

CIRCULAR

458 SQUADRON NEWS



The Editor:

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

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SINCE OUR LAST ISSUE.....

CORNSTALKS DANCING:--N.S.W. Notes

from

ALLAN WALKER.

The Seventh Annual Squadron Ball was held as scheduled at the Pickwick Club on Friday July 6th. About 180 including guests attended and they all seemed to have a very gay evening. Peter and Rita Alexander were hosts to a happy official party which had as its guests the acting State President of the Air Force Association Jack Davenport and Mrs. Davenport, Air Force Club President Ron and Mrs. Levenger, President of the Limbless Ex-Servicemens' Association Jack Harris and Mrs. Harris and Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Hall who represented the Campbelltown Golf Club. Some 458 members made long journeys to be at the Ball, among them John "Snow" Fennell who brought a party of 14 from The Entrance, --Freddie Strom, who came from Narramine--Jack Bevan who came from Wollongong and Russell "Curly" Wilson who came from Kurrajong. Other Squadron members we saw dancing, and generally enjoying themselves, included Cecil Nation, Sam Barlow, Eric Munkman, George Unitt, Ray Davies, Kemp Beach, John Dunn, Frank Hickey, Graeme Coombes, Bob Lyndon, Alf "Slappy" Hammond, Freddie Ridge, Jock McGowen, Cy Irwin, Owen "Darky" Crompton, Bluey "Milner", "Red-Jack" Baker, Don Bitmead, Don McNeil, Bob Millar, and, of course, Maca.

LATEST ADDITION TO THE ALBUM.

It has been decided to include in the Album an Honour Roll in the form of a list of 458 Squadron Casualties. Tom Moore has agreed to do this for us--and to Tom, for this and other jobs, we say many thanks.

GOLF.

Two golf dates have been definitely arranged by Cy Irwin and will definitely be held barring one thing--extremely bad weather. The first is on August 19th (Sunday) when a regular golf day will be held at Campbelltown Links and the other on September 9th, also at Campbelltown when the Presidents Cup will be played for. A "certain member" already twice winner of the coveted trophy is reported to be in training with a view to making it three times.

JACK McDONALD IN HOSPITAL.

We appreciated George Bradd's telephoning us to let us know Jack McDonald was in Concord Repat Hospital. Tony Harris went out to see Jack, later followed by some other 458 members who however found that Jack had been discharged. We wish Jack a speedy and complete recovery.

A.T.C. ACTIVITIES.

Three Squadron members are playing a part in helping to train the airmen of the future by giving up some of their time to the A.T.C. They are Black-Jack Baker, Stuart Ricketts and Graeme Coombes. They are with the same unit. Jack Baker we understand is the Unit Adjutant.

GENERAL ITEMS.

We forwarded a Squadron Car Badge to Theo Ravenscroft who, in writing down, told us of his marriage recently. Usually the grape vine keeps us informed of these things but this time we were taken by surprise. Congratulations to you, Theo, and best wishes. Best wishes also to Bill and Emay McBride who have an 11 lb. 6 oz boy--Andrew James. We met Geoff Burgess down from Wellington, a couple of nights ago and he is expected back soon on an extended holiday. Well knowing Geoff's capacity to play and observing the glint in his eye we have started to fortify ourselves accordingly. Geoff, by the way, now owns a Standard.

N.S.W. Notes- (cont.)

ALL-STATES REUNION, 1957.

Arrangements for the 1957 All-States Reunion to be held in Sydney are in hand and proceeding satisfactorily. In the next issue of Squadron News we should be able to announce the full programme. Have you made your arrangements to be in Sydney for Anzac Week 1957 yet? We shall be happy to see you. Easter immediately precedes Anzac Week this time: perhaps some members will be coming for the two weekends--if so, and they would like us to make their accommodation arrangements, then the earliest possible advice to Box 5289, G.P.O., Sydney will be appreciated.

We regret to announce the death of Noel Moody, who was killed in a mining accident at Broken Hill. Our sympathy to all his mates.

SANDGROPPERS CHRONICLE.

from

LEN STEWART.

Bob Drinnan, from South Australia, paid us a short visit the other week. Al Wheat advised me of Bob's arrival and I was able to meet the plane. Met by Shorty Long back in town we knocked over quite a few beers and had a good old car-bash. Next morning Bob flew off again up north to Geraldton to see Al. (Bob and Al. were in the same crew together) and from what I heard it must have been a typical Squadron Reunion. Al. accompanied Bob back to Perth (unfortunately) and gave us no peace till we joined in the massacre; we also shanghaied Ben Cormack one night (with apologies to his wife, Val) I have a faint idea that Bob was glad to climb aboard that DC 6 homeward bound, to catch up on some well-overdue shut-eye.

I am particularly thankful to Jack Riseley for standing in at the recent Adelaide Squadron Conference on my behalf. I want to place this on record through the Squadron News.

In approximately a month I will be visiting Sydney on business and I am looking forward to meeting up with as many of the gang there as possible.

W.A. Flight has been extremely sorry to hear of the recent deaths of "Pappy" Cooper and Noel Moody. It is very hard to realise that it was only a couple of months ago that Moody and I were in that train together having a good old session, and now he has passed on.

IN HOLLIDAY MOOD.

News from Q. FLIGHT

All's well in Q Flight, and why shouldn't it be, with all its members basking in the most salubrious climate of all Australia?

However we must report the sad news of the death of Arthur Gallagher at Cunnamulla. Arthur was a Holme-on-Spalding-Moor boy. Both brilliant inventor and stormy petrel, his career in the Air Force is worthy of mention. It was only now and then that we in Q Flight heard of him. In recent years he suffered great pain from his injured back and it was that injury which brought about his death.

On the bright side, we've had a long letter from Theo Ravenscroft telling us of his marriage last Christmas Eve to a lovely lass who was the local candidate for last Centaur Queen. Theo claims he is the last member of 458 to take the plunge. We, who have been married these many years wonder why he has hesitated so long. Theo is now back at Longreach and particularly happy and doing well in his new job as Sales Representative with his old firm.

Q Flight is having its Annual Reunion on Saturday 11th. August at the A.T.C. Mess.

It may be of interest that Q Flight is following the lead of N.S.W. Flight and has applied to plant a Memorial Tree at R.A.A.F. Station, Amberley, during Air Force Week. It is also presenting a trophy for Annual Competition to the A.T.C. together with a personal award to each year's winner.

(The matter above was contributed by Queensland Secretary Jim Holliday: the title by the Editor who, after resisting the temptation for several issues, finally fell)

LETTER FROM THE VICTORIAN FLIGHT.

by

ARTHUR GREEN.

A number of 458 members have passed on recently. You will know about Ace O'Leary of Victoria. Now there is Noel Moody who came from South Australia and also Allan Cooper who died in Victoria some two weeks ago. Our sympathy to their families.

We in Victoria are about to open up our social season. There will be a dance on August 10th. and our Annual Reunion on September 21st. We are about to try out a few golf days in the next month or so to raise some more interest in the goings on of the Squadron.

According to our news W/Cdr. John Dowling is back in Australia.

Victorian Letter (cont.)

One of our committeemen, John Bilney, has had an increase of his family--a son. Both the Mother and baby are doing well.

A few of us have planned to go up to Robinvale on August 18th as guests of Ken Copper for the weekend, but I have some doubts of this trip at the moment on account of the floods. If possible we will get there somehow.

We have a very good committee in Victoria and there is a big lift coming in our social affairs during the summer months.

OBITUARY.

Britton Noel Moody-----Allan (Pappy) Cooper-----Arthur Gallagher.

458 Squadron News regrets deeply to announce the passing of the above-named members.

Noel Moody. The Sydney Morning Herald, of July 3rd 1956, carried this short report, of sorrowful significance to 458 ers. "Broken Hill. A Zinc Corporation miner died instantly when buried by a fall of ground this morning. He was Britton Noel Moody 35, single, of the Zinc Corporation Barracks, Argent Street."

Squadron member Howard Prout who also works at the Hill arranged a wreath from 458 Squadron at Noel's funeral.

Original groundstaff will recall Noel well as a cheerful and chubby young fellow who arrived at Holme-on-Spalding-Moor. We first recall seeing him there, sitting with Yank Martin in the Station Naafi about morning tea time, no doubt drinking some of the Naafi tea and eating, as we all had to do, some of the Naafi 'wads'. He went out to the Middle East and continued with 458 until he was posted to 3 Squadron. He had one of the lowest numbers on 458---5742---which is evidence of the earliness of his enlistment.

After the war he moved to Broken Hill to work. He came down to Adelaide last April for the Anzac Day March and Reunion and joined in the festivities heartily. His photograph taken then is in the Squadron Album. We found there was much more of Noel than when he was on the Squadron!

Howard Prout writes: "I assure you Noel's death was a big shock to me. How many times over a few beers we related the humorous side of Squadron days and laughed our heads off together. Just recently we attended a Diggers Golf Day, and towards evening we were in our best form. Then again only a matter of a week before the fatal accident, we both attended a Diggers Day Rifle Shoot...a wonderful day. Lastly we worked together underground more or less together, and how often we planned a trip together to one of the many reunions.....Please thank the boys for thinking of the wreath--it was a pleasure and a privilege to act for them."

Allan Cooper.

Allan "Pappy" Cooper served as a groundstaff member of 458 Squadron from early on until the Squadron was in North Africa, when he was posted to 450 Squadron.

We remember him as a big dark haired chap. We bring to mind intermittent but recurring pictures of him at Shallufa and Amiriya taking his part in the daily life of the mob at work, in the Mess, or on leave in Cairo.

Of his life home in Australia we have little information and little information about the tragic circumstances of his death. He was a Victorian. Len Stewart was able to send a telegram to his family expressing 458 Squadron's sympathy.

Arthur Gordon David Gallagher.

Arthur Gallagher's is the first reported civilian death of a Q Flight member. His body was cremated in Brisbane on 23rd July 1956. He was on the Squadron for only a short time and information about him is rather sketchy; however it is known that he invented several instruments which were accepted by Air Ministry in England.

He joined the R.A.A.F. as an Observer in No.4 Course and trained at Edmonton in Canada. While at Edmonton he submitted plans for a bomb sight which was accepted by the Canadian Government and for which he was awarded 25,000 dollars. He remustered as Air Gunner and came to 458 at Holme-on-Spalding-Moor. While at Holme he invented a composite loading tool for Browning machine guns which was accepted by Air Ministry. He was asked to join the Research Section of the Air Ministry but refused because he preferred active service.

One day Arthur crashed his car in a shop window in Lincolnshire. Getting out, he surveyed the wreckage and, estimating that the value of the wrecked car was roughly equal to the damage to the shop, walked off and left the car to the shop owner.

On the way to the Middle East Arthur tangled with the civil authorities in Malta, which caused his incarceration in the local jail. Undismayed, he took the small hack saw from his escape kit and tackled the bars to his freedom. Towards dawn, success crowned his efforts and he struggled through the bars to freedom--in the next cell.

Arthur Gallagher (cont.) while the Squadron was reforming in the Middle East, he was blown up by a stick of bombs at Ishmalia and suffered a broken back which invalidated him back to Australia and eventually brought about his discharge. In civilian life, he is known to have invented a successful type of air-flow brick, the patents of which he sold to a firm which is still manufacturing on this patent. He then manufactured plastics and was the first in Australia successfully to mold teeth from plastic material. At the time of his death he was at Cunnamulla as a Building Contractor.

The cause of his death was promoted by his wartime back injury. Arthur Gallagher, perhaps because of his inventive ability, was rather restless and his period of service with the R.A.A.F. was not always a bed of roses. However he performed his duty when called upon and he did contribute quite considerably to the war by his inventions.

(contributed by Jim Holliday)

PERSONALITIES.

Gordon Ough works with Canadian Industries Ltd., Chatham, Ontario ("Serving Canadians through Chemistry"). He sends wishes for good luck to his many acquaintances in the Antipodes; he is delighted to learn that Ken Cupper is back in the fruit business and still able to 'grog-it-up! Gordon says "Your publication is about the only contact I have now with 458 and it is indeed pleasant."

Dick Boydell recently visited South Africa (by air) but did not succeed in meeting any of the 458ers from the Union;

Pete Pettit is on his way home to Australia; he has been holidaying on the Continent of Europe;

Terry Mullins is with Mullins Engineering and Body Works at Petrie Terrace, Queensland;

B. Gray-Buchanan is with Winchcombe Carsons in Brisbane;

Jack Cronau has turned up in Brisbane;

Owen "Darky" Crompton is having a period of hospitalisation, in Sydney. Good luck to him for a speedy recovery;

Theo "Smiler" Ravenscroft has ordered a 458 Squadron Blazer-pocket;

Cy Irwin is said to be the only N.S.W. 458er who went to the Adelaide Reunion who has been the same man since;

Allan Goll's sister came to the start of the Sydney Anzac Day March and several of his old Squadron friends had the pleasure of meeting her;

Dud McKay to Dud and Enid McKay congratulations on the birth of their fifth daughter--- Deborah;

Wal Clarke is leaving for an extended overseas trip;

"Harpo" Marks is Chief Gliding Instructor at Dubbo, N.S.W. He is rumoured to be about to migrate to Sydney;

Jim Perry sends good wishes to Bob Williams. Jim who is a building contractor, has 2 boys and a girl;

Bert Ravenscroft has sent his remembrances to Slappy Hammond, Snow Fennell, Ross Burgess and Dick Whiteman;

Ted "Sharkey" Edwards is with the Post Office at Albany in W.A. We understand that his main interest in life (now) is fishing;

Bill McBride, whose sixth child was born recently now, by all calculations, shares the lead in the stork Derby with Bunny Williams.

Allan Walker and Peter Alexander have been reelected as Directors of the Sydney Air Force Club Ltd.,

Allan Walker and Dick Healey are members of the N.S.W. State Committee of the Air Force Association; Dick is heavily engaged on a Television Conversion Course with the A.B.C.;

Hal Coffill proposes that if Ian Beer does not enter for the History Dust Cover Competition then Ian be sought out and destroyed;

LONDON LETTER.

from

SID THOMPSETT.

I am relaxing on the beach at Sandown in the Isle of Wight after lunch. Last night we held our Reunion in London and all who attended had a very good time.

Those who turned up were:

| | | | |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| L.L. Johnston | P.W. Pettit | S. Thompsett | M. Mason |
| H. Bishop | W. Anton | N. Gilbert | R. Springhall |
| E. Brown | P. Walker | V. Thwaites | P. Marryott |

Several of the chaps brought their wives. Quite a number more had accepted but in the end couldn't turn up. It was unfortunate that the date clashed with the Annual Holidays of so many but we are hoping for another get-together near Christmas. We are making inquiries about the proposed Memorial Tree-planting Ceremony.

All the best to you all. Cheerio.

ARRANGE ACCOMODATION IN SYDNEY FOR THE ALL STATES REUNION N O W VIA BOX 5289, G.P.O.

CROWDSTERS' COLUMN.

from

JACK RISLEY.

S.A. Flight has been rather dormant, or, perhaps to be more accurate, lying back licking its wounds after the All-States Reunion.

Weather, of course, has not been the best but the Committee have several little things in mind for get-togethers, as soon as the sunshine breaks through sufficiently to entice people out of doors.

Since our Reunion, of course, two of our best known and highly regarded members have lost their lives through terrible accidents:—Noel Moody and Pappy (Kangaroo) Cooper.

There is not one member who does not lament their passing for each of us carry many little memories that have them as part and parcel of the scene. Our sympathy to their loved ones.

Pappy Cooper was of course a Victorian, Noel one of the local lads. Noel was born on 7th December 1921; joined the R.A.A.F. in 1939 and had one of the lowest numbers of any squadron member. He went to England in the Blue Draft. He was a Fitter IIE.

CORRESPONDENCE: Letters to the Editor.

From Dick Watson, Djakarta, Indonesia.

Dear Peter, The copy of Squadron News for May is just to hand and when reading about the Squadron's activities over Anzac Day I was forcibly reminded that I intended to write you earlier and report on our celebration of Anzac Day in Djakarta.

Our gathering was not ostentatious. Permission was requested from the Chief of Staff of the Army to fly the Australian Flag at the Menteng Pulo War Cemetery, and this request was gladly granted together with the advice that representatives of the three armed services would like to attend.

The actual arrangements were in the capable hands of Lt. Col. F. E. Kiel, Military Attache at the Australian Embassy and at about 10.45 a.m. a small gathering of Australians arrived at the War Cemetery where among peaceful and orderly beauty lie the graves of a number of identified Australians. We were shortly joined by the Naval Commandant Djakarta and senior representatives of the Army and Air Force.

Promptly at 11.0 a.m. the assembled company moved to the British Sector where the Australian Flag was flying at half-mast. A simple ceremony took place including the laying of wreaths by the Naval Commandant and the Australian Charge d'Affaires, and the placing of a white carnation on each Australian grave by two of the ladies present.

The Flag was raised and our simple but impressive ceremony ended with the usual token of respect.

I thought that fellow-458ers might be interested as Anzac Day is so essentially a part of the Squadron's activities.

With Kind regards,
yours sincerely,
Dick Watson.

From Theo Ravenscroft, Longreach, Queensland.

Dear Peter, It is a long time since I wrote...so here is a little bit of news.I claim the honour of being the last of the original members of 458 Squadron to stay single for the longest time. I was married in Aramac last December 24th to a Toowoomba lass who was a nursing sister in the Base Hospital here and was the candidate for the Central West in the Centaur Nurses Appeal held in Brisbane last year. So the boys were a long way out in their guess that I would be married as soon as I got home. They gave me a month.

I have left the Shearing Industry as this strike was not so good and also I could not get a house, so I accepted the position with the Western Electric Service Co as their Sales Representative. The Band obtained me a small flat otherwise I could not have accepted. I sell everything just about. Hillman, Commer, Hawk, and Snipe Cars; motor scooters, beds, mattresses, electrical appliances...so I have a large range of things to sell and a big district to travel.

Will you order me a Squadron Blazer Pocket please ?

Please convey my congratulations to Ken Cahill and his wife on their daughter, and convey my regards to 'Shamans Tent' --that is Mick Singe, Wally Archbold, Terry Waldon, Les Boyer, Norma Cugley and Scotty Wishart. Also to Bert Ravenscroft, Ken Cahill, Charlie Warren, Orch., and the other boys of the Squadron.

I hope to meet some of the boys at Southport next year at the Queensland Band Championships. I will be there with the Band from here--in fact we have

Correspondence (cont.) already booked our accomodation at the San Souci Hotel.....

Cheerio, All the best,

Fraternally yours,

Theo Ravenscroft.

SYDNEYSIDERS PICNIC IN THE SUN.

August 5th saw the N.S.W. Committee hold its Annual Picnic-- in the wintertime as usual and as usual--despite heavy rain for the days before, in fine sunny weather. Surprisingly it was hard and dry underfoot in our usual site beside the Lane Cove River. It couldn't in fact have been bettered.

There was a good roll-up of members and their children. For the children there was Ice Cream, soft drinks, races and slippery slides. For the adults, the Squadron Badminton equipment was brought and also the Squadron Darts Board. Eric Hankman brought the substantial bottled supplies; Allan Walker and Cy Irwin organised it under the overseeing eye of the Old Maestro Bill McBride. Allan Walker and George Unitt started the Children's Races. Alf Hammond and Bill Cotton captained the enthusiastic Tug of War teams. Alf supervised the Darts Tourney. Dorothy Hankman devoted her day, with her usual enthusiasm and devotion, to keeping the Badminton Tournament moving (it had nearly as many entrants as Wimbledon.) The N.S.W. President spent the day walking to and fro calling up the competitors due at the Board or on the Court. To mention a couple only of the families there, we liked having Geoff and Gwen Burgess down on holidays with their son and daughter from Wellington; and we were particularly pleased to see Owen and Yvonne Crompton with their twins.

The Picnic finished only with the light (and the bottled beer). To the competitors who won--congratulations! (incidentally Gwen Burgess won the Ladies Race)--to those who did not win--congratulations also--on their fine picnic spirit.

INDONESIA TO-DAY.

by

DICK WATSON.

It is just over 350 years ago that the East India Company, established by the Netherlands, commenced operations in what became known as the Netherlands East Indies. In 1945, the Japanese handed over the country to the Indonesians and after nearly five years of fighting and interminable discussions, full independence was obtained on 29th. December, 1949. In these discussions, Australia championed the cause of the Indonesians, and this has not been forgotten, though certain subsequent events have somewhat diminished the warmth of the friendship.

The Republic of Indonesia is comprised of hundreds of islands, the principal ones being Java, Sumatra, Borneo and Celebes. The total population is in the vicinity of 80 Million with approximately 50 Million living on the island of Java, which is about 58% of the area of the State of Victoria in size, and therefore rates as one of the most densely populated areas in the world and every possible acre of land is under cultivation.

Rice is the staple diet and very good work has been done in recent years to make the country self-sufficient in this commodity.

The terrain of the country, with its lowlands and mountainous areas plus the volcanic nature of the soil in so many parts, makes it possible to grow an enormous variety of produce. The country also abounds in mineral products, covering a great range such as petroleum, tin, bauxite, sulphur, coal, manganese, asbestos, mica and diamonds. Of the ground products there is an unending variety, the principal items being rubber, tea, coffee, cocoa, sugar, palm oil, fibres, kapok, rattan, quinine, tobacco, a variety of woods and spices. Truly, a country beautifully endowed by nature but at the moment suffering at the hand of man.

A wide variety of cultures, customs, arts and languages exists. Wild life on Java is practically non-existent with the exception of wild bear, but Sumatra offers more interesting possibilities with crocodiles, elephants and panthers. There is a good selection of bird life and as one may expect more than a fair share of mosquitoes.

No mention of Indonesia, however short, would be complete without special reference to the Island of Bali. Here the Hindu religion has been staunchly maintained despite the fact that the rest of the country is predominantly Muslim. The Balinese are famous for their dancing, music, woodcarving and paintings, the latter being executed without perspective, as was the case in Europe prior to the 13th. Century. The elaborate cremation and mass bathing ceremonies attract tourists from all parts of the world.

Living conditions vary somewhat throughout the country. Meat and fish are plentiful and vegetables are never out of season. House servants are readily available and entertaining even on a large scale does not present any difficulties. There are two large European-controlled breweries that produce quite a reasonable brew and adequate stocks of hard liquor are always available at a price.

