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** *Have you notified Rob Wilkinson, if you prefer to receive your newsletter by email?
Are there others in your family, or circle of friends, who would like to receive a copy by e-mail ?
Please advise the Editor – see address and e-mail details above.*

*** *Contributions for the next Newsletter are due to the Editor by 27 July*

VALE

With sadness, we record the passing of the following members and family of 458.

Ken BROWN	see VIC flight report (and article below)
Audrey CRUTTENDEN	see VIC “
Bill LAUGHLIN	see NSW “ (and article below)
Ron MOY	see UK “
Rob PHILLIS	see NSW “
Sid WINCHESTER	see CANADA “

A tribute to KEN BROWN from his wife, June

For the last couple of years, our son, Andrew, and I, have nursed Ken at home. That was his wish. He had frontal-lobe dementia, and it was so sad to see him fade away. Fortunately he was not in a great deal of pain. He passed away in the Yarrawonga Hospital peacefully, shortly after being admitted. Ken was in his ninetieth year. So ends a chapter.

He was a navigator in Bob Drinnan's crew. The other crew members were, Al Wheat, Jack Taylor, Bob Lyndon and Bob Smith. 458 Squadron meant so much to Ken.

He was buried at Numurkah Cemetery, Friday 26 FEB in a semi-private service. It was both a religious and RSL service.

Harry Ashworth, 458 Sq, and Eddie Bradshaw attended the service. Both had trained as navigators with Ken. It was a lovely service, fitting for a wonderful man. He will be sorely missed.

A tribute to WILLIAM (BILL) HAWARD LAUGHLIN from his son, Bill

William Haward Laughlin was born on 31 October 1931 at Mildura. He enlisted in Deniliquin on 2nd September 1940 and was called up on 21st June 1941. After preliminary training at Somers he was transferred to Rhodesia as a member of the tenth draft.

He trained at 28EFTS on Tiger Moths and 23 EFTS on Oxfords then left for No. 61 Air School George, South Africa as a Sergeant in Sept 1942.

He left George in 31st December 1942 for the Middle East before being posted to the 458 Squadron at Malta on the 11th February 1943 flying Wellingtons, then served at Blida, Protville and Bone before completing his tour of duty on 10th July 1944.

He flew with 36 sorties totalling 276 operational hours .

In Australia, he was posted to Bairnsdale, Tocumal and various training centres flying Liberators, before joining 21 Squadron based at Darwin and Morotai until the end of the war. From August 1945 until November 1945 he flew ex-prisoners of war and medical cases home from Morotai to Melbourne, a 3000 mile journey taking 18 hours.

He was discharged on 20th November 1945, as a Flight Lieutenant, and on return to Deniliquin spent the majority of his working life as a partner in an accounting firm.

As a citizen, he made an enormous contribution to the Deniliquin community through his membership of many service organisations and committees over a period of fifty years.

These included: Legacy, Rotary, Deniliquin Hospital Board for 16 years, Methodist Church Council, Carols by Candlelight for 34 years, Southern Cross Homes, the Deniliquin Golf Club and local horse racing clubs. He was also a keen bowler and a member of the Deniliquin RSL Club for more than 60 years.

In 1989 Bill and Goldie moved to the Central Coast to be closer to family where he continued his association with Legacy. He died suddenly on 13th February 2010, and up until that time was living independently and attended the Anzac Day service at Deniliquin in 2008.

He is survived by his wife of 68 years Goldie, son Bill, daughters Lyn, Pamela, Heather, nine grandchildren and one great grand son.

REUNION - 2010

After much discussion on venues, distance and travel issues, NSW Flight is now organising a Reunion, to be held in **SYDNEY** in late **October 2010 (tentatively 24th – 28th)**. Details and registration forms will be included in the July Journal. Interstate members / friends will be most welcome to attend.

REMINDER - Do you have any old 458 Newsletters stashed away?

Please contact Wendy, if you can assist, on 0411-848111 or e-mail wendy@cape3.com

A Christmas message received from Betty Kleckham

Thankyou for the 458 newsletter. My father, Fred Kleckham was in the 458 squadron, based in northern Africa, Middle East, Malta and Italy and England. Maybe more, I'm not sure. He did not talk much about it. He was very proud to be a member of 458, and had a photo of a Wellington bomber on the wall in the dining room as well as a wooden plaque with the 458 insignia on. He marched in Brisbane every year with his mates, and they all went to the Irish Club afterwards for their AGM, followed by many beers. He died in 2002 from cancer. We miss him terribly, he was such a wonderful man and such a good father.

Wishing you a very happy and peaceful Christmas and all the best for the New Year. I look forward to forthcoming 458 newsletters.

A request for identification and information from Ron Kirk

I came across this photo (*see below*) yesterday of the crew I was in, at Holme-On-Spalding Moor, Yorkshire on October 28th 1941. I wonder if anyone remembers this, and who are the ones with the question marks.

Also I wonder if anyone still has the silver Maltese Cross we had made when we were in Malta? They were engraved "458 Squadron 1942". I wear mine with pride every Armistice Day. All best wishes

CAN ANYONE ANSWER RON'S QUESTIONS ???



Message received from Jack Pryde – a “friend of 458” in NZ

Thankyou for continuing to send me the 458 Journal. I feel I do not really qualify as a member of your mailing list. Even Kevin George, who brought me to two of your Reunions, lives a long way away from me. We communicate on the telephone two or three times a year. Finally, my age is now 96.

I was ex 221 Squadron in the M.E. Kevin's and my tour expired at the same time, and we met up in Cairo in 1945. I got an e-mail, a day or so ago, from the splendid fellow who runs the 221 Reunions. He had been to see the unveiling of a statue of Sir Keith Park in Trafalgar Square. Park comes from around here !

Message from Rob Forgan (further to article in Journal # 235 Aug 09 “A Ring Cycle”)

In the depths of one of the most severe European winters on record, the efforts of a small group of dedicated amateur historians and the neighbouring communities of Golleville and Colomby in the Cotentin region of Normandy were recognised this year for their association with the loss of a 458 Squadron Wellington from Holme on Spalding Moor. Overdue recognition to those villagers, who attended the crash site in the bitter January of the 1942 Winter, and to the next generation, who researched the tragedy and who in turn inspired a small village community to erect a stunning monument to those who came from far way lands to help liberate France.

Relatives of the crew of Wellington R1785 showed their gratitude by forwarding framed individual certificates of recognition and gratitude to the 4 members of the research team and to Joel Lequertier, Mayor of Golleville and Robert Lebreton, Mayor of Colomby. Wooden plaques in the shape of Australia, bearing the 458 Squadron insignia, were also presented to each individual and village. The plaques were co-funded by 458 Squadron and relatives of the young airmen.

The presentation ceremony was due to be held on the same day as the plane was shot down 68 years earlier, but once again the weather interfered with the best laid plans. The roads were out, due to heavy snow falls, and the ceremony was delayed by a week to enable those who planned to travel from hundreds of kilometres away to attend. On the 16th January, in the Golleville village hall, presentations were made to the research team members, Ms Claire Letellier, Claude Letellier, Mickael Simon and Georges Dennebouy. In addition to the above Mayors were the past Mayor of Golleville, Msr Loslier who approved the building of the granite memorial, and Mr Joseph Anquetil who 68 years earlier, as a 16 year old, was one of three men who were ordered by the occupying German forces to recover the badly burnt bodies from the wrecked Wellington.

For those readers who have the good fortune to visit Normandy, Golleville is only a 30 minute drive south of Cherbourg and is very close to the D-Day landing beaches and the ancestral home of Robert The Bruce. The local hospitality is overwhelming, the B&B's are grand, the food and local cider magnificent and the country side is bliss. If you do go to Golleville, make sure you introduce yourself to the locals and be prepared for the warmest of receptions. If you are flying with Air France, it just may be possible that you are in the very safe hands of Captain Georges Dennebouy.

And, here's a thankyou received from one of the recipients....Ed:

“I'm writing to THANK YOU very much to all of you for the gifts and certificate. My father Claude is joining me to thank you. We were very proud to receive those gifts.
Claire & Claude LETELLIER”

FLIGHT REPORTS

Canada Flight

by Bryan Quinlan

On Friday 19 March, **Sid Winchester's** son Chris advised me of the sad news of Sid's death just a few hours earlier at the Care Centre in Nanaimo on Vancouver Island. He was just three months short of his 95th birthday. Sid was a Wireless Air Gunner on Elden Neilson's mainly Canadian crew from Jan to Oct 1943 at Shallufa, Malta, Blida and Protville and part of what was labelled as "MacKenzie's Air Force".

Sid's Air Force career included several highly traumatic episodes both with 458 and on a second tour on Coastal Command Liberators from the UK in 1944. On a take-off from Blida their Herc. Wimpy Mk III blew a tire and was write-off but with no serious injuries to the crew. On his second tour his aircraft was shot down by a German gunboat and crashed into the sea. Sid survived and subsequently became a German POW. Two of the crew were killed, including Hugh "Red" Conlin who also had been on Nielson's crew on 458. At war's end after the Russians took over the POW camp, but did not release the prisoners, Sid escaped and endured a painful trek West following the Elbe River until encountering an American convoy and finally safety and freedom.

Sid has been in declining health over the past year, similarly matched by the loss of his quality of life and like most who have enjoyed an active lifestyle would have welcomed his final release. It will, of course, be difficult for Sid's wife Joyce who is in poor health at the same Care Centre. We can only offer our deepest sympathies to Joyce and Sid's family.

Since the last report I have fortunately been in touch via e-mail and telephone with Dick Sladen's daughter Jay Lowry and her husband Rob who reside in Toronto. An age-related health problem has necessitated Dick's move into a Care Centre nearby and he recently celebrated his 92nd birthday. The family has sent me some notes that Dick made about his time in the RCAF which reveal that he joined 458 in Jan 1943 at Shallufa and was captain of a crew operating from there until the main Squadron and the detachment joined up at Protville, Tunisia. According to Dick's notes he carried out Air Sea Rescue duties from various locations and became tour-expired in June 1944.

On my recent call to the Markland residence in Kamloops I was pleasantly surprised to find Bert at home for his weekend visit with the family. He too has had to move into a local Care Centre for treatment of Parkinson's Disease and a number of other health issues. I enjoyed a very pleasant chat with Bert and wife Gladys who Joan and I used to visit when vacationing at one of BC's lake where the Markland's used to live. Bert was a Wireless Air Gunner on Leon Armstrong's crew when 458 was at Bone, Malta, Sardinia, Italy and Gibraltar, 1943-44.

A call to Tom Rowan in Northern Saskatchewan revealed that he had recently completed his 64-game curling season and is making plans for a summer visit with his adult grandchildren. Tom is visited regularly by his daughter who lives in a nearby community.

Also talked with Tom Lindsay and Jack Reynolds, who both live in Vancouver and, like most of us, concentrate our efforts mainly on overcoming the problems of the advancing years.

You are no doubt aware of the recently concluded and hugely successful Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games which I think surpassed even the most optimistic expectations. It will be interesting to find out how they turn out financially, but regardless should be considered well worth the cost.

Victoria Flight

Greetings to all from all in Victoria. First and foremost I'm sad to report the death of **Ken Brown**, who passed away on the 28th February. (Thanks to Harry Ashworth who attended Ken's funeral representing 458 Squadron). Sympathies to his family from 458 Squadron. (see article on Page 2 by June Brown.....Ed)

Hilary Cruttenden contacted Jeremy Orchard (Secretary/Treasurer Vic. Flight) and announced the passing of her mother **Mrs. Audrey Cruttenden**, wife of the Late Jack Kenneth Cruttenden. Sympathies to Hilary and her family from 458 Squadron.

The following are excerpts of letters or phone calls of apologies or attendance possibilities after letters were posted to Victoria Flight members re ANZAC Day 2010 March in Melbourne

Mrs. Beryl Giles: used to love the march with her late husband but now unable to attend

Mr. Bill Flentje: at 91 years of age traveling would be a challenge, sorry can't attend

Mr. Stan Cartledge: thanks for keeping me informed about 458 activities, if able to attend his son will provide transport

Mr. and Mrs. Cecilia & Adrian Temple: will be attending the local service and March in Stratford

Phone call from Mr. Harry Ashworth on 28th Feb: vale announcement of 458 er: Mr. Ken Brown. Harry attended Ken's funeral in the last week of Feb

Mr. Eric Jewell: will be observing the service & March on TV this year, best wishes to everyone

Phone call from Mr. Ian Alison: he sends his apologies, will be watching it on TV. He sends his regards to all veterans, widows, family and members of 458

Phone call from Mr. Ken Fleming: he sends his apologies, and regards to all

Mrs. Enid Dowling: won't be attending and thanks us for thinking of her and wishes everyone a pleasant day.

Mr. R. Rabone: he would very much like to attend but lives 4 hours away. He attends the local Dawn Service and March. Sincere wishes for a great day and regards to all 458

I've spoken to a number of 458ers recently, including Ian Alison, Jim Anderson, Ken Fleming, Eric Jewel, Roy Pearce and Harry Ashworth. All of them were as well as can be expected, all things considered. The crew also wishes every one well.

On 28th February 2010, Victoria Flight had an activity to RAAF Pt. Cook Air Pageant. It was an exciting day seeing the old war-birds fly. Hudson, Spitfire Mk.VIII, Mustangs, Boomerang, Kittyhawk (the only P40F [fitted with Rolls Royce Merlin engine] flying in the world), Sabre, Vampire and more. It was great to meet Bill Flentje's sons Rod and Neil. Also Bill's grandson Zack. Zack has joined Australian Air Cadets 425 Squadron, Ballarat and has aspirations to follow in his grandfather's footsteps and join the RAAF in the near future. Good Luck Zack!

We are all gearing up for ANZAC Day March 2010 and looking forward to the day. If any members in Victoria feel they are up to it, as we get closer to ANZAC Day, don't hesitate to call myself (Roland) on 03 97270106 or my brother Jeremy 03 98013891. Even if you would just like to attend 'after march' refreshments at Melbourne Bowling Club, 138 Union St, Windsor, phone 03 95105321, Melway 58D7. We would be glad to assist in any way possible. Just a couple of housekeeping items. Could Stan Cartledge and Jack Ramsay please call either myself or Jeremy. We need to update your contact details. Thanks and all the very best.

South Australia Flight by Pat Cribb

Our Christmas lunch went well, with 20 good friends catching up. We wish Kevin Tait all the best, now that he is out of hospital following surgery; also Di Michell who is feeling better now. It is good that several Squadron men are intending to march on Anzac Day. We will meet afterwards at The Kensington, Regent Street, Kensington, for lunch and plenty of chatter. Best wishes to all for the year ahead.

Late news – just received from Pat.
Col Hutchinson, Rick Michell and Pat Cribb have been in hospital and now discharged and on the road to recovery. Get well Col, Rick and Pat - we need you.....Ed.

NSW flight by Eric Munkman

Best wishes for a Happy and Healthy New Year, to all members of 458 Squadron.

ANZAC DAY. The Squadron will assemble in Elizabeth Street, near King Street, prepared to march off at 10.30am. Those requiring wheel chairs, and who haven't already advised me - please call Rob Wilkinson on 02-9888 3625.

ANZAC DAY LUNCH – CHANGE OF VENUE – after the March, gather for a Reunion and lunch at the Castlereagh Boutique Hotel (formerly NSW Masonic Club) at 169 Castlereagh Street. We can enjoy a light lunch, drinks and plenty of catching up at a cost of about \$30 per head. Please confirm attendance with me.

I'm sad to report that **Bill Laughlin** passed away on 13-2-10. Bill was Skipper on anti shipping operations in the Mediterranean area. To his wife, Goldie, and family, we extend our deepest sympathy. (*see article on Page 2. by Bill Laughlin, Jr.....Ed*)

Rob Phillis, son of the late 458 Veteran Tom Phillis – died after a long illness. He regularly attended recent Anzac Day marches, together with his son Michael. Our sympathy goes to his family.

West Australia Flight by Ted Jewell

We had a great get-together for our usual Xmas lunch, as there were 12 present at the home of Bob & Dot Breslands. Everyone brought plates of food, plus a few drinks & had a wonderful day. Members present were Joan Clues, and daughter Vicky, Vera Etherton, Margaret Gannaway, Bill Kelliher, and son Bob, Ted Jewell and friend Veronica.

We then organised a BBQ lunch at my home in Mandurah on 14 March, however this had to be postponed, as several people were in hospital, and unable to be there.

As mentioned before, we have only 4 members here in the west – Jim Palmer, Nobby Nobbs, Bill Kelliher and Ted Jewell.

We will not have a get-together on Anzac Day, as attendances at previous lunches, at Miss Maud's in Perth, have been too small to carry on. I have been going to the Service here in Mandurah, and do not march as I am not up to it anymore.

I often think of the days in the Squadron when a lot of us were only 19-20 years old, but so much has happened since then. I still say they were some of the best years of my life.

UK Flight

by Keith Wilkinson

A memorial service has been held for **Ron Moy**, a 458 Navigator who died at the age of 87. The moving, well attended service took place at the 12th century parish church of St Michael and All Angels in Ledbury, Ron's beautiful, historic home town in rural Herefordshire. The Rev Paul Dunthorne described him as "that perfect gentleman". And there were many other glowing tributes, like: "Thank you for being such an example to us all on how to live our lives".

458 squadron was represented by myself, and Leon Armstrong, a former pilot with the squadron, just five days before his 90th birthday.

Ron was a familiar and cheerful figure at reunions, attending with his wife Rosa, who passed away a year earlier. A devoted, loving couple, they'd been married for 66 years.

Ron and Rosa had met at the Black Country factory where they worked; drawn together by their love of music – he was a pianist, she was a singer.

In one tribute at the memorial came this: "The story of their wedding is legendary and worth repeating. Ron (who'd joined the RAF at 18) was sent on a training course to Eastbourne. The course venue, a hotel, was bombed and Ron was given survivors' embarkation leave. Ron and Rosa decided to take the opportunity to get married, and applied for a special licence.

"However, special licences took a few days to process and Ron's leave wasn't long enough, so they were advised to obtain an Archbishop's special licence which cost £5, a lot of money in those days. Undeterred, they pressed on, and the licence duly arrived. They could have married on May 11th but, not wishing to appear to be rushing things, they waited until May 13th".

That was to become a significant date for Ron. While flying with 458 in 1944, his Wellington developed engine trouble landing at Malta.

Ron wrote the following account: "Someone drove a truck in front of us just prior to touch down so we had to go round again. As Tredwell opened up the engines to full power, the starboard engine finally gave up and stopped dead.

"This was a truly interesting situation, with our load of eight 250 lb depth charges still intact, we finally got airborne again with a certain amount of difficulty, trepidation, prayer and so forth. This time we got down and meant to stay there. However, it proved to be impossible to stop the landing run due to a high speed approach, on one engine and a following wind. To put it more bluntly, we overshot.

"Bob Johnson, our second pilot, selected the undercarriage to 'up' position. This ploy did not work so we hopped over the boundary fence, jumped a wall and ploughed into a field, which did irreparable damage to the aircraft...

"I got a cable from home to say that Lesley, our daughter, had arrived on the scene – this was the 13th of May 1944 – our second wedding anniversary."

This wasn't the only crash for Ron and his crew. Another aircraft he was in was seemingly struck by "friendly fire", then collided with a Bofors gunpost on the airfield at Bone, writing off the Wellington – on Christmas Day!

Not surprisingly, say his friends, Ron faced his terminal illness with stoicism, remarking: "When I was 18 I didn't know if I would be alive tomorrow. I have been here before."

Once again, it's that time of year when we start thinking of the next UK Flight reunion.

Various places are being considered and the general view of the dwindling number of participants is that there should be one – somewhere.

Last year we went to the Squadron's English birthplace, Holme on Spalding Moor, with a visit to nearby Elvington, and the Yorkshire Air Museum, which was full of memorabilia and a vast wartime collection.

If you have any thoughts about where we should get together, do let us know. We are always keen to welcome new faces, or to see old ones from the past.