

CIRCULAR

# 458 SQUADRON NEWS



The Editor:

G.P.O.Box 5289, Sydney, N.S.W.

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## SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE.

### Squadron President places Memorial Plaque.

#### Air Force Week Ceremony at Richmond.

Sqdn/Ldr. L.L. Johnston, the 458 Squadron President, formally placed a Memorial Plaque in position, at Richmond Air Force Station, on the Sunday in Battle of Britain Week, near the 458 Memorial Tree.

Over a score of 458 members with wives and children drove up from Sydney to attend a very impressive though informal ceremony.

Readers will recall that two years ago, on October 7th 1951, the then N.S.W. President, Pete Campbell, planted a Tree in memory of the Squadron Dead at Richmond. The tree, a Kaffir Plum, has done well and grown and this year the N.S.W. Committee had a small brass plaque made, reading:

458 Squadron, R.A.A.F.

To the Memory of the Squadron Dead.

United Kingdom--Middle East.

7.10.51.

By special arrangement with Richmond, the plaque was installed during Air Force Week, when the Station was open to the public.

Richmond made efficient preparations, having the concrete base prepared, to Squadron specifications, and a low fence erected round the Tree and base.

At 3.0. in the presence of the Station Administrative Officer, W/Cdr. Chartres, and with members gathered round, the ceremony took place. Johnno, speaking briefly, said he very much appreciated being asked to perform the ceremony; he hoped that, as the Tree grew so also would the 458 Spirit. The plaque was then screwed down, the President saying "This Plaque is placed to the memory of the Squadron Dead."

A bugler sounded the Last Post and a minute's silence followed. Johnno then read the Ode

"They shall grow not old, as we who are left grow old,  
"Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn,  
"At the going down of the Sun, and in the Morning,  
"We shall remember them."

W/Cdr. Chartres, for the Station, saluted the Plaque, and the ceremony was over.

The Squadron appreciated the Ceremony very much.

Among members who drove up were Alan Piggott (N.S.W. President), Alf Hammond (Sydney Council delegate), Pete Campbell (S.A. Council delegate), Peter Alexander, Jack Baker (Queensland Council delegate), B. Bruce, Jock McGowan (Past President, Victoria), Sam Barlow, Cec. Nation, Cy. Irwin, Allan Walker, Fred Street, Bert Thompson, Charlie Ruthven, Kemp Beach and Ern. Doman. W/Cdr. Chartres, as it turned out, also has a connection with 458. He was at Kodak House and came to Holme-on-Spalding-Moor on a couple of occasions, once to attend a full-muster identification Parade, which members may remember, and also to arrange the overseas postings when 458 left the U.K. We were glad to have him in attendance at the ceremony.

Before driving back to Sydney members were able to shew their families around the R.A.A.F. Station.

### Inaugural Meeting of 458 Squadron Council.

The Squadron Council, which was set up by the Anzac Day Squadron Conference, held its first meeting in Sydney on August 1st, a Saturday, and considered various matters brought forward by the State Committees and the Squadron officers.

Quite a lot of important matters were discussed during the two and a half hours meeting. Conditions of publication of the Squadron News, and its finances, were settled, as were details of the 458 "Guessing Competition". A formal draft Constitution was adopted. To avoid confusion it was decided that the officers of Squadron Council should be known as the Squadron President, Squadron Vice President/Secretary, and Squadron Treasurer; and that State branch officers titles be prefixed by the name of the State, i.e. the Victorian President, the N.S.W. Treasurer, the Queensland Secretary and so on.

Delegates present were the Squadron Vice President (Peter Alexander) in the Chair, the Squadron Treasurer (Sam Barlow), Alan Piggott (N.S.W.), Eric Munkman (proxy W.A.), Pete Campbell (proxy S.A.), Jack Baker (proxy Q.), Bob Bruce (Observer, U.K. branch). An apology was received for the Victorian delegate.

### Q-FLIGHT COMMENTARY

by

Jim Holliday.

#### Election of Officers.

Well, blokes, we have a new President, Bernie McLoughlin. The choice is a particularly happy one. Bernie has worked indefatigably for "Q" Flight since its formation on 31st May, 1952. Bernie was deeply moved by the honour conferred upon him and stated that he would do his best to maintain in good order the trail blazed, cleared and macadamised by Chas. Warren. I think you will agree that Bernie will carry out his duties with the same vigour, competence and zeal which have characterised all that he has undertaken.

Chas. Warren, our first President, stepped down from the position as he felt (a) that he had kept the position long enough and (b) that there should be a new President each year. Might I say here that it's been a real pleasure to work with Charlie and "work" he did in his job as President.

As you've probably gathered by now, Q-Flight has the same old simpleton as Secretary; but here's a change for the better--we have an Assistant Secretary now by name Len MacDonnell, by nature "Keener than Keen's Mustard".

Answering from the right by numbers, here's the line-up of the

Tarmac:

President:	Bernie McLoughlin
Treasurer:	Erle Hetherington
Secretary:	Jim Holliday
Assistant Sec:	Len MacDonnell
Committee:	Chas. Warren, Bill Ernst, Ned Kelly, Bill McBride,

Jack Carter, Keith Campbell.

It was decided to invite an Associate Member to the Committee and for this purpose Bob Yeowart (ex-Squadron Leader, no less) was duly trapped into the job.

#### August Reunion.

It was august in name only. A real roystering, swiggering sort of a "Do". More bodies there than before. Forty three to be exact. There were many new faces there for the first time. Jim Plunkett, Bert Garland, Swen Hansen, Howard Holmes, Frank Crowley and last but not least by 15 stone, Mick Mather. All of these were foundation members of 458 at Holme on Spalding Moor, most of whom had not seen each other for many years. My! Oh, my! did they go into a huddle and natter. Mick finally capped everything by producing a small packet of genuine Desert Dust carefully preserved these many years, and scattering it over all and sundry. said he waited impatiently for years to get rid of it.

Finance. Despite our dissolute ways we finished the year with £17-5-0 in hand. Profit from the August "do" £16-12-0. We therefore have £33-17-0 in the bank. We seem to be doing very well, thank you!

#### Personalities.

Mick Mather (Squadron Leader) is O.C. No.23 City of Brisbane Squadron, Archerfield. This Squadron was recently awarded the Cup for the most efficient Squadron in Australia.

Jack Lewis has gone and got himself married. Tickled pink about it!

Bert Garland is with Civil Aviation at Archerfield.

Swen Hansen is down with the City Council of Casino as Assistant Town Clerk.

Jim Brown has a property outside Dalby. He would be pleased to hear the whereabouts of Ron Pritchard.

Clive Wyman has started his own company.

Eric Lloyd has ventured into Real Estate.

Future Events. (a) Mixed Event (wives and/or sweethearts) Christmas Do, about the end of November. Details to be advised.

Q-Flight Commentary (Cont:)

Future Events. Melbourne Cup Swindle. There's not enough books of tickets to go around. So if you haven't had one sent to you, consider yourself unlucky. If you desire to try your luck, send £1. We'll get a book for you somewhere, so that you can do your dough. Incidentally Q-Flight profits go towards the National Reunion in Brisbane on Anzac Day, 1954.

Passing of Kevin O'Brien.

His many squadron mates will be extremely sorry to hear that Kev. O'Brien died at his Sydney home during September.

Bert Reynolds, who flew with Kevin, says "I remember Kevin well as he was on 'the Squadron. He was a most staunch crew member and a keen wireless and radar man. Wherever 'you were, Kev. was always right beside you."

458 EVENTS IN N.S.W.Special Evening for Council Delegates.

Sam Barlow entertained Squadron members and their wives at his flat on the evening of August 1st, after the inaugural meeting of the Squadron Council, to meet the Delegates. This very enjoyable evening (Evenings at Sam's--Established '04, No Corkage--always are memorable) was also the Wedding Anniversary of the N.S.W. President and Kitty Piggott (the 22nd we are told) and members drank their health.

A Film Show at the Club.

By the courtesy of the Dunlop Rubber Company, in the person of Mr. K. Meyer, the Entertainments sub-committee was able to put on an evening of Movie Shorts for 458 & their wives, on August 26th. The locale was the third floor rooms of the Air Force Club. Mainly of sporting interest--Davis Cup matches at Forest Hills, Motorcycle racing and ice skating--but including a delightful Charlie Chaplin ("The Champ"). Members laughed their heads off at Charlie. Afterwards there were sandwiches, tea and a keg. Credits to Allan Walker and Ern. Doman for a very successful night.

Have you ever travelled in a Convoy ?

Going up to Richmond we were somewhat reminded of that road convoy from Mayago to Protville. This time we started from outside the Melba Cinema at Strathfield. Zero hour was set at 12.30 and we managed to leave by 12.45. Alf Hammond, with Sam Barlow and Fred Strom as passengers, left earlier, at 12.0, to avoid being lapped. Jock McGowen, in a smart-looking green Holden (Number plate ALA 458, no less) led the Convoy off and, with the Squadron President as co-pilot, set a cracking pace. He was immediately followed by "Pontoon" Piggott with the Squadron Secretary as passenger, and they, grinding their teeth with the effort, managed to keep up with the Holden. Thereafter came Charlie Ruthven, Kemp Beach, and Bert Thompson, driving various vehicles and sundry passengers. The Convoy, being clearly recorded, arrived as a convoy. It is however intended to enter Jock in next year's Redex Contest as 458 representative.

Various other members for various good reasons drove up independently but they were all there on time.

Golf Days at Campbelltown.

The monthly Day out at Campbelltown attracts an increasing attendance and is in fact a first-class outing. The links are not crowded, we are made very welcome by the Golf Club, there is always ample 19th Hole supplies afterwards, and the handicappers see that everyone has a fair go. Main prize-winners have been

July 12th        Tamar Bennett  
August 9th      Peter Alexander  
September 13th. Dulcie Byrne.

The President's Cup Day, our main Golf day of the year, is fully reported elsewhere in this issue.

Half-yearly Reunion in Sydney.

The usual half-yearly Reunion was held on September 26th, a Saturday this time, at the usual place, 330, George Street. We have had more successful Reunions than this one, with more in attendance, but as always it was a pleasure to see 458 reunited. We had a visitor from Victoria, Bill Lyons; and very welcome he was. Bill has not altered from squadron days. During the Reunion, the N.S.W. President, Alan Piggott, told members of future plans for golf, cricket and fishing, and for the manufacture of a car badge, and also reported on the formation of the Squadron Council. Reunion subscribers this time were: Alan Piggott, Sam Barlow, Bob. Bruce, Goldy Bartlett, Fred Strom, Noel Spurling, Tom Moore, Bert Thompson, Cliff Hayward, Pete Campbell, Alf. Hammond, Jack Baker, Jack Baxter, Cec. Nation, Pete Alexander, "Chappie" Chapman, Max Eljan, Doug Bennett, Allan Walker, Cliff Tillack, Ray Davies, Harry Dorge, Charlie Ruthven, Bill Perkins, Jack Bevan, Laurie Kew, Jack Payne, Fred James, Stuart Ricketts,

N.S.W. Notes (Cont.)

Don Bithead, Lofty Bracker, Graeme Coombes, F. Keith, Eric Munkaan, Kemp Beach, Merv. Hargraves, Ron Hills, Jock McGowen, John Dunn, Jack McDonald, Bill Lyons. Subscriptions were also sent in by Wally Baird, Doug. Millard and John Hamilton.

A Visitor from the West. One of 458's stalwarts in the West spent a few days in Sydney recently and met some of his old friends at Sam Barlow's flat one evening. Shorty Long has not altered much since Gibraltar; perhaps there is a bit more of him, but in personality he is the Stan Long we remember. It was very nice to see him again and hear what he had to say of 458 in Perth. We shall remember this evening incidentally as the one on which Alf. Hammond held the floor (and most entertainingly), and at the end of which the N.S.W. President succeeded in demonstrating to Jack Baker that the quickest way back to Crows Nest is through Ryde.

Cricket. A practice has been held, and a full programme of matches (about one each fortnight) is to be played this season. "Run-to-Cover" has been engaged again as our Cricket Commentator.

Christmas Cheer. Members will meet at 5.0 on Friday December 18th at the Marble Bar Hotel Australia, Sydney, to down a few noggins together informally in honour of Christmas.

GROWEATERS' COLUMN.

BY

Brian Woodhead.

Well, the books of tickets have all been distributed and it's now up to the members.

George Riddock passed through Adelaide on his way to the West recently and we understand he will be looking us up on his return. Apparently George is of the wealthy squatter type these days. He is a Councillor for his district, in Victoria.

Some weeks back Bill Taylor and family did a caravan trip up the north to Hawker and on the way back through Gladstone Bill met Bert Ravenscroft who was that day leaving for Port Vincent where he is to take over the Shell Depot. Good luck to you, Bert. You have picked a nice little spot to get settled in.

A couple of months ago we had the pleasure of welcoming "Johnno" Johnston (the Squadron President) in Adelaide. He came over for a few days and on the day after arrival we met him at the Napoleon Hotel: about a dozen of us were there including Lofty Trewartha, Don McRae, Ned Kelly, Johnny Bax, Ron Badger; on the Friday night before his departure we again met Johnno, this time at the rear of Ron Badger's motor cycle shop and farewelled him with fish and chips and beer. We understand he may be coming over again, this time with his wife, and we are looking forward to seeing him again.

Eric Both has just arrived from his Station overseas, on Kangaroo Island and from all reports all is well within in that dark land !

458 in VICTORIA.

BY

Bill Carr.

Squadron plans in Victoria for the next few months include a Kiddies Picnic at Christmas, a Christmas Dinner, and also we have ideas of a Ball. All these things we feel should meet with members support.

Competition tickets have gone out to members and, being the "Cup," we hope will appeal to Victorians.

One of the matters our Committee wants to settle soon is our Squadron Banner and we are seeking quotes for the manufacture of one.

Dance evenings are very popular here. We have held two, with about 90 at each. We have charged 10/- a double--7/6d single the first time and 15/- & 10/- for the second dance and overall have done alright financially. The womenfolk seem to like this and so do most of the chaps. Of course we intend to hold, during May, the usual "Bucks" Do and the Christmas dinner will serve as another.

At the last Committee meeting a new President was elected in place of Jim Munday, who has served his term of 12 months. New President--Lon Johnston, who is now Victorian President as well as Squadron President.

SQUADRON SANDGROPEERS.

from

Len Stewart.

Firstly we would like to express appreciation to the proxy delegates who have represented W.A. at the Squadron Conference, Eric Munkaan and Alan Piggott, and also with reference to Squadron Council meetings.

No doubt you are wondering just how far we have proceeded in W.A. as regards to reforming the Squadron Club. Well, as yet, not so very far at all, unfortunately. Due mainly to the wide open spaces and distances separating the majority of members you can no doubt imagine that reforming the Club is by no means an easy task, but nevertheless

Squadron Sandgropers (Cont.)

both Jack Riseley and myself are still just as determined to get the gang together if its the last thing we ever do. Since our last get-together on Anzac Day, Jack, like myself has been kept very busy. We both have just gone into new homes and time off for play has been extremely limited. As a matter of fact a good old course of spine-bashing is well overdue. Next week we will have a discussion to see if we can arrange a general meeting and form the club by electing the necessary officers to get things under way. With the right man behind the guns I feel sure we will eventually build up and create the good fellowship among all state members as has been done in all other states.

PERSONALITIES.

Bill (Curly) O'Connor is with the Post Office in Perth. Bill is still unmarried.  
Doug. (Bruno) Anderson is running a Cinema of his own in Perth.  
Stan. Long in partnership with his father, is representative in the West of various Footwear manufacturers. He says any 458er visiting Perth will find E.V. Long & Son in the phone Book;  
Ted Wheeler now, we understand, has a Garage in Kojonup.  
Ted (Sharkey) Edwards is at the Post Office, Albany;  
Teddy Jewell is a painter in Perth;  
Tim Dale and Aub. Naylor are both with the same firm of Smallgoods providers in the West;  
Don Daniels has a lawn-mowing business in Perth;  
"Ches" Chessell is with the Signals Section of the W.A. Railways;  
Sid Baker is in an earth-moving business with his brother;  
Alf. Bullock, in Insurance in Perth, Alf. wants to be remembered to all his old friends;  
"Digger" Watts on his return to Australia won £2,000 in a lottery. He is now understood to be with the Perth Metropolitan Water Supply Authority.  
Bob Shearman is in Bayswater, W.A.  
Sammy Scott, when last we heard of him, was with the Mechanical Section Metropolitan Busses in Perth;  
Lloyd Simpson is an orchardist;  
Phil Bennett is working at Essendon in Victoria;  
Hensell Hemmy is a Health Inspector at Bridgetown;  
Bill Lyons is sheep-farming at Darlington in Victoria; he tells us that he is in the same settlement area as Tommy Burgess and Charlie Harding, who are also sheep farming and, apparently, doing very well--their wives recently revisited England together.  
"Macca" is working in Canberra. He did not let that prevent him from coming down to Sydney for the recent Reunion. Macca has not yet missed a 458 Reunion since they started in N.S.W.. The only other member we know who can say as much is Doug. Bennett.  
Cliff. Tillack recently got married. 458's heartiest congratulations to you, Cliff!  
Ron. Pritchard is with the Dept. of Civil Aviation in Melbourne. (Attention--Jim Browne).

458 SQUADRON HISTORY.

The Squadron President is particularly anxious that the History should contain as much personal interest and as many personal anecdotes and as far as possible, and asks all members who have not yet done so to send in (to the Squadron Secretary, Box 5289, G.P.O., Sydney) their recollections of any interesting episode during their time on 458. For members convenience the History Record Form has been reprinted in this issue. Be in it, now; don't come along afterwards and want to know why such and such has been left out of the History. Its up to you to see that we know about it all!

CORRESPONDENCE. Letters to the Editor.

Dear Peter,

Someone must have been very kind to me when he revealed to you my address, otherwise how would I have received those newsy and lengthy and interesting newsletters?

Looking back (and I have a remarkable capacity for forgetting what has happened!) I realise that it is about nine years since I left the Squadron, and possibly six since I met and spoke to one of the old brigade. I have often wondered how I should contact Squadron members if I should by some chance find myself in Kangaroo Land! Now it would appear that there is no difficulty at all.....

For my part, I live here in a rural community in splendid isolation. If Doddsy still lives in Dunedin he will be my nearest Squadron contact. He flew with Kevin George. By the way, did my address find its way to you through Kevin? He, according to my last letter, is flying with N.A.C. here. (Editor's Note: No, Ron, from Eric Fendick)

Strangely enough, I had neither an Aussie nor an N.Zedder in my crew which boasted three Canucks and two Englishmen. To meet up with one's crewmembers would indeed be

worth a lot of trouble. No doubt you'll recall Eric Fendick, "Bill" Munroe, Gerry Landry, Ernie Allanson, and the inimitable, irreplaceable, "Ruggles" (Mom's Little Boy).

I would like to send greetings to some of the Squadron chaps of those other days...I can at least send my best wishes to "Orch." who figures prominently in your News. I would like, too, to send greetings to Robin Knight.....And where has W/C Dowling disappeared to? I see no mention of "Bluey" Firth. I was surprised yet interested to see that Ernie Laming was in Japan....

No one would list me as a story teller. But I never tire of relating how when we were returning to Bone one day with a duff engine, Eric gave expression to the real humour of the Englishman. Apparently when I called up the Navigator for a course on Base, Eric was not plugged-in on the Intercom. Ernie, the second pilot, tried hard to inform him verbally what was afoot but failed. He picked up Eric's pencil and wrote on his pad "Port Engine vibrating badly". Quick as a flash Eric wrote underneath "So am I."....

Before I close I would like you to know that I am interested in your Squadron badge, your Squadron History and the News.....If any lone Squadron member is down this way and I can for old time's sake be of any assistance, I hope I'll not be found wanting.

Wishing you all the best,  
Ron Verity, Invercargill, New Zealand.

Dear Pete, Enclosed please find my portion of the Squadron History.....We had a great Reunion here, as Len Stewart has told you. Charlie Davis and I ended up drinking plonk at 1.0 a.m.....Pass on my congratulations to Bob Lyndon on the increase of family.

Some of the boys will remember the Gib. Surf Club we had. As a matter of interest I wrote to find out what had happened to all our gear. I also saw in a paper that a picture of the R.A.A.F. Badge representing 453 was unveiled in the King's Chapel, so I asked for a photo. Enclosed please find a copy of the reply I received, also some photos of the badges which I think are the only copies in Australia....Please remember me to everyone I know on 458 and many thanks for your remark in the News about the 'gropers' thirst. We hope to do better next year. All the best from Al. Wheat, wife Joy, and renegades Gary & Jeff.  
Geraldton, Western Australia.

Enclosed therein a copy of a letter from the A.O.C., Gibraltar, addressed to Al Wheat as President of the Geraldton Surf Life Saving Club

"I have pleasure in enclosing photographs of Squadron Badges in the King's Chapel including that of No.458 Squadron. Although the Chapel was seriously damaged in a maritime explosion which occurred here ..necessitating the removal of the badges, they will be put back in position after repairs to the Chapel are completed.

"I regret that despite enquiries made with all personnel here concerned with swimming and a review of likely files, no record can now be traced of the activities of the Life Saving Club. Although the R.A.F. have a successful Swimming and Water Polo team, no Surf Life Saving Club activities are organised here as such....."

Dear Pete, I was extremely pleased to receive yours of the 18th...I'M grateful to you for sending the parcel of Squadron News...It was good to see the names of old timers from Holme-on-Spalding-Moor..Mick Mather, and "Rosebud" Jim Munday is still taking an active part in the doings...I have been in Greenslopes Repat.Hospital, four months off work, which is too long away from my wife and three children (boy, girl, boy), but I expect to be discharged next week.

Album. Yes, although cameras and the taking of photos were 'verboden' I always carried mine, even at night...I took thousands (one anyway) of snaps and tried to get a record of Brest's illuminations while dropping "Eggs" on the three "Pigs"--German battleships! As soon as I can get them sorted out, I'll certainly let you have them..... All the best,  
Jim Plunkett, (L for Leather).

Dear Peter,

Your letter received and my apologies for not replying sooner but life has never been so fully occupied as in the last six months. For Squadron news I've had to rely on the "News" and have been very glad of it.

I have no regrets for having come up here and think it will be a fair time before we return south to live, if ever....I have gone into partnership with a fellow at Ayr with three 'dozers...I think prospects are even better than I hoped for when I came up...I have found the people very genuine and the country good with a heap of opportunities for any one ready to put their weight into it....

If you know of any of the boys coming through we'll be very glad to see them at any time. We are expecting to take a trip to Sydney during the "Wet" and will see you then.

I guess the cricket will soon be on again and while thinking how I'd like to be in it reckoned you'd be needing some new equipment so please use the enclosed, with my appreciation for what the Squadron has and does mean to me..All the best..Dud McKay, Calen, North Queensland.

