



## 458 Squadron Association

### Victoria Flight

c/o Jeremy Orchard  
Secretary/Treasurer  
8/345 Moreland Road,  
Coburg, Vic 3058

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## THE MINUTES OF OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE JARDIN TAN CAFÉ ON APRIL 25, 2024

On a crisp and rain free autumn day, 12 of us marched to the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. Earlier some of us attended the 5.30 am Dawn Service. One of the many highlights on this day was thinking about our “new found” Co-President Bert and our recent meeting (23/3) with him: 99 years young Warrant Officer Bert (John) O'Leary who resides in Frankston South. He served with the Squadron at Gibraltar. Another was having Rob Forgan join us from Mt. Gambier. It was also fitting that 460 SQN was marching behind us as they were formed out of 458 SQN. Within the hour after completing our march, Victoria Flight President, Roland Orchard opened the meeting and called for a minute's silence in remembrance of recently passed Veterans, widows & members of 458 Squadron. He then recited the ode. Lest we Forget.

The meeting was called to discuss the coming year's focus and activities and to conduct the 2024 AGM. The meeting place was the same as 2023, just across the road (Birdwood Ave) from the Shrine. In attendance were Chris & Heather Wurr, their daughter Karen & husband Clinton and their son, Rob Forgan, Neil Flentje, Roland Orchard and daughter Emily, Chris Orchard, Jeremy Orchard, friend John Marino. Apologies were received from Howard & Sally Bertram, Jane & Eric Foster, Matthew Wuillemin, Gill & Joe Somers.

Those who marched were: Rob Forgan, John Boydell, Chris Wurr and grandson, Neil Flentje, Roland Orchard and daughter Emily, Chris Orchard, Jeremy Orchard, our sisters Pene and Edwina, John Marino. This year we had 5 Air Force Cadets displaying the picture of the Wellington and carrying our Banner; Four from 414 Squadron in Richmond and one from 415 Squadron in Melbourne. Following beside us (with the onlookers) as we marched were Heather Wurr and daughter Karen and husband Clinton.

### Office Bearers 2024/2025

Roland advised that all positions were vacant and called for nominations:

President: Roland Orchard nominated by Chris W, seconded by Emily. Carried. Re-elected  
Senior VP: Christopher Orchard nominated by John M, seconded by Chris W. Carried. Re-elected  
Junior VP: Neil Flentje nominated by Emily, seconded Chris W. Carried. Re-elected  
Secretary/Treasurer: Jeremy Orchard nominated by Neil, seconded by Rob W. Carried. Re-elected  
Historian: Peter Hedgcock accepted to continue on in the office (post meeting)



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### **Victoria Flight President's Report.**

Welcome and thanks to everyone here and those who joined us in the march today. I've received apologies from Howard & Sally Bertram, Matt Wullemin. First and foremost, please join me in a minute silence for those who gave their lives in service to this great country of ours.

#### **The ode**

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old; Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them.

#### **Lest We Forget.**

First order of business is to dissolve the current Victoria Flight 458 Squadron Association Committee and call for nominations for the following –  
Victoria Flight President - Vice President- Junior Vice President- Secretary- Treasurer.

Since our last AGM in 2023, we were saddened to hear of the passing of our Veteran widows, Mary Wilkinson, Joyce Humbles and my beloved mother, Beryl Orchard. Our sympathies go out to each of the families.

In January of this year, we were thrilled to find out that we have a surviving 458 Squadron Veteran, Bert O'Leary, currently living in Vasey RSL Aged Care in Frankston. I hope everyone read about Bert in the current newsletter. Jeremy and I recently visited Bert, his sons Mark and Paul and grandson John and Paul's partner Viviann. Bert is in good health and is certainly mentally active at the tender age of 99. Bert joins our other two Veterans as Co-President of the 458 Squadron Association. It was a privilege to meet Bert and wish him all the health and happiness he deserves.

During the last 12 months Jeremy, Chris, John and I attempted to get a 2025 Squadron reunion off the ground. The proposal was to be centred around the International Air Show at Avalon. Unfortunately, due the many restrictive terms and conditions placed on us by the proposed accommodation venue and numerous other issues, we decided to cancel. A sad decision but on reflection, one that was probably for the better. Hopefully we can organise a future reunion to be held in Victoria.

As I did at the last AGM, a special mention to our three 458 Squadron Newsletter correspondents Adam & Cate Wagstaffe from Vancouver, Canada and Brett Taylor



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from Brisbane, Queensland. Both of their recent reports were well researched and brilliantly written. The prowess they display and the hours they put into these articles reflect the dedication and respect these people have for our Veterans. Well done Adam, Cate and Brett!

Another special thank you goes to our Vice President Chris Orchard for the time and effort he puts into the Eric Jewell Award on a yearly basis. The Eric Jewell Award came about due to the very generous donation by Eric's family in memory of the hero pilot of 458 that he truly was. I implore each and everyone of you to visit the Eric Jewell Award page on our website to remind you of the time and effort Chris has put into this most worthy of projects thanks to the generosity of Eric's family.

I would like to pass on my thanks to our generous donors over the past year. These donations are extremely helpful in funding our website and newsletter running costs. Our Treasurer will have a full report on this and other financial matters pertaining to the 458 Squadron Association in the last 12 months.

Last but by no means least, thanks to the support from our Victoria Flight Secretary/Treasurer Jeremy Orchard, VPs Chris Orchard and Neil Flentje and 458 Historian Peter Hedgcock for their tireless devotion and ongoing works in keeping things afloat, project works and memorabilia sales which help with the financial running of things here in Victoria. Thank you on behalf of all 458 Squadron members.

#### Senior Vice-President's Report:

*"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old"*

Another year passes and "The Ode" rings true even more for those of us past our Spring and Summer, and into the Autumn of our lives.

Another ANZAC Day for our young people (children, young adults) and "The Ode" gathers more meaning for them too.

Thank you to the Executive Committee for all the work in the past year. Thank you to everyone for your support, in all the ways that you can, including just being here today.

As always, we honour our loved ones who served to help win the freedoms we enjoy today – freedom from despots, dictators and ideas made into law that will eventually come to nothing. We think of all from 458 that never came back.

To that point, this year, let us honour:

**SGT Athol Louis OPAS, Service Number – 400354, Date of birth - 08 Nov 1920, Place of birth – Caulfield, Victoria. Place of enlistment – Melbourne.** (please read in Senior VP Report)



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### Eric J JEWELL Award Applications:

1. An application from 327 AAFC Squadron, located in Gungahlin, ACT (13 km north of Canberra city), with 114 Cadets and 14 Adult Staff.



Their submission is to support a 17 year old cadet who is experiencing significant hardship (no way of getting to and from the weekly parade night, etc).

2. An application from 604 AAFC Squadron, located in Hamstead Barracks, Greenacres, SA (10km north of Adelaide), with over 120 cadets. The Squadron actively supports the SA/NT Branch of the National Malaya-Borneo Veterans Association Australia with a catafalque party at the annual Malaya-Borneo Veterans' Day Service.



Their submission is to purchase 4 glass-fronted display cabinets to house the Squadron's library books (historical & aviation, etc) and display their trophies and memorabilia. They have commented that they would take great pride in naming the library: **'The Flying Officer Eric Jewell Library'**.

### Junior Vice-President's Report:

\* Made contact with Denise, who is the niece of 458er Vic Johnstone and asked her to write up Vic's serviceman's story for the website

\* Glad to participate and do research during the year. Including Palestine and also Wellington Serials . As well as on an Air Force related topic Harvey Bawden of 150 SQN just passed away at 99 (this history mentioned in the book 'Fly' by Michael Veitch).

*Note from Secretary: I commend Neil for his excellent research work on Wellington serials for a near future book about 458 SQN to be published by Christopher Ward (an author/historian who has spent 30 years writing RAF Bomber Command WWII squadron histories). Thank you Junior VP!*



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#### 2024 Treasurer's Report: Current Financial Statement

458 Squadron Association Victoria Flight bank account statements (CBA) are emailed to the Treasurer quarterly, including internet banking. On our website we also have a paypal account to receive donations (also by electronic funds transfer to the bank account) and to receive payments for our memorabilia items.

Balance on 25/4/23 = \$4654.51 +\$4159.57 paypal - \$1030.40 EJ Jewell fund\* = \$7783.68  
Balance on 25/4/24 = \$396.51 +\$1241.85 paypal + \$5000 TD + \$401.80 in TD\* = \$7040.16  
Nett = -\$743.52

Consisting of:

- Income:
  - \$370 membership dues
  - \$439.85 from five kind Donations
  - \$75.95 for Iconic Memorabilia photos sold
  - \$117 for 458 Badges sold
  - \$39.18 for DVD sets sold
  - \$72 for Pins sold
  - \$361.98 Interest earned from term deposit
  - \$170 received for international memorabilia order to Kenya
  - + \$14.70 accounting adjustment/currency exchange rate variation (in paypal acct)
  - Total = \$1660.66
- Expenses:
  - \$867.94 for postage & paper/cartridges costs for Newsletters (inc. Reunion mailout)
  - \$58.50 Pic printing at Officeworks (Iconic prints)
  - \$150 for reimbursed postage for international memorabilia order to Kenya
  - \$1222.75 for Website Hosting for the year (includes new Newsletter email service to prevent spam blockers – this service is an additional \$67 per year)
  - \$104.99 anti-virus software for laptop
  - Total = \$2404.18
- Income – Expenses = \$1660.66 – \$2404.18 = -\$743.52

Summary: This result reflects the Potent web increase from \$600 /yr to \$1223 /yr – inflation and other factors have caught up with us. We have had a good run with this hosting cost up until now. Keep in mind we have an unlimited sized/paged website.



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**\*Extraordinary Item:** Supporting future generations of youth in the Australian Air Force Cadets (AAFC)

Income: \$8k & \$5k generous donations from the family of Eric Jewell (in 2018 & 2020)  
Expense: \$1200 for the inaugural 2018 Eric J. Jewell Award  
Expense: \$1449.60 for the 2019 Eric J. Jewell Award  
Expense: note that due to covid, no Eric J. Jewell Award was given in 2020  
Expense: \$3000 for the 2021 Eric J. Jewell Award  
Expense: \$1320 for the 2022 Eric J. Jewell Award  
Expense: \$1432.20 for the 2023 Eric J. Jewell Award – see webpage

Current 2024 Balance: \$4598.20. This figure plus \$401.80 of Squadron funds = \$5k total has been put into a Term Deposit to earn interest (TD = \$5k, 3.45% p.a. at CBA; matures 19/7/24). The Squadron Term Deposit: \$5k, 3.50% p.a. matures 14/6/24. Funds will be available to use from either maturing TD for the 2024 EJ Jewell Award.

### Summary:

+ **Well done** to VP Chris for overseeing the 2023 EJ Jewell Award program once again.

+ **Well done** to “Hedgy” Peter Hedgcock, our Historian who runs the Memorabilia Shop. This is our tenth full year for the Shop. See webpage:

<http://458raafsquadron.org/memorabilia-shop.html>

+ Apart from the increase in Potentweb fees (an additional \$623/yr), overall it was a fair year, essentially break even. I am very grateful for the kind donations of the 458 family. Your generosity makes possible the smooth running of the Association.

+ **Proposal\*\* for AGM to vote on:** increase annual fees from \$50 to \$75\*\* per family to cover the increased website hosting costs. *Thanks to those who have already paid their dues for the coming year. Association membership is now due for the coming year, \$75\*\* per family; Veterans & wives no charge.* **Tabled, discussed, voted on & passed during the meeting**

### Secretary's Report:

Another eventful year in the life of 458 Squadron Association. Some highlights:

- **Congratulations** to our Flight President Roland who, as the Newsletter Editor and Publisher has once again produced stellar results, Editions #274, #275 and #276!
- Our website [www.458raafsquadron.org](http://www.458raafsquadron.org) just had its **12<sup>th</sup>** birthday!
- Chris and I visited the Narromine Aviation Museum (see article next Newsletter). In 1940 Dad, Gordon Orchard was there at No. 5 EFTS course 7 (of 46 total). His class size was 56 aviators.....in their ensuing service to country, 28 paid the ultimate



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sacrifice. Lest we Forget. Four of Dad's class mates went on to serve with 458 SQN: F/O Jack Gordon Bond 400690 KIA (later on with 22 SQN), S/Ldr Geoffrey Francis Jackson 400414 KIA, F/LT Graeme Frank Coombes 402788, W/Commander Alan Wharton 404556 (note: Alan is shown in the Museum – *which I shared at the meeting*)

### Focus and Plans for 2024/2025:

As concluded from previous meetings, the emphasis continues on the following:

- Focus on continued support of our Veterans & Spouses and descendants here and around the country and overseas through our Flight correspondents
- Seek feedback from all Veterans, descendants and members regarding the website and continue to build the website, particularly the individual Serviceman' stories that will be shown via the Honour Roll page, the Serviceman's stories page and the Nominal Roll page.
- Round-table discussions included from (i) Karen: her son Hutchison gave a class presentation yesterday about his great-Granddad 458er Lisle Wurr. The talk was well received and the class teacher was impressed. (ii) John Marino: Nhill airshow at RAAF airbase that he recently attended (Horsham is near by for hotels) may be a good Reunion idea. It also has great publicity and is very well run (iii) Rob Forgan talked about an Aviation Museum/Air Show idea in Mt. Gambier and two long time local Veterans associated with the idea, Charlie Miller and Jack Hopgood
- We discussed at some length the benefits e.g. to attract youth/next generations, of having a social media platform like facebook. Emily volunteered to investigate and explore the idea of opening a 458 Squadron facebook page. *Note from the Secretary: it's amazing that as of this writing we now have an official 458 Squadron RAAF Facebook page. Well done Emily!*
- Continue to look at ways to involve youth/next generations at a greater level, and building upon our current program described next:
- The Committee to finalize reviewing the two AAFC applications: 604 SQN (Greenacres, South Australia) and 327 SQN (Gungahlin, near Canberra) received for the 2024 Eric J. Jewell Award. To be completed in May/June.
- A final short note: Secretary to investigate banner pole decorative top caps not latching on properly

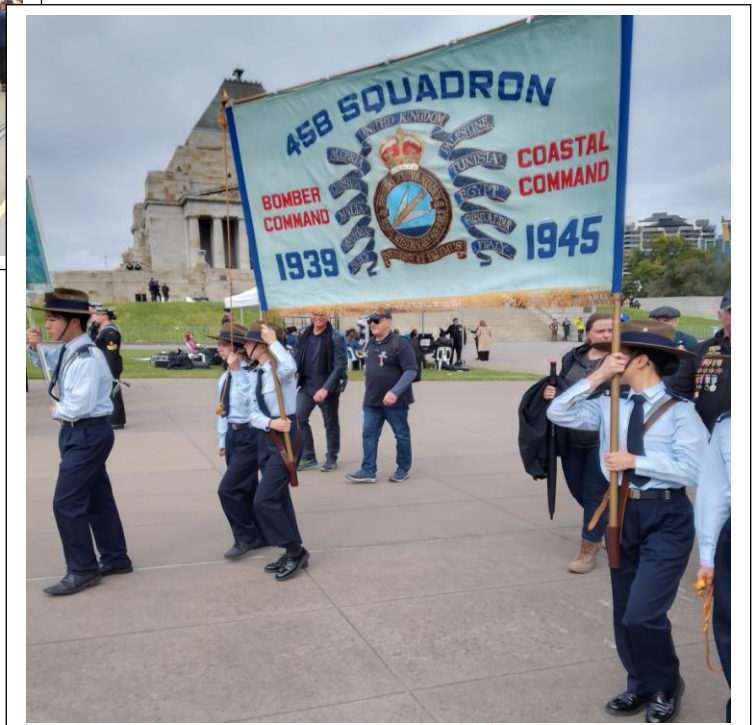
### Closure of the Meeting

The President closed the meeting at 12.55 pm, wishing all Veterans, spouses, descendants and members to stay safe and well for the coming year.

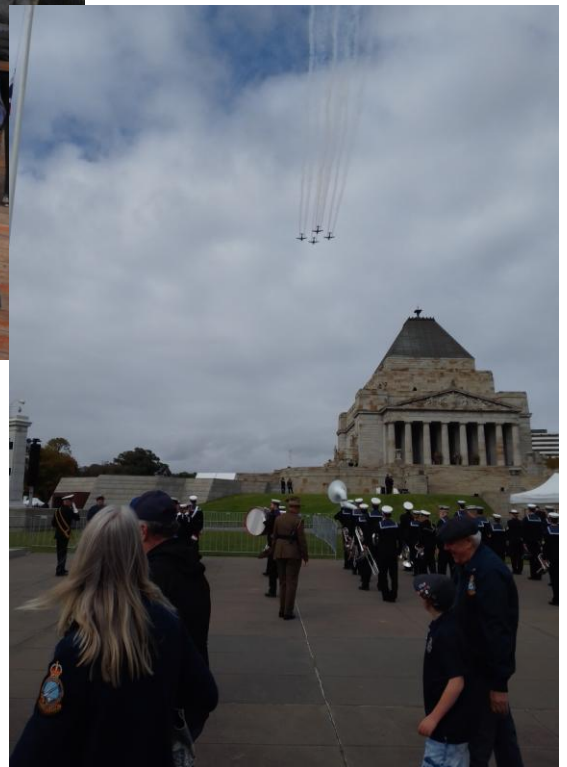


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**Photos of the March**







Above: finished the march; and then at the AGM;  
Right: RAAF Roulettes flyover just as we are about to finish the march