

## **INFORMATION FOR RADIO AND TELEVISION**

### **COMMENTATORS**

**TITLE OF ASSOCIATION: 458 SQUADRON (RAAF) ASSOCIATION**

**Website Address: [www.458raafsquadron.org](http://www.458raafsquadron.org)**

### **BRIEF INFORMATION ABOUT UNIT:**

#### **458 SQUADRON RAAF**

No. 458 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, was formed at Williamstown, NSW on the 10<sup>th</sup> July, 1941. From its base in Britain at Holme-on-Spalding Moor (in Yorkshire), the Squadron commenced operations over German occupied Europe on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October, 1941. It was equipped with Vickers Wellington medium bombers and was part of 1 Group Bomber Command.

The twin-engine Wellington's were the first bombers to be used in the war offensive that began in September 1939, with 8 Wellington squadrons in operation. They were the mainstay of Bomber Command for over two years up until 1942, with 21 squadrons in operation at that time. After that, four-engine heavy bombers entered service.

In January 1942, No. 458 Squadron was relocated to Middle East Command. Based at El Shallufa in Egypt, the Squadron was trained in techniques employed to attack ships and submarines with both bombs and torpedoes. Henceforth No. 458's primary role was to seek out and attack enemy shipping in the Mediterranean Sea. As seen on its banner, its aircraft went on to operate from many different airfield locations in Egypt, Palestine, Malta, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Sardinia, Corsica, Sicily, Italy and Gibraltar. The Squadron also supported the Allied invasion of southern France in August 1944. No. 458 operated until the 9<sup>th</sup> of June 1945 (the end of the war in Europe had occurred on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945).

The Squadron's banner also shows its crest with the flying torpedo (indicating its primary role of anti-shipping operations in the Mediterranean theatre of war) and the corresponding motto: *Invenimus Et Delemus: We Find and Destroy*. Close to 1750 personnel from Australia, New Zealand, Britain, Canada, and South Africa proudly served under No. 458

### **Summary.**

- 458 SQUADRON WAS FORMED AT WILLIAMTOWN (NSW) IN JULY 1941
- FLYING WELLINGTON AIRCRAFT THE SQUADRON WERE INITIALLY ENGAGED IN BOMBING OPERATIONS OVER EUROPE FROM HOLME-ON-SPALDING MOOR (U.K.)
- IN JANUARY 1942 THE SQUADRON RELOCATED TO THE MEDITERRANEAN. OPERATING FROM A VARIETY OF BASES IN NORTH AFRICA, MALTA, SARDINIA, ITALY AND GIBRALTA THEY WERE INVOLVED IN ANTI-SHIPPING AND ANTI-SUBMARINE STRIKES USING BOTH BOMBS AND TORPEDOS AS WELL AS CONVENTIONAL BOMBING TASKS, THE MOST NOTABLE BEING IN SUPPORT OF THE ALLIED INVASION OF SOUTHERN FRANCE.
- THE SQUADRON WAS DISBANDED ON 9 JUNE 1945

458 SQUADRON FINALLY HAD THEIR SQUADRON CREST UNVEILED AND COMMEMORATED AT RAF'S CENTRAL CHURCH AT St CLEMENT DANES, LONDON, UK, ON 28<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2009, 64 YEARS AFTER THE SQUADRON WAS DISBANDED.

