

JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL

c/- Jim Whitem,
PO. Box 239,
Port Macquarie,
NSW 2444, Australia

Year 56, No 223, August 2005

Squadron President - Tom Moore (NSW)

Squadron Vice Presidents

U.K. - Leon Armstrong
New Zealand - Kevin George
Canada - Tom Lindsay

Squadron Secretary: Jim Whitem P.O.Box 239, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444

Squadron Treasurer: Frank Ward 50 Castle Hill Rd. West Pennant Hills, NSW 2125

Squadron Newsletter:

Editor: Jim Whitem Phone (02) 6583 8311; Email haslett@aapt.net.au (note change)
Publisher: Eric Munkman Phone (02) 9972 0641

Flight Correspondents

UK Keith Wilkinson, 23 Ferndale Pk, Tedmore, Stourbridge, W. Midlands. DY90RB
NSW Eric Munkman, 722 Lantana Lodge, Lantana Av. Collaroy Plateau, NSW 2097
Qld Evelyn Lewis, 5 Cupania St. Victoria Point, Qld 4165
WA Ted Jewell, 61 Wyaree Rd. Mandurah, WA. 6210
NZ Kevin George, 20 Kowhai Av. Kaikohe, N.Z. 0400
SA Pat Cribb, 2/20 Rochester St., Leabrook, SA 5068
Vic Rupert Pearce, 46 Mt. Pleasant Rd, Nunawadding, Vic. 313
Canada Bryan Quinlan, 1460 Haywood Cres.. W. Vancouver, B.C. Canada.

Post communications for:

*Squadron Secretary to Jim Whitem, P.O. Box 239, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444,
and Treasurer to Frank Ward, 50 Castle Hill Rd, W. Pennant Hills, NSW*

This will be the last issue of the Squadron News before the final All States Reunion

Message from the Squadron President

Year 2005, yes unbelievably, is sixty years since VE Day and VP Day, events that are permanently and indelibly etched on the minds of all 458ers.

This year regrettably we have been reminded of the horrors of war by the depraved terror attacks on London, on the underground and the London buses on which we 458ers have traveled. At times like this our thoughts are with our UK members and our friends in London.

These VE and VP Day commemorations have been celebrated across the world and our nation by various gatherings, marches and reunions. To cap it all we will be issued with a commemorative medallion.

It must be said that during these years 458 has remained cohesive and can hold its head high as one of the signature service and ex-service organizations. We can look back on the picnics, cricket matches, dinners and, would you believe it, thirty-six major reunions.

Come October this year we gather in Canberra for our final, our very last, major event - our final reunion. At this event we will leave a symbolic landmark in history by the dedication of the Squadron Plaque in the Memorial Grove - beside the other great RAAF squadrons. This seems a fitting finale to all those reunions that have given us so much fun, friendship and fraternity.

Let us now ensure that we support this last and significant event, let us all now gather strength and rally for the final muster,

Tom Moore

Canberra Reunion Update *by John Gibbins and Wendy Whitem-Trunz*

Reunion Deposits for some 79 persons have now been received. In addition to the list in last newsletter, the following have now been received.

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Don Anderson and Joan | Harry Baines and Anita |
| Sid Bartram and Pat | Bert Garland and Isla |
| Vic and John Gibbins | Jim Palmer and Lucy |
| Bernie McLaughlin and Helen | Jack Pryde |
| Bob Smith and Dorothy. | |

There are whispers of more, including local friends for the functions. We would love to have 30 more starters.

We need to know accurate delegate numbers for catering and buses. If you are staying at the hotel, we will include you in the overall counts for all non-optional events.

If you are not staying at the hotel, please indicate the event(s) you wish to attend by phoning Wendy Whitem-Trunz on (02) 6268 5531, leaving a clear, brief message with your name and phone number. If you have any questions about Canberra or the reunion hotel (Rydges Lakeside), also call Wendy.

The Final Reunion program is below:

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Morning</u> | <u>Afternoon/Evening</u> |
|--|--|--|
| Sun, 30th October | | <i>Arrival</i> Meet Your Mates |
| Mon, 31st October | Canberra Exhibition at Regatta Point | Luncheon Cruise (2 hrs) Mick Singe presentation - UK Mission |
| Tues, 1st November <i>(timing change)</i> | | Australian War Memorial · Lunch · Memorial Service Ceremony · Conducted tour (optional) |
| Wed, 2 nd November | Squadron Plaque Dedication at RAAF Memorial Grove | Maltese High Commission Reception (Lunch) |
| Thurs, 3rd November | Old Parliament House (OPH) OPH Lunch (optional) | Rest in afternoon Final 458 Squadron Dinner |
| Fri, 4th November | The Final Squadron Conference or <i>Free Day</i> | Sea Food Buffet Dinner (optional) |

For event details, please review the previous newsletters.

We could use more photographs, both wartime and reunion time. Here is an example.



Who are they?

Please send your photographs (they will be returned) ***asap to:***
John Gibbins, 6 Boronia Ave, Turrumurra NSW 2074

P.S. Members traveling to Canberra by road should be aware that Temora, NSW, about two hours drive west of the capital, is the home of the **Temora Aviation Museum**.

Built on the site of #10 E.F.T.S., this houses a number of WW2 and other service aircraft, all of which still fly. In addition there are many memorabilia including a scale model of the E.F.T.S itself. Although there is no flying weekend adjacent in time to our reunion, there is much to see on non-flying days. It is well worth a visit. The email address is info@aviationmuseum.com.au and the phone number is 02 69771088 JHW

Flight reports - *These appear in the order that they were received. Ed.*

UK Flight by Keith Wilkinson

Plans are well in hand for the 458 Squadron UK Flight's special re-union – it's to be in Alghero on the Italian Mediterranean island of Sardinia. We now have 14 people taking part, all flying out from Britain in October for the three-day event.

This trip has been made possible largely through the hard work and administrative talents of 458 pilot Jack Christianson who has coordinated arrangements, including grant applications made under the "Heroes Return" programme. This is a Lottery-funded scheme, based in the UK, which assists our veterans to go back to the places where they fought in the Second World War.

In this case, squadron members will quite literally be returning to that exact place. They will be staying in a hotel on the very same sandy beach where in 1944 they camped in tents between sorties in their Wellington bombers. We will also be able to visit the nearby Alghero airfield, which was used by the squadron. It's now an international airport. Most guests will be landing and taking off there, which should rekindle memories from 60-odd years ago.

We are to make our visit as relaxed and informal as possible, and outings will depend upon things like the weather and personal preferences. Guests arrive at the hotel on Saturday October 1st. It's a beautiful location with views of the Med, and the old town across the bay, and the suggestion is we simply "chill out" there on the first day. There will be a free beer to the first person who can identify the place where their own crew's tent was! (It may be the bar is built right on top of it!! I joke not.)

The next day, we are to head into historic harbour town of Alghero with its old buildings – like, the Aragonese bell tower, the Marco Polo Bastions, the Sulis Tower, the Cloisters of St Francis, the multi-coloured cupola at the Church of St Michael.

From here, for those with sea legs, we can take a three-hour boat trip to the stunning Grotta di Nettuno, a cave system in steep cliffs. Again, this should bring back a few memories, as many members of the squadron relaxed between ops by hitching lifts on local fishing boats. I know my dad's crew did.

If we have time, it would be interesting to pop in to the Villa Las Tronas for tea, or something. Once owned by a count, now a smart hotel, it was used as an officers' mess in 1944...luxury compared to the tents on the beach. When I visited 458 pilot Colin Fereday in Canberra earlier this year (what a great bloke!), he had a few memories of the place.

Meanwhile, Jack is trying to organize a dining room at our hotel for the official re-union dinner on the Sunday evening.

On the Monday – the final day - we may take the local train to the town of Sassari, which is Sardinia's "second city". There are several reasons for this suggested outing. Again, it's an old town with historic architecture. But it was also a haunt of squadron members in the war, and many will recall the views from the train. Most of the squadron's ground crews arrived on this railway line after the move from North Africa.

Plans are deliberately being kept loose and laid back so everyone can do things at their own pace and follow their own particular interests. Our hotel is a few miles away from the main town but there will be a number of us with hired cars to help with local transportation. Whatever, it should be easier than sitting in the back of an open lorry (as per 1944). If anyone has any other ideas about places to visit, please drop me a line, or contact Jack. We will do our best to help out.

We think it should be a memorable reunion.

Editorial note. This is the best one-topic flight report that has been through my hands, or read by me. Our Squadron seems to be programmed for self-renewal.

South Australian Flight by Pat Crib

The lunch at the Kensington Hotel on July 7 went well with 24 present. So good to have Monica Thom back in the fold, with her family Jennifer and John Higgins also present. Apologies were from Michelle Rowe, Margaret Harden, Glen Forgan, Marjorie Oliver, Jean & Max Barnes, Mattie Baker, Nathan Price and Brian Woodhead.

Everyone was saddened to learn of the death of Beth Lawson on June 12. She was always present at our functions - such a lovely lady.

We know of six members intending to go to the last 458 Reunion to be held in Canberra in October - Colin & Yvonne Hutchinson, John Ringwood, Trish Cosh, Syd & Pat Bartram. We are sure it will be a great success and wish everyone a great time.

Ten members have accepted an invitation to the VP Day Commemorative Service and Tea Party on August 14 from 2-5 p.m. at the Convention Centre, North Terrace, Adelaide.

Our President, Col, is following up some suggestions for maintenance of the 458 Renmark plaque site.

Put the date December 4 in your diaries for our Annual General Meeting and Christmas Lunch at the Adelaide Bowling Club, Dequetteville Tce, Kent Town, commencing at 11.30 a.m. A further reminder will be forthcoming later, with costs etc.

We send greetings to everyone, especially if you are not enjoying good health at the moment.

W.A. Flight by Ted Jewell

I mentioned in the last newsletter that the number of mobile members over here is now few. On Anzac Day due to sickness and other reasons, we had no members able to fall in behind the banner. This is also the case when we have functions during the year- usually four members at the most; without our Associate Members, we would not be able to function.

A few members came to my home in Mandurah for a BBQ in May. The weather forecast was terrible, so some did not arrive. However, Squadron members Bill & Joan Clues, Nobby and Esme Nobbs and several associate members did attend and we all had a great day, under shelter.

Last week we went to Phil & Shirley Hicks home for Sunday lunch, everybody brought a plate. It was very enjoyable day with Bill and Joan Clues, Henry and Vera Etherton, Mick Singe, Margaret Gannaway, myself and friend, plus some associate members

Bill Clues and Ted Jewell are booked up and ready to go to the reunion in Canberra. We can hardly wait. (*Ed. There are others*).

Had a phone call from Jack Cobb who wants to be remembered to everyone. He is ninety years old. Both Ethel and Jack have health problems and are not able to get around these days.

Mick Singe asked me to mention that he attended the War Memorial rededication service at King's Park. The weather had affected the footings; it was taken apart brick by brick and then reassembled to its former self. He met Rear Admiral Simon (Retd), who had lead the contingent to London. He also attended the RSL Congress for two days in July – he certainly moves around.

NSW Flight by Eric Munkman

On reading the winter edition of 'Wings' I learned that Eric Purcill was elected to the committee of RAAFA Orange Branch. Congratulations, Rinso.

Keith Cousins wrote an item re the forthcoming reunion. Thank you, Keith, well done. We'll keep the flag flying

In June, members enjoyed another delightful lunch at the TAFE Catering College, Ryde. Such lunches are now limited to two per week and I was able only to make a tentative booking for the next, on 10 November. To be confirmed in October.

Noel Walters is now a resident in Shangri-La nursing home at 107 Carrington Ave. Hurstville, telephone 9580 4333. He would love to hear from you all.

Victorian Flight by Rupert Pearce

Our A.G.M. was held on May 31st at the Bentleigh Club. Present were Jim Anderson, John & Marjorie Bilney, Neil Dean, Jack & Margaret Ellis, Joann Hinton, Lawrie & Jean Kew, Roy & Barbara Pearce, Rupert Pearce, Norma Pollard & Joyce Reeves.

Apologies were received from Enid Dowling, Ken Fleming, Bill & Betty Flentje, Beryl Giles, Shirley Granger, Joan Munday & June Schoppe.

Our officers bearers are unchanged, Neil Dean President, Rupert Pearce, Secretary/treasurer, Jack Ellis S.V.P. & John Bilney J.V.P.

Planned Activities for 2005/6 are:-

Lunch at the Manningham Club 26th. August

BBQ at the Bilney home, Ferny Creek, 27th. November

BBQ at the Ellis home, Dromana, 5th. March 2006

The A.G.M. will be held at the Bentleigh Club 26th. May 2006.

The Malaysian Government will award a commemoration Medal for those who served in Malaysia during the period 1957/1966. Some Victorian members (now deceased) served during this time and there may be other Squadron members also. For a copy of the Application Form, call the toll free number, medals hotline 800 111 321. Posthumous medals for deceased ex serving members will be issued in accordance with the order of entitlement, widows, son or daughter etc. The list is with the Application Form.

Bill Flentje writes to tell me "Geoff Burgess who was a fellow member of Tony Harris's crew in Italy and Gibraltar and afterwards lost his life in a street accident in Western Australia, has a grandson, Paul Burgess. Paul gained 11th place in the pole-vaulting event in the Olympic Games at Athens with a vault of 5.65 metres. Recently in the trials in Adelaide was shown on TV winning 1st place for Australian representation for the impending Commonwealth Games with a vault of 5.80 metres. No mean feat"

We wish him success in Melbourne in 2006.

Roy Rabone writes to say that Charlie Harding passed away in December 2004 at Mortlake. He was 92. Charlie was with 458 in the early days, sailing from Sydney 5th. September 1941. He served on 458 from Holme until his departure from Foggia for England where he married Margaret. Charlie played football with the squadron and he was a grand sportsman

Les Kennedy was named in the Queens Birthday Honours list and awarded an A.O.M for service to the community of Ballarat through local Government service and local history organizations and through support of the Australian Ex Prisoner of War Memorial Appeal. Congratulations, Les.

Queensland Flight by Evelyn Lewis

Not a great deal to report this issue. I've tried to contact some members to see how they are and what has been happening and how their health is. Health a big factor for so many now.

Harry Dorge does not enjoy good health and lives from day to day. Was so pleased to chat to me. Wishes to convey Members attending the Canberra Reunion all the best; sorry he cannot make it.

Dud & Enid McKay not long back from a few weeks stay in Cairns. Enid and daughter are going to Vietnam in November. Dud not decided as yet about Canberra.

Charles & Hazel Ruthven going along quietly, both over 90. Hazel said sad to think its the last reunion but hopes the news continue as they both look forward to it each quarter.

Bert & Isla Garland intend to go to reunion. their son Ross and his wife going along with them to keep them company as both have had a lot of health problems.

So pleased to hear from Bernie McLoughlin. He and Helen intend to go to reunion all being well

Arthur & Mae Jones would love to be in Canberra however it is not possible as their daughter is coming up from Adelaide in September to take them back with her as they do not like to travel on their own.

Eric Kelly and Bernie McLoughlin each year attend a Mass at. Thomas Aquinas at St. Lucia.

This year the service is on at the time of the reunion. After all these years this will be the last Mass for the Air Force to be held. I guess for other forces as well. Recently Bernie attended a 50-year luncheon at the United Services Club and after many years he caught up with friends from other Squadrons and Bill Brown one of our famous cricketers. It made Bernie's day.

I was in Wollongong a month ago I bumped into Cyril Bevan or he bumped into me in a shopping aisle of Woolworth's. We caught up with lots of news and it was good to see Cyril looking so well.

Editorial

At this time there is no news from the Canadian and New Zealand flights – perhaps not surprising with the passage of time. We still send our greetings to members in those far off places.

Wartime Diary of A423099, W.O. E.J. (Ted) Gore, RAAF 1942-45

Do you remember Ted Gore, one of Stan Slater's WAGs, who served at Alghero, Foggia and Gibraltar? Recently I have been in conversation with David Irons, formerly of the RNZAF, now living in Sydney. David has discovered that Ted kept a wartime diary, has read the manuscript and had it typed; it exceeds one hundred pages in length. He is in touch with Ted's widow, Jean Gore, who has read the typescript and has agreed to make a copy of it available for Squadron records. It will be on display at the Canberra Reunion and I will ensure that Squadron Council discusses this potentially invaluable piece of Squadron history.

Happy Landings in Canberra. JHW