



## JOURNAL OF THE 458 Squadron Council

**Year 61**

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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 and reports for the next Newsletter are due to the Editor by 27 November. Please feel free to send in your story.*

**This is a particularly lengthy Journal, however I have received a number of interesting contributions – for which I am very grateful – and would like to share them all with you.**

## VALE

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

<b>Stan CARTLEDGE</b>	<b>see VIC flight report</b>
<b>Selwyn FOOTE</b>	<b>see Tribute below</b>
<b>Eric KELLY</b>	<b>see Tribute below</b>
<b>Jim PERRY</b>	<b>see SA flight report</b>
<b>Bert RAVENSCROFT</b>	<b>see SA flight report</b>

### **A TRIBUTE TO SELWYN FOOTE from his daughter**

My name is Kathryn Hogan and I am the daughter of a 458 squadron member, Selwyn Foote. Dad died on the 5th February this year. He was in Canossa Nursing home at Oxley for the past 3 years suffering from Parkinsons Disease. Unfortunately, the disease progressed to a stage where Dad could not swallow at all and was admitted to Wesley Hospital with Pneumonia. He was treated actively with antibiotics, but after 2 weeks of severe ill health he died. Born in 1920, Dad died at age 89 years and was adored by his 4 children, 10 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren. Our mother is still alive, and is also in Canossa, where she has been for 5 years, after suffering a stroke having a total knee replacement.

Dad loved his mates from 458 Squadron, and going to a reunion was always a great highlight in any year. He would often regale us with stories of the War years, mind you only the funny ones. Mac the monkey (apparently stolen from another squadron) springs to mind. I think these men were brave gentlemen, who showed great humility, and love for their country and family.

### **A TRIBUTE TO ERIC “NED” KELLY from his family**

Eric “Ned” Kelly passed away on 26 April, aged 87 years.

He was a proud member of the 458 squadron and attended the ANZAC day marches in Brisbane Qld (only missing 4) and, most importantly, catching up with his mates afterwards for a few drinks and, of course, cards. Unfortunately, as time goes by there were less and less people who were able to attend. Ned was going to the march again this year in his wheel chair, but had a fall 2 days before hand and was in hospital. He also enjoyed going to the reunions and seeing everyone. It was the only time that he would go on a trip willingly, it’s been quite a few years now since he has been able to attend.

Ned was always a happy person with a great sense of humour (always the gentleman) who loved his family dearly. He will be sorely missed by his wife Kath, his 8 children, 14 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren.

### **A NOTE FROM RON KIRK, in Wales, following his article in the DEC 09 Journal**

Hello Rob. At last someone who remembers me. Tom Rowan, a Canadian, is 91 years of age and he wrote me a seven page letter, and included 10 photo's which really brought memories back. We were in Malta together, and were in the same billet at Sliema. He also gave me information regarding Glen Hoosier, a Canadian friend that I took home on leave. Also there was a photo of me and Hoosier on the beach in North Africa . Thank you for all the help you have been for me to achieve this.

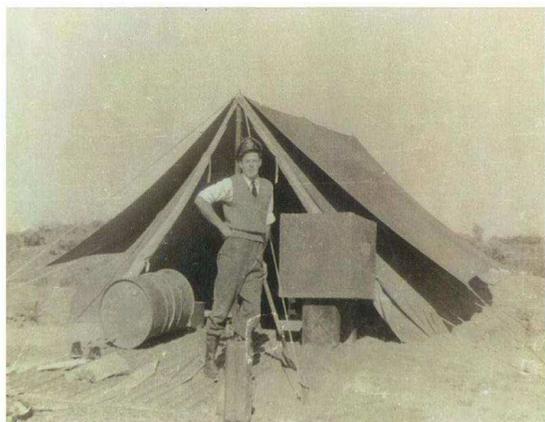
\*\*\*\* REUNION in SYDNEY – OCTOBER 2010 \*\*\*\*

The REUNION is “ON” and will be held in **SYDNEY, October 25 - 29**. Preliminary details, and a registration form, are included in **THIS Journal**. Interstate, and overseas, members / friends are most welcome to come along and “join the party”. For those on e-mail, if you can’t print out the Registration Form to complete and send back, just e-mail me the details... Ed.

## KEVIN BYRNE and BERNIE McLOUHGLIN – memories from Peter Byrne

While 458 Sqn was stationed at Bone, my uncle, Kevin (Bunny) Byrne, was posted as a Wireless Operator/Gunner in Mal Priest's crew. By coincidence, his next-door neighbour from home in Brisbane, Bernie McLoughlin was also on squadron as Second Pilot in Bill Taylor's crew. Bernie and Uncle Kev were the best of mates and shared a tent while at Bone. Bernie's older brother, Cormack, also served with 458 until his death in an aircraft accident, which is described in detail in the squadron history.

I met Bernie for the first time in 1995, and during our conversations he would tell of various humorous events from his Air Force days. On one occasion, he told of the lack of comforts in the tents, and how every opportunity was taken to improve the situation. Uncle Kev was returning to camp one day when he found a water-tank on the roadside, immediately took possession of it and installed it outside his and Bernie's tent, beside which he then posed as Bernie took a photo (*see below*).



They then retired into the tent where Bernie noticed that Kevin had a Thompson sub-machine gun on his camp bed. Kevin stated that he had swapped his service pistol for it so that he could go hunting. Bernie was taken aback, and warned Kevin that the 'Tommie gun' was very dangerous and should be handled with great care. Kevin (the Squadron Gunnery Officer) replied that there was no problem and he was quite capable of handling the Tommie gun safely and proceeded to demonstrate his dexterity with the gun. Predictably, I suppose, the Tommie gun discharged sending a bullet within inches of Bernie's head, through the tent, and off in the

direction of the main camp. Bernie would not repeat the conversation that immediately followed.

A little time later a truck pulled up outside the tent. "There!" said Bernie to Kevin, "you've killed someone in the main camp". As luck would have it, the truck contained some British personnel who had come to retrieve their water tank, and the only casualty of the Tommie gun was Uncle Kev's pride.

On another occasion, Bernie told of a visitor to his tent who admired a well-padded pilot's seat that Bernie had acquired and asked where it came from. Bernie replied "Oh, I found it in that pranged Stirling on the edge of the field. I climbed in and chopped the seat out with a fire-axe."

"You bloody fool!" the visitor remarked. "That plane has an un-exploded 4,000 pound bomb inside it." Bernie was understandably shocked at this news.

As co-incidence would have it, I had just finished reading an account of the mission that particular aircraft had flown, that resulted in it being at Bone.

It was on a mission from its base in England to Turin, Italy, and while on the bombing run it was struck by what was assumed to be friendly fire. The pilot, Arthur Aaron, was critically wounded, and the plane sustained considerable damage. As the damage to the plane would have prevented it climbing over the Alps and returning to England, it was decided to proceed to North Africa.

Arthur Aaron died soon after landing at Bone, and was awarded a posthumous VC.

**WHEN LAURIE MET BETTY – A True War-time Love Story** by Betty Crowley  
*(With assistance from our roving reporter, Jenny Higgs – daughter of 458'er Don Bitmead)*

My sister, Mary & I, grew up in a small fishing village on the Bay of Fundy in Nova Scotia. As Mary & I are bilingual, we were recruited by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (who were then in charge of Canada's security) when World War II was declared, to work as telephone censors in the port city of Halifax.

In our leisure time, we volunteered at the popular YMCA Club where meals, entertainment & dances were put on for the servicemen. It was at one of these dances that Mary met Laurie. She told me that she had met the 'Best Looking Australian Airman' & they were going on a date the next evening. In those days, at our young age, you didn't go to dances or the movies, you went to the drugstore & sat at the soda bar eating fabulous sundaes while you chatted. Mary brought him to our flat (which was in the same building as the drugstore) after their date, where I duly acknowledged the introduction to the 'good-looking' Australian airman & went back to reading my magazine.

The following day he turned up with a friend, Archie Wishart. The latter asked me out, & we attended a dance - I think at the Y Depot where the Aussies were stationed, awaiting embarkation. Laurie was there, & Archie said he wanted us to join him & the girl he was with, which we did. I wondered why he had asked, as he was being very quiet. We then all joined in for the Barn Dance & as I went past Laurie, he pulled me out of the line to wait until we could join it again. While we waited, he told me that he had a problem about meeting Mary first & then falling for her older sister. It really was not much of a problem, as she was only 16 & certainly not seriously smitten! Rather, I had the bigger problem of putting off Archie!

Within days of that dance we said "goodbye" as the Australian Blue Draft went off to embark for England. So, it was with utter disbelief & delight when I received his phone call saying they were back at Y Depot to await another ship. My mother came to Halifax to meet Laurie. He apparently met with her approval, as on her return home she commented to her friends that being young I would soon get over him – she replied that she might not!

After deducting travel time by ship from Australia & a week across Canada by train before he embarked ship in Halifax towards the end of July 1941 – we could not have known each other more than 10 or 12 days at the most. When saying our goodbyes, he asked if I would marry him, to which I answered he would have to come back & ask again. We did exchange photos, I still have his, but mine went missing in his kitbag overseas. We did keep up correspondence, but were aware that many were not being received. I was also writing to his younger sister in Australia.

In 1942, I returned home to work in the Shipyard, which was building minesweepers for the navy. I worked in the bookkeeping department till I was asked to transfer to Head Office in Montreal, as private secretary to the Company's Secretary. It was during my time in Montreal that I experienced a rather strong premonition that I was soon to see Laurie. He wrote to say that he very nearly did catch a plane from England to Montreal – the crew had arranged to pick him up at the end of the runway, but because of a sudden wind change had to take off from the opposite end – thus putting an end to his travel plans.

Back in Australia, Laurie took his discharge from the Airforce in September 1945. He then sent me a cable asking if I would come to Sydney & marry him – to which I replied "yes" – despite the fact that we had not seen each other for five years.

After all the necessary paperwork was finalized, I was notified that arrangements for my travel were completed & that I would be leaving home February 1946. Not so, two days before departure, I fell on ice & badly fractured my ankle. I recall that I shed one large tear – not because of the physical pain, but for that of the delayed departure.

The thought that I was to be 12,000 miles from my loved ones & friends was most intimidating & it was with both sadness & happiness that I left home on ANZAC Day & arrived in Sydney, still on crutches, May 21, 1946. Meeting up again, after so many years apart, was like a dream. However, I was sent into shock when I was to understand that I was probably the only fiancé on board the ship two days off married. Translated meant that we were to be married in two days time! Our previous plans were to have six weeks to get to know each other again. However fate played a hand once again & we did have six weeks before the trunk containing my trousseau turned up from Auckland, where it had been off-loaded & not returned to the hold of the S.S Monterey.

Our wedding took place at Sacred Heart Church, Randwick, on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1946, when I met most of Laurie's family for the first time. We have had nearly 64 wonderful years together, which seems to say that, despite distance & time, we were meant to meet & marry.

### **A NIGHT OUT TOO FAR FROM MALTA     by Keith Cousins**

BRADFIELD PARK, N.S.W., is familiar to many of us, being the Initial Training School and Embarkation Depot for RAAF aircrews. The 'E.D.' as the latter was known, was the gathering point for men who had qualified for their 'wings', or for some, before despatch overseas for further training. Here, many of us met up with those who had gained their 'wings' in other states, and some good-natured banter as to who had the best training, whether it be for pilot, observer, or wireless-airgunner, ensued. The banter was given the name of "shooting a line". This anecdote concerns the movement of one such "line shooter", an observer, who perhaps was a little more serious about the benefit of his training. Early in November, 1941, after a short stay of pre-embarkation leave, a group of airmen were 'bussed to a wharf on Sydney Harbour and thence to join RMS "Queen Elizabeth", riding at anchor off Cremorne Point. Visibly impressed by this grey behemoth, we were to become shipmates with several thousand AIF troops, and a sprinkling of RAN, and Nurses, who had embarked before us. The 'best trained observer', previously mentioned, was included.

The next morning, our 83,000 tons (at least) transport, pointing north at anchor, turned on its own length without the assistance of tugs, and churning up large amounts of the bottom of the harbour in the process, headed for the Pacific. We were in for a further surprise on clearing Sydney Heads to see cruising offshore, RMS "Queen Mary". Obviously, it did not pay to have both in port at the same time. Heading south, at a great rate of knots, it was evident we were not heading for Canada. A pause at Fremantle, after an uneventful passage of the Great Australian Bight, and more troops were embarked. The two great ships then steered northwest, line astern, so ending the conjecture as to whether our destination would be Cape Town or Durban.

The two 'Queens' would take turn about each day as to who would lead the convoy, and at night, the 'QM' when leading, was readily discernable by the size of its phosphorescent wake. Our escort, once out of range of shore-based aircraft, was taken up by a RAN cruiser, which we were to learn later was the ill-fated HMAS 'Sydney'. By now we were getting more familiar with our transport, and cabin mates, all sergeants. Our shipboard duties included 'fire watch', which required each one detailed to inspect a certain spot on the ship at regular intervals to ensure the designated soldier guard was at his 'station'. There being some two dozen or more such positions on this immense ship, not one of us could locate every single 'station' on his round. All of us had no difficulty in locating the 'station' at an entrance to the boiler rooms, as ship's boilermen when changing their 20 minute shifts through the entry door, would be preceded by a blast of hot air, as if from hell. It was not known how our previously mentioned expert navigator fared on his round, as we lost him temporarily in the numbers on board.

Our next port of call was to be Trincomalee, on the NE coast of Ceylon, of short duration, only to refuel. Approximately half way from the Australian coast in this part of the Indian Ocean, our escorts changed. HMAS 'Sydney' handed over to a similar class cruiser from the Royal Navy.

As 'Sydney' turned about and headed south east, being daylight, many of her crew lined the decks and gave us a big cheer, waving their round caps at the same time. It was a date in mid-November. We, and they, were not to know that all of them would be lost in the fatal encounter with the enemy raider 'Komoran' a few days later, on the 19<sup>th</sup>.

Leaving the coast of Ceylon behind in darkness, our convoy steered NW again, leaving no doubt to our guessing game as to our eventual destination – Egypt. Just before arriving at the entrance to the Red Sea, an epidemic of influenza beset the ship's occupants. It was the writer's first experience of this malaise, not to be forgotten. On leaving the cabin one morning for breakfast, and stepping into the hallway on 'A' deck, the ship appeared to lurch from side to side suddenly – most unusual for the 'QE' – and then the deck came up to hit one in the face. Waking up in the ship's hospital, together with scores of others, several days were spent while the 'QE' cruised about in the Red Sea, whilst the 'QM' took its turn in disembarking its large number of troops at Port Tewfiq, at the entrance to the Suez Canal. Our group later informed that this 'pleasure cruise' around the Red Sea was anything but, the climate being what it was.

A train soon arrived to transport the RAAF group for the next day and a half, skirting along the west side of the Canal, which gave us our first sight of the enemy. They were encamped on the eastern side of the Canal, behind barbed wire enclosures – the Italians in one camp and the Germans in the other. The Italians were peacefully engaged in making sand "castles", beautifully sculpted. The Germans, on the other hand, were busy shouting abuse at our trainload and waving fists in a most unfriendly manner. Our new destination was to be the village of Aboukir, on the shore of the Bay in which Nelson, in 1798, created havoc with the French fleet. Some 25 kms. east of Alexandria, it was the site of the ancient city of Canopus, with a reputation for luxury living. Nothing remained of it but a few scattered fragments of pottery. The RAF camp at Aboukir gave us a rude shock to our diet compared to that provided previously enjoyed on the "Queen Elizabeth". Breakfast, the first meal, consisted of a "hard-tack" biscuit dipped in diluted canned milk, then a hard-boiled egg with a raw white onion, rolling around on an enamel plate.

Arriving in early December, 1941, at RAF Aboukir, a lot was to happen in that month on the world stage which would affect all of us. The German advance into Russia had stalled, Japan had started a war against U.S.A at Pearl Harbour, invading the Philippines and S.E.Asia, sinking the Royal Navy's H.M.Ships Prince of Wales and Repulse in the process. Our days of idleness were to end, with postings of several pilots direct to squadrons, and the rest to the Middle East "Pool". It was during these days that we lost sight of our somewhat boastful observer, mentioned earlier. Some of our draft were posted to temporary ground duties at various RAF establishments, and those less fortunate for a few months in the MEP.

The programme entailed posting aircrews from the "Pool" to Kenya and Rhodesia for training, then on to squadrons. This plan was halted due to the urgent requirement for aircraft for the Russian front. Such aircraft were to be hastily taken from the operational training units in Kenya and Rhodesia, so leaving a lot of us suffering boredom from enforced inactivity. At this stage, many of us had not seen the inside of an aircraft for almost six months since leaving Australia, until with great relief, postings were made to Delivery Flights, Communications Flights, or Squadrons. Although the postings came in small numbers at a time, they had a pronounced beneficial effect on general morale. It was to one such squadron, that two of us, observers, on 26<sup>th</sup> March, 1942, were flown out of the M.E.Pool at Kasfareet, on the Canal, to 216 RAF Sqdn's base, some 20kms. NW of Cairo, in one of their aircraft, a Bristol "Bombay". At Khanka, 216 Sqdn's base, we were to be greeted on arrival by a bunch of grinning RAAF sergeant aircrews yelling, "where have you been"?! – in jest, of course. The Aussies on 216 Sqdn. were evenly spread among RAF, RCAF, and RNZAF types, even Americans who had joined the RCAF. One pilot had even been a grog "runner" between U.S.A. and Canada, during the prohibition days, so was a natural selection for night landing jobs. Another had applied to join the Luftwaffe as his "Old Man was a Hun, so that was the natural thing to do." He carried a letter from the Luftwaffe thanking him for his application, but had "all the pilots needed at the time". Good insurance in case he became a guest of the enemy! There was even a Russian engineer,

responsible for keeping the airfield in shape. Despite the sample of the League of Nations, there was no sign of our “line shooter”. In all fairness to him, it must be said that at the time, any of his statements had come with ‘tongue in cheek’. Perhaps he should have earned the nick-name as “The Joker”. Several Aussies on 216Sqn. would later be posted to 458 Sqn.

458 Sqn., RAAF, which had lost large numbers of its Wellingtons in an incident before takeoff on a bombing raid earlier in the year, were to re-form in September, 1942 at Shaluffa, on the Canal, the second start after leaving their original base in Yorkshire. They were to train in various sources, even a couple from our November ’41 draft from Bradfield Park Embarkation Depot, but no sign of our ‘Joker’. After training in bombing and torpedo dropping, 458 Sqn. joined the offensive once more against targets in the Mediterranean from their new home base, or from detachments in the Western Desert and soon, Malta.

Malta, the ‘unsinkable aircraft carrier’ proved a great asset for the Allies, with the ability for preventing supplies from reaching the enemy’s armies in North Africa. The use of radar, or “ASV”, (Anti Service Vessel), was of the utmost importance in the campaign, so that crews were forbidden to fly over enemy territory should they be shot down – (a directive which met with no opposition from crews!) and equipment falling into enemy hands. This, unfortunately, was to happen. One of 458’s Wellingtons, on anti-shipping patrol in the vicinity of Naples, possibly stayed out from home too long, or developed a fuel leak – we were not to know. The crew, returning to base, instead of entering the Sicilian Channel, keeping North Africa on their starboard wing and Sicily on their port, took the shorter way home, across Sicily, which was to be their undoing, as they were shot down, to become POW’s. The navigator of the crew, a recent posting to 458, was none other than our “Joker”, a new arrival to our Malta detachment.

The loss of 458’s Wellington proved a disaster for the anti-shipping campaign. Offensive patrols were maintained, but were handicapped severely by the “hash” soon appearing on our radar screens. It was so serious that Air Chief Marshal Sir Sholto Douglas, C.in.C of all the RAF in the Mediterranean theatre, flew in to satisfy himself what the trouble was. All squadrons’ crews not on active operations were summoned to his presence in the very large cave which housed H.Q.. There, in this amphitheatre, on stage with squadrons’ C.O’s, he came quickly to the point in seeking answers. His query as to “who is your best ASV operator”? was met with the response from our C.O., “Sgt. Lucas of 458 Sqn”. Sir Sholto demanded that he come on stage. Our “Kiwi’ operator uttered a loud “Oh xxxx!”, to the amusement of all, but then, on mounting the stage, gave a clear statement of what he could see, or not see, when operating the equipment. The fact that he mentioned his crew mates by their ‘nick-names’ did not upset the A/C/M in the slightest with his probing questions, possibly lending credence to his statements. Our distinguished visitor did not waste his time – nor ours – and was on his way. Having at times viewed the radar screen with our operator, wearing special goggles to perhaps minimize the “hash”, it could be understood why he was nominated ‘best operator’ by 458’s C.O., when, on one night, he was able to “home” our captain onto a lone lifeboat. As quickly as the ‘jamming’ problem occurred, almost as quickly counter measures were in place after the visit from Sir Sholto Douglas. Our anti-shipping squadrons were back in business, and so the war resumed.

## **FLIGHT REPORTS**

### **Canada Flight**

**by Bryan Quinlan**

On 4 June, we had a reunion of three of our six surviving 458ers when Tom Rowan visited Vancouver on a swing through the province, visiting various family members. Tom, Jack Reynolds and myself met for lunch, along with Tom's namesake nephew Tom Hampton. Naturally we chewed over old times and explored any common ground we could discover. By phone today, (21 July), Tom advised that he is about to set forth on another visit to the interior of BC, to attend a mini family reunion with his sister, some of her grandchildren and great grandchildren and other family members. Tom says he wants to get his visits in while he is still mobile, now into his 90s.

Tom Lindsay, also in that age bracket, relates a personal story from 458's time in Gibraltar when an Aussie mate invited him along for a sail in a home-made (or acquired) boat rigged with a seat sail. All went well until they ran into rough seas, and the boat capsized and dumped them into the water about one or two miles off-shore. As usual, the Aussie was a strong swimmer and set-off and made it to shore, however, Tom, with limited swimming ability, was soon in trouble in the rough sea and no means of life-support. He now admits that he became resigned to drowning, but it appeared that his time was not up as, remaining afloat by dog-paddling, he discovered he was being carried into shore by a strong on-shore current, eventually landing near a fishing village, east of the Gibraltar airfield. So, Tom lived to extend his existence now well into the nineties. Tom cannot remember the name of his Aussie companion and wonders if, still alive, he will recognize this adventure.

A call to Gladys Markland today revealed that Bert is doing as well as can be expected, in a care centre administering to various medical problems, and still makes some short visits home. Bert now has his own phone and I will be passing on our collective best wishes.

Similarly, a call to Dick Sladen's daughter, Jay, indicated that he is doing as well as can be expected in his extended care centre and she says he seems to be able to recollect certain names and events from the distant past and does respond favourably to social contact with his old friends. She will pass on our best wishes.

Joan and I, relative kids in our mid to late eighties, are experiencing a few new negatively-oriented medical problems but otherwise relatively little to complain about. My two worn-out knee joints have cancelled out golfing on a full-length course this year, but I am still able to manage an occasional game with family members at a much shorter venue. All but one of our five grandchildren have completed their university education, and are now out in the working world and doing very well.

### **Victoria Flight**

**by Roland Orchard**



It is with sadness that I report the passing of **Stan Cartledge** on the 14<sup>th</sup> July. Stan had been ill for some time. Stan was one of the original 458ers, joining the RAAF in May, 1940 and after being posted to 458 Squadron, Williamstown, sailed from Sydney in September 1941, crossing the Pacific, through the Panama Canal and on to Scotland via Nova Scotia. He made his way to Holme-on-Spalding-Moor, but soon set sail for North Africa. Stan remained with 458 Squadron for the duration of the war, and, after returning home, plied his trade as a fitter and turner then went on to become a teacher, where he ended up at Williamstown Technical School, teaching accountancy and maths before retiring. Stan's love of golf saw him on many a day at the Westgate Golf Course. His cache of trophies accredited him to his golfing prowess - a hole in one trophy being one of his coveted. Our sympathies go out to Christine, Ian and their families. Thanks to Karen Ganley (Stan's granddaughter) who kept communications open during Stan's last few weeks. Jeremy and I represented 458 Squadron at the funeral. The Victoria Flight 458 Squadron Banner was displayed during the service.

458 Squadron had a great turn out at the 2010 Melbourne Anzac Day March (*see photos on following page*). Many from Regional areas who couldn't make it to Melbourne made their way to their local March. Those who marched in Melbourne were: Karen Ganley (Great job with the poster of the Wellington Karen!) Helen Cartledge, Fred Ayres, Howard & Sally Bertram, Brian & Nigel Paroissien, Jane Foster, Dave Prideaux & son Caleb, Peter & Sue Jackson and their daughter Michelle, the Orchard boys Christopher, Jeremy and Roland. Eric Foster saw us off and took photos of us along the route. Well done team! Thanks also to the 4 cadets from 402 Squadron AAFC who held the banner: LCDT Willingham, LCDT Page, CDT Normington and CDT Willingham. After the March, we retired to the Melbourne Bowling Club in Windsor for a bite to eat and refreshments. Upon arrival we were extremely pleased to find Harry & Nell Ashworth (thanks to Tony Van de Ven, Harry and Nell's son in law, for

driving them up from Rosebud) and Roy & Barbara Pearce waiting for us. We had a wonderful afternoon chatting about the successful March, and reflecting on days gone by. We held the Vic. Flight AGM and as a result of elections Jeremy, Fred and I retained our positions. As a result of Colin Dean stepping down from the role of Senior Vice President, Chris Orchard was nominated and unanimously voted in as SVP. Thanks Colin Dean for your support in the past and congratulations to Chris. Many items were discussed during the meeting, a couple of key points being, the progression of the Web-Site project and re focus on support for Veterans in the form of contacts, luncheons and the like. It was a wonderful day, and I implore those Veterans who really want to attend the 2011 March or any other function, that there are always plenty of helpers ready and willing to support with transport and care.



As a personal reflection, I firmly believe that if my father, Gordon Orchard (*see photo at left*) was still with us, as the years progressed, he would have come back to the fold of 458 of which he spoke fondly. In my recollection, it wasn't 70 Squadron (where he did his 1<sup>st</sup> tour of ops.) he spoke of, or the months of ferrying flights in the ME or the time he spent with 82 Wing on Morotai. When he did talk about the war, it was always about **458 Squadron**. Personally, I think that speaks volumes.

I know I speak on behalf of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation that we all feel great pride in our 458 Veterans and widows, and feel very privileged at each opportunity we get to sit and listen to them. To all of those Veterans and widows, there are many genuine, interested people who are willing to sit, chat and listen.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of July a number of members attended a luncheon at the Clayton RSL. The venue was suggested by Roy Pearce, who had included 458 Squadron on the Honour Board. Thanks Roy. We set up a memorabilia table and displayed many photos, books and a couple of laptop photo displays as well. Attendees were Peter Hedgecock, Roy Pearce, Tony & June Van de Ven, Helen and Megan Voss, Anne & Paul Stack, Marjorie Bilney, Nell & Harry Ashworth, Fred Ayers, Howard & Sally Bertram, Eric & Jane Foster and Rebecca Foster, Adrian & Cecilia Temple, Kim & Carol Temple, Jeremy and Roland Orchard. It was a great afternoon and everyone enjoyed themselves. Peter Hedgecock has generously offered his services to digitize any 458 Sqdn related photos, no charge. Anyone in Victoria who wishes to take up Peter's most kind offer please contact myself on 0397270106 or Jeremy on 0398013891 and we will get you in contact with Peter. I would encourage each and every one of us who have photos to get them digitized onto a disc or computer. Future unforeseen circumstance may see those photos lost forever. Digitizing them will ensure that they are stored safely and preserved for future generations, and depending on the camera equipment, the zoom functions may enhance faces that could not otherwise be made out on a small print. An extension to all of this, of course, is the implementation of a web site (more on this at a later date) which would archive all of these digitized photos for all of us to have easy access. Jane and Eric Foster reported on meeting up with Bill Flentje and spent some time with him.

Apologies for the luncheon were received from Barbara Pearce (unwell), Chris Orchard (unwell) & family, Ken Fleming, Margaret Ellis, Beryl Orchard (unwell), Laurie & Jean Kew (Jean recovering from hip surgery), Enid Dowling.

For those not feeling the best, we hope for a speedy recovery. To Jack Ramsay -we know you've been through a rough patch lately and we want to let you know we are all thinking of you. All the best to you. Also to Ted Love, who has moved to an Aged Care home, our thoughts are with you as well. Best wishes to Everyone, from Victoria Flight.



PLT.OFF. Harry Ashworth



Anzac Day - Melbourne



## NSW flight

by Eric Munkman

At a recent Committee Meeting I resigned as President, but still wish to stay on the Committee. Keith Cousins was elected as President, and Rob Wilkinson was elected as Vice President. Congratulations to both these members.

I welcome Garry and Lureen Kirkman to our Association. They made themselves known at last Anzac Day. Lureen is the daughter of "Red Jack" Baker who passed away in 1991.

*An extract of interest, from Bomber Command N.S.W.*

"90th Birthday Celebration FLT/OFF KEITH S CAMPBELL D.F.C."

Achieving the meritorious milestone of age 90, by any Veteran, calls for a real celebration. But not many of our golfing members have, after smiting the little white ball for over 60 years, celebrated by achieving their first 'hole in one'. That is what one of our three members, the 1940s volunteer, Brisbane's Keith Campbell of 458 & 6 Sqns, did on the 147 metres 5th at Indooroopilly Golf Course in March. Congratulations Keith; you are the envy of all our golfing members, not only for a 'hole in one' but that, at 90 years of age, you can still send the golf ball 147 metres in less than three shots." Keith is a member of Queensland Flight. Congratulations from your 458 members on both counts.

A luncheon has been arranged at TAFE CATERING COLLEGE, RYDE, on 16th August at 12 noon. All welcome - please contact me, on 9972-0641, if you wish to attend.

**.....and from Keith Cousins, a summary of Anzac Day in Sydney.....**

ANZAC DAY commenced with the forecast of a few light showers, 17 degrees - typical Sydney autumn weather. Fortunately for the March, the showers held off, and we moved off according to plan, which included John Gibbins trundling Harry Baines in his wheelchair from Circular Quay to our starting point near David Jones' in Elizabeth St., quite an uphill jaunt. There were 15 or so starters, and Harry joined five other 458 Veterans, plus descendants of a few others, several with their "prime mover" sons to push the wheelchairs. Our 458 marchers were led by our President, Keith Cousins, ably assisted by Committee officers David



Longhurst and Rob Wilkinson, as banner bearers, Eric Munkman (and grandson Adam), Don Bitmead (and son Peter), Harry Baines (with pusher Ron Munkman), Wal Archbold (and son-in-law Mark) and Laurie Crowley. Other marchers included Allan Smith, James & Simon Wardle, and David Wood. Having moved off on time, as usual, we marched one block along King St. to Pitt St. and there to remain standing for almost half an hour, whilst other groups in front of us were fed into the stream - and what a stream, it seems the march becomes

longer each year and the supporting crowd larger. Our venue for lunch this year was The Castlereagh Boutique Hotel, centrally located in Pitt St., which suited us admirably, a room to ourselves, close to the end of our March, and convenient for the 28 who turned up for a tasty lunch. As well as the marchers and 'pushers', the 28 included John Gibbins; Rosemary Wardle (daughter of 458'er Len Best) and her husband Jim; Dorothy Munkman and family; Nita Baines; Bev Bitmead, daughters Jenny and Lesley, and families. At the end of lunch, and as per custom, our Annual General Meeting was held. On leaving, we were "piped out" by a pipe band entertaining the group who were lunching downstairs - quite a successful day.

*(Photo above of Rob Wilkinson and Eric Munkman, on Anzac Day)*

*Apologies to any marchers whose names have been missed out. Please let me know.....Ed.*

## South Australia Flight by Pat Cribb

The former President of S.A. Flight, **Bert Ravenscroft**, passed away peacefully on June 21, after moving to a nursing home for only six days. Bert was always very involved in Squadron affairs, attending many interstate reunions over the years. Amongst many at his funeral were 458 pilots Col Hutchinson, John Ringwood and Reg Priest.

Sadly, news has just been received that **Jim Perry** passed away on July 27, in Port Augusta. Jim was an LAC, and a member of ground crew. Our condolences to daughter Kath, & family.

The formation of the Anzac Day March was different this year, with several RAAF Squadrons grouped together, behind a line of their banners. Rather hard to pick out the few men marching in 458 section. A good muster of 25 met for lunch at the Kensington Hotel afterwards.

We met again for lunch on July 1, as usual at the “Kensy”; 18 friends enjoyed the meal and chatting, with old wartime photos being handed around by next-of-kin. Very hard to recognise loved ones from the faded, old snaps. Apologies from Keith Grimshaw and Kevin Tait, not well enough to attend. Our best wishes to all.

## West Australia Flight by Ted Jewell

I’m sorry to say that Anzac Day for W.A. Flight is no more, as we have no members able to march, or even attend the reunion in Perth. I want to mention the laying of a wreath at the War Memorial in Kings Park, by Bill Clues’ daughter, Genefer.

At last, I was able to have a BBQ at my home in Mandurah, after I cancelled an earlier one due to several people being ill. We all had a great day, in good weather, and 12 people attended, most driving down from Perth – Bill Kelliher and son Bob, Joan Clues, Vera Etherton & grand-daughter Jo, Margaret Gannaway, Nobby Nobbs and Esme, Ted Jewell and friend Veronica, Bob and Dot Bresland. We are managing to have a few get-togethers during the year. Our next luncheon was at Shirley Hicks home on the first Sunday in July. Everyone brought a plate of lovely food, and drinks, for a great meal and a wonderful day.

I tried to contact Jim Palmer, who is in a nursing home in Koginup, but could not get through. I have often wondered if Stan Smith is still around – he was in transport – and I would like to hear from him. *Does anyone have news of Stan ?.....Ed.*

We have arranged a Sunday lunch in October at Bob and Dot Bresland’s home in Wembly. It’s really great to come together on these reunions, as most live so far apart. Bill Kelliher and myself are the only two Squadron members (male) who are able to attend, and we have agreed that as long as possible we will continue with our luncheon get-togethers.

The year is flying through so fast, we will soon have to start thinking about Xmas celebrations. Best wishes to all 458 Squadron Members.

## UK Flight by Keith Wilkinson



The UK flight has welcomed 458 pilot Jim Whitem, who has been visiting Britain on a world tour. Jim, who’s 88, and from Port Macquarie in New South Wales, joined other war veterans on a Military History Tours trip to various places in the UK where Australian squadrons were based. This included a stop at the 458 Memorial near the former Holme-on-Spalding-Moor airfield in Yorkshire. Here poppies were laid during a small service of remembrance.

*(photo: Leon Armstrong and Jim Whitem)*

I travelled with 458 pilot Leon Armstrong, aged 90, to meet Jim for lunch and beers at the Britannia Hotel in Coventry - a city devastated in 1940 by 515 German bombers in Operation Moonlight Sonata.

Jim was there to see many of his Whitem relatives in a family reunion. His family were originally from the Coventry area - one was a former mayor of the city, and some were christened in the cathedral, famously destroyed in the bombing.

Jim, who joined 458 at Alghero, hadn't seen Leon (a former flight commander) for many years - the last time was when they attended a squadron re-union at Stratford-on-Avon, during which the late Norman Duke was given the honour of life membership.

Norman - who flew with the legendary Bruce McKenzie, as his navigator, was very much involved with the restoration of the Wellington "R for Robert" at the Brooklands Museum in Weybridge. This aircraft was recovered from the bottom of Loch Ness, where it crashed in 1940 with the loss of the rear gunner.

On his tour of the UK, Jim visited Brooklands and was allowed to climb on board the Wimpy, reuniting man and machine. Coincidentally, Jim also visited the RAF Cosford Museum near Wolverhampton - which has just received the only other preserved Vickers Wellington. This is to undergo major restoration after being transported by low-loader lorry along the motorways from the Royal Air Force Museum at Hendon in London.

Other places on the busy Whitem itinerary included Wren's St Clement Danes RAF Church on The Strand - where the impressive 458 crest is now on display following years of campaigning by squadron members for the badge - and its Invenimus Et Delemus motto - to be officially recognised.

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Earlier in the year, I too re-visited "R for Robert" at Brooklands. I went with a former RAF bomb aimer/navigator, John Hooper, who took part in many bombing raids on Nazi Germany. Some years ago, I had spent a whole day with Norman Duke inside this aircraft - and was amazed at his incredible knowledge of virtually every single part of the aeroplane, and how it all worked. You'd expect him to have some understanding of navigation, but Norman could speak for hours and hours about Wallis's geodetic principles and the like.

John and I got special permission to enter the aircraft - which cannot be accessed by the general public, for reasons of health and safety, and because of the high risk of damage to a priceless, fragile, historic exhibit.

John hadn't been in a Wellington for 67 years and said he was surprised at how small and claustrophobic it felt. With his guidance, I managed to get myself into the bomb aimer's position - not exactly the most comfortable thing to do, even when the aircraft was motionless inside the hangar.

I thought to myself - what on earth must this have been like with flak guns firing up at you and with the Luftwaffe on the tail, or whilst attacking a u-boat which had decided to fight back?

As the son of a 458-er, I have maximum respect for you guys who did this!

Once again, the UK Flight is planning a reunion this year. It's expected to be in October at the Falcon Hotel in Shakespeare's Stratford-on-Avon. Sadly, numbers are dwindling - but anyone with a 458 connection will be made welcome. The aim is to carry on this annual tradition in the name of the squadron. As ever, former 458 pilot Jack Christianson is co-ordinating things.



## **458 SQUADRON - REUNION**

### **HOSTED BY NSW FLIGHT**

**CHECKERS RESORT & CONFERENCE CENTRE  
TERREY HILLS, SYDNEY, NSW  
OCTOBER 25 - 29, 2010**

#### **DRAFT PROGRAMME**

MON OCT 25           Arrival at Reunion Venue by 2.00pm  
Check in at:  
CHECKERS RESORT & CONFERENCE CENTRE  
331 Mona Vale Road  
Terrey Hills

In the evening - welcome buffet dinner and drinks

TUE OCT 26           )     Half-day trips, in and around Sydney's northern beaches, to be  
                                  )     organised on 2 or 3 days, with lunches included, together with  
WED OCT 27           )     plenty of time for you to relax with your 458 friends and catch  
                                  )     up with everyone's news.  
                                  )     On WED night, we will once again hold a formal  
THU OCT 28           )     Reunion Dinner, at Checkers. Visitors are welcome.  
  
FRI OCT 29            Depart for home

(see over for further details and registration slip)

Whilst this Reunion is again being organised in NSW, we would warmly welcome, and strongly encourage, attendance from interstate and overseas mates. Also, maybe there are some interested sons and daughters of 458 Members who might like to come along – you certainly are very welcome.

If required, we will arrange for transport from Sydney Airport or railway stations, to the Reunion venue, for those arriving by air or rail.

Approximate cost (based on twin share accommodation at the hotel) will be similar to last year, at approx. \$590 per person. This includes 4 nights accommodation; daily hot, buffet breakfasts; all dinners, lunches and day trips. Cost for single accommodation would be approx. an additional \$230.

All rooms, for veterans, will have separate shower recesses.

Wheelchairs (with pushers !) will also be available for those who need mobility assistance.

A deposit of \$250 per head is due at the time of registration, and can be made by:

- cheque (made out to Group Travel Management)
- Bank transfer (please contact Rob Wilkinson for bank account details)
- credit card (with a 1% merchant fee surcharge)

**Please register NOW**, by completing the slip below, tear it off and mail to:

Rob Wilkinson  
458 Squadron Reunion  
Group Travel Management  
36 Finch Avenue, East Ryde N.S.W. 2113  
phone: (02) 9888-3625 or 0418-969241  
e-mail: [robwilk@bigpond.net.au](mailto:robwilk@bigpond.net.au)

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**458 REUNION – SYDNEY – OCTOBER 2010 - REGISTRATION SLIP**

**Names:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact details - address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**- phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **e-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_

\* I am a single delegate and would like to share a twin room **Yes / No** (Please circle your choice)

Name of person I would like to share with: \_\_\_\_\_

**Special dietary requirements:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What are your mobility limitations, if any:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_ \$250 (per person) cheque for deposit attached herewith **Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

or

\_\_ **I prefer to pay deposit by credit card** **Card type:** Mastercard    Visa    Bankcard  
(please circle)

**Card number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Card expiry date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Name on card:** \_\_\_\_\_