

# 1945 CALENDAR

- **January** at Foggia, Italy: repatriation of 'old hands' of the Squadron began to occur on a large scale, many had served for over 3 years. Replacements from Australia were arriving in substantial numbers, such as flight mechanics, armourers, fitters and ancillary tradesmen
- **January 3rd:** night ops with 4 Wellingtons and 6 Beaufighters (from 272 Squadron). Bombed a German 2000-ton tanker etc
- **January 21st:** orders received, an advance contingent to move to RAF Station, Gibraltar (the Navy requested 458 to hunt U-boats in the Bay of Biscay)
- **February 13th:** the main party arrived at Gibraltar 'The Rock' by sea. Without delay there was considerable 'training' flying and operations alongside Spanish territorial waters in search of U-boats; such as patrols between Cape St. Vincent and Lisbon. Ops included the important job of escorting Allied convoys in addition to targeting U-boats with depth charges. Wellingtons were fitted with the Leigh Light searchlight to effectively hunt U-boats
- To counter the stresses of war, recreational activity included sightseeing in the nearby Spanish towns of La Linea (including a bullring) & Algeciras, swimming and canoeing at the Gibraltar beach, stage performances such as 'French Without Tears' by lead role F/O Len Thiele (who was to become an actor of note after the war: Leonard Teale), a literary & debating society, athletic tournaments, soccer, rugby, hockey, tennis, rifle shooting and billiards
- **Anzac Day, 25th of April:** the Squadron marched in flights to King's Chapel. The Commanding Officer (CO), W/Cdr Mackay read the Act of Commemoration: *"Hallowed in Christ be the memory of brave men and women who in this and past wars died for the freedom of the world. They shall yet stand before the Throne, an exceeding great array, and in the last muster there shall be found these our own well beloved....."*
- **VE-Day: May 8th,** the great Orator Prime Minister Winston Churchill announced by radio the consummation of victory - Germany had surrendered unconditionally. Celebrations lasted two days. A Victory March was held which including aircraft flying in formation overhead. Post-war operations continued (including escorting a surrendering U-boat U541)
- **June 9th,** disbandment: the Squadron paraded in full strength behind its CO. Air Vice-Marshal Stevens addressed them: *"Gentlemen, I have come here to perform an undertaking which for once gives me no pleasure whatsoever. I come to take the final salute from you officers and men who form one of the best units I have had the pleasure to have under my command....."* After many more words, he gave the last command to be received, *"458 Squadron, to the right, dismiss!"* Close to 1,750 personnel served with the Squadron throughout its 4 years of operation (July 1941 to June 1945). Forever remembered; Honour Roll, our fallen: [www.458raafsquadron.org/honour-roll](http://www.458raafsquadron.org/honour-roll)
- **VP-Day: August 15th:** Having served their tour of operations in the European theatre of World War II, a good number of 458ers returned to Australia to answer the call in the Pacific theatre. They were determined to serve until the war was won. Men such as F/Lt Ken Cupper and S/Ldr Gordon Orchard



Gibraltar The Rock: anti U-boat operations



CO: Wing Commander R. Mackay leading Anzac Day march



458er F/Lt Ken Cupper (front row right) B24 in Pacific theatre operations

PEACE  
declared  
15/8/45

