of Remembrance. One of the many highlights on this day was thinking about the very significant anniversaries this year: 85 years since formation of our Squadron in 1941, our Presidents Charles and Bill both turned 104 recently! Within the hour after completing our march, Victoria Flight President, Roland Orchard opened the meeting and called for a minute's silence in remembrance of recently passed Veterans, widows & members of 458 Squadron. He then recited the ode. Lest we Forget. The meeting was called to discuss the coming year's focus and activities and to conduct the 2026 AGM. The meeting place was the Observatory cafe just across Birdwood Ave from The Shrine. In attendance were John Boydell, Rob & Julie Forgan, Chris & Heather Wurr, daughter Karen & husband Clint and son Hutchison, Neil Flentje, Edwina Bell, Roland Orchard, Jeremy Orchard. Apologies were received from Jane Foster, Gillian & Joe Somers, Matthew Wullemin, Rod Flentje, Pene Compton, Chris Orchard, Peter Hedgcock. Those who marched were John Boydell, Chris Wurr and grandson Hutchison, Neil Flentje, Rob & Julie Forgan, Edwina Bell, Roland Orchard, Jeremy Orchard, John Marino. This year we had 6 Air Force Cadets displaying the picture of the Wellington and carrying our Banner; Two from 407 SQN in Broadmeadows, two from 416 SQN in Moonee Ponds, one from 405 SQN in Sunshine and

one from 401 SQN Surrey Hills. Following beside us (with the onlookers) as we marched and meeting us at the end of the march were family members of the Wurr clan. Many of our attendees came from far and wide, Bendigo; the Wurr clan and Neil Flenje, Castlemaine; Edwina Bell and even South Australia; Rob and Julie Forgan. It is wonderful to see that the deep commitment to preserving the memory of our 458 Veterans remains strong within our 458 Squadron family.

[Reports from the Day < Anzac Day | 458 RAAF Squadron](#)



Around the table L-R-
Jeremy Orchard, Edwina
Bell, John Boydell, Julie
Forgan, Rob Forgan,
Heather Wurr, Chris Wurr,
Chris' grandson Huchison,
daughter Karen and son-in-
law Clint.

VALE – Mr Paul O’Leary.

It is with great sadness that I report the sudden passing of Paul O’Leary. Paul was the son 458 Squadron Veteran, the Late Bert O’Leary.



Above photo is Paul at the podium paying tribute to his Dad, at Bert’s 100th birthday celebration, February, 2024.



Paul’s dad Warrant Officer John (Bert) O’Leary served with 458 Squadron at Gibraltar from March, 1945 until The Squadron was demobilised in June, 1945. Bert served as a wireless operator/air gunner. Bert sadly passed away on the 16th July, 2025.

Our condolences go out to the O’Leary family. Rest in Peace Paul.



New South Wales Flight Report by Stephen Bruce

Dear 458 Family, It was truly inspiring to gather together for this year's Anzac Day March in Sydney, especially for those of us who travelled to Malta last October. Sharing those meaningful experiences, which are so deeply etched in our hearts and minds as descendants of those who served in 458 Squadron during World War II, was a source of pride and unity for us all.

A special welcome goes to the Aitken Family John, Liz, Felicity, and Joshua who joined our march and function for the first time this year. We hope they will continue to be part of our family as we honour the remarkable service of our relatives. We also express our heartfelt appreciation to Steve Chapman and his family for their ongoing commitment, making the annual journey from Tasmania to be with us. Their presence and enthusiasm at our traditional gathering spot, The Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, as always adds to the camaraderie of the day.

Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to such a memorable event. The stories and memories shared among us passed down from veterans and family members, are always a highlight, reminding us of the enduring bonds we cherish as a group. I am pleased to share some updates with you. The Australian High Commission in Malta has notified us that our specially commissioned quilt from Aussie Quilts will soon be presented to Air Wing Commander Colonel Nicholas Grech, in recognition of the outstanding support he and his subordinates provided during our visit. This presentation will be made by His Excellency Matt Skelly; we will keep you informed once a date is confirmed.

Additionally, as mentioned at our function, the Maltese Tourist Authority commissioned a story about our commemorative events at Luqa Airfield last year. This story was broadcast by **news.com.au** on Anzac Day, and you can view the full article under the travel stories section on their website. [don-bitmead-article-for-website-anzac-day-report.pdf](#)

I thought I would share a touching story that beautifully illustrates the respect and shared heritage within our group. On Anzac Day 2025, at 10:00am, Peter Williams (grandson of L.J. (Sam) and Maisie Barlow) boarded a train at Cherrybrook Metro Station, proudly wearing their grandfather's medals. At Chatswood Station, Tim Colclough, also wearing the same medals, joined the train. They engaged in conversation before both alighted at Martin Place. Only upon arriving under our banner did they realize their common bond as both were honouring their grandfathers' service in 458 Squadron. Such moments remind us of the profound connections that unite us.



L-R Adam Bruce, Tim Colclough, Peter Williams

Each of you plays a vital role in keeping our heritage alive. We appreciate your involvement and encourage you to continue sharing your stories and reflections, which make our annual gatherings so meaningful. We look forward to continuing these traditions together and honouring the legacy of the 458 Squadron.



NSW Flight ANZAC Day 2026



Around the table L-R- Lureen Kirkman, Wendy Whittem, Gary Kirkman, Anita Bruce, Carolyn Wilkinson, Beryl Dodds, Pat Baker, Charlie Baker, Ron Munkman.

From: Grech Nicholas at AFM <nicholas.b.grech@gov.mt>

Date: 21 May 2026 at 02:40:19 AEST

To: Stephen Bruce <stephenwbruce@hotmail.com>

Cc: Adam Bruce <adamrobertbruce@hotmail.com>

Subject: RE: Aussie Quilt

Good afternoon Stephen,

On Monday, I was invited over to the Australian High Commission whereby I was presented with the Aussie Quilt. I must say that I am chuffed to receive such a memorabilia, I will somehow frame it and place it in our Squadron lines for it to serve as a memory of 458 who served here and also of the memorable activity that we did together last year. Please thank all the 458 Sqn community and reassure them that you are always welcome to our tiny rock.

Should our paths cross at any stage, I would be delighted.

Warm regards,

Nicholas Grech

Lieutenant Colonel (OF-4)

Commanding Officer

Air Wing MQR AFM



Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas Grech flanked by Rob & Carol Wilkinson at the Malta Memorial, 15th October, 2025.



Queensland Flight Report by Brett Taylor

Since the last newsletter I have received communication in late June from Graziano Fiordelmondo, who lives in Ancona, Italy. In the December 2025 newsletter I reported on Graziano's assistance with help to find six 458 aircrew who were buried in the Commonwealth WWII Cemetery in Ancona, Italy.

Graziano told me he has been in contact with the group "Archeologi dell'aria" who are Air Archaeologists. They are a non profit association of nonpartisan volunteers who use their free time to search for aircraft and aircrew shot down during the second world war. Their headquarters are at La Tratta Museum in Copparo (Ferrara) Italy. They have shown interest in searching for the location of the 458 Wellington that crashed when trying to land at Jesi Aerodrome on the night of 13/14th December 1944. This resulted in the death of W/O G.G. Simons, F/S K.J. Leslie, W/O J.H. Watson, W/O H.S. Shying, W/O R. Ellis, W/O P.J. Farrell. At the time the aircraft was found burnt out 10-12 miles southwest of Jesi. Initial plans are to arrange excavation around September but in the meantime the group are seeking more information.

For your reference I have added the link below for this group of Air Archaeologists. Their website describes a number of successful searches for aircraft and positive identification of the remains of aircrew who were subsequently buried with full military honours.

<https://archeologi-dell-aria.webnode.it/#:~:text=Archeologi%20dell'Aria%20%C3%A8%20una%20Associazione,Museo%20La%20Tratta%2C%20sede%20dell'associazione>.

The existence of this group of enthusiastic volunteers is gratifying especially for the families. They have identified and confirmed the final resting place of those missing brave men. I am still trying to locate the person who visited the grave of W/O J.H. Watson on 23rd February 2025 and presumably left Australian flags on all the six 458 graves.

ANZAC DAY

The Anzac Day March 2026 in Brisbane City included a few 463 and 467 Association representatives under a Bomber Command banner on a rainy day. My wife and I attended the local ANZAC ceremony near where I live at the Brookfield Showgrounds in Brisbane. This ceremony attracted an estimated 3500 people and importantly it included many students from all the local schools to attend and provide representatives to lay a wreath to honour past veterans.





TRANSPORT TO WAR ACROSS THE PACIFIC

I have inherited a file with documents including the daily orders for all RAAF service men on the S.S. Monterey, en route across the Pacific to the UK. I have selected a range of those documents below to show examples of the administration that was required when transporting RAAF personnel to the war.

My father was the only serviceman I am aware of, who later joined 458. He was transported on the American first-class passenger liner the S.S. Monterey. In mid-September 1941 he was posted to Sydney and immediately boarded the ship along with 60 RAAF men. At this time, America was not in the war and the ship was on a cruise with lots of very well-to-do Americans on holiday.

The ship had been procured by the American Government to help citizens return to the mainland.

My father wrote that both N.C.O.s and Officers were first class passengers and his accommodation was fantastic. He was delighted to learn he was to share a state room with an ensuite bathroom, twin beds, huge wardrobes and a large window with an uninterrupted view of the sea. During the voyage he was instructed to observe security and to address all letters as “at sea” with no information as to our destination etc.

In Auckland 600 young New Zealanders, L.A.C s for training in Canada joined the ship. Despite orders regarding censorship my father wondered about security as in Fiji, Pago Pago and Honolulu the men were welcomed with parades and much fanfare.



S.S. Monterey in Auckland Harbour

I have documents covering the voyage period 19th to 30th September 1941 which reflect the constant need to entertain, discipline and train the young enthusiastic men ready for action. Some interesting events include concerts on board, a swimming contest on Waikiki Beach together with an exhibition of surfing and lifesaving by RAAF and RNZAF teams on 1st October 1941, which was to be attended by as many personnel as possible. A baseball match was held in Suva on 25th September between air force personnel and the crew of the Monterey and was surprisingly won by the air force team. Sick parades were conducted to lower the risk of the spread of infectious diseases, a constant worry to the senior officers. Discipline covered subjects such as, smoking, keeping tidy cabins, indecent language, not opening port holes and not sitting on ships railings or rigging where lives would be endangered! I was particularly interested in the cost of candy at 5 cents each and Aussie beer at 20 cents a bottle, and large ones at that! Below are a couple of the menus that illustrates the luxury experienced by those men prior to the horrors of war.



S. S. MONTEREY

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1941

Breakfast

<i>Fruits</i>	Chilled Papaya Hawaiian Papaya, Carrot or Tomato Juice Frosted Strawberries	Baked Apple
<i>Cereals</i>	Cracked Wheat Bran Flakes Rice Krispies Puffed Wheat	Milk Rice with Raisins Grape-Nuts
<i>Fish</i>	Boiled Finnan Haddie English Style	
<i>Eggs and Omelets</i>	Fried or Boiled Ham or Bacon and Eggs Poached on Toast Scrambled Eggs with Croutons or Plain Shirred Eggs in Brown Butter or Plain	
<i>Meats</i>	Baked Roast Beef Hash Grilled Ham or American Bacon Grilled Lamb Chop, Toast	
<i>Potatoes</i>	Boiled or Fried Potatoes	
<i>Cold Buffet</i>	Roast Beef Ox Tongue York Ham	Roast Lamb
<i>Rolls</i>	London Scones Buttered, Cinnamon, Modern Melba or Milk Toast Wheat Hotcakes with Maple Syrup or Honey	Assorted Breakfast Rolls
<i>Preserves</i>	Apricot Preserves Strained Honey Grapefruit Marmalade Blackberry Preserves Pineapple Jam Guava Jelly	Currant Jelly
<i>Beverages</i>	Bushells English Breakfast Lipton Tea Kaffee Hag Buttermilk Milk	Orange Pekoe Oolong Tea Cocoa Kona Coffee Coffee Iced Tea

S. S. MONTEREY

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1941

Dinner

Table Celery on Ice Salted Jumbo Peanuts
Pineapple Cocktail Curacao Marinaded Herring in Sour Cream
Tomato, Hawaiian Pineapple or Orange Juice
Heart of Artichoke with Fillet Anchovies
Consomme Royal Cream of Tomato with Small Tapioca
Brook Trout Saute, Brown Lemon Butter
Creamed Minced Veal with Fresh Mushrooms on Toast
Braised Smoked Loin of Pork with Glazed Apple
Roast Tom-Turkey with Celery Stuffing and Cranberry Sauce
Roast Prime Ribs of Beef au Jus
Fresh Green Peas Mashed Carrots
Hawaiian Poi Boiled Rice
Cottage Fried Boiled Potatoes
Baked York Ham with Asparagus Tips
Cold Spring Lamb with Mint Jelly
Heart of Lettuce Tomato Fruit
French Thousand Island Mayonnaise
Preserved Tangerines Apple Sauce Cake Papaya Sherbet
Sultana Ice Cream Roll Cold Apricot Pudding
Old English Roquefort Bel Paese
Fresh Fruit in Season
Demi-Tasse

SHIP STANDING ORDERS

By

Wing Commander A.X. RICHARDS

1. ROUTINE

The following daily routine will be observed by all ranks until further notice :-

0700 hours	Reveille
0710 "	P/T Parade
0725 "	Dismiss from P/T Parade
0755 "	Inspection for Meal Parade 1st sitting.
0855 "	Inspection for Meal Parade 2nd sitting.
0945 - 1015	Sick Parade
1000 "	Classes
1005 "	Orderly Room Cases
1155 "	Meal Parade 1st Sitting
1255 "	" " 2nd Sitting
1400 - 1600	Classes
1755 "	Meal Parade 1st Sitting
1855 "	" " 2nd Sitting
2230 "	Lights Out.

2. MEAL PARADES

Assembly time for meals is to be considered as a parade and troops will fall in on the Aft end of "B" Deck.

3. DRESS

Until further notice dress for all ranks will be No. 5A. Dress for P/T Parades will be Shorts, Singlet and Sand Shoes. Personnel are to pay particular attention to their appearance, they are to be shaved, properly dressed and are to keep their general appearance neat and tidy.

4. SALUTING

Personnel are to salute once a day and when specially sent for or detailed to a duty by an officer.

5. BOUNDS

"A" Deck will be out of bounds at all times with the following exceptions :-
The lounge will be available for lectures and pictures. The Smoking Room, Portside, will be available at night as Sergeants Ante Room. The Pavillion will be available at night and for

Page 2.

6. SERVICE PATROL

One Orderly Sergeant and six men from the Duty Flight will be detailed as a Service Patrol and will be responsible that ship's orders are observed and discipline is maintained. This party will wear red arm bands.

7. CANTEEN

The Dry Canteen will be open from 1000 hours until 2200 hours. The Wet Canteen will be open from 1700 hours until 2200 hours for sale of beer only. No liquor will be sold for consumption in cabins.

All canteen goods are to be sold through the Ship's "Slop Chest". This automatically fixes the profit on all articles bought there at 10%. The following prices have already been fixed for the Northbound trip:-

Standard brands of American Cigarettes - 2 packets of	20	15	/
Candy Bar		5	/
Soft Drinks - American & Australian		5	/
Beer - American in small bottles		10	/
Beer - American in cans - 2 cans for		25	/
Beer - Australian - large bottles		20	/

(Signed) A.K. RICHARDS, Wirt Commander,
O.C. TROOPS

CENSORSHIP OF CORRESPONDENCE

OBJECT.

The object of censoring correspondence is to prevent assistance being afforded, or Naval or other Military information being transmitted to the enemy. Complete blockage of such information is vital.

GENERAL RESTRICTIONS.

No mention is to be made in letters of :-

- (a) Date of embarkation, departure, or disembarkation.
- (b) City, wharf or quay at which embarked.
- (c) Name of ship conveying troops.
- (d) Route and destination.
- (e) Naval Escort.
- (f) Units involved in movement.
- (g) Personnel involved in movement.
- (h) Nationality of ship, currency employed or any other fact which will give an indication of nationality, ownership or name of ship.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS.

- (a) When ships paper is used, ship's name or company must be removed.
- (b) All mail is to be posted in the letter slot on the orderly room counter. The envelope is NOT to be gummed down.
- (c) Postage stamps are not necessary.
- (d) The number, rank and name of the sender and the address "R.A.A.F. ASKOAD" is to be shown on the top right hand corner of the letter.
- (e) Mail is not to be posted ashore.
- (f) Air mail and wireless or cable facilities are not to be used.
- (g) No code, or other means of avoiding perusal is to be used. Breach of this will be regarded as a serious offence.
- (h) No Menus, news Bulletins, or other distinctive material indicating nationality or name of the ship is to be sent.
- (i) No mention is to be made of alterations in ships time.
- (j) Reference to stay at Auckland must be written in most general terms. No mention of the city is permitted.

CLOSING TIMES.

All mail intended for dispatch from Suva is to be posted at orderly room by 2200 hrs. Tuesday 23/9/41.

Mail posted after leaving Suva will be sent on subsequent to final disembarkation.

REQUEST.

It would be appreciated if personnel would write legibly and on one side only of notepaper. Failure to comply may mean delay in despatch of letter, or mutilation by erasures which may render the letter of little value to the recipient.

INQUIRIES CONCERNING CENSORSHIP SHOULD BE MADE TO SQUADRON LEADER W.S. TAIT or P/O.D.R. MARSDEN.

Copies of these instructions can be perused at the orderly office.

(Signed) A. RICHARDS, W/O.
O.C. TROOPS.

22/9/41.

SPORTS COMMITTEE

PRESIDENT

Wing Commander A.K. RICHARDS

VICE-PRESIDENTS

Flight Lieutenant W.M. MELVILLE
Flight Lieutenant J. LAUNDER
Flying Officer I.G. BUCKINGHAM

COMMITTEE

Pilot Officer B.H. GRIFFITH
Pilot Officer J.C. FRANKCOMB
Pilot Officer W.J. HANDELSLEY
Pilot Officer G.E. TAYLOR
Pilot Officer K. GIBBARD
Pilot Officer W.E. SHEARER
Pilot Officer A.M. OGDEN
Pilot Officer J.E. COATES

WARRANT OFFICERS

Warrant Officer G.T. CUSACK
Warrant Officer G.M. BERRY
Warrant Officer T. PEACOCK

SECRETARY

Corpora 1 SELLACK S.C.

...V...V...V...V...V...

F.O.Os IN CHARGE OF GAMES

PA BALL TENNIS)	Sgt. Harmon E.	Sgt. Worth M.
DECK TENNIS)		
DECK QUOITS)	Sgt. Williams A.C.M.	Sgt. Maglund A.
SHUFFLE BOARD)		
TABLE TENNIS)	Sgt. Lord A.A.	Cpl. Barnett A.H.
SWIMMING POOL)		

FLIGHT F.O.Os.

No.1 Flight	Sgt. Bathgate G.
No.2 Flight	Sgt. Cullen S.C.
No.3 Flight	Cpl. Smith W.
No.4 Flight	Cpl. Ramage G.S.
No.5 Flight	Cpl. Hamilton H.A.
No.6A Flight	Sgt. Manning J.A.
No.6B Flight	Sgt. Lithgow E.C.
No.7C Flight	Sgt. Robinson P.J.
No.7D Flight	Sgt. Marshman J.A.
Hq. Flight	W/S. Ross D.

Serial No. 7
24th. September, 1941

DAILY ROUTINE ORDERS

by

Wing Commander A.X. RICHARDS

O.C. TROOPS

1. DUTIES

Thursday 25th September (No. 1)

Duty Officer
Next for duty

Squadron Leader R.C. AYLING
Squadron Leader D.J. McPHERSON

Orderly Officer
Next for duty

Flying Officer I.C. BUCKINGHAM
Pilot Officer K.H. RIDGEWAY

Orderly Sergeants
Next for duty

407501 Sgt BURT R.T.
407761 Sgt CHAMBERLAIN N.J.
400887 Sgt FERRERO G.S.
407555 Sgt THOMPSON W.R.

Duty Clerks
Next for duty

4487 Sgt GREGORY L.G.
30791 AC1 MALES R.R.
10739 Sgt HARMAN E.E.
59126 AC1 KLINGNER J.H.

Duty Runners
Next for duty

408508 LAC PEAKE P.O.
416280 LAC PEARCE A.P.
411270 LAC ANDERSON R.F.
411475 LAC BANNISTER R.T.
413009 LAC ATKIN R.E.
413374 LAC BROWN G.

Duty Flights
Next for duty

No. 2 Flight
No. 3 Flight and No. 9 Flight.

2. ENTERTAINMENTS

Owing to the fact that a large programme of entertainments has been arranged, the "Quiz" competition has been cancelled.

3. IMPROMPTU CONCERT

On the second Thursday this week an impromptu concert will be held in the Lounge of "A" Deck at 2000 hours. At the same time dancing will commence in the Pavilion. 2150

4. PORTHOLES

Portholes are not on any account to be opened by Air Force personnel. These portholes are closed for a purpose and will be opened by the ship's company when necessary.

5. CIGARETTES

Personnel are to use ash trays when smoking and are on no account to leave cigarettes burning on tobacco or woodwork. Contravention of this order will result in severe disciplinary action being taken.

(Sgd) A.C. BARKER
Flight Lieutenant,
C.A.T.T. 100 1000000

28th September, 1941.

DEPT. ROUTINE ORDERS.

By

Wing Commander A.A. Richards.

O.C. TACOPS.

1. DUTIES:

28th September, 1941 (No.2).

<u>Duty Officer:</u>	Squadron Leader E.J. McPherson.
<u>Next for duty:</u>	Squadron Leader W.B. Tart.
<u>Orderly Officer:</u>	Pilot Officer R.L. Ridgway.
<u>Next for duty:</u>	Pilot Officer E. Davey.
<u>Orderly Sergeants:</u>	400087 Sgt. Parrovo, G.S.
	407652 Sgt. Thompson, W.R.
<u>Next for duty:</u>	401400 Sgt. Anivette, M.
	409948 Sgt. Wright, J.C.
<u>Duty Clerks:</u>	10722 Sgt. Harman, E.E.
	39196 A.C. Klingner, J.M.
<u>Next for duty:</u>	5094 Sgt. Maglund, A.A.
	39578 A.C. Corbett, P.J.
<u>Duty Runners:</u>	411270 LAC. Anderson, R.F.
	411276 LAC. Banister, R.F.
	413009 LAC. Atkin, R.E.
	413574 LAC. Brown, G.
<u>Next for duty:</u>	411435 LAC. Adam, G.R.
	12168 LAC. Bethurst, A.L.
	402533 LAC. Gargin, A.S.
	411966 LAC. Young, G.
<u>Duty Flight:</u>	No. 5 Flight and No. 9 Flight.
<u>Next for duty:</u>	No. 4 and No. 10 Flights.

2. BOUNDS:

Cabins No. 283 and 514 will be out of bounds to all ranks until further notice.

Duty Flights will supply runners to deliver meals to these cabins daily until further notice.

3. SICK PARADE:

Attention is again drawn to Sick Parade which will be conducted on "B" Deck "Art" at 0945 hours daily.

The Orderly Sergeant will be responsible to see that personnel attending this parade are present at the Casualty Room, Cabin 285 "B" Deck, not later than 1000 hours daily.

4. SWIMMING:

Swimming pools are now available for personnel in accordance with previous orders.

The Duty Flights will arrange for two piquets to be stationed at each pool whilst the pool is filled.

Personnel will not use either pool without first dipping their feet in foot baths adjacent.

Orderly Sergeants will be responsible to see that an adequate supply of disinfectant is consistently available.

5. OFFICERS' CONFERENCE.

The following officers will attend a daily conference in the Smoke Room, "A" Deck at 1200 hours: O.C., S.A.O., Adjutant, Education Officers and Squadron Commanders.

6. BOAT DRILL.

At the conclusion of Boat Drill, personnel will be marched from Boat Stations through the nearest available exit.

7. STAY AT SUVA.

(a) Leave: The Orderly Officer will conduct a general parade at 0900 hours on 25.9.41 at normal parade stations at which Shore Leave will be granted to all personnel, except those on duty, until 1630 hours on 25.9.41. at which time a general parade will be held on the Dock.

(b) Passes: Leave or Ship passes will not be required by personnel whilst in uniform.

(c) Dress: The Order of Dress from and including Thursday, 25th instant, and until further notice will be as already published in Daily Routine Orders, viz.,

Airmen, by day: Shorts, drab.
Shirts (Buck type without tie)
Stockings, drab.
Shoes, black
Caps, Field Service.

Airmen, by night (after 1000 hours)

Blues (5A).

Officers will wear Dress 6A by day and dress 5A by night.

(d) Baseball: With reference to the baseball match which will be held at Suva on 25th September, 1941, it is desired that the match be attended by as many Air Force Personnel as possible.
The match will be played between 1400 hours and 1600 hours.

8. CONCERT:

At the conclusion of the concert to be held in the main Lounge, "A" Deck, on 2nd Thursday of this week (25.9.41), supper will be served to all personnel.

The Bar will close at 2045 hours and re-open at 2300 hours and "Lights Out" will be at 2359 hours.

[Signature]
C.O. Troops.

(Sgd.) A.C. Barker,
Flight Lieutenant,
ADJUTANT, TROOPS.

Supplement to Daily Routine Orders

Serial No. 8.

25th September, 1941.
(No. 2).

1. MEDICAL INSPECTION:

A medical inspection of all personnel will be conducted on "B" Deck immediately after the 1415 hours parade on Thursday, 25th instant.

Flights will break off as inspection is completed.

2. HONOLULU:

Efforts are being made to arrange a 2½ hours motor tour of Honolulu at an approximate cost of 2.50.

Personnel desirous of making the trip must submit their names to their Flight Commanders not later than 1415 hours on 25th instant.

3. LOST PROPERTY:

The following items have been found and may be obtained on application to the Orderly Room:

- 1 Money belt.
- 1 Fountain pen.
- 1 Small key.
- 1 Writing set.

4. INDECENT LANGUAGE:

Complaints have been made regarding the use of indecent language by personnel. This practice must cease forthwith.

5. INSPECTION OF ENGINE ROOM:

Arrangements have been made for the inspection of the Ships Engine Room except on days when the ship is entering, berthed or leaving port. Each inspection party will be comprised of four (4) and times for inspection will be allotted by Squadron Commanders.

Personnel desirous of availing themselves of this opportunity to see the Engine Room should submit their names to their respective Squadron Commanders forthwith.

6. LAUNDRY:

It is advised that a 24 hour laundry service cannot be provided. In future, laundry will not be available for 16 to 72 hours after lodging.

7. TIME:

Clocks will be advanced 30 minutes as from 2400 hours tonight.

8. SPORT:

The baseball match between the crew of the S.S. Monterey and members of the R.A.A.F. resulted in a win for the R.A.A.F. team by 12 runs to 6.

Matson Line WIRELESS

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THE OCEANIC STEAMSHIP COMPANY

S. S. MONTEREY

BOUND FOR SUVA FIJI WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 24 1941

WORLD NEWS BY UNITED PRESS

***WORLD AFFAIRS:

BERLIN -- Competent German sources reported the sinking or damaging of 27 Russian ships, including 16 warships and the destruction of 30 Soviet divisions approximating 360,000 troops in the systematic crushing of four Red armies trapped east of Kiev. As the war went into its fourth month, Nazi spokesmen said that German Panzer columns were stampeding eastward through the Ukraine, having passed Poltava, 135 miles south-east of Kiev, and reached a zone from which they menaced key military and industrial region of Kharkov, in the heart of the Donetz Basin. The High Command said that German bombers and coastal batteries had struck shattering blows at Soviet vessels in the Black Sea and the Gulf of Finland. Sixteen warships, including the venerable and battlescarred 23,000-ton battleship "October Revolution", were reported destroyed or crippled. A special communique from Adolf Hitler's Field Headquarters said that German submarines in the Atlantic had attacked two enemy convoys and "in hard struggles" 13 heavily laden vessels amounting to 82,500 tons were sunk.

MOSCOW -- The Red Air Fleet, cooperating with Army units, hammered furiously at enemy columns to break up German thrusts into the Ukraine as official sources charged Bulgaria with plotting to provide a base for a Black Sea attack on Russian oil fields. Enemy tanks, motorized units and infantry columns were reported heavily bombed by Russian planes on the southern front and the besieged sea port of Odessa was standing stronger than ever far behind the Nazi front lines. The German losses in their newest push were reported in war front dispatches as extremely high, including some 150,000 killed in the battle of Kiev in addition to the loss of 40 percent of efficiency of some divisions on the northern front before Leningrad.

ROME -- An extraordinary war communique said that Italian "suicide" boats had slipped into the harbor of Gibraltar under the big guns of "the rock" and had sunk three ships and damaged a fourth. The communique said that a 10,000-ton tanker, a 500-ton tanker and a 6,000-ton munitions ship were sunk, and added that a vessel of 12,000 tons was damaged and "must be considered lost." The assaults that made the daring raid were said by reliable quarters to be similar to those used in an attack on the Island of Malta, July 25.

LONDON -- The British and American missions to Moscow have arrived by air on Soviet soil, a Tass news agency broadcast heard by the United States listening post reported. The American mission is headed by W. Averell Harriman and the British mission by Lord Beaverbrook. The conferences at the Kremlin are designed to speed American and British aid to the Red Army.

LONDON -- The Algiers radio said that General Sir Archibald Wavell, Commander of the British Indian Army occupying Iran and Iraq, had gone to Turkey in the Russian-Georgian Province, to organize the defense of the Caucasus.

I imagine daily news reports such as this would have encouraged the men to get to the fight as soon as possible.

If anyone suspects their relatives also travelled across the Pacific en route to the UK in September 1941, let me know and I will search for that name.

I hope this record provides new information for 458 relatives and friends.

I can be contacted on btaylorc6@gmail.com



United Kingdom Flight Report by Keith Wilkinson



Our squadron co-president Bill Wake has celebrated his 104th birthday. As our photos show, he was in fine spirits when he received a birthday cake at a nursing home where he was living, temporarily.

He got many cards and messages to mark the occasion. Bill and I had an hilarious chat about some of his funniest experiences with the squadron - and the light-hearted antics of some of its officers. His family say he has been in good form recently. Bill has been enjoying the nursing home gardens, from where he can sometimes watch cricket matches.





I have spoken too to our other co-president, Charlie Humbles. His 104th birthday featured in our last newsletter. The UK has had a number of heatwaves this summer which has made life difficult for many elderly people. Although the temperatures have not been high by Australian standards, Britain is not geared up for extreme heatwaves - and most homes do not have any air conditioning.

Charlie told me that he had been "very very hot recently". But he said had been alright and was soldiering on, as ever.

Bill's relatives told me that although he didn't have air conditioning in his nursing home, his room was in the shade and so he was not too hot.

I have had another nice long chat with Christina McKenzie, widow of the legendary CO Bruce McKenzie. "I am hanging on, as they say," Christina told me. "A bit wobbly at times."

She had a big happy family party in England for her 90th birthday. She also recently spent time out in Kenya where she used to live with Bruce in a house on a beach surrounded by palm trees. She says she loves to receive this newsletter as her late husband had so many affectionate memories of the squadron.

There is some other interesting news in England. It is not directly about the squadron, but it is about a Wellington bomber and air crew members from Britain, Australia and Canada. I went to the unveiling of a new monument to five men who lost their lives when their bomber crashed onto farmland in Shropshire in 1943.

The Wellington came down whilst on a bombing exercise near Bridgnorth. Several members of 458 Squadron spent some of their training period at Bridgnorth so would have been familiar with the area.

The men who died were the pilot Sgt William Shepherd; wireless operator Walter Henry Lawrence; Sgt George Donald Hector Morrow (from Saskatchewan, Canada); rear gunner Norman Leslie Wachter (from North Queensland, Australia), and observer Francis George Wells.

The Wellington was destroyed in a fireball and the bodies of two of the crew were never found. The monument overlooks the field where the crash took place at Eudon George. There was a moving ceremony and the Last Post was played. The monument was draped with flags from the UK, Australia and Canada as a mark of respect for this Commonwealth crew.

So many of our 458 squadron men were lost under similar circumstances.

The whole ceremony was filmed and can be watched on YouTube. An excellent production.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p41elrACDXw>





Canada Flight Report by Adam & Cate Wagstaffe



"Dear Sir, I am sorry to bother you, but we have had no word of our son Manley L. Brechin since he was reported missing on August 24th. One of our own neighbours Mrs. W.M. Reid, R.R. 2 Coldwater Ontario, insists that she has had a card from him sent since he was reported missing. I tried to explain to her that it must have been sent before that date, but she will not listen to me and tells everyone she has heard from him. I find this very embarrassing when people ask me if I have had any word from him and have to say I haven't when she is reporting to everyone that she has. Mr. Reid even went into the Dominion bank, where Manley worked before he enlisted and told

them about his wife having had word from him. I would like you to look into this story and ask her for proof of what she is telling and if it is the truth have his whereabouts traced as soon as possible as we are very anxious about him here. Manley was a good straight forward boy and am sure he would report to the proper authorities if possible.

Yours truly Mrs. John Brechin" (3 November 1943)

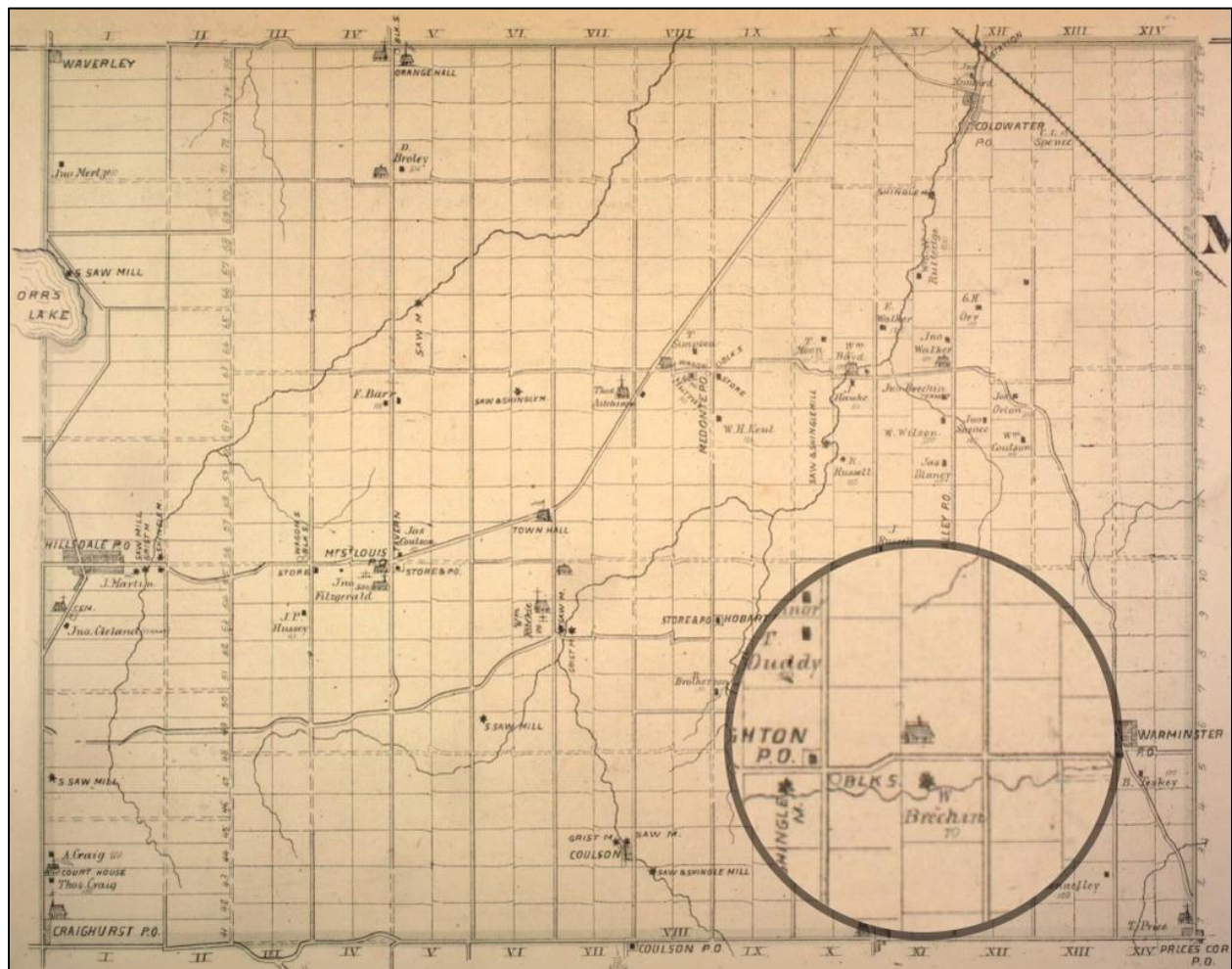
When reading this letter from Flying Officer Manley Lyall Brechin's mother, it is difficult not to feel its weight on multiple levels. There is sorrow in the absence of news, and anxiety in the long wait for confirmation that never comes. There is also something quieter but just as present: the strain of uncertainty as information fragments across community lines, carried second-hand, repeated without clarity or proof.

At the centre of it is a mother trying to steady what remains knowable. In the absence of official confirmation, she returns to what she can still assert with

certainty—her son’s character, and the belief that he would act properly, report if he could, remain as he ought to be. Wartime categories such as “missing” can rob a life of its shape, reducing a person to a status while everything personal is left suspended. In that space between record and reality, families were often left holding identity together with memory alone.

It is from this space that we begin to trace the story of 458 Squadron member Manley Brechin, as fully and faithfully as the record allows.

Manley was born on 28 March 1923 to John and Lila Brechin on the family farm in Coldwater, Ontario. His father, John, born in Ontario in 1892 was the son of Immigrants Walter (1852-1912) and Elizabeth (1854-1933) Brechin. Walter and Elizabeth emigrated between 1875 and 1885 and according to early Simcoe County archeological maps settled in Medonte Township, just west of Orillia.



Interestingly, in 1899 Archeologist, Andrew F Hunter published *Notes of Sites of Huron Villages* in the Township of Tiny (Simcoe County) for The Ministry of Education. It was “Prepared with a view to the identification of those villages visited” and described by Champlain and the early Missionaries.

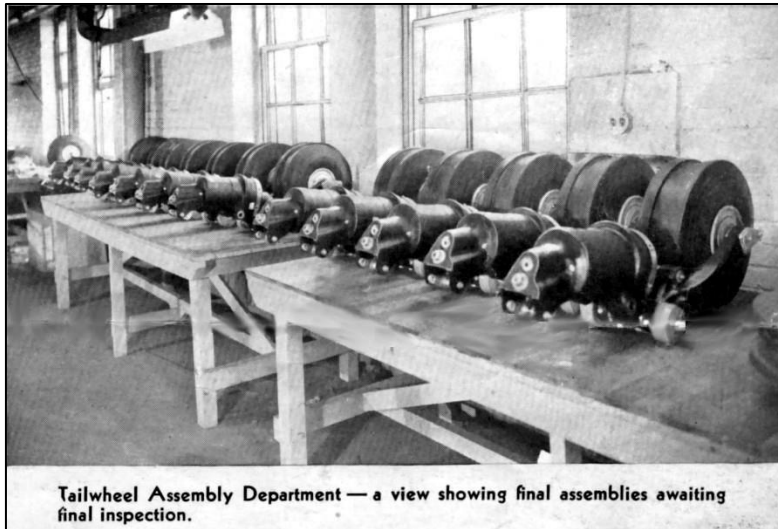
Hunter was hunting for evidence of the Huron Indigenous Nation in and around Coldwater. He actually visited the Brechin farm and noted that on the Brechin farm he discovered ancient ash beds, pottery fragments, skinning stones and pipes from an early Huron-Wendat village site, overlooking the Coldwater River basin.

Around 45 Kilometers to the south of Coldwater is the village of Brechin, Ontario. There is no direct link to Manley or the Brechin family, but it is likely that the family name and the village name are sourced from the same historic market town and Parish of Brechin in Angus County (formerly Forfarshire), Scotland.

We, the Wagstaff's, know the area well as we had a farm and airstrip not 50 kilometers to the southeast, flew over the area many, many times and visited Brechin, where a fellow named Doug Ronan has a farm on which he carved out a float plane landing and takeoff canal, which is quite unique.



<https://www.dougronan.com/pictures.php?gal=Pictures-Of-Our-Water-Runway>



Source: <https://www.orilliamatters.com/postcard-memories/at-height-of-war-effort-1600-people-half-women-toiled-at-otaco-3956807>

The village of Coldwater is very close to Orillia, Ontario, a quiet lakeside town that, like much of Canada, was steadily drawn into the machinery of the Second World War.

Orillia's industrial identity shifted through the war years, particularly through

the Otaco manufacturing company. What had once

centred on agricultural implements—ploughs, wagons, spreaders, pumps, cow bowls, harrows, and rural equipment—expanded into wartime production, machining small exhaust manifolds, engine bearing assemblies, nose cones, canopy tops, bomb bay doors, and landing gear units for aircraft.

The West Street plant in Orillia was involved in machining components for de Havilland Mosquito bombers and fighters, bringing the war effort directly into the town's daily rhythm.

At the same time, larger-scale production was taking place at Downsview in Toronto, where Canadian industry helped manufacture Mosquitos in significant numbers for the Royal Air Force and Commonwealth air forces. More than a thousand would ultimately be built there, each one assembled from thousands of smaller parts produced in towns like Orillia and across the province.



Otaco Manufacturing Plant in Orillia. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/19Cbw8b31B/>

At its height, Otaco employed over 1,600 workers, with women forming a substantial portion of the workforce across multiple shifts. In Orillia and beyond, production lines fed directly into the Allied air effort. Even the smallest components carried weight—what left a machine shop in a small Ontario town could end up bolted into an aircraft thousands of feet above Europe.



A Mosquito being assembled at the Downsview Plant.
Source: www.facebook.com/groups/112232095483062/posts/27166087186337520/

factory floor, the connection was immediate and impossible to ignore.

For a young man growing up in Orillia, it would not have been difficult to imagine those aircraft not just as machines in the sky, but as something to one day fly.

Manley received his elementary education at S.S. No. 6 Medonte Public School from 1929 to 1935, a typical rural one-room schoolhouse serving the farming families of Medonte Township,

There were moments when completed Mosquitos

would fly over

Source: <https://wartimecanada.ca/categories/victory-loans-and-war-savings>

West Street in Orillia as part of war bonds efforts and demonstrations of what that labour had built. For those on the ground, it was a rare, unmistakable sight—wood and metal turned into speed and purpose overhead. In a town where those same aircraft had been taking shape on the



before continuing his studies at Orillia Collegiate Institute from 1935 to 1940.

In September of the same year, Manley began work as a Junior Clerk with the Dominion Bank in Coldwater, Ontario. The Dominion Bank would later merge with the Bank of Toronto in 1955 to form the Toronto-Dominion Bank (TD). Remarkably, the original bank building still stands today.

By day, Manley managed the financial affairs of the town's residents—perhaps even those of Mr. and Mrs. Reid from next door.

By night, he worked at another local institution, one where first kisses, Saturday evenings, and youthful dreams often began: the Geneva Theatre. From October 1940 until March the following year, Manley worked there as an usher.

It is not hard to imagine him tearing tickets as audiences came to see *Fantasia*, released in November 1940, or watching Humphrey Bogart cement his place in Hollywood with *High Sierra*, which reached theatres in early 1941.

Although he would be lost without trace within two years, there is something quietly human in imagining Manley — an eighteen-year-old in rural Canada — simply living an eighteen-year-old's life. That would all change on 18 August 1941, when he enlisted in the Royal Canadian Air Force at the none other than No. 1 Manning Depot in Toronto. As was so often the case, Manley was enrolled in the RCAF Special Reserve, a sort of binding contract at the pleasure of the RCAF, possibly designed so that no other arm of the services could recruit those committed to but not paid by the RCAF. Manley was sent on two weeks unpaid leave and told to report back to the #1 Manning Depot at the old fairgrounds in Toronto on 31 August 1941.



Before the Army would entrust him with a rifle, it first took stock of the man himself. During his first week at Manning Depot, Manley underwent a thorough medical examination. He measured 5 feet 9¾ inches tall, weighed 123 pounds,

had blue eyes, a 32-inch chest and perfect 20/20 vision. His teeth were healthy, his chest and urine examinations were clear, no history of disease was recorded, and his blood pressure, heart and reflexes all fell within normal limits. The examining physician's conclusion occupied just three words, but they would shape everything that followed: fit to proceed.

Frustratingly for would-be pilots like Manley, Toronto Island Airport lay less than a stone's throw from the Depot, well within sight and hearing. It was a major training base used by the Royal Norwegian Air Force, where exiled and escaped Norwegians

learned to fly. Manley would have watched aircraft taking off, landing and practising formation flying directly overhead while he remained earthbound below, spitting on his boots and polishing the brass buttons of an ill-fitting

uniform.



NAHA digital collection <https://www.norwegianamericanhistory.org/digital-collections/items/show/21280>.

Cate and Adam have flown into the ex “Little Norway” at the Toronto Island Airport, many times (with all three of its wartime triangle runways still in use) specifically when Cate worked for a Helicopter company on the Island. Today the approach often involves flying around or negotiating the iconic CN Tower as well as the Current CNE Exhibition grounds (the old #1 Manning Depot).



www.jojecaaero.com

On 25 September 1941, with his kitbag, his marching blisters and a faint whiff of horse from the stables where the recruits had been barracked, Manley set out on the journey that would carry him from the parade ground into the vast and dangerous machinery of the air war.

His first stop was Trenton, Ontario, roughly two hours east by train along the northern shore of Lake Ontario. Officially, Manley had been posted there for general and tarmac duties. In practice, it was the sort of posting given to recruits for whom the RCAF had not yet found a proper place: somewhere to keep them occupied until a vacancy opened at an Initial Training School.

RCAF Trenton was not just another tiny base or airstrip. In addition to an administrative school, Trenton was home to No. 1 Flying Instructors School (3 August 1942 to 31 January 1945 – 912 days), No. 1 Air Navigation School (1 February 1940 to 23 November 1940 – 296 days – moved to Rivers Manitoba),

No. 1 Composite Training School and the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan's Central Flying School (1 February 1940 to 31 March 1946 – 2250 days). It operated with 3000 air force personnel and 500 civilian employees.



<https://www.hillmanweb.com/150/9bcatp.html>

Today, Trenton is the beating heart of the Royal Canadian Air Force's transport fleet. Giant Globemasters and Hercules thunder down the same runways, Polaris aircraft depart on missions around the world, and rescue crews stand ready around the clock to answer distress calls across much of Canada.

In 1941, however, Manley's world was considerably smaller. For an entire month he patrolled perimeter fences, cleaned buildings, hauled equipment and dragged wooden chocks beneath aircraft he was still waiting for permission to fly. He had joined the RCAF to become a pilot. So far, the closest he had come to flying was making sure someone else's aeroplane stayed firmly on the ground —the broad and ancient military occupation of dogsbody.

Fortunately, the wait lasted only a month. Manley's next posting took him just fifteen kilometres down the road to Belleville, Ontario, where he would finally begin his formal aircrew training at No. 5 Initial Training School.



ITS in Belleville, Ontario. Manley Brechin is fourth row from top, on the far left.

ITS was designed to prepare potential aircrew for the specialised roles they might later fill as pilots, observers, navigators, wireless operators, or air gunners. For Manley, this stage of training took place at the Ontario School for the Deaf (now known as Sir James Whitney School of the Deaf), whose premises had been temporarily repurposed for the Royal Canadian Air Force under the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan.

This was not unusual during the war. Across Canada, schools and public



Manley Brechin (2nd in from right), at Memorial Park Cenotaph on Station Street in Belleville, Ontario

institutions were adapted to meet the demands of the expanding air training scheme. The Manitoba School for the Deaf became an RCAF wireless school; Jericho Hill School for the Deaf in Vancouver was also used for wartime training; and the Belleville School for the Deaf became home to No. 5 Initial Training School from 1 August 1941 until 15 July 1944.

Half a century later, the Belleville school would again be linked to the men who had passed through its halls. In 1991, the school hosted a special remembrance event for graduates of No. 5 ITS, organised by the 418 Wing RCAF Association in Belleville. Some fifty-five former trainees, then in their seventies and eighties, returned for the reunion weekend. Near the end of the ceremony, fifty homing

pigeons were released, followed by a C-130 Hercules flypast from nearby RCAF Trenton — a striking tribute to the young men who had once arrived there at the beginning of their wartime training.

Manley was part of Course 40 from 10 November 1941 to 2 January 1942. Manley completed the course with an 80% average, and his instructor's comment was brief but generous: "Fine young type, hard worker, keen and a good student." He finished 8th out of 127 in the class, scoring 100% in Mathematics and 96% in Aircraft Recognition. His overall marks were pulled down by 69% in Navigation and, atrociously (Ed smiling), only 54% in Drill. Clearly, he had been watching the Norwegians learning to fly at *Little Norway* when he was supposed to be learning to march. Drill, however, was not why he was there. At the end of the course, Manley received the recommendation he had been waiting for: training as a pilot.



Figure 1 Aerial view of No. 14 EFT School & No. 7 AOS (c. 1941) Source: [Archives of Manitoba](#), Charles J. Gingras collection #122Tiger Moths lined up in front of the hangars.

With that assessment behind him, Manley was posted to No. 14 Elementary Flying Training School at Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, where he joined Course 46.



Manley Brechin. Source: Submitted to Canadian Virtual War Memorial for the project, Operation Picture Me.

At Portage la Prairie, the training environment became physical. The base consisted of eight large buildings, including a hangar built to house twenty-five Tiger Moths, a ground-instruction school, officers' mess and quarters, non-commissioned officers' mess and quarters, airmen's quarters, airmen's mess, stores, and a garage. It also had a 25-yard machine-gun range backed by a 28-foot-high concrete wall. These were no longer names on a training schedule. This was now Manley's everyday world: crowded classrooms, shared

quarters, draughty hangars, rifle ranges and the bright yellow Tiger Moths waiting on the airfield outside. All around him, men were learning, laughing, making mistakes and preparing to fly. At last, he was among them.

One hallmark of the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan, not always spoken about, was its reliance on civilian organisations to scale up the immense training



effort required for Allied aircrews. Portage la Prairie was one of many schools where civilian aviation experience was folded into the military system. Central Manitoba Flying School Limited was contracted to train up to thirty-five students per course, helping turn the demands of war into a working local institution.

Training so many novices in Tiger Moths inevitably led to terrible outcomes. On 6 November 1941, Tiger Moth 4110 and Tiger Moth 5160 collided in mid-air, crashing one mile east and three miles south of Newton, Manitoba. Leading Aircraftman McPhadden, the pilot of aircraft 5160, was injured, but Thomas Gerald Stevenson, flying aircraft 4110, was killed. Manley's time at Portage la Prairie belonged to this same landscape: a place of instruction and ambition, but also one where the risks of air service were already present. (<https://caspir.warplane.com/personnel/unit-search/p/600019279>)

Through the twelve weeks at No. 14 EFTS from 4 January 1942 to 13 March 1942, Manley's record shows the familiar pattern of a trainee finding his footing. Like many of the Canadian airmen who later passed through 458 Squadron, he appears to have needed time and immersion before the pieces came together. His course remarks noted that he "was rather slow at first but is now progressing satisfactorily. Instrument flying and practical navigation are both good." He placed 19th in a class of 39 in Airmanship, Airframes, Aero Engines, Signals, Theory of Flight, Air Navigation, and Aircraft Recognition.

Records indicate that he went solo after less than 11 hours dual instruction and completed a total of 76 hours of dual, pilot in command and night flying.

Today, leaning to fly in a Tiger Moth would be considered very adventurous (a tailwheel aircraft) and on completion pilot wings would be awarded with much respect. For Manley and his fellow graduates of EFTS, this was considered very

basic flying and not worthy of pilot's wings, they would not be awarded their "Wings" until successful completion of the next phase of training using far more advanced aircraft.

It is interesting to note that there is a section in his training that says "Quals. as an Officer" where instructors can observe students for potential officer material. This area of Manley's record was simply crossed out. More on that later.

Manley's next posting was to No. 11 Service Flying Training School at Yorkton, Saskatchewan, where he joined Course 52. He trained there from 30 March to 17 July 1942. This marked a significant step forward. At SFTS, Manley moved beyond elementary flying and into more advanced work on twin-engine aircraft. During the course, he spent 25 hours in the Link Trainer and logged more than 209 hours in the air, flying by day and night, dual and solo, as passenger and pilot.

At Yorkton, Manley trained on the Cessna Crane, known in American service as the Cessna AT-17 Bobcat and nicknamed the "Bamboo Bomber." It was a twin-engine light transport and training aircraft, used to bridge the gap between single-engine trainers and the multi-engine aircraft many aircrews would later encounter operationally. Manufactured in the United States, the Crane became an important aircraft within the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan. Canada ordered 180 Crane Mk. I trainers in November 1940, at that time Cessna's largest order. A further 460 aircraft were later ordered, and eventually 822 Cranes were operated under the BCATP.

Manley's flying training remarks described him as "a little immature but quick to learn," with "air sense and judgement above average." It is worth remembering what that meant. Manley was nineteen years old, still close enough to boyhood that a touch of immaturity was hardly remarkable, yet he was being trained to fly a large twin-engine aircraft and prepared for the possibility of operational bombing duties overseas. The criticism, if it was one, is softened by what follows: he learned quickly, and his judgement in the air was already above average.



The Manley L. Brechin collection. Shared by Lois and Steve McNally

The picture above just by itself could fill a book of stories. We are not certain whether this is the graduation of EFTS at Portage or the commencement of 11 SFTS in Yorkton, Sask. The uniforms do not display the RCAF wings (rather the LAC propellers) and the white flashes in the head caps indicate cadets, so this is before the graduation ceremony in July 1942. But what is evident is the smiling face of Manley Brechin. Many of the faces signed the back of the photo, some had been with Manley from Manning Depot Toronto to Trenton to ITS in Belleville to 14 EFTS in Portage to 11 SFTS in Yorkton: but not all at least one came from 19 EFTS Verdin, three were Americans and at least three were awarded DFCs. They went on to fly Wellingtons, Lancasters, Sunderlands, Beaufighters, and a good number like Manley were killed in action. Others survived the war and prospered.

On 16 July 1942, Manley was awarded his pilot's flying badge. His final assessment was strong: "An intelligent and alert pilot with qualities of steadiness. Should develop with experience." By this point, he had moved from promising trainee to qualified pilot, though his service records still place him within the non-commissioned aircrew ranks. The following day, he was promoted from Leading Aircraftman to Sergeant, marking his new status as a trained airman ready for the next stage of specialist instruction.

Course 52 graduates were immediately dispersed.

12 -No. 31 G.R.S.,R.A.F.,Charlottetown, P.E.I.

10- No. 2 F.I.S.,R.C.A.F.,Vulcan,- Alberta.

5-R.A.F., Ferry Command, Dorval, Quebec

4- No. 31 Personnel Depot, R.A.F.,Moncton, N.B.

4- No. 1 Central Navigation. School, Rivers Manitoba.

6- No. 1 G.R.S., R.C.A.F., Summerside, P.E.I.

2- No. 1 'Y' Depot, Halifax, N.S,

1-No. 1 F.I.S., R.C.A.F.,. Trenton, Ontario.

1- No. 124 Ferry Flight, Rockcliffe, Ontario.

From 3 August 1942 to 3 October 1942, Manley, along with 11 other course 52 graduates, underwent training at No. 31 General Reconnaissance School in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. They were Course 51B. Here, his training shifted again. Having moved from the Tiger Moth to the Cessna Crane, he now trained on Avro Ansons and entered the specialised world of general reconnaissance.



The Manley L. Brechin collection. Shared by Lois and Steve McNally



We are not sure, once again, of the exact date of the photograph above. A smiling Manley Brechin is clearly visible, as are his wings and sergeant's stripes, both awarded following his graduation from SFTS. As this was taken before his promotion to officer status, he was still in Canada, placing the photograph in 1942. Because of the relatively small number of men pictured, and what appears to be a front row of older officers, we lean towards No. 31 General Reconnaissance School in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. We have also seen the same background in other photographs from No. 31 GRS. Either way, it was probably taken some time between July and October 1942.

His fellow course 52 graduate and future crew mate Clare Scott was one of the 6 who went to do the same course at 1 GRS in Summerside, Prince Edward Island, 60 km down the road from Manley.

RCAF Station Charlottetown was infamous among wartime recruits for its relentless, thick red mud. Constructed quickly in 1941, the base lacked paved walkways between many of its buildings. One airman recalled stepping off the roadway toward his barracks and sinking into fourteen inches of soft, cold, red mud. Equipment also became stuck in it, often requiring great feats of strength to

free it. While Manley later made his way through this same station, trying not to disappear beneath the barracks, the base's busy day-to-day life had already been recorded in the Royal Canadian Air Force operations record books:

"12 August 1941: Good flying day. Orders received to shorten length of G.R. Course from 12 to 9 weeks but to retain the standard at present set.

13 August 1941: Good flying day. News received that No. 31 GRS is to be expanded to 8 courses by 22nd September.

14 August 1941: Good flying day. Permission for Storms contracting to proceed with completion of roads, walks and grading etc, about the camp was received today by signal from No. 3 Training Command. It is doubtful whether it will be possible to complete the work before this winter sets in as permission to proceed was delayed so long.

1 September 1941: Good Flying day, until afternoon when low cloud and wind developed, and flying instruction was cancelled.

2 September 1941: Heavy rain and wind washed out flying. H.R.H. The Duke of Kent visited this station arriving by car 1 ½ hours later than scheduled time owing to deplorable weather.

29 September 1941: Flying was cancelled in the morning as a 30-m.p.h. wind at 45 degrees developed/ affecting all runways. Flying undertaken afternoon as wind appeared alright from No. 2 Runway but the wind velocity increased and veered to halfway between runways 1 and 2. Too dangerous for new and inexperienced pilots now being sent here and may give risk to serious crash if this type of pilot is used.

30 September 1941: Roads through the station now being properly surfaced. The officers' and sergeants' messes overflowing as new buildings not completed. 197 officers at present accommodated in room holding 80. Improved sewage and heat make new quarters habitable for 88 officers. Airmen's' new quarters have no heat, limited water and no baths. 22 pilots."

*Royal Canadian Air Force operations record books: C-12366
https://heritage.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.lac_reel_c12366/477*

Manley's own flying, when it was a good flying day at Charlottetown included 61 hours of day navigation and 32 hours of night navigation, for which he received an average score. His flying remarks described him as "alert and keen and interested in the work," though added that "with a little extra effort" he "could have done much better."

The ground training was broader and more demanding: dead reckoning navigation, astro navigation, compass and instruments, meteorology, signals, reconnaissance, coding, ship recognition, photography, and visual signals. In these subjects, Manley achieved an above-average grade. His ground trainer noted that he "worked consistently well throughout the course and should develop into a very good general reconnaissance pilot."

The comments from Charlottetown return again to a familiar thread. Manley's officer commanding described him as "a fairly keen N.C.O. who might have obtained better results," but added that "with a steadying influence and operational experience" he would "prove a useful general reconnaissance pilot." The station commanding officer made a similar observation: "This N.C.O. is rather young, but with a steady influence should develop well."

Again and again, the record circles back to the same impression: Manley was young, keen, not yet fully polished, but promising. He was not presented as effortless or immaculate. He was developing — and the instructors around him seemed to believe that experience would do the rest.



415-062 #2 ANS / #32 ANS / #31 GRS Charlottetown, PEI

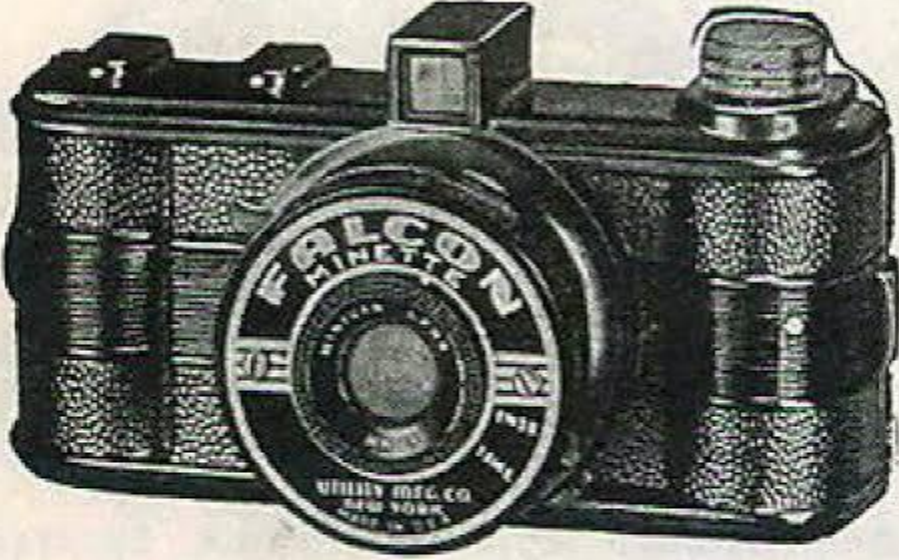
After completing his training in general recon, Manley moved on 17 October 1942 to the No. 1 "Y" depot, the embarkation depot in Halifax Nova Scotia. It was in Windsor Park on Exhibition Grounds, not unlike No. 1. "M" Manning Depot in Toronto. Windsor Park was within walking distance from both the CNR Station and Pier 21. The capacity of the depot site was anywhere from 2500-3000 airman. There were also smaller accommodations for another 500 personnel at Pier 21 in what was known as the Embarkation Shacks.

On November 13th, 1942, the RCAF Ops record shows the Training Wing, 950 strong paraded to the Casino Theatre to see the frontline cameraman shot documentary *Moscow Strikes Back*. 5 days later, Manley would be in the tactical convoy HX 212 departing Halifax, Nova Scotia. This transatlantic convoy consisted of merchant vessels and troop transports navigated the U-boat infested waters Manley would later patrol for. On 5 November, he reached Liverpool, UK and was

taken to Initial Training Wing 3 at RAF Padgate in Warrington, UK. The following month he went to No. 3 Personal Reception Centre in Bournemouth, Dorset to facilitate his next phase of training.

Manley did not bring much with him when he left Canada, but he did bring a Falcon Minette camera, and he used it.

FALCON MINETTE



Falcon Minette Camera. This new FALCON has no equal in the low price field for either quality or economy. Minivar 50 MM. lens with fixed focus. Eye level view finder. Black ebony plastic case. Easy to load, simple to operate. Takes 16 pictures $1\frac{5}{8} \times 1\frac{1}{4}$ inches on Kodak 127 or Agfa A8.

No. 99J780. Each.....	1.00
Eveready carrying case for above.	
No. 99J781. Each.....	.36

He also had his film developed and created an album, labelling most of the photographs as he went. After he was "Killed in Action", 458th RAAF squadron personnel sent his effects back to his parents in Canada. The family kept the album, and thanks to his niece Lois and her husband Steve McNally, we can share some of those photos, which provide a fascinating pictorial record of Manley journey overseas. They also tell a story in of themselves of youth and sacrifice and

a world at war. We will credit all pictures when used here to Steve McNally and the Manley. L. Brechin collection.

At the #3 Personnel Reception Centre in Bournemouth, Manley, as with so many before and after, was introduced to wartime British cuisine, which seemed to have been extensively based on powdered forms of carbohydrates and Brussel sprouts, both cooked to the texture of emulsion paint. He was also kitted for UK weather, wet and cold and given training on water egress, life rafts and the Mae-West (or PFD as we would say today). He was just there for three weeks, but, oh boy, did get his camera out!



The Manley L. Brechin collection. Shared by Lois and Steve McNally. Above photos are taken in Bournemouth UK.

Originally built between 1935 and 1936 as a prestigious, luxury Neo-Georgian apartment complex (see photo above), Bath Hill Court played a notable role in World War II. During 1942 and 1943, the building was requisitioned by the British military and served as the No. 3 Personnel Reception Centre (PRC) for the Royal Air Force (RAF) and the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). It was used to quarter

and process newly arrived aircrews arriving from overseas training before they were deployed to active squadrons.

Top Left ("Home Sweet Home in '42"): Shows the distinct, towering multi-story wing of Bath Hill Court where service personnel were billeted.

Top Right & Bottom Left ("Rockery in Bournemouth" / "...And Yet Another"): Captures the award-winning, beautifully maintained communal grounds, featuring the ornamental stone steps, winding pathways, and distinct rockeries.

Bottom Right ("Bath Hill Court"): A wider view showing the landmark building sitting in its elevated position overlooking the town.

On 30 November Manley was finally off to No. 7 Coastal Operational Training Unit, at RAF Limavady, Ireland. It is here where previous newsletters have noted (See No. 281 Malta Edition), the crews of Wellington bombers come together to form tightly knit bonds that will never be broken, long after the war.

It is here on Aghanloo Airfield, where Manley and Pilot Officer Scott (See Newsletter 282 from April) re-unite along with the other members of their crew:



Photo shared by Steve McNally on Canadian Military Photos Lost and Found, Facebook Group

Name	Crew Position	Service
F/O Russell Claire Scott "Scotty"	1st Pilot	RCAF
F/O Manley Lyall Brechin "Self"	2nd Pilot	RCAF
F/O Jack Hillen "Jack"	Navigator	RAFVR
Sgt John Whittaker "Johnny"	WAG — Wireless Operator / Air Gunner	RAFVR
Sgt William Edward Dixon "Bill"	WAG — Wireless Operator / Air Gunner	RAFVR
Sgt Maurice Edwin Windsor "Tich"	WAG — Wireless Operator / Air Gunner	RAFVR

We have mentioned Limavady in countless newsletters, but we have never really talked about the airfield itself. In the townland of Aghanloo, it was hastily erected during WW2 by Coastal Command. It is about two miles outside of the town and was built 1939/40. It finished its wartime career in 1945, although used occasionally by the Fleet Air Arm in the 1950s. It is no longer an airfield and many of the old hangers are used for industrial purposes.

Most of the aircraft which used this site were Wellingtons. The longest serving squadron stationed here was 7 OTU. Aircraft from Limavady were responsible for sinking many U Boats and several innovative techniques or seeking and destroying submarines were first tested here.



The control tower still survives but is only a shell with just two signs on two doors inside to hint at its original purpose →



In the background of this control tower, you can see the reason why Limavady was such a dangerous airfield - Binevenagh mountain (385m) was on the landing circuit and became the downfall of so many crews. An ex-serviceman,

stationed at Limavady airfield during the war, vividly recalled one night seeing three separate aircraft wrecks burning at the same time on the mountainside.



The primary mission at Limavady or Aghanloo, No 7(c) O.T.U., was training aircrews specifically in: maritime patrol, anti-submarine tactics, torpedo delivery, and specialized Air-to-Surface Vessel (ASV) radar reconnaissance. Base life for the training crews was defined by high-intensity flight schedules, bleak Atlantic weather, extreme geographical hazards, and a distinct multi-national culture. As a temporary training stop before front-line deployment, life on the base was fast paced, demanding, and frequently dangerous. Just getting to the airfield itself was an adventure!

- **The Long Journey:** *Aircrews arriving from #3 PRC Bournemouth faced an exhausting journey. Trainees traveled by packed overnight trains from London to Stranraer, Scotland, before crossing the Irish Sea and taking local rail lines up to the town of Limavady.*
- **The Looming Menace:** *The base sat under the shadow of Benevenagh Mountain (1,260 feet). Take-offs and landings in dense low cloud and fog, this massive peak was a constant, terrifying hazard.*

High-Risk Training Routine

- **Crashes and incidents:** *Base life was underscored by a grim, lingering reality—RAF Limavady suffered a high training accident rate. The combination of new crews with (new to them) aircraft, sudden North*

Atlantic squalls, and high ground meant that crashes into the mountains or ditching in Lough Foyle were regular events. The local churchyards, pay testament to the dangers.

- **Cutting-Edge Tech:** *Despite the bleak conditions, crews trained with advanced technology. Gunners and bomb-aimers spent hours inside the base's Gunnery Training Dome—a rare, hemispherical concrete structure where simulated enemy aircraft attacks were projected 360-degrees onto the walls. Crews also had to master new Air-to-Surface Vessel (ASV) radar to spot U-boats in the dark. The dome still exists as one of only a few still intact.*
- **Shifting Cycles:** *Depending on when a crew arrived, the pace changed. In 1942, standard training courses lasted 12 weeks. By 1943, the base was brought to full capacity, compressing courses to a frantic 8-week cycle to rush crews out to combat groups.*

Accommodations and Social Life

- **An Empire Outpost:** *The base boasted a highly international atmosphere. Trainees came from all over the British Commonwealth, living alongside personnel from Canada (RCAF), Australia (RAAF), and New Zealand (RNZAF).*
- **Nissen Hut Living:** *Living quarters consisted of standard, drafty corrugated metal Nissen huts spread out across the damp Northern Irish countryside to minimize damage from potential German air raids. Heating was sparse, usually reliant on small peat or coal stoves.*
- **Local Reprieve:** *When free from night flying and navigation drills, crews walked or took transport two miles south into the market town of Limavady. The local community was tight knit; airmen frequented local pubs, dances, and farmhouses to escape the stark, functional landscape of the airfield. (One of the Most Dangerous Airfields by Brian Willis)*

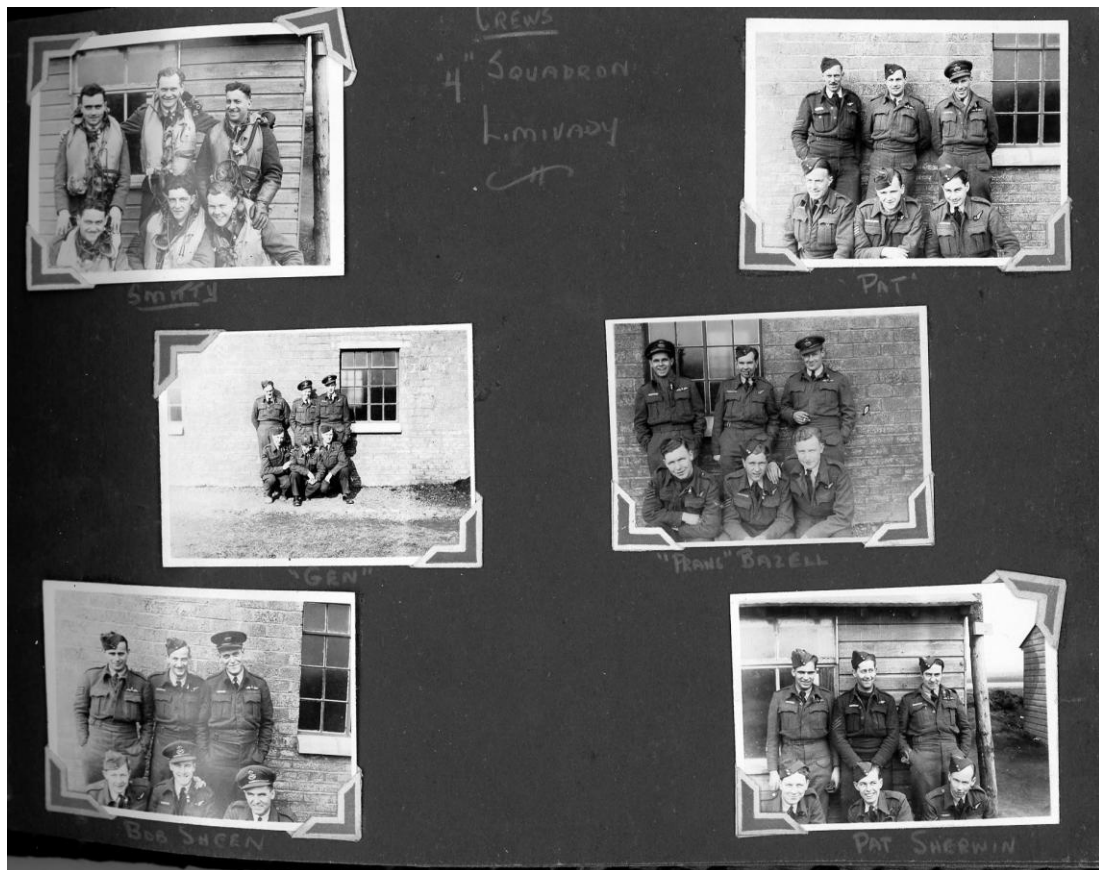
The following three pictures, taken by Manley, provide some visual clues to Limavady, the formation of crews and the camaraderie:



The Manley L. Brechin collection. Shared by Lois and Steve McNally



The Manley L. Brechin collection. Shared by Lois and Steve McNally.



The Brechin/Scott crew are middle left. The Manley L. Brechin collection. Shared by Lois and Steve McNally.

Just as Manley was arriving at Limavady (posted 30 Nov 1942) for the 12-week conversion and training course he received word that, effective 16 July 1942, he was “Commissioned” and promoted to Pilot Officer, with a new Service Number J20439: Pilot Officer Manley L Brechin.

Manley was designated Second Pilot in a crew captained by fellow No. 11 SFTS graduate Clare Scott. As Scott was the Pilot and Captain, Manley had very little opportunity for hands-on flying at Limavady. But he did fly almost 40 hours as second pilot, did a further 9 hours in the link trainer and did more courses on Meteorology, Navigation, Armament, Signals etc.

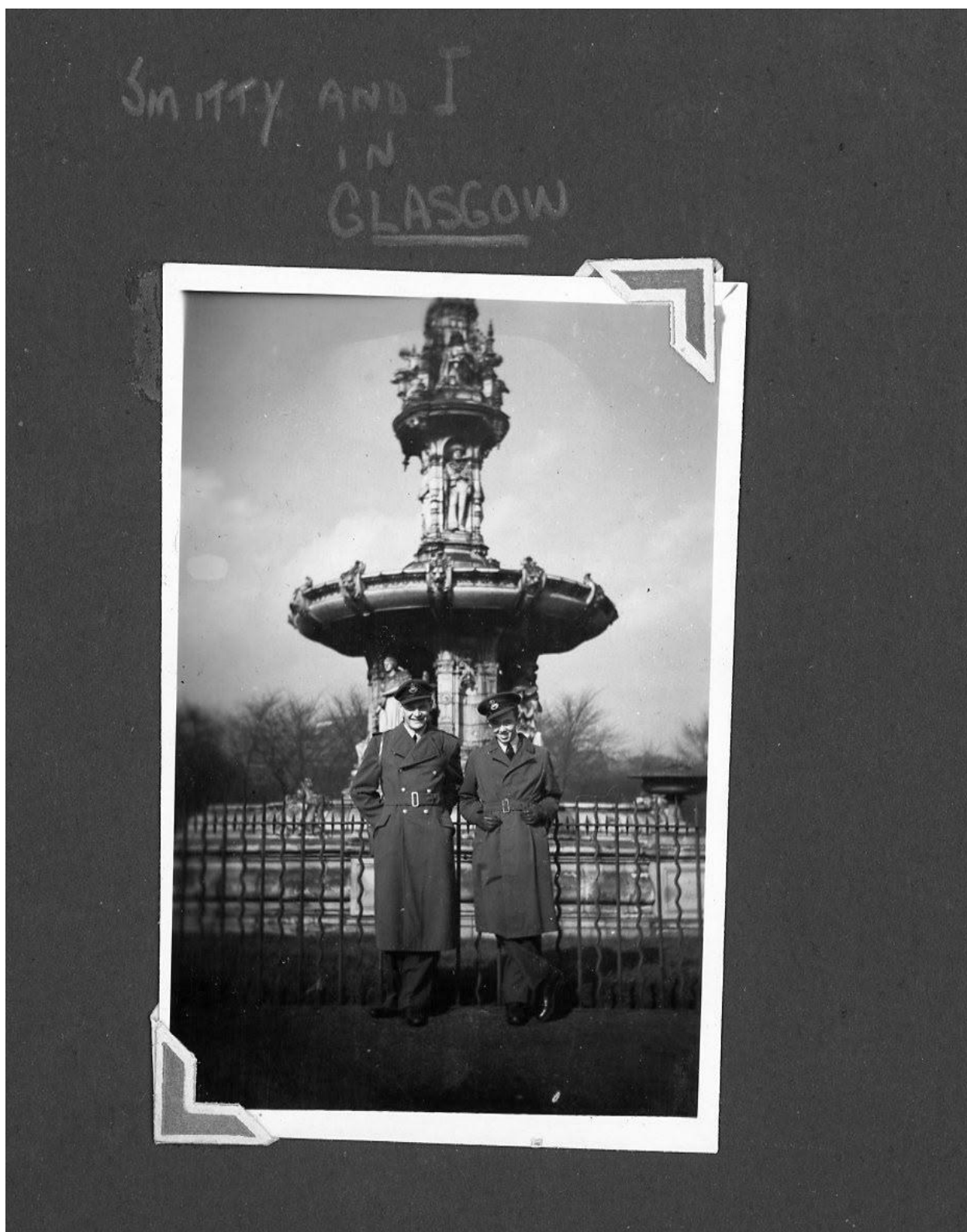
For Manley and Clare, this 12-week course would be one of that last at the station. New intakes arriving, even while they were there, were having their time reduced to just 8 weeks, as the shipping convoy losses were so high.

The course finished 9 March 1943. The Pilot Training report in his records indicate that on completion of this OTU course he was posted to 303 F.T.U (Ferry Training Unit), but Manley, Clare and crew were in fact now posted to 21 O.T.U.



Top Row (left to right): Scott, Brechin, Hillen. Bottom Row (left to right): Whittaker, Windsor, Dixon

Before beginning the course that would prepare him for service in the Middle East, however, it appears that Manley was granted a couple of weeks' leave. Being of Scottish descent, it is perhaps not surprising that he first made his way north to Scotland. Definitely to Glasgow, but we do not know if he made the additional two hour plus train journey to "Brechin" his namesake town on the Northeast Coast.



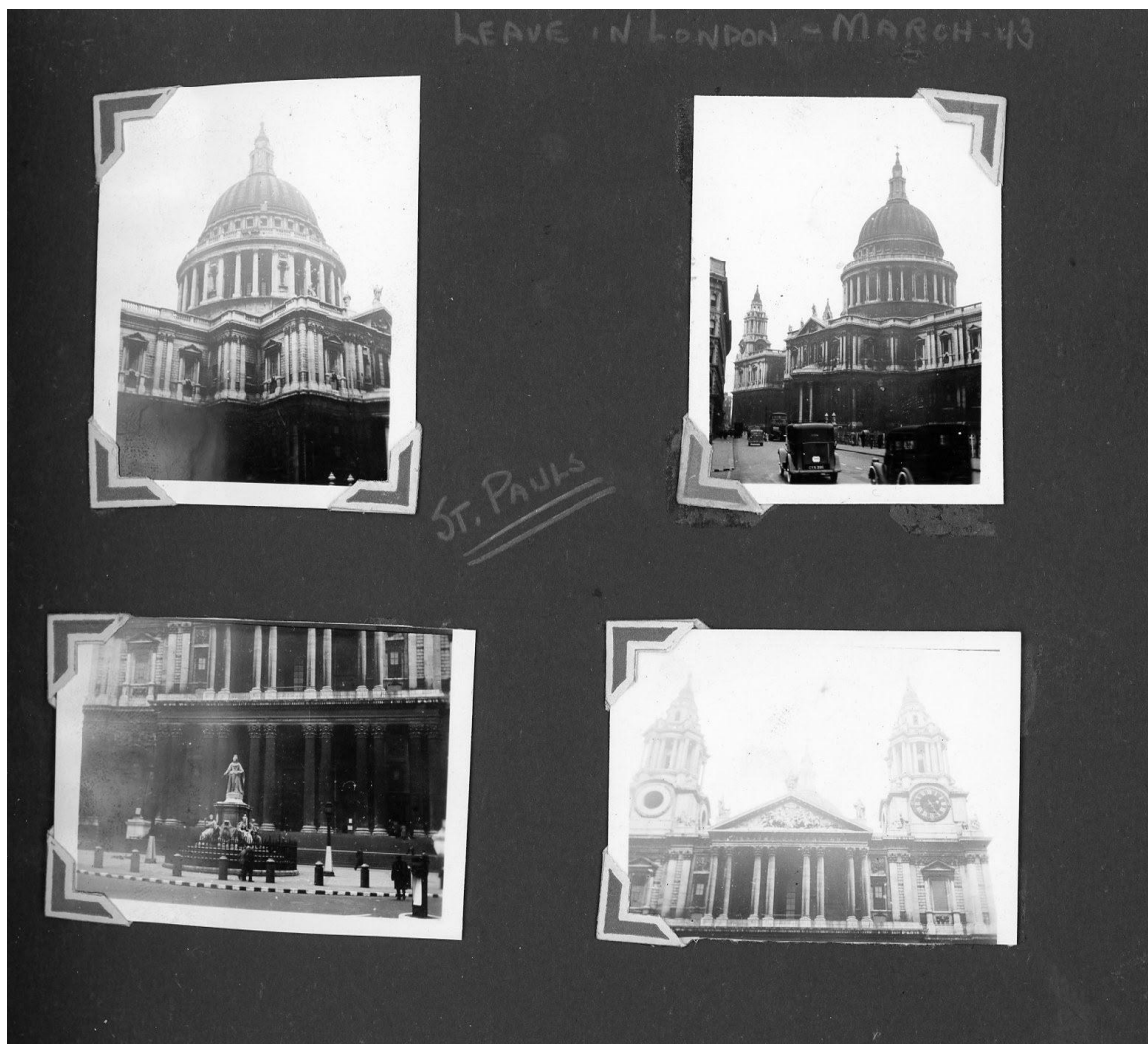
The Manley. L. Brechin collection. Shared by Lois and Steve McNally

The historic monument in the photograph previous page is the Doulton Fountain, located at Glasgow Green in Glasgow, Scotland.

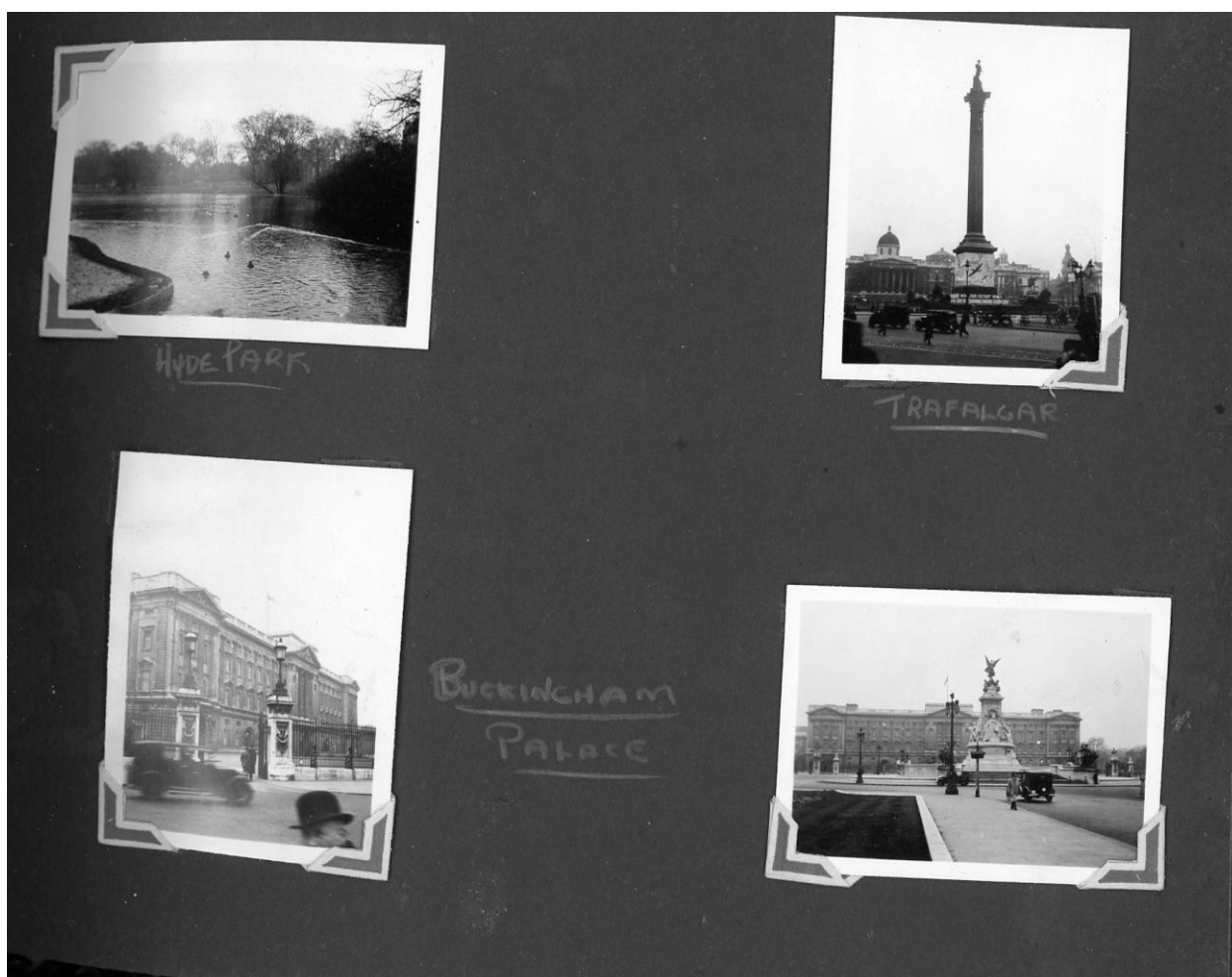
Monument History

- **World's Largest Terracotta Fountain:** Standing at 46 feet tall, it holds the record as the largest ceramic fountain ever constructed.
- **Royal Connection:** Built by English ceramic manufacturer Doulton & Co., the structure was designed to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. The apex of the fountain features a life-size statue of Queen Victoria herself.
- **Original Location:** It was originally erected for the 1888 International Exhibition in Kelvingrove Park before being moved to its permanent home in Glasgow Green in 1890.

Manley also took a trip down to London. In his pictures below it is eerie to see the famous landmarks in the cold grey spring light, with no tourists or traffic!



The Manley. L. Brechin collection. Shared by Lois and Steve McNally



The Manley. L. Brechin collection. Shared by Lois and Steve McNally

Manley and other pilots were sent to 21 OTU at RAF Moreton-in-Marsh to master heavy night operations. Coastal maritime strikes required a high degree of night-flying proficiency, as U-boats frequently surfaced under the cover of darkness to recharge batteries. He spent weeks practicing night takeoffs and landings, simulated night bombing runs, instrument-only flying, and coordinating closely with the crew's navigator to handle total-darkness environments.

Manley and crew also did a side trip to RAF Hurn the airport at Bournemouth. They trained with the Overseas Aircraft Despatch Unit (OADU). They practiced flying heavily overloaded aircraft (fitted with massive auxiliary fuel tanks inside the bomb bays). They completed strict instruction on fuel management, lean-mixture engine cruising to squeeze every mile out of the tanks and received tropical kit and survival briefings for ditching in the ocean.

Briefly back to Moreton-in-Marsh and 21 OTU and then to Middle East Ferry Command and the trip to Egypt. This was the transit flight to deliver themselves and their Wellington to North Africa. In early 1943, flying across

Europe was impossible due to German air defenses, requiring a specific detour route.

The Route: They took off from the UK, 4 May 1943 to fly west over the Atlantic to clear occupied France, and headed south to land at RAF North Front, Gibraltar. From Gibraltar, they flew across North Africa, stopping at airfields in Algeria or Tunisia, before reaching El Shallufa in Egypt

They arrived with their Wellington and reported to (22 PTC) No. 22 Personnel Transit Centre in the Middle East. It was a Royal Air Force staging and transit base located at RAF Almaza near Cairo, Egypt, during World War II. It processed allied airmen and military personnel moving between assignments, reassignment pools, or repatriation.

Manley and crew would be there for a month or so before going on the specialized Middle East Torpedo training, so naturally Manley got out his camera, made connections with other RCAF crews and toured Cairo!



The Manley. L. Brechin collection. Shared by Lois and Steve McNally

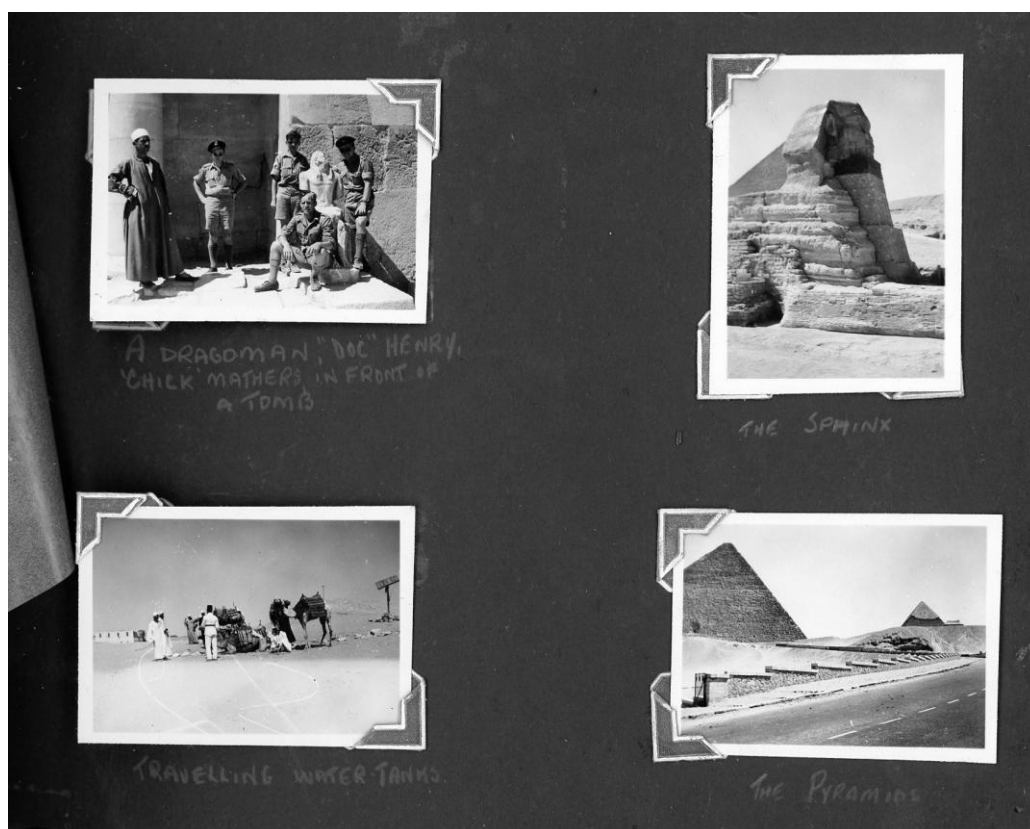


The Manley. L. Brechin collection. Shared by Lois and Steve McNally

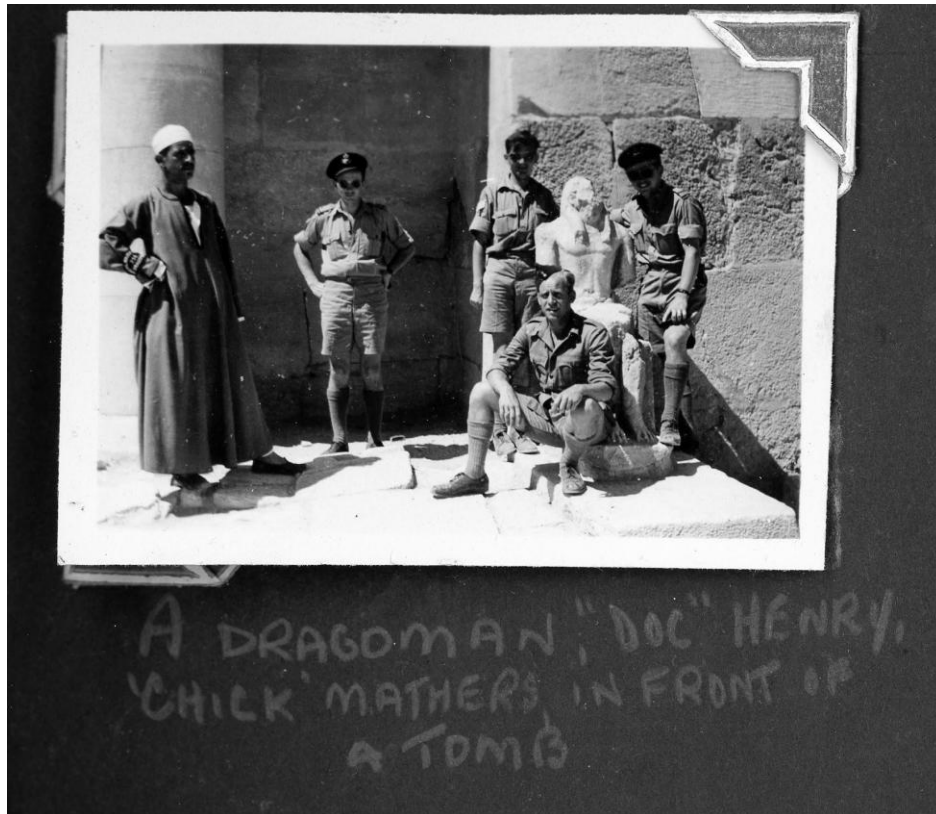
With Manley on the right in the picture above. His reference to “M” is the No. 1 Manning Depot in Toronto, where his RCAF journey started. Almost two years earlier. We have no idea how Manley found these other two “M” graduates, we don’t think it was the long ago but heavily imprinted smell of horse stables (where they bunked at the Manning Depot), but you never know!



The Manley. L. Brechin collection. Shared by Lois and Steve McNally



The Manley. L. Brechin collection. Shared by Lois and Steve McNally



The Manley. L. Brechin collection. Shared by Lois and Steve McNally



The Manley. L. Brechin collection. Shared by Steve and Lois McNally

From 29 June 1943 to 26 July 1943 Manley and crew were on course at the No. 5 M.E.T.S (Middle East Torpedo School)

5 METS was frequently referred to historically as the *No. 5 Middle East Torpedo School* and was a specialized Royal Air Force (RAF) instructional unit based at RAF Shallufa in Egypt during World War II. Formed from the Torpedo Bombing School in July 1942, the unit was highly active throughout 1943 providing critical, advanced operational training to Allied aircrews targeting Axis shipping in the Mediterranean.

- **Primary Mission:** The school served as a final operational training ground for pilots, navigators, and wireless operators before they were deployed to front-line anti-shipping and maritime reconnaissance squadrons.
- **Torpedo Instruction:** In 1943, aircrews trained intensively on airborne torpedo tactics, which were essential for attacking Axis supply convoys heading to North Africa.

Ian L Berick, A Teacher At War: <https://www.458raafsquadron.org/honour-roll/servicemens-stories/guthrie-j>)



Imperial War Museum. Wellingtons out of Shallufa

On completion of the METS course Manley returned briefly to the 22 Personnel Transit Centre before the final posting. On 3 August 1943 Manley was posted to 458th RAAF, which was now stationed at Protville, Tunisia.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

MEC0560

Conditions were harsh and primitive. Ground crews and pilots lived in tents and spent their early days manually digging slit trenches to protect themselves from remaining Axis air threats.



The Manley L. Brechin collection. Shared by Steve and Lois McNally.

Manley, with fellow pilot Clare Scott and crew, flew on five operations with 458th RAAF. It is likely that Manley flew a circuit or two with a senior squadron pilot, to demonstrate basic Wellington knowledge, but we do not have his log book to confirm.

From squadron records we can confirm that Manley went on his first operational sortie with the squadron on the night of the 7/8th August, with Clare Scott and crew and they flew an almost 9-hour flight in Wellington "D" to Chiappa Point, a key enemy monitoring point in southern Corsica.

	Sgt. John West	"			
"H"	F/O Davison	Captain	2205	0606	Armed Rover East Coast Sardinia and Corsica from Alisto to Bastia to depth of 30 miles from Corsican Coast.
	Sgt. Hamer	Navigator			
	Sgt. Coppard	2nd. Pilot			
	Sgt. White	W.A.S.			
	Sgt. Knight	"			
	Sgt. Warrider	"			
"D"	F/O Scott	Captain	2055	0542	Recco, Chiappa Point to C. Corse.
	F/O Hillen	Navigator			
	F/O Brechlin	2nd. Pilot			
	Sgt. Dixon	W.A.S.			
	Sgt. Whittaker	"			
	Sgt. Windsor	"			
"H"	S/Lt. Thomson	Captain	1953	0437	Recco, C. Scales - Cape Campanella.
	F/O Barrett	Navigator			
	F/O Kermot	2nd. Pilot			
	F/O Harper	Pilot			
	F/S. Tipping	W.A.S.			
	F/S. Dennis	"			
	Sgt. Pugh	"			

458 Operational report for 7/8 August.

Manley's second operation was on the night of the 13/14th August 1943, an "Armed Rover" up and down the Italian Coast. 7-hours according to the squadron records summary, F/O Clare Scott and crew (Manley Brechin as second pilot) were part of a 5 Wellington offensive search. All aircraft returned safely.

	"H"	F/S. Bishop	Captain	1955	0415	Recco, Italian Coast - Cape Campanella to Island.
		Sgt. McIninch	Navigator			
		F/O Walker	2nd. Pilot			
		Sgt. Cox	W.A.S.			
		Sgt. Baldwin	"			
		Sgt. Batten	"			
11/12	"H"	F/O Scott	Captain	1924	0413	Recco, Italian coast - Cape Campanella to Piumara Grande.
		F/O Hillen	Navigator			
		F/O Brechlin	2nd. Pilot			
		Sgt. Dixon	W.A.S.			
		Sgt. Windsor	"			
		Sgt. Whittaker	"			
	"H"	F/O Davidson	Captain	1935	0550	Recco, East coast Corsica.
		Sgt. Hamer	Navigator			
		Sgt. Coppard	2nd. Pilot			
		Sgt. Warricher	W.A.S.			
		Sgt. White	"			

458 Operational report for 13/14 August.

Manley's third sortie was very eventful. On the night of the 17/18th August 1943, here is the quote from the squadron summary:

"Also on this night, five Wellingtons [...] were dispatched between 1930 hours and 2337 hours on the following shipping patrols [...] the Captains were F/O Davidson, W/O Elliot, F/O Driver, F/O Downs.

[Ed. That would be “Brush” Downs, our Uncle’s pilot and including in the crew Bill Wake, squadron co-president) and F/O Scott (Ed. Clare and Manley Brechin and crew].

At 2254 hours F/O Downs sighted a motor vessel (M/V) of 3000 tons and four other M/V’s on course 350deg, speed 8 knots, off the coast near Rome. Two torpedo attacks were made on the starboard beam of the M/V, down moon path from a height of 60 feet and at a range of 600 yards. No results were observed. After the attack intense and accurate light flak was sent up by the escort vessels.*

F/O Scott with F/O Brechin left his patrol and went to this sighting and at 0010 hours sighted the convoy. He made an attack on a bearing of 190 deg into moonpath and dropped two torpedoes from a height of 60 feet at a range of 800 yards. No results were seen. Flak from the escort M/Vs resulted in a few hits in the fuselage.”*

	Sgt. Walker	2nd. Pilot			to depth of 15 miles from Coast.
	Sgt. Wake	W.A.G.			
	Sgt. Lewis-Lavender	W.A.G.			
	Sgt. Birchall	W.A.G.			
"H"	F/O. Scott	Captain	2318	0650	Armed rover, Italian Coast from 25 miles North of Monte Circeo to 15 miles north of Civitavecchia to depth of 29 miles off Coast.
	F/O. Hillier	Navigator			
	F/O. Brechin	2nd. Pilot			
	Sgt. Dixon	W.A.G.			
	Sgt. Windsor	"			
	Sgt. Whittaker	"			
"H"	F/O. McKay	Captain	1958	0450	Armed patrol Imperatore Point to Monte Circeo.
	F/O. Edwards	Navigator			
	P/O. Travena	2nd. Pilot			
	P/O. Britt	W.A.G.			

Manley’s penultimate sortie was on the night of the 21st/22nd August 1943. It was a “Naval Cooperation” 10-hour flight off the coast of Italy. Also, out that night was Squadron President Bill Wake along with Lewis-Lavender and “Brush” Downs, our Uncle’s pilot.

	Sgt. White	W.A.G.			
	Sgt. Knight	W.A.G.			
	Sgt. Warriker	W.A.G.			
	F/O. Scott	Captain	1933	0549	Naval cooperation coast of Italy - Tonnara.
	F/O. Hillier	Navigator			
	F/O. Brechin	2nd. Pilot			
	Sgt. Dixon	W.A.G.			
	Sgt. Windsor	W.A.G.			
	Sgt. Whittaker	W.A.G.			
	F/O. Downs	Captain	2038	0513	Rover patrol East coast Sardinia coast Elba to Lignorna.
	F/O. Gandy	Navigator			

Manley’s last sortie and the one where he met his death was on the night of the 23rd/24th August 1943.

		Sgt. Priest	2nd. Pilot			
		F/Sgt. Marks	W.A.C.			
		F/Sgt. Bradnam	W.A.C.			
		Sgt. Jones	W.A.C.			
23/24	"A"	F/O. Scott	Captain	1958	Missing	Anti shipping recon. Civitavecchia - Elba - Leghorn.
		F/O. Brechin	2nd. Pilot			
		F/O. Hillier	Navigator			
		Sgt. Windsor	W.A.C.			
		Sgt. Dixon	W.A.C.			
		Sgt. Whittaker	W.A.C.			
	"T"	F/O. Downes	Captain	2155	0600	Anti shipping recon. east coast of Sardinia and Corsica and Elba Island.
		Sgt. Cook	Navigator			

That night four squadron Wellingtons were dispatched between 1956 hours and 2158 hours to carry out offensive shipping searches. Clare and crew took off from Protville, Tunisia in Wellington Mk X111 "R" M.P.706 at 1958 hours.

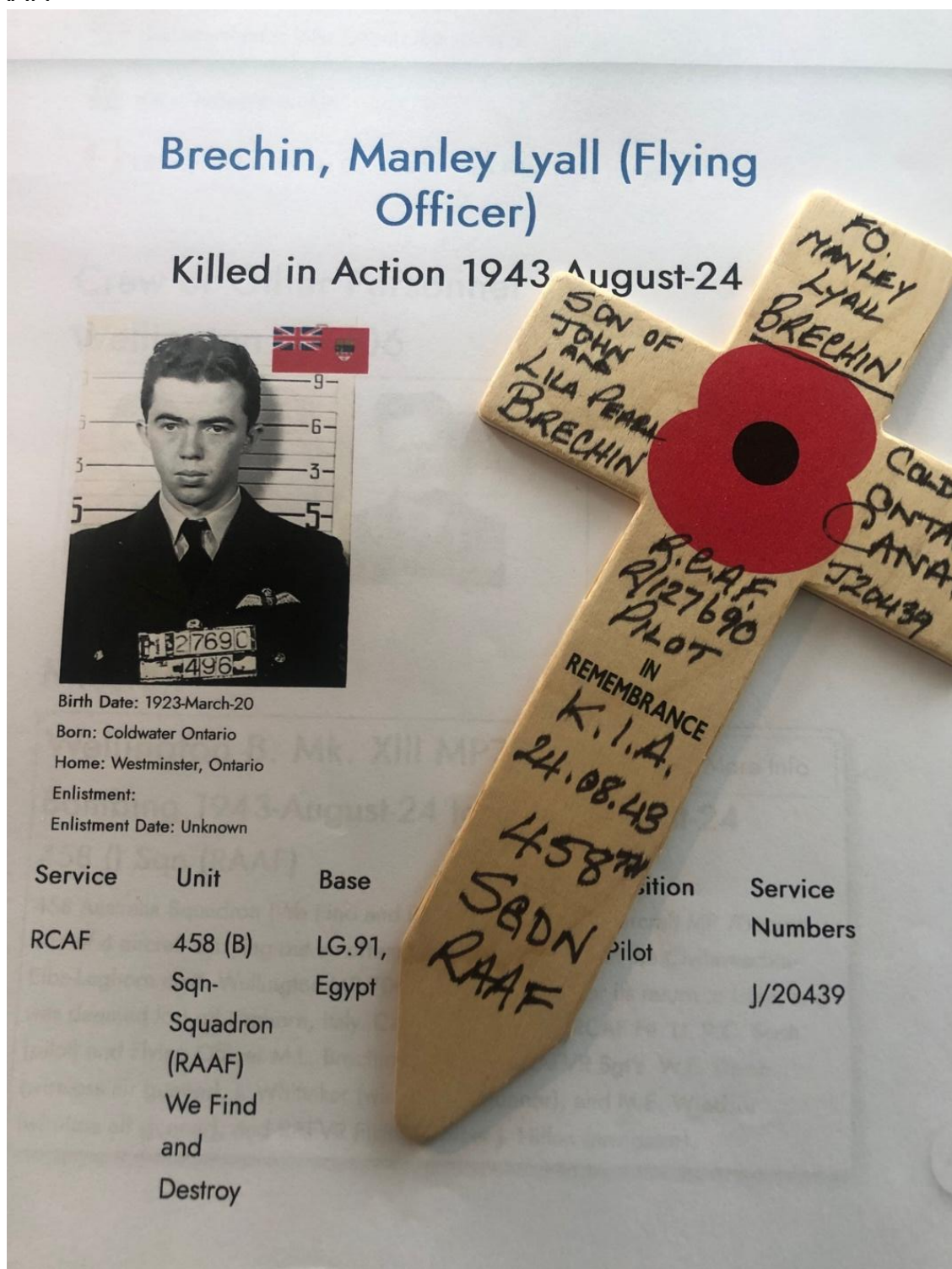
From the squadron ORB:

*"The aircraft of which F/O Scott was the Captain, [including F/O Brechin] and which was on patrol of area Civitavecchia-Elba-Leghorn, failed to return. At 2300 hours one of our other Wellingtons intercepted a message from it requesting instructions but this message was not received at Base or Group. At 0155 hours Group received a message from the aircraft requesting instructions and at 0200 hours Group replied that it had nothing to communicate. When the aircraft became overdue, Group and Malta attempted to contact it by W/T for a considerable time without success. The missing Crew comprised: F/O Scott (Captain) **F/O Brechin (2nd Pilot)**, F/O Hillier (Navigator), Sgt. Windsor, Sgt. Dixon and Sgt. Whittaker (w/Ops)"*



Steve McNally and the Manley L. Brechin collection.

Flying Officer Manley Lyall Brechin, Pilot
 Killed in Action August 23/24.1943 while on an operational sortie with 458th
 RAAF.



We left this remembrance cross at the Malta Memorial in October 2025. Manley has no known grave and is memorialised on Panel 10, Column 1 of the Malta Memorial.

He is also remembered on the Orillia, Ontario, War Memorial



He is remembered on the Canadian Government Veterans virtual memorial:
<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/memorials/canadian-virtual-war-memorial/603983>

He is remembered by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission:
<https://www.cwgc.org/find-records/find-war-dead/casualty-details/1081527/manley-lyall-brechin/>

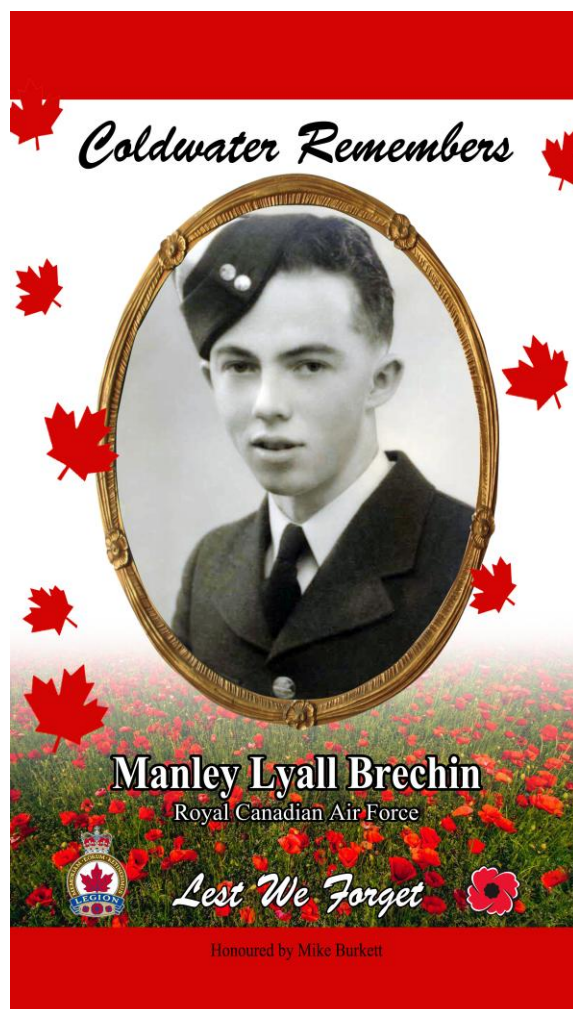
He is remembered via www.findagrave.com



BRECHIN, Manley Lyall

Manley was born in Coldwater, Ontario, on March 28, 1923, the son of John and Lila Brechin. After graduating from Orillia Collegiate Institute, he worked as a junior clerk at a bank in Orillia. He was quite involved in sports, particularly hockey and basketball. During World War II, he enrolled with the Royal Canadian Air Force on August 18, 1941. Leading Aircraftman Brechin completed his basic flying training at No. 14 Elementary Flying Training School at Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. He was awarded his pilot wings upon graduation from No. 11 Service Flying Training School in Yorkton, Saskatchewan in July 1942, and was later given an officer commission. Flying Officer Brechin was eventually posted to No. 458 Squadron (Royal Australian Air Force) in North Africa, operating in the Mediterranean along the coast of Italy. His last flight was on August 24, 1943, when he and his crew took off aboard their Vickers Wellington bomber for an anti-shipping reconnaissance mission over the Mediterranean, along the coast of Italy. The aircraft failed to return to base. Flying Officer Brechin has no known grave. He is commemorated on the Malta Memorial, in Malta.

He is remembered in Coldwater Ontario, his birthplace, where a Veterans crosswalk was painted to honour the names of the 24 who died in the First World War and the 6 including Manley Brechin who will also remembered with a plaque on the cenotaph in Coldwater. Each year the shops and businesses of Coldwater display banners depicting Coldwater's fallen, including Manley Brechin and his name is read out each year at the Remembrance service on 11 November.





COLDWATER REMEMBERS F/O MANLEY LYALL BRECHIN

Born in Coldwater, Ontario, on March 28, 1923, Manley Lyall Brechin was the son of John and Lila Brechin of Coldwater. After graduating from Orillia Collegiate Institute he worked as a junior clerk at a bank in Orillia. He was quite involved in sports, particularly hockey and basketball.

During the Second World War Manley enrolled with the Royal Canadian Air Force on August 18, 1941. He was 18 years old. On his Attestation Form, he is described as 5 feet 9 ¼ inches tall, with blue eyes and brown hair. He was single, and he identified his religious denomination as Presbyterian. He had no previous military experience.



Leading Aircraftman Brechin (RCAF service number J20439) completed his basic flying training at No.14 Elementary Flying Training School at Portage LaPrairie, Manitoba. He was awarded his pilot wings upon graduation from No.11 Service Flying Training School in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, in July 1942, and was later given an officer commission. Flying Officer Brechin was eventually posted to No.458 Squadron (Royal Australian Air Force) in North Africa, operating in the Mediterranean along the coast of Italy.

Manley's last flight was on August 24, 1943, when he and his crew took off aboard their Vickers Wellington bomber for an anti-shipping reconnaissance mission over the Mediterranean, along the coast of Italy. The aircraft failed to return to base. There are no details available as to the circumstances of the aircraft being lost at sea. Flying Officer Brechin and his crew members were declared "officially presumed dead".

Flying Officer Brechin has no known grave. He is commemorated on the Malta Memorial, in Malta. In Canada he is commemorated on page 139 of the *Second World War Book of Remembrance*, located inside the Memorial Chamber in the Peace Tower in Ottawa.

We will remember him.

Special thanks to Coldwater Legion Branch 270, Mr. Normand Marion, Historian and Public Relations Manager.



Coldwater Legion Branch 270.

Manley Lyall Brechin was awarded the following campaign and service medals: The Defence Medal, Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp, General Service Medal, the 39-45 Star and the Italy Star. He was also awarded the RCAF operational wings.



The Defence Medal, Volunteer Service Medal with Clasp, General Service Medal, the 39-45 Star and the Italy Star.

His mother was given the Memorial Cross. He will be remembered by the 458th RAAF family.

