

CIRCULAR



THE EDITOR.

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COMPETITION PLANNED TO PROMOTE PERTH REUNION.

Squadron members will recall that the next All-States Reunion of 458 Squadron will be held in Perth in April, 1964. This means that there will be no All-States Reunion in 1963 (a decision made by the last Squadron Conference and not received with unanimous approval in all Flights).

It has been decided to devote the next few months to conducting a Competition among Squadron members throughout Australia. The "News" understands that full details will be circulated to members shortly. Prize in the Competition is understood to be a free return trip by sea, first class, for two people between Sydney and Perth, to attend the Perth Reunion, together with substantial spending money on the journey. For those unable to travel there will, if they win, be the option of an equivalent money prize. Members in other states can, of course, make suitable equivalent arrangements.

This Competition, with its associated publicity, is likely to add considerable interest to planning for the Perth Reunion.

Members can look forward to hearing about it in the near future.

458 SQUADRON PARTICIPATION IN BOMBER COMMAND REUNION.

Plans made over recent years culminated in Sydney in December, 1962, with the holding of the long-awaited Bomber Command Reunion. A Committee, on which 458 Squadron was represented by past-President Graeme Coombes, made the arrangements. 458 was, of course, with Bomber Command during its service in the United Kingdom.

Very many Australians served with Bomber Command on R.A.F. Squadrons, apart from those on the Australian squadrons. Very many, also, did not return.

Guest of Honour for the Reunion invited by the Committee and brought out by air after a number of what the Committee called "Administrative vicissitudes" was Air Commodore Hughie Edwards, V.C., an Australian in the R.A.F., who commanded R.A.F. Station, Binbrook during the war.

The Reunion included quite a hectic series of receptions and other events. The Lord Mayor of Sydney gave a reception at the Town Hall, there were parties at various ex-service clubs, including the Air Force Club, and, as the high point, the Reunion Dinner was held in the Amethyst Room, Hotel Australia, Sydney.

The Dinner, attended by nearly 300 men, attracted a galaxy of Air Force personalities. The Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Sir Valston Hancock, the previous C.A.S., Air Marshal Sir John McCauley, the Federal Vice President of the Air Force Association, Mr. Claude Vautin, WingCmdr. Jack Davenport, were all present. Also present were Fighter Aces, Clive (Killer) Caldwell, John Waddy, and Bobby Gibbes. Indeed Clive Caldwell proposed the toast of Bomber Command. He took care to mention that when really accurate bombing was needed it was done by fighter aircraft--not equipped with a massive array of navigational equipment--a point laughingly appreciated by the gathering.

458ers at the dinner included Graeme Coombes, Dick Healey, Stuart Ricketts, Col. Corten, Bill Turier, Ralph Bailey and Peter Alexander. Dick Healey was also a 458 representative on the Committee.

Sporting events and a church service on Sunday completed the Reunion events. We hope there will be further such reunions. Congratulations to the committee !

AT HOLME-ON-SPALDING MOOR.

Glancing hurriedly through a recent copy of the English aircraft paper Flight, our eyes fell on a passing reference to 458's old snowy home in the north. Briefly, it recorded the fact that Blackburn Aircraft are test-flying and developing the Buccaneer aircraft there. Members will perhaps know that the Buccaneer is the latest aircraft chosen for the Royal Navy.

CROWEATERS' COMMENTARY.

from Brian Woodhead, 90, Observation Drive,
Highbury, S.A.

As Colin Hanlon has left for one of his country (insurance) trips, he has asked me to write the news from Adelaide.

Farewell to the Parkins. With Jack Parkin and family selling-out his Morphett Vale property and moving to Western Australia, we decided to hold our Christmas Children's Picnic on his property for the last time. It was a beautiful early summer's day that we drove the some 20 odd miles to Jack's place on the side of mildly sloping hills, overlooking farmlands and on to the sea, and there picniced amongst lovely old gumtrees. Jack had done us well by providing shelter for the refreshment department, and drums for water, etc. Jack Riseley rose to the occasion and played Father Christmas to the children. I'm afraid the majority of our children are getting a little old for this now. After a very pleasant day, we left for home after wishing Jack and his family the best in their new venture.

Caravan on Fire. The Parkins were to leave by road just after Christmas. We were upset to read during the Xmas holidays and hear on the radio that the caravan that Jack Parkin and family were taking to W.A. had been burnt out at Norsman and that some of the family had been treated for burns. We haven't been able to get in touch, as we haven't their new postal address, but can assure Jack and his family that our thoughts are with them. We believe they are somewhere near Barker.

Laurie Welcomed. Last week Sid Bartram arranged for a gathering at the Talbot Hotel to meet Laurie Crowley and Phil Bennett. Laurie is down from Lae to get a new aircraft, a de Havilland Dove, and Phil Bennett has been tinkering about with engines for him. They expect to fly back this week. Quite a number arrived to say 'Howdy', including Sid Bartram, Arn. Scholar, Mel Priest, Jack Riseley, Bob Drinnan and myself.

Cuthie & Co. Gordon Guthbertson and family were over from Ballarat for holidays at Brighton. Cuthy says George Riddoch, Lloyd Simpson, and Ted Kennedy are all doing well.

Woodhead Whereabouts. Readers will notice that I have myself moved to a new address--as above.

Kindest Regards.

BRITISH BULLETIN.

from Sid. Thompsett, 369, Downham Way, Bromley,
Kent, England.

All the best for 1963 to all in the Aussie Flights.

We have had a disappointment here over our last Reunion which had to be cancelled--too few acceptors. I do look forward to these evenings out and a chinwag over old times--but there it is, and we'll look forward to our next Reunion.

News at this end is very scarce. The main talking point always seems to be the weather;--and what a spell we have had since Xmas! Quite heavy falls of snow coupled with below-freezing temperatures for the past 30 odd days, and to-day we have another hazard, freezing fog; and the weather chaps don't hold out much better weather in the near future.

Bob Osborne Returning. One item of news there is. Bob Osborne will be returning to Sydney about 13th. February. His wife and two children left last week by boat and Bob will be following on by air, via America. Harry Bishop, Mick Mason and myself met Bob last Friday night and had a few farewell drinks--an enjoyable evening. Bob doesn't know where he will be living in Sydney but he gave me his Business address, where he can be contacted:

Pritchard Wood and Partners Pty Ltd.,
100, New South Head Road,
Edgecliffe, N.S.W.

British Bulletin (cont.)

I was very sorry to hear of the death of Jack McDonald, whom I knew on the Squadron. Did you know that Kel Kellam has been very ill recently? I understand he is much better now but has had to give up the grog.

From a freezing foggy London I say a very warm cheerio to you all.

N.S.W. FLIGHT NEWS

from

Cy. Irwin, 17, Vincent St.,
Canterbury, N.S.W.

Firstly, greetings to all Squadron members throughout Australia from N.S.W. Flight. May 1963 be a good year for all.

There is not a great deal to report since last news time, by way of functions. On 14th. December some of our Flight members attended the welcome to Air Commodore Hugh Edwards at the Hotel Australia, Sydney. This was a night arranged by the Bomber Command Reunion committee, and part of a three day series of functions.

Christmas Social. A Christmas gathering of members was held at the new Air Force Club premises at 213, Clarence Street on 20th. December. A fairly small gathering, but over a few beers 458ers exchanged Xmas greetings.

Future Events. Amongst functions for the current year for members and their families an excursion to the near north coast is talked of (Wyong-Tuggerah-way). There is also talk of holding this year's country reunion at Wollongong.

Annual Subs. With this News issue (for N.S.W. members) is enclosed a reminder re subs. Please keep our Association financial by returning your dues:

Air Force Association (of which the N.S.W. Flight is a branch)--	
Membership	£1-0-0d.
Membership with "Wings"	£1-5-0d
458 Sqdn. Membership	10/-
Squadron News sub.	5/-

Of Jack McDonald. 458 members in this and other states will be sorry to learn of Jack McDonald's death. Bob Bruce, Jan Carey, Cec. Nation, Fred Strom, Jack Aitken, and Cy. Irwin attended to pay last respects.

NEWS FROM Q. FLIGHT.

from

Jim Holliday, 43, Stella Street, Holland
Park, Brisbane, Q.

This "news" may well be termed 'A Report from our Northern Representative' for it is mainly a collection of snippets of information brought to us by Erle Hetherington. As we have reported on many previous occasions, Erle now abides at Cairns, 1,000 miles from Brisbane, and 2,000 from Melbourne, where he has the enviable job of engineer on tourist launches serving island resorts on the Barrier Reef. We use the word enviable because most of the tourists are young and (therefore) attractive young ladies.

To get away from it all Erle treks 1,000 miles southwards to Brisbane about Xmas time. This year he and his wife came during the rainy season and had a rather worrying time waiting for creeks to subside to cross and then racing to the next doubtful crossing before the floodwaters came down, and so on. Such is the way of life in that far-flung outpost of Australia, the north of Queensland.

Apparently Cairns is a centre housing, or visited by, many well-known 458 identities. Somehow or other, they all seem to gravitate to Erle. Most notable recently was the visit of Laurie Crowley who landed at Cairns two months ago on a charter flight from New Guinea to Innisfail. He spent the evening with Erle and took off next day on the return flight.

Fred Kleckham's family live in Cairns. Fred is in the New Guinea service and comes home every fortnight. At present, he is on six months long service leave. Erle says Fred looks exceptionally well and that Mrs. Kleckham is now fully recovered from her severe illness of some years ago.

Erle often sees Stan Parker when he visits Cairns from Ayr where he has a farm. Stan is "still the same old bloke."

Another visitor to Cairns is "Danny" Dangaard who is agent in Mareeba for the Norlanda Milk company and doing--and looking--extremely well.

News from Q. Flight (cont.)

Jacky Dew wanders up occasionally from Tully where he has an electrical and refrigeration store and seems to be doing O.K.

Erle has met George Davis who is now chief Engineer at the Hamilton Sugar Mill, Gordonvale. Erle says this is a most responsible job (to us it seems a "sweet" one) and George looks remarkably well.

One surprise was to find that Clive Thorpe is now living at Draper Street, Cairns. We 'lost' Clive some years ago. He was domiciled at Warwick and then 'folded his tents' and left no forwarding address. Apparently he has spent some years on Thursday Island and in New Guinea.

Jim Plunkett is doing very good work in service circles as an official of both the Air Force Association and the R.S.S.A.I.L.A. in Cairns---sterling and selfless work. Unfortunately Jim is now in Brisbane on one of his periodic visits to Greenslopes Repat. Hospital.

Erle Hetherington himself is a ball of energy, lost a little weight but nevertheless blooming in good health and good cheer.

'Johnno' Johnston recently visited Cairns on holiday along with Molly and the children. Erle says he saw a lot of Johnno, and Johnno says Erle gave him a wonderful time.

Richardson and Honan. Chas. Richardson has run into Bill Honan and gleaned from him that after 10 years or so as manager of Woolworths at Roma, he has been transferred as manager of Woolworths, George Street, Brisbane. We should now be seeing a lot more of Bill.

Chas., incidentally, recently had a birthday. He apparently is much older than his records shew and I would claim him to be the oldest aircrew in 458

Christmas Social. Our Christmas Social knotted up another success. Attendance was a little down, at 103, though spirits (and spirit) were up. Again Gordon Postle donated a Utility Set for raffling, which was won by Mrs. Speedie, one of the Eric (Digger) Kelly gang. The "secret number" prize of a ton-sized box of chocs, donated by Associate member Frank Brady, was won by Mrs. Col. Davies, our amiable R.A.N. type.

Anzac Day. Plans are afoot for re-locating the site of the Anzac day Reunion, of which every member shall have due and timely notice.

DEATH OF JACK McDONALD.

The many 458ers who knew W.J. McDonald (Jack), the Observer of the Harris crew, will be very sorry to hear of his early death late in 1962. Particularly, the members of the crew will remember him--Tony Harris, Bill Flentje, Bob Bruce, Geoff. Burgess, and Dud McKay.

A Sydney man, Jack was a Barber in early life, before entering the R.A.A.F. He did a G.R. Course in Canada, and was an Observer. After the war he worked in Insurance for some years, with T.G.I. He attended 458 do's regularly, and was one of the squadron team of four to win for 458 the Final of the Open Road Competition; the others being Sam Barlow, Pete Campbell and Lofty Chalmers.

Jack had several years of ill-health before his death, in which heart failure followed on war-caused disabilities. He was in his early 40s and leaves a widow and four children. To them 458's sincere sympathy.

BOB DAVIES TO BE BISHOP OF TASMANIA.

The Rt. Rev. R.E. Davies, Assistant Bishop of Newcastle, who Australian airmen of the Middle East will remember well as Padre Bob Davies, has been elected as Anglican Bishop of Tasmania. This news makes his many Squadron friends and admirers very happy. We wish him every success and happiness.

Returning from overseas, he was successively Warden of S. John's College, Morpeth, Rector of S. John's Church, Canberra (and Archdeacon), Rector of Wagga and then Asst. Bishop of Newcastle. 458ers attended his consecration as bishop in S. Andrew's Cathedral in Sydney in force. We know ex-airmen in Tasmania will join in welcoming his arrival there.

CORRESPONDENCE: Letters to the Squadron.From Alan Slarks, c/o Radio Australia, Shepparton, Victoria.

I wish to express my thanks to the Editor and staff for the regular arrival and interesting news of the Squadron. It has kept me up to date with all the activities of 458 and its members, which would have been lost to me over the last few years, owing to change of address and occupation.

I am now a qualified radio technician here at Radio Australia, have a diploma in Electronic Engineering, and have completed a course in T.V. and pulse techniques.

My address is as above as we are living in one of the six station houses.

In conclusion may I wish all and everyone of 458 Squadron a bright and prosperous New Year.

I remain, sincerely,

Alan Slarks.

(Ed. Alan was an R.A.F. member of the Electrical Sect. who came to Australia some years ago and settled in Shepparton. We are delighted to hear from him).

From Gordon Sagers, Green Street, Lockhart, N.S.W.

Moving around as I did, and spending only a matter of weeks with each Squadron I find it hard to recall names. Am sure I would remember faces though. I rarely get to Sydney but do appreciate the 458 Squadron News, just as I did the kindness and hospitality of all the chaps when I lobbed in in Foggia.

Kind regards to all the boys from

Gordon F.S.

(Editor: Dr. Sagers was our R.A.A.F. Dental Officer in the Mediterranean area.)

ADJUTANTS' S HONOUR.

458's hearty congratulations to its fourth and last adjutant, John Islip, on his receipt of the honour of being made an Officer of the order of the British Empire in the New Year Honours. John, who is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries, has been for many years the Secretary of the Royal Victorian Institute of Architects in Melbourne.

The Civil Defence of Australia: Germs and Poison Gases.

Earlier articles in this series dealt the Threat of and the Defence against nuclear warfare. This form of enemy attack looms largest in the minds of men of this decade and rightly so. In the hardly-to-be-visualised violence of nuclear fission and fusion lies such immense power --relatively so easy, alas, to deliver in war and so conclusive as a bearer of the ashen fruits of victory, that other forms of attack by man on man recede from the mind.

But there are others: others which perhaps we should begin to consider more closely while Russian nuclear power is held in balance by American, and vice versa. There is still high explosive--T.N.T. There are also germs and poison gases.

Germ Warfare. We should say, at the outset, that the main 'teeth' of germ war seem to us to be panic--the fear of the unknown. Bacteria and Virus are at least as old as humanity, and evolution has equipped humanity to survive in the same world as germs. No one can deny, who has known such an epidemic as that of Spanish Influenza after the 1st. World War, that when germs do get the upper hand of the body's defences, there are appalling, large-scale consequences. Not are epidemic diseases new to warfare. Campaigns have been won ^{by} Cholera and typhoid. Napoleon was diverted from India more by typhus than by opposing armies. An Assyrian army preparing to attack Jerusalem, seven centuries before Christ, camped near the river Jordan and was, apparently, devastated overnight by malignant malaria.

Germs are difficult to deliver as weapons. They are delicate, killed by adequate heat, many killed by sunshine. They don't like compression or explosion. All this leads to the conclusion that an attack on a civilian population by germ warfare, though possibly causing considerable sickness, could be countered by popular attention to clean air, clean food, clean skins, avoidance of dirty insects and the boiling of drinking water. Could be countered by the modern hygiene of public health services.

If they are adequately supported by trained volunteers. Will they be? That is one of the unanswered questions called 'Civil Defence'.

Germs and Poison Gases (cont.)

Nerve Gases. Chemical warfare, which occurred in the 1914-18 war--with mustard gas and about a dozen other gases--but not in our war--at the present time would mean a dire series of highly dangerous gases (derived from phosphine oxides) generally called Nerve Gases. They are savagely toxic and very quick. In liquid form they are rapidly absorbed by the skin and, in vapour, when they are invisible and odourless, are absorbed through the eyes and nostrils. These gases paralyse the muscles and can cause death by suffocation in a few deadly minutes. Unlike germs, these gases can be delivered easily enough by explosive missile.

First Aid Trained first-aid is the necessity in this situation and is one that cannot be improvised in a minute. As a matter of civil defence we shall do well to foster and to join the St. Johns Ambulance, and the Red Cross organisations. Not only can the trained first-aider give the quick treatment that is vital but that treatment can prevent shock and bacterial infection, the killers that follow after.

Symptoms and Treatment. What are the symptoms of nerve gas poisoning?

- (a) Pinpoint pupils, aching eyes, dimness of vision;
- (b) Nasal discharge and tightness of the chest;
- (c) Nausea and abdominal pains;
- (d) In severe cases, general weakness, twitching muscles, intense sweating;
- and (e) Gasping, choking, frothing at the mouth followed by convulsions and death.

The text book treatment recommends:

- (i) Adjustment of respirators;
- (ii) Removal of any liquid contamination by swabbing;
- (iii) Eyes washed out immediately;
- (iv) The injection of 2 mg. of atropine;
- (v) Artificial respiration by the Holger-Neilson method.

Detection. Attempted recognition of the presence of nerve gases by sniffing is remarkably dangerous. There are detector kits available for the trained man.

When and If. The strategic situation in which gas is likely to be used is not easy to envisage with certainty. It seems to most observers that the trump card--the nuclear weapon with the power of millions of tons of high explosive is likely to be played first, as a pre-emptive bid of overwhelming strength on the main targets in any war other than the bush-fire, local sort which could be fought out with T.N.T.

However that may be, we must again ask those who read this article, as we did readers of earlier articles, the question 'Do you know what to do for your wife and children when--there is atomic radiation--bacterial infection--or poisonous gas on 'the winds about them'?' If not, how about joining the Civil Defence organisation, getting some training, and lending a hand?

SQUADRON DANCE IN SYDNEY.

458 members in Sydney are invited to come with their wives to join their fellow-squadron members who belong to the Air Force Club at a Saturday night social-dance there. The date--Saturday March 9th. The time 8.0. p.m. on. No admission charge--pay as you go. Supper for a nominal charge. The place--The Air Force Club, 213, Clarence Street, Sydney. On arrival ask for Sam Barlow, Cy. Irwin, or Bob Bruce. Please be in it !

EDITORIAL NOTES.

There are two. Firstly our acknowledgements to those who sent Christmas greetings to the Squadron--including Stan. Parker, Al. Wheat, Sid Thompsett, Arthur Green, Graeme Coombes, Bruce McKenzie, Harry Jenkins, Cec. Nation, Ken Mercer, Ern. Laming, Jim Holliday, Sid Bowen, Eric Munkman, Bob McKinna, Tony Harris, Jim Palmer, and Lock Simpson.

Secondly, a request. We have always thought about the most interesting thing in the News is Correspondence--Letters from members. May we please have some ? To the Editor, Box 5289, G.P.O., Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.