



458 Squadron Association

Victoria Flight

c/o Jeremy Orchard

Secretary/Treasurer

86 Pasley Street,

Sunbury, Vic 3429

THE MINUTES OF OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD AT THE TERRACE CAFÉ ON APRIL 25, 2025

On a near humid 23 degree C day (with rain in the forecast during the afternoon), sixteen 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 the very significant anniversaries this year: 110 years since the Gallipoli landings in World War 1 and 80 years since the end of World War 2. 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 2025 AGM. The meeting place was the Terrace cafe by the lake in the botanical gardens (about 10 minutes walk from our meeting point in 2024, it being just across Birdwood Ave from The Shrine). In attendance were John Boydell, Neil Flentje, Edwina Bell, Roland Orchard, Chris Orchard, Jeremy Orchard, friend John Marino and son Thomas. Apologies were received from Chris Wurr & family, Howard & Sally Bertram, Jane Foster, Rob Forgan.

Those who marched were: Matthew Wullemin and sister Jade, John Boydell, Mark O'Leary, grandkids Hamish, Darcy, Patrick, son John O'Leary, daughter Monique O'Leary, Neil Flentje, Edwina Bell, Roland Orchard, Chris Orchard, Jeremy Orchard, John Marino and son Thomas. This year we had 5 Air Force Cadets displaying the picture of the Wellington and carrying our Banner; Four from 402 Squadron in Watsonia and one from 416 Squadron in Moonee Ponds. Following beside us (with the onlookers) as we marched and meeting us at the end of the march were family members of the O'Leary clan.

Office Bearers 2025/2026

All positions remain as is. Office holders were happy to do so (unavoidably there was no quorum in place to proceed with any new nominations this year).

President: Roland Orchard continues in office

Senior VP: Christopher Orchard continues in office

Junior VP: Neil Flentje continues in office

Secretary/Treasurer: Jeremy Orchard continues in office

Historian: Peter Hedgcock accepted to continue in 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 Chris Wurr & family and Rob Forgan. Peter Hedgcock will be attending 2025 ANZAC Day at Bayswater RSL. 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 (*Secretary's note: no quorum, therefore no new nominations; Office Bearers remain as is*)

Since our last AGM in 2024, we were saddened to hear of the passing of our Veteran widow, Peggy Hull. Our sympathies go out to the Hull family. Peggy always voiced her appreciation of the current team carrying on the traditions of her husband Bill's and his fellow 458 Veterans in publishing the newsletter. Peggy would either post me a hand written letter or email me to express her thanks. Peggy was 100 years and 10 months old. Rest in Peace Peggy.

In February of this year, some of us attended Vasey RSL Aged Care in Frankston to help celebrate the 100th birthday of 458 Squadron Veteran and Co President, Bert O'Leary together with his family and friends. The RAAF attended and presented Bert with a certificate of appreciation of his service during WWII. It was great to hear Bert give his 8-minute speech of appreciation. Jeremy had previously organised and been interviewed by ABC radio to pay tribute to Bert. Bert had also been interviewed and it all came together for a very informative program. Chris wrote an excellent article in the current Newsletter.

I hope everyone is aware of the 458 Squadron Reunion 2025 in Malta. Stephen Bruce and Rob Wilkinson from NSW Flight have organised this great event and to date there are 44 members attending on 13th to 17th October of this year. 458 Squadron served in Malta on a number of occasions during the war. It's not too late to join us in



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Malta to help commemorate 80 years since the cessation of WWII. Let me know if you are interested.

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. I would also implore every one to consider payment of dues for 2025/26 which are due today. These dues are extremely helpful in paying for the aforementioned ongoing costs in running the website and publication of the 458 Newsletter.

As I always do at every AGM, a special mention to our three 458 Squadron Newsletter correspondents Adam & Cate Wagstaffe from Vancouver, Canada and Brett Taylor from Brisbane, Queensland. Both of their recent reports were well researched and brilliantly written. The expertise 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 every one 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.

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.



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Senior Vice-President's Report:

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

"The Ode" rings ever true, and perhaps even more this year where we will mark 80 years since the end of World War 2.

Hello and welcome to you all. 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.

We honour our loved ones who served all those years ago to win the freedoms we enjoy today. We think of all from 458 that never came back. It is truly an honour to pay tribute to one of these men. For this year, the life story starts like this:

Nick Murphy from Mandurah, WA, ordered three 458 Lapel Pins in July last year. Nick is married to the 3rd daughter of **"Joe" (and Phyl) Watson**. He ordered the Pins for Joe's three daughters.

Now, an interjecting thought, if only Tim Watson, of Essendon "Bombers" Football club fame (3 premierships) had read Joe Watson's epic survival story, maybe Tim and his wife, Susie, would have named their son Joe, instead of Jobe. But I'm getting a head of the story.

WO BRYAN ANDREW ("JOE") WATSON, Service Number – 406705, WOAG,
Date of birth - 30 Dec 1917, Place of birth – Perth, Western Australia. Place of
enlistment – Perth, WA. (please read in the Senior VP Report)

Eric J JEWELL Award Applications:

1. An application from 723 AAFC Squadron, located in Joondalup (30 km north of Perth city), with over 100 Cadets and Instructors.



Their submission is to support two cadets, Julyen and Christian, both in financial hardship situations, to cover the annual membership fee.



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2. An application from 224 AAFC Squadron, located at Wirraway Drive, Rothwell, QLD (40km north of Brisbane), on behalf of 2 Wing Band. The role of 2 Wing Band is to provide musical support to the Wing and Squadrons, either in a Concert or Ceremonial format. The submission is for updating their Drum Kit which has been with the Band for the past 8 years.



Junior Vice-President's Report:

- * Neil has bought a scanner for research work
- * And he has purchased a copy of We Find & Destroy. It turns out to be 458er Peter Cochrane's copy, he had all RAF crew. It had inserted a photo and news article inside the book. Neil has also ordered another copy of WF& D latest edition. They are getting scarcer.
- * Glad to participate and do research during the year. Including Wellington Serials .

Note from Secretary: well done to Neil for this very useful research work . Thank you Junior VP!



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2025 Treasurer's Report: Current Financial Statement

458 SQN 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) and to receive payments for our memorabilia items. In 2024 both TD's matured and a Goalsaver (GS*) account was opened up.

Balance on 25/4/24 = \$396.51 + \$1241.85 paypal + \$5000 TD + \$401.80 in TD* = \$7040.16

Balance on 25/4/25 = \$2459.05 + \$1386.62 paypal + \$6019.61 GS* - \$3298.20 EJ Fund = \$6567.08

Nett = -\$473.08

Consisting of:

- Income:

- \$680 membership dues
- \$629.40 from nine kind Donations
- \$33.26 for 458 Badges sold
- \$19.18 for DVD sets sold
- \$62.36 for Pins sold
- \$315.63 Interest earned from term deposits & Goalsaver account earning 4.65%
- + \$22.57 accounting adjustment/currency exchange rate variation (in paypal acct)
- Total = \$1762.40

- Expenses:

- \$667.33 for postage & paper/cartridges costs for Newsletters
- \$66 Copy of We Find & Destroy for Co-President Bert's 100th Birthday
- \$79.15 AWM research looking for 3 lost Newsletters
- \$1273 for Website Hosting for the year (includes new Newsletter email service to prevent spam blockers – this service is an additional \$67 per year)
- \$150 anti-virus software for laptop
- Total = \$2235.48

- Income – Expenses = \$1762.40 – \$2235.48 = -\$473.08

Summary: +\$270 improvement over last year, but the result reflects the Potent web increase from \$600 /yr to \$1273 /yr : inflation and other factors have caught up with us. 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

Expense: \$1300 for the 2024 Eric J. Jewell Award – see webpage

Current 2025 Balance: \$3298.20. This figure plus \$2721.41 of Squadron funds = \$6019.61 total has been put into a Goal Saver account to earn interest of 4.65% p.a. at CBA. Funds will be available to use from this account for the 2025 EJ Jewell Award.

Summary:

+ **Well done** to VP Chris for overseeing the 2024 EJ Jewell Award program once again.

+ **Well done** to “Hedgy” Peter Hedgcock, our Historian who runs the Memorabilia Shop.

This is our 11th full year for the Shop. See webpage: <http://458raafsquadron.org/memorabilia-shop.html>

+ This is the second year we are experiencing (financially) the increase in Potentweb fees (an additional \$673/yr), overall it was a fair year. I am very grateful for the kind donations of the 458 family. Your generosity makes possible the smooth running of the Association.

+ Consider for 2026 AGM: increase annual fees from \$75 to \$100 per family to cover the increased website hosting costs. *Thanks to those who have already paid their dues for 2025. Association membership is now due for the coming year, \$75 per family; Veterans & wives no charge.*

Secretary's Report:

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

- **Congratulations** to our Co-President for reaching his 100th Birthday on 14/1/25! Well done to all who made his celebration memorable, including VP Chris for organizing the RAAF to attend. We presented Bert with a copy of 'We Find and Destroy'. Also **Congratulations** to our Co-Presidents in the UK, Charles and Bill, both of whom turned 103! recently



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- **Congratulations** to our Flight President Roland who, as the Newsletter Editor and Publisher has once again produced tremendous results, Editions #277, #278 and #279!
 - Our website www.458raafsquadron.org just had its 13th birthday!
 - Another 25 Serviceman's Stories were added to our website. This is an on-going project
 - The serviceman's Record of one of our heroes from the UK, F/Sgt Bernard Eric Adams (1063543) was requested and received. He was KIA 5/8/1943, shown on our Honour Roll www.458raafsquadron.org/honour-roll
 - I was very happy to participate in an ABC radio Ballarat 107.9 FM interview and coordinate the ABC radio presenter and reporter, Gavin McGrath to interview Bert and the resulting on-line story about Bert which had over 62,000 views!!
 - A spare copy of We Find & Destroy was purchased (copies to buy are becoming rare now)
 - I wrote and submitted a grant application to Upgrade/Renovate our website (after 13 years in operation). The result of the application is expected in June. This project, if given the go ahead, will be coordinated with Potent Web, our current website host/designer. Our Co-President, Bert provided a Letter of Support for the grant application.
 - Breaking News: our 3 missing Newsletters #23, #24 from 1955 and #32 from 1957 have been found!! They were contained in a donated collection at the Australian War Memorial. This collection <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1036485> has the first 218 Newsletters from #1 in 1949 through to #218 in 2004. Thanks to the 458 family (likely) for making the donation to the AWM

Focus and Plans for 2025/2026:

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's stories that will be shown via the Honour Roll page, the Serviceman's stories page and the Nominal Roll page.
- Continue to build/add to the 458 RAAF Squadron Facebook page. This social media platform will attract youth/next generations. Continue to look at ways to involve youth/next generations at a greater level.



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- Round-table discussions included from (i) John Boydell: add ADF Wellington serials webpage link to our website (ii) John Marino: investigate if we can establish ties with the Australian War Memorial, for example to add our active website link etc We had previously made contact with Memorial staff when the 458 Official Squadron Albums were donated to the AWM collection. Secondly, review cost of Norton anti-virus; could potentially save up to \$100 per year (iii) Thomas Marino: volunteered to conduct geo-mapping of lost Wellingtons. *Secretary: Thank you Thomas!* (iv) Chris reported from Mark O'Leary that our Co-President Bert is very happy with the 458 Squadron focus
 - The Committee set to finalize reviewing the Australian Air Force Cadet applications for the 2025 Eric J. Jewell Award. To be completed by end June.

Closure of the Meeting

With possibly our longest AGM yet, the President closed the meeting at 1.20 pm, wishing all Veterans, spouses, descendants and members to stay safe and well for the coming year. The weather held out and we returned to our vehicles keeping the Banner and Wellington poster rain free.



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Photos of the March





Above: finished the march; and then at the AGM;
Right: RAAF Roulettes flyover The Shrine during our march