



## JOURNAL OF THE 458 Squadron Council

### Year 64 No 246 March 2013



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*\* Post communications for Squadron Secretary to David Longhurst (address above),  
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 \*\* Have you notified Roland Orchard 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.*

**ANYTHING THAT YOU WISH TO APPEAR IN THIS JOURNAL MUST BE  
 MAILED OR EMAILED TO ROLAND ORCHARD (address above)**  
**Contributions and reports for the next Newsletter are due to the Editor Roland  
 Orchard by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2013. Please feel free to mail or email in your stories, articles  
 or enquires to Roland. All are welcome.**

## VALE:-

Frank Baggott .....see UK Flight Report

### **Message from Our Squadron President Keith Cousins.**

Greetings,

I sent you (Ed) a rather lengthy E-mail last night, but unfortunately got my fingers caught in the cracks when I tried to save it. The gist of it was – could you provide Margaret Watts' address –any of 'phone ,E-mail, or postal, as I think I can fill a few of the gaps in her parent' history, e.g. I was best man at her parents' marriage ceremony at INVERGORDON, Scotland, about August, 1943. (ed see Marg's & her sister Kathy's emails in the 'emails' section of the Journal)

This leads to the chance of me completing an anecdote for a newsletter of the saga of Marks and Cousins' hitch-hiking from Malta to the U.K. via Cairo, having completed our operational tours. Precise dates are hazy as my log book is in the hands of the RAAF Association,



Jim Whitem, Eric Munkman and President  
Keith Cousins Feb Council Meeting.

investigating my claim of nil operational leave after first tour, and half an airman's leave (2 days) for the 2nd. tour on 43 Sqdn. on the technicality that I had not completed the required 6 months, which I dispute, having been placed in hospital immediately on arrival in Darwin, January 1945 for the first two weeks until my ankles subsided. Over 500 operational hours were completed during the next 6 months, the swelling ankles problem being overcome by sitting on the bombsight case, which in turn overcame the problem of raw buttocks from sitting on the plastic seat at the

navigators' station. Watch this space for further developments!

Health wise- I could use a bit more of it. My next medical appointment is with a specialist on 17th April, which proves either my G.P.'s faith in my longevity, and/or the business of the specialist. Socially, I have to report my second grand-daughter, Emily, has commenced her second degree training as a medico at St. Hilda's College, at Melbourne Uni, specialising in Sports Medicine, and loving it. Her first course has been physiotherapy, and I am looking forward to her brief visit over Easter, as I can provide her with a genuine wreck of a back on which to practice.

Best regards, and don't expect too much from me too soon.

**Keith.**

### **FLIGHT REPORTS:**

#### **New South Wales Flight report by David Longhurst.**

In November 2012 458's Laurie Crowley, his wife Betty and several family members were flown to the Solomon Islands as guests of honour at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Solomon Airways. Apart from the Airbus A320-211 now used for international flights, the largest aircraft used for internal flights by Solair is a Dash 8 (DHC-8-102). This aircraft is named "Megapode" the name Laurie gave to his fledgling airline 50years ago.

(What is a Megapode I hear you ask?) Megapode is the generic name given to birds whose offspring live independently from the time they hatch. In the Solomon Islands these birds use the thermally heated soil near volcanic vents to incubate their eggs. An Australian Megapode is the Brush Turkey, their eggs being laid in a mound of rotting mulch which generates the heat necessary to incubate the egg.)

There is little doubt surviving independently was a vital requirement for an airline, born in such a remote location as the Solomon Islands!

**The following is a partial extract from Solomon Airlines In-Flight Magazine.** The full article can be accessed via: <http://www.flysolomons.com>

*Solomon Airlines Limited history dates back to 1962 when Mr Laurie Crowley founded a small charter company called Megapode Airways. A change of both ownership and name to Solomon Island Airways (although better known by the acronym SOLAIR) occurred when Macair of Papua New Guinea purchased the airline in 1968, becoming the smallest International Airline in the world serving Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. In 1975, Macair and SOLAIR were taken over by TALAIR and by 1976 the airline was operating 9 aircraft on its domestic services. The Solomon Islands Government bought 49 percent of the Airline's shares in 1979 and with it the right to buy the remaining 51 percent at the end of the following 5 years.*

*On the 23 December 2008 the Government of the day approved a comprehensive restructure and recovery plan for Solomon Airlines be adopted. Progress over the past 2 years indicates the airline is*

NSW Flt. Report Continued.

well on track with the recovery process with the Board and Management foreseeing an IOSA accredited Airline that meets the highest standards of safety and exhibits potential to attract genuine private enterprise investment. With a total employee strength of 179 based in Honiara - Solomon Islands, Solomon Airlines serves a Domestic network of 24 destinations, an International network servicing Brisbane – AUSTRALIA, Nadi – FIJI, Port Vila – VANUATU, Port Moresby – PNG and other major interline connections throughout the world.

P.S. Laurie hasn't been too well of late so on behalf of all 458ers I take this opportunity to wish him all the best for a swift recovery.

**West Australia Flight report by Nick Bertram & Ted Jewell.**

**Anzac Day – From Vicki Ham (Bill & Joan Clues Daughter)**

Unfortunately Nick nothing happens as a group on Anzac anymore. The only thing is my sister Jenny lays a wreath for 458 Sqn at the Kings Park Dawn Service (I go to accompany her) but apart from that – nothing. Jenny always used to accompany Dad when he laid the wreath at Kings Park then he would march and then they all (with wives) went to Miss Maud's for lunch but since they disbanded and nobody marched it all stopped.

**VIDEOS & CASSETTES** - At the October WA 458 BBQ Joan Clues mentioned she had a few VHS Videos and Cassette tapes at home. Joan read the request in the August 2012 newsletter.

On the 12th January 2013 Jess and I took a drive to Joan Clues home in Merriwa to pick them up, Joan lives at the RAAF Retirement Village I was able to convert the Cassettes myself but the VHS Tapes were converted professionally, the VHS Tapes were converted to a DVD and a separate digital file suitable for uploading to YouTube. I then created a YouTube account for the 458 Squadron so the videos can be view by anyone at any time. Amongst the items Joan loaned me were the following:

**VHS TAPES**

- 1 - 458 Squadron All-States Reunion form Victoria 1989
- 2 - 458 Dinners (1st = 1994 Dinner 2nd = 1993 Dinner at the Freeway Hotel)
- 3 - Fred McKay at Bill Clues place 458 Sqdn afternoon tea 1995

**CASSETTE TAPES**

- 1 – The 3 Padres Message to 458 Reunion Southport QLD 1970
- 2 – McKenzie's Speech at 179 Kooyong Rd
- 3 – Padre Bob Davies, Padre Fred McKay HOSM 1989

BILL CLUES 458 Squadron WA Flight Photo Album. (See attached)

**TED STORY** -Ted Jewell has written a story about when he first joined 458 Squadron in England.

**OTHER** -I would like to keep the request for any historic 458 items running in the newsletter. (VHS Videos/Pictures/Cassettes/Newsletters, etc) Does anyone know what flight Arthur Budd was and if we are in contact with his family? **(Can anyone help Nick??? ed)**

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA BBQ 458** - Our luncheon was held on Sunday the 24th of March at Ted Jewell's Place in Mandurah. In attendance was Bill & Bob Kelliher, Joan Clues, Esme Nobbs, Bob & Dot Bresland & myself. Most of us travelling from Perth were late due to the freeway being closed for a cycling event all the way from Perth to Mandurah, so alternate route had to be taken which added on an extra hr or so. Ted had organised a large plate of fresh crab which was a great way to kick off lunch. The next WA Luncheon will be held a Bob & Dot Breslands in City Beach on Sunday the 7th of July. **Regards Nick**

**MY FIRST DAY IN THE 458 SQUADRON by TED JEWELL**

Joined Air Force 24/09/1940. My number: 17740. Posted to 458 Squadron 07/08/1941 in Australia. I arrived in England early October 1941 and was sent to a transit camp at Bournemouth. After a few days I was reposted to the 107 Squadron R.A.F but after several weeks myself and several others were told we were being posted to the 57 Squadron R.A.F at Cambridge. It was an operational unit flying Wellington Bombers. We were there until Xmas 1941 when we were then told we were posted to the 458 Squadron at Holme on Spalding Moor. We had had railway tickets from Cambridge rail station to York; we arrived in York on Friday afternoon. We were told to ring the air force base for transport, but we decide to stay in York for the weekend and ring up on Monday morning after a wild weekend, a lot of that time spent at Betty's Bar! We contacted the base on Monday for transport, arriving at Holme on Spalding Moor, reporting to W.O Vale ("Black Panther" as we learnt later). He demanded why we were two days late and we said that we wanted to do some sight-seeing and meet the people. After threatening us with all kinds of things as we were 2 days A.W.A.L we thought we would be doing guard duties for ever! He then told us to find our billets and dump our gear. W.O Vale must have taken pity on us for we never heard any more about it, so we joined the 458 Squadron at Holme on Spalding Moor. **Ted Jewell**

## **Victoria Flight report by Roland Orchard**

Avalon Air Show 2013. Melbourne Australia

On Saturday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March Jeremy and I attended the Avalon Air show 2013. This year's theme was 'The Power of Flight' showcasing the USAF's latest joint strike fighter the F22 Raptor. I must say, for a 'blow torch' (to use \*Bob Brown's description of a jet engine) the Raptor was quite impressive and



seemed to defy all the laws of flight. We were privileged to be the first two into the Gold Pass section and received



rousing greetings from staff. (It was all very amusing) Jeremy had made a couple of 458 Squadron T Shirts for this



occasion and there were a few comments from the crowd about them.

It was a brilliant day. My favourite aircraft were the Boston, Catalina, Kitty Hawk, Boomerang, Spitfire and DC3s. It was great to see a Meteor and F86 Sabre flying as well. My father in law, Eric Downs was an engine fitter with 20 Squadron RAF and served in post war Germany. He worked on Meteors and Sabres as well as a variety of other aircraft of the era. The weather was perfect and as usual it was an excellent day.



\*Bob Brown is a member of the Tocumwal Historic Society and prominent member of THAM - Tocumwal Historic Aerodrome Museum <http://www.tham.org.au/>. He helps in the preservation of the Tocumwal airfield, built in 1942 and named McIntyre Airfield by the United States Army Air Services Southwest Pacific Area. After the battle of Coral Sea in 1942 the USAAF moved to Qld and the RAAF took over.

I would like to pass on a big thanks for the parcel I received from Bryan Quinlan, our 458 Canadian Correspondent. This parcel is a wealth of information about Lieutenant Colonel Bruce McKenzie and F/Lt. Peter Eastcott DFC. F/Lt. Eastcott was one of Lt.Col.'s Navigators. If any of the McKenzie or Eastcott family read this or if anyone knows where the families could be contacted, please email me, Roland Orchard on [editor@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:editor@458raafsquadron.org) I would dearly like to speak to them about adding their stories to the Servicemen's Stories page on our 458 Website.

### **Melbourne ANZAC Day March 2013**

Anzac Day is quickly approaching and no doubt our minds are set on attending and supporting any Veterans who wish to attend. The following details are taken from the official RSL **Victoria** ANZAC Day 2013 website Assembly area for **Melbourne**.

[http://www.rslvic.com.au/custompage/index.cfm?fuseaction=display\\_main&CategoryID=17064&OrgID=195](http://www.rslvic.com.au/custompage/index.cfm?fuseaction=display_main&CategoryID=17064&OrgID=195)

**RAAF Europe & Middle East** \_ 458 Squadron form up 1025hrs (10:25am) at Flinders Street east of Swanston Street, Federation Square side. (Look out for the 458 Banner) Commence March at 1058hrs (10:58am) 458 Squadron will follow 455 Squadron. 460 Squadron is behind us.

As I do each year, my plea goes to our Victorian Veterans who would like to attend the Melbourne March, please come along. We always have a terrific day at the March itself and afterwards at the Melbourne Bowling Club, 138 Union Street, Windsor. Of course, if you don't feel you can March then by all means come along to the Bowling Club. It will be booked from 1230hrs until we finish. Hope to see everyone there. We all send out our best to Bill and Betty Flentje who are both unwell at the moment. Best wishes to Messrs Ramsay, Jewell, Rabone, Primrose, Anderson and our Victorian 458 Widows.

### **Queensland Flight Report:**

*Anyone from QLD interested in submitting a report would be more than welcome.*

*Please contact Roland Orchard. [editor@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:editor@458raafsquadron.org)*

### **South Australia Flight report by Rick Michell**

The Airport Memorial Service that is held on the Sunday before ANZAC day will be held at the Torrens Parade Ground in the city on April 21<sup>st</sup> 2013, as the Adelaide Airport Authority has resumed the area once occupied by the Airport Memorial Plaques. The service on the 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2013 will commence 10.30hrs. The veterans of SA 458 Squadron have advised that they are not able enough to march this ANZAC day. We will meet for a reunion lunch at the Kensington Hotel Regent Street Kensington at Noon for 12.30pm.

We have a young guy by the name of Joel who is with University SA and has been allocated to archive the SA 458 Squadron records.



## New Zealand Flight report by Kevin George

**30<sup>th</sup> January, 2013**

The Newsletter of last November has an interesting account of Jim Whitem's "latest cruise around the Pacific Rim" The cruise included a call in New Zealand before crossing the Tasman going Westwards. After leaving Auckland a stop in the Bay of Islands was planned. I planned to meet Jim in the Bay of Islands, however, I was advised the previous evening that a storm was about to make the Tasman crossing an uncomfortable and slow business so the decision had been made to delete the stop in the Bay of Islands.

It will soon be 29 years since we had two busloads of 458 Squadron Association members unloaded outside our main street entrance. That was reunion number 23 and Archie Fell and I had already met our guests at Auckland Airport. We had our conference that evening in a hotel in Auckland. Originally our guests were to be here on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March (my birthday) however, the itinerary was changed and they came through our front gate on the 25<sup>th</sup> March; they had already been up to Cape Reinga lighthouse, our most Northerly point. The tour of N.Z carried on going southward and in the course it ended in Christchurch.

Later in 1984 we sold this home to Don and Doreen Gillard. (Same name as your Prime Minister, now in office) We moved to our holiday home at Opuia in the Bay of Islands. However, Doreen was unhappy so far north of Auckland and the property was advertised for sale. We bought it back 6 months, exactly after selling it.

Don had made major changes. He sealed off the double garage and turned it into a flat for his son. The boatshed then became the double garage. Don had not finished the job but we came back with new enthusiasm. The house now felt much bigger.

Before we built this house we lived in another further up the street and in 1969 we made an arrangement with my old Navigator, Ted Adams that we would exchange homes (and cars) for a year or so.

We sailed from Auckland on the "Australis" going eastwards through the Panama Canal and with 4 stops in North & Central America & finishing up at Herbert and Marjorie's home in Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk. After the weather warmed we hired a motorised caravan and spent 6 weeks touring through France, Spain, Italy, Austria, Germany and the Low Countries. A great experience for all of us. The returned Journey, on the Australis, was still eastwards calling at Freemantle, Melbourne and Sydney where we met some of our Australian cousins.

The Australis was owned by a Greek company, "Chandris Lines", but was built in America about the time that World War 2 started. She was about 38,000 tons and an excellent ship to travel on. The Greek crew were very good to deal with and the food was excellent. (Lots of olives.) Our children's ages ranged from 8 years to 16 years with the two boys in between. It appears that we planted a travel bug with all of our children. But New Zealanders generally are enthusiastic travellers and many are now moving to Australia.

My old friend, Jack Pryde, who was a member of the 458 Squadron Association, died some months ago at the age of 98 and a half years. I am now the sole survivor of the New Zealanders who served with 458 and will be 90 on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March (D.V) The Georges came from Cornwall (in SW England) and came to South Australia about the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In due course they moved to the South Coast of New South Wales and made their home at Pambula about 10 miles north of Eden. This is where my father and the older brothers who brought him to New Zealand were born.

Jack Pryde and I thoroughly enjoyed the final reunion in Canberra in 2005 and have not been outside of New Zealand since.

I noted the Editor comment in the November Newsletter "hope all is well with Kevin. No report received. All the best from us all. ed"

I am often told that I do not look my age. Naturally that pleases me. I have to be grateful to my ancestors: - The Georges in Australia and the Ellis's in New Zealand. Tom Ellis, my mother's farther was born in Ireland but was not ancestrally Irish. He came here as a boy of 16 on his own and married into a Scottish family. The Ellises in County Cork were Protestants in a Catholic community. When in England in 1970 I went over to Ireland and met my mother's first cousin, Bella Ellis. She took me to the farm and home where my grandfather grew up. I was very favourably impressed. (The home was two storied with stone walls.)

Yours with Kind Regards and best wishes for 2013.

**Kevin G**

### **United Kingdom Flight report by Keith Wilkinson**

There's been a mixed reaction in the UK to the news that veterans who served in Bomber Command are to receive a clasp in recognition of their bravery. In Parliament, the Prime Minister David Cameron welcomed this recommendation in a review of campaign medals by Sir John Holmes. Mr Cameron said: "On Bomber Command, Sir John concluded they have been treated inconsistently with those who served Fighter Command. He therefore recommended – and I also agree – that the heroic aircrews of Bomber Command should be awarded a Bomber Command clasp." Although 458 was a Coastal Command squadron, it started life in Bomber Command. And among surviving 458 veterans who were in Bomber Command at Holme on Spalding Moor is Charles Humbles, who celebrated his 91<sup>st</sup> birthday in February, just two days after the proposal for the clasp was announced. Mr Humbles – and other 458-ers in Britain – recently welcomed the erection of a magnificent Bomber Command memorial at Hyde Park in London (as reported in the last Newsletter). The lack of recognition given to bomber crews has been a sore point ever since the end of the Second World War.

Mr Humbles told me: "I think Churchill let the boys down. But that's water under the bridge now. They should have awarded a medal a long time ago. It's just too late in the day now. Most of my colleagues are long gone." I also asked our UK president Leon Armstrong – also in his 90s – whether he thought they should have issued a medal 60 odd years ago. "Of course they should!" He added: "I do have an Atlantic Star, and I wear it proudly." Veterans who were in the Arctic Convoys campaign are to receive a medal. This has led to some people in Britain questioning the issue of a clasp. The creator of one rejected e-petition to the Government wrote: "Come on Mr Cameron. Don't insult the veterans of Bomber Command with a clasp." The clasp will be attached to the 1939-45 star.

Defence Minister Mark Francois said: "All those who served in our country in Bomber Command and on the Arctic convoys deserve nothing but the utmost respect and admiration from us."

There are numerous comments from people in the Defence Management Journal. And while there is much praise for the recognition, there is a common theme among the commentators: "This is 70 years too late..." "About time these brave men were honoured"..."Long overdue!"

Regretfully, the UK flight has lost another member – Frank Baggott from Derbyshire. His son, Paul, wrote: "He passed away at the grand age of 91 in Larches Nursing Home, Ilkeston, on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2012 following a stroke. "It was a blessing for him, having spent over two years wanting to re-join his beloved wife (my mother) Beatrice, who passed away in December 2009 after 63 happy years of marriage. Although it has been a sad time for me, I am pleased they are now re-united.

"I have to say how much I enjoy reading the 'We Find and Destroy' history of 458 RAAF Squadron (2002 edition) and in particular seeing the photograph of the Signals Section (Re-union at Suez) on Page 71, which of course included my father. "Thank you to all concerned over the years who have kept the memories and friendship alive." Mr Baggott enjoyed reading the 458 Newsletters. He started with the squadron at Holme in Yorkshire and worked on aircraft radios.

I have received a photograph from Charles Humbles of his wedding while he was serving in the RAF. We reported previously on his wedding anniversary. I was wondering just how many people in 458 have been married this long. Mr Humbles married Joyce at Kings Langley near Hemel Hempstead in November 1940.

The couple (pictured) are still together after all this time – Joyce will be 93 years old in July. We'd like to congratulate them and wish them continuing happiness.



Mr & Mrs Charles Humbles  
November 1940



Ken Wilkinson atop one of  
the Pyramids, Egypt.

Finally – how about this photograph of my dad, Ken Wilkinson, who served as a WOP/AG with 458. For a time, he was based in Cairo, Egypt – and climbed right to the very top of one of the Pyramids. The picture shows him scrambling up one of the poles at the top. At that time, you could get up the Pyramids by climbing the many large blocks of stone. But these days it is not allowed. Did any other people in the squadron do this? I'd love to know if you did.

## Canada Flight report by Bryan Quinlan

A telephone call to Gladys Markland revealed that on 8 March this year she and Bert celebrated their 70th Wedding Anniversary with a big family party which Bert, who remains in a Care centre, was able to attend. They both received well deserved congratulatory messages from the Queen, our Prime Minister, the local mayor and several other important dignitaries. CONGRATULATIONS on a remarkable and commendable achievement!

A call to Jack Reynolds resulted in learning that he had recently undergone an operation for colon cancer which appears to have been successful and he is now on the way to recovery. Jack sounded very upbeat and the background noise revealed that a family birthday party was underway. So sincere best wishes to Jack for a quick and full return to good health. After several unsuccessful attempts to reach Tom Rowan I was finally able to make contact with his niece to learn the unfortunate news that Tom had been in hospital for a week and under treatment for an infection. It is too early to predict the outcome but Tom is a tough character at 94 and may well return to his weekly curling and card sessions. Sincere best wishes for an early and complete recovery.

Am hoping to hear news of Sandy McGaw via e-mail from his daughter Sheila and if received I will send it on for inclusion in this report.

Most of our news is centred on the upcoming May wedding of daughter Peggy's oldest son in May, the first of our grandchildren to marry, so an exciting event to look forward to. As expected and recently confirmed, wife Joan requires cataract operations on both eyes, as yet unscheduled and is presently undergoing other tests for a variety of problems. I am eagerly looking forward to warmer weather and a return to golf, hopefully with some major improvements in my game with the two new knees. Very best wishes to all our Aussie mates and hopefully better weather conditions than you have been experiencing.

### ARTICLES OF INTEREST.

#### 11 YEAR OLD GRANDSON 'MEETS' GRANDFATHER!



Proud Grandson 'meets' his Grandpa at the Australian War Memorial.

Jonathan Orchard, grandson of 458er Gordon Orchard, visited the Australian War Memorial in November last year for his Year 5 school camp. He



Left to right  
Gordon Orchard, Norman Scott, Len Reid  
Douglas Spooner & Rawdon Middleton VC

discovered this photograph of his grandfather! Taken in February 1941 from course No. 7, No. 5 E.F.T.S.

(Elementary Flying Training School) at Narromine, NSW, Gordon Orchard is 22 years of age. Among these five trainees is Rawdon Hume Middleton - who went on to receive the posthumous award of the Victoria Cross on 29 November 1942.

"I think it was really great going to one of Australia's most famous buildings and seeing my grandfather next to his mates training for the war. It was really amazing seeing all the aircraft and learning about the conditions he was in during his hectic flights and missions. I really wish I could have met him in person." – Jonathan.

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND DONATIONS to 458 Squadron Association .**  
**Neil Flentje from Bendigo, Victoria. Thanks again Neil.**

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**Embroidered patch of the 458 Squadron Crest  
(with Velcro backing)**

***Dimensions - Length 126mm x Width 84mm(5"L x 3 1/4"W)***

**Badge + Postage within Australia:- 11.50AUD**

(Prices for New Zealand, UK & Canada are based on the fluctuations in the Australian Dollar)

Order via website [www.458raafsquadron.org](http://www.458raafsquadron.org) or write to Roland Orchard. 78 Edward Rd, Chirnside Park. 3116. Victoria, Australia. *Victorian Senior Vice President Chris Orchard.*

## 458 Squadron Photograph Album Project



Our major project to digitize the entire photograph album has finally kicked off. Thanks to Jeremy Orchard and Peter & Pauline Hedgcock who were given permission by the Australian War Memorial & our own 458 Squadron Council to borrow the Albums. Within the next 6 months we should see a digitized version of the photographs on the website. The outcome will be well worth the effort. We need everyone's support in this momentous job and are asking our generous 458 'family' to please contribute to help with costs involved in this exercise. (Excluding Veterans and Widows) See the Donations page on our 458 Website <http://458raafsquadron.org/donations.html> for details on how to contribute to this project.



### EMAILS via <http://458raafsquadron.org/home.html> WEBSITE

Anyone wishing to contact the sender of these emails or have answers to questions posed, please don't hesitate to contact the Editor [editor@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:editor@458raafsquadron.org) or write to Roland Orchard 78 Edward Rd, Chirnside Park, Victoria. 3116. Australia. Apologies for not being able to print all of the emails we receive. Printing and postal costs are getting extremely prohibitive.



From United Kingdom (Wales)

**From:** [Ronald Kirk](#) **To:** [458 RAAF Squadron](#) **Subject:** Re: 458 Squadron Badge

Hi Roland. Thank you for your prompt reply, because of my poor eyesight and hearing an E mail is my main means of communication. Please can you tell me how to get a Squadron badge (patch) and how do I pay for it. At the moment I am wearing a 215 Squadron badge but 458 is the Squadron badge I really want to wear on Remembrance Day and Forces day.

All best wishes for the New Year. **Ron** (stay tuned for Ron's "Hitch-Hike to Shallufa" in next July edition)



From United Kingdom via [UK@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:UK@458raafsquadron.org)

Good afternoon Roland, It is with great sadness that I write to you to inform you of the passing of another one of your members, namely my Father, Frank Baggott, formerly of 127 Nursery Avenue, West Hallam, Ilkeston. He passed away at the grand age of 91 in the Larches Nursing Home, Ilkeston on 2 October 2012 following a stroke. It was a blessing for him having spent over 2 years wanting to re-join his beloved Wife (my Mother) Beatrice, who passed away in December 2009 after 63 happy years of marriage. Although it has been a sad time for me, I am pleased that they are now re-united. I have to say how much I enjoy reading the "We Find and Destroy" History of 458 RAAF Squadron (2002 edition), and in particular seeing the photograph of the Signals Section (Reunion at Suez) on Page 71, which of course included my Father.

Thank you to all concerned over the years who have kept the memories and friendship alive. I wish you all the best for 2013 and hope it brings all you could wish for yourselves. Kind regards,

**Paul Baggott**

*Our sincere condolences to you, Paul and your family on behalf of 458 Squadron Association. ed.*



From Canada via [CA@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:CA@458raafsquadron.org)

Mr Quinlan, Congratulations on the web site. It is super. Michael Lamont here in Ottawa. For the past few years I have been researching the death of WO Daniel Joseph Somers, RCAF 96079. Mr Somers was the brother of an aunt of mine through marriage. Mr Somers was in 458 Squadron and was flying from El Adem to Shallufa on the night of June 28<sup>th</sup> 1943 when his aircraft, Wellington mark V111 LA993 crashed short of LG106. 458 squadron ORB has no record of the flight or of the accident, but I was able to obtain crash information from the RAF historical branch. I intend to do a scale model of the aircraft involved and am trying to obtain a photo of LA993. I have been unsuccessful through several sources including the Australian War Museum, The Imperial War museum and Vickers Archives. I am wondering if your association would have a photo of LA993. If no photo is available would you have any information on the aircraft letter? I know the squadron letters were MD. Thank you for your time. Regards, **Michael Lamont**



Following is email communication between Bryan Quinlan and Jeff Gunn (living in Canada), son of Ken Gunn (Aussie) who served as a WAG with 458.



**From: Gunn, Jeff**

To: [editor@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:editor@458raafsquadron.org)

Subject: 458 Squadron

Hello Roland, I am the son of a 458 Squadron rear gunner. His name was Ken Gunn (Australian) and he joined the squadron in 1943 spending time in Ein Schemer (spelling?) Palestine, the UK, Gibraltar (where I believe he was at war's end) and from memory he flew in the Mediterranean (Italy and Malta). My dad passed away in 2003 but left me many memories of his time in the RAAF. I now live in Canada - my mother, now 84, sent me a copy of the March 458 Squadron News and it told of a Canadian, Robert ( Sandy ) McGaw who, at 90, has recently caught up with his old Squadron – what a fascinating story !I'd love to know where Sandy resides....if it happens to be anywhere near where we are ( Kelowna, BC ) I'd love to try to contact him. He may recall my dad and if nothing else he could regale me with some old 458 stories. I would love to be added to your email list and receive regular updates if you don't mind. Thanks Roland. **Jeff Gunn**

**From: "Jeff Gunn"**

To: "Roland Orchard. Cc: "Bryan Quinlan" Subject: RE: 458 Squadron

Wonderful Roland, thanks for that information. And yes, we are not far from Nelson. It's only four hours away. You would pretty well drive through Kelowna en route from Vancouver to Nelson. I have also been suggesting that my mum come over again in 2014 (she generally visits about every 2 or 3 years ) so it would be nice if she was here too. I have copied in my sister (who lives beside my mum) as she has access to some more historical info on dad and may be able to provide what you require. I found it fascinating to delve into the operational records showing everything that happened day by day back then. Just looked at a few pages but I suppose if I looked at enough I would eventually see one with my dad's name on it. I'll keep looking! Let's keep in touch...thanks again. **Jeff Gunn**

**From: "B Quinlan" To: "Jeff Gunn" Cc: "Roland Orchard" Subject: Re: 458 Squadron**

Hi Jeff, Thought I would touch base with you and wish you a Merry Christmas and best wishes for 2013 and contact you after the hectic holiday season is over and hopefully help you track down your Dad's time on 458. If you have access to time period he was with 458 it would be helpful and his old log book would be invaluable in that regard if available. Do you have a copy of the fairly recent published 458 squadron history? Nelson is well known to me as we spent 10 years at Castlegar building the Keenleyside Dam, Kootenaay Canal and Seven Mile projects. I am a long-retired Civil Engineer, age 90, and was on 458 at Malta and Protville (Tunisia) from Mar - Aug 1943. My wife (from Creston) and I now live in W. Van, married for 62 years. We have one son, a lawyer and one daughter (ex-teacher), four grandsons and one grand-daughter, now all adults, all close-by in Vancouver and Victoria. No great-grandchildren so far. That's more than enough personal background and will be in touch soon about your Dad. Your tel no. may be helpful for direct discussion. Ours is 604 926 6101 Very best wishes to you and yours, **Bryan (Quinlan)**



**From: Charles Baker** New South Wales, Australia **To: 458 RAAF Squadron**

Dear Roland, How are you? Yesterday I was talking to a visitor and his wife at Fighter world Museum at RAAF Williamtown and he happened to mention in the course of casual conversation that his father had served with 458. I was startled as you can imagine. The man I was talking with is from Perth and his name is Andy Shearman. His father was (he died 30 years ago) called Bob (Robert) Shearman. I suggested that he might like to go on the mailing list of the 458 Journal. Would that be okay? As you can see, he is in the military, currently the Military Support Officer with the Navy, based at the moment in Darwin. His card reads: LEUT Andy Shearman, OAM RAN. He had flown over with his wife to see his son do his first flight with 76 SQN Hawks at Williamtown. I don't know too much about his father and his 458 activities except that he was Ground Crew and spent time in Malta. Anyway, I hope you can see your way clear to include him on the mailing list of the Journal. The current one (no.245) would be a great start. This one is an excellent publication, the best I've seen and a credit to you and the others involved. My dad, Jack, continues to slowly decline, sadly. He can only shuffle around now and doesn't know too much about what is happening around him. He's now 94. His wife Grace, you remember her, is not doing well either with pronounced declines in physical and mental capabilities occurring. She's now 90. Thank you very much. Best regards, **Charles Baker**



**From: Shearman, Andrew LEUT**  
**Sent:** Monday, 4 February 2013 16:41  
**To:** 'Roland & Janet Orchard'

**Subject:** RE: 458 Squadron Newsletter [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED Thanks Roland.

Dad's Grandson Kim Shearman (my son) is currently serving as a RAAF Pilot and is training to fly the Hawk Jet then hopes to move onto the F18 at RAAF Williamtown.

I will dig up some info for you.

Mum Kathleen (Kath) is still alive in Perth and will be 90 this year.



Regards **Andy**  
**Andrew Shearman OAM**  
 Lieutenant  
 Military Support Officer- Navy



**From:** Stewart Kent  
**To:** editor@458raafsquadron.org  
**Sent:** Monday, March 04, 2013 7:28 AM

**Subject:** WEBSITE FORM: Online Enquiry

**Name** Stewart Kent

Enquiry My father was a WOP/AG in 458. My wife and I attended a few of the UK reunions before we retired to Cornwall. Norman Duke left me with a few documents mainly correspondence and lots of original photographs. Could you tell me how many EX 458's are still around in the UK?

*ed. Hi Stewart I forwarded your email to Keith Wilkinson, our UK Correspondent, to follow up with you.*



**From United Kingdom via** [editor@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:editor@458raafsquadron.org)

Hi Roland & Happy New Year to you & yours (albeit belated).

Just back from a long-ish trip (3 weeks) nearer your neck of the woods - i.e. Queensland - than mine. Dad wanted me to call you while I was there (not sure why - I guess he thinks Australia is similar in size to the Isle of Man - but unfortunately there I realised I'd misplaced your number so was unable to. My apologies. Dad was delighted with the piece in the newsletter and knowing him, I'm sure he'd be happy to contribute more. In fact, whilst she was finishing her Masters at Swinburne Uni my (now) wife did an extended interview with him for a module within the degree. Very sadly the fully typed up Q&A, which was very extensive, was stored on a USB stick which then got broken. We've had in mind the idea of re-doing it (even though the course has now been completed) and your suggestion might prompt us all into some action. Anyway, will print out your note and pass onto Dad then get back to you with his thoughts & hope all is well. Very best **Ian Dunmore**

*Note from Editor – Keep them coming from your Dad. Your wife has a great and rewarding job ahead of her, albeit going over old ground, so to speak. Good luck to you all. Cheers mate. Bad luck we missed each other. My next trip to the UK is July/August 2014. Perhaps we could catch up then.*



**From Kathy Black**

**To:** [president@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:president@458raafsquadron.org) **Subject:** Henry Owen (Harry) Marks

Hi, My father Henry Owen (Harry) marks was in 458 Squadron and, looking on the Nominal roll his name is down as H Mark. If I am mistaken I apologise however I am unable to find any other record of him being in this group. I would appreciate it this could be amended. Thank you.

**Kathy Black (nee Marks)**

**From:** Margaret Watt **To:** [president@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:president@458raafsquadron.org) **Subject:** Harry Marks - Dear Keith (Cousins) It's many, many, many years since I last saw you and your family- in fact when I was a young child!!! You probably don't remember me, but I'm Harry and Mary Mark's youngest daughter- Margaret (preferred name Marg). We came and visited you at your home at Pymble many times and I remember Mum picking you and dad up from a pub in Hay Street after "merry" ANZAC Day celebrations. All good times that I know Dad really enjoyed. He often spoke about you when discussing the war. Sadly, he passed away about 26 years ago from the long term effects of emphysema and too many cigarettes. Mum moved from Sydney to Cooma (where I live with my husband Neil) when her rheumatoid arthritis and dementia meant that living independently was becoming more of a challenge. She passed away 18 months ago. So our family of 5 has been reduced to 3 daughters (Kathy, Judy and I) plus our own children and in the case of Kathy and I, grandchildren. Kathy and I have been trying to connect the dots with regards to dad's service in the air force and also find out more about Mum's background and life before meeting Dad in England. Unfortunately, we are unable to discover very much about our English/Canadian heritage due to lack of important family details. Even though it is a very long time since I saw you last, I do hope you are in good health. Kind regards. **Marg Watt (nee Marks)**

**From:** Peter Barnett

**To:** [editor@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:editor@458raafsquadron.org)

**Subject: WEBSITE FORM: Online Enquiry** Name **Peter Barnett** - Enquiry I have a log book and many photos taken by my father when part of 458 Squadron. He was navigator to Rob MacKay who became Sqdn Leader and CO of 458. Is there any interest in these items?

**Roland** - Thanks for such a quick response. He spent about a year 1942/43 with 69 Squadron in Malta where he was teamed up with P/O MacKay, who later became commanding Officer of 458 in 1945. He joined 458 in October 1944 when they were flying out of Foggia, Italy, up until 9 June 1945 when his log book records "On Disbanding of 458 Sqdn RAAF." This entry is followed by 4 flights in Wellingtons with pilot W/Cdr MacKay, "Delivering Squadron A/Craft to U.K." I would like to put together his service story, including the events around mentioned in despatch for distinguished service. However it may take a while as I will need to get some of the photos from my mother. Would 3 months be too long? Regards **Peter Barnett**

(ed. Take however long you need, Peter. It will be an honour to upload your Dad's story on the Website.



**From:** John Russell

**To:** [SA@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:SA@458raafsquadron.org)

**Subject: From John Russell/Adelaide** re 458 member

To: Mrs Pat Cribb, 458 Squadron S.A. Flight's CC to the Council and Local Flights (Forwarded to Rick Michell) Dear Pat, I am writing as son of Flt. Lt. Ken Russell, navigator, 458 Squadron.

Firstly I must tell you that Dad died a few years ago. He was a proud member of the 458 Squadron which has also been a part of my life as long as I can remember. And I do remember the Anzac Days of the 1960's (mostly wet), and the occasion when my grandfather came down from Queensland, I think in the 60's, to lay a wreath at one of your services, obviously remembering his other son Jack who was lost while with RAF Squadron 38 in 1944. I am mightily impressed by the continuing newsletters, which I always look forward to receiving, and now by your wonderful website. The wealth of information is amazing, and quite exciting to have at one's fingertips. Perusing this, and following leads, I came across a bit of family history I was unaware of. It seems that that Dad's captain was Squadron Leader Leon V. Armstrong (RAF). I was able to find his previous address in London, but have now lost the trail. I am wondering if anyone knows his current contacts, as I would love to have some communication with him. On further investigations, sparked by your website, I was amazed, even appalled, to read in the Operations Record Book (from the National Archives) of the so-called Black Thursday, 19th April 1944. Wellington JA 272 had engine failure on take-off from Gibraltar. After a hasty going around the craft hit the edge of the quarry when landing and broke in two. All survived, including the captain Leon Armstrong and my father Ken. Dad never did mention this incident – but I am so glad to have found this story, now part of our family history. I am very keen to remain in contact with 458 and to contribute where and when possible. Regards

**John Russell OAM** RUSSELL WINES • BAROSSA MUSIC FESTIVAL

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(Ed-Thanks John. Rick Michell our SA Correspondent would welcome any support. [rick.michell@bigpond.com](mailto:rick.michell@bigpond.com) )



**From:** Victoria, Australia

**To:** [editor@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:editor@458raafsquadron.org)

**Sent:** Friday, December 28, 2012 9:03 PM

**Subject:** Laurie Kew - Hi Roland My family would like to thank both you & Jeremy for the book (We Find & Destroy) for my mum. She had a copy for many years but when she & dad moved into care it was misplaced. We have transferred \$500 in memory of dad to the squadron account. With it go our thanks for your help & kindness at this sad time for us. Cheers **Marillyn**

*ed. Our pleasure Marillyn & thanks very much for your Mum's very generous and kind donation. We have given \$250 to The 458 Council NSW to help fund printing and postal costs for the Newsletter. The other \$250 is for the 458 Website hosting costs.*

**Note from Editor** – If I didn't publish your email or in fact reply to any emails, please bear with me. There are many to sift through, edit and try and publish. Again, the printing and postal costs restrict us to a certain number of pages. Please don't hesitate to contact me for any reason what so ever be it positive or not so positive.

[editor@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:editor@458raafsquadron.org)

## **FEATURE STORY**

### **Bill Clues Story**

#### **Hubert (Bill) George Clues**



Born in Fremantle on April 27 1922, Bill was the eldest of five children of Roy and Ruby (nee Gurney) and spent his early years in Meekatharra until the family moved to Victoria Park in 1936.

Bill had a number of jobs before *putting his age up*, and in June 1939 joined the Militia and tried to en-list in the 11<sup>th</sup> Battalion and the 2<sup>nd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Battalion, but both his mother and father refused to sign his enlistment papers.

He was able to convince his parents that he should join the Air Force, and after courses at Pearce, was posted to Geraldton and volunteered to join the RAF under the Infiltration Scheme and was part of the WA contingent posted to 458 Squadron which sailed from Sydney via Christchurch, Panama Canal to

disembark at Gourock in Scotland on 25 October 1941.

Following service with 458 Squadron in the UK, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria, Sardinia and Italy, Bill was posted to 454 Squadron and was discharged from the RAAF on the 24 January 1946. On his return to Perth Bill renewed his acquaintance with school friend Joan Toy and the pair married on the 3 February 1947 and established a family with children Jennifer, Gary and Vicki.

Following his discharge Bill was employed for some years as a sheet metal worker and then worked in the Post Office, from where he retired 33 years later in 1983.

Bill was most active in 458 WA Flight from 1954 including decades as President from 1967, and *as an appreciation and recognition of service to the Post-War Squadron Organisation*, was awarded Life Membership in 1991. He was also awarded a Certificate of Merit by the Air Force Association.

Bill's Uncle Arthur, "Stan" Gurney VC, was a successful State and National cyclist and gave Bill his first racing cycle with a promise to make a bike rider out of him, but that was not to be as both joined the services in 1939, and Stan was killed in action at Tel el Elisa in 1942.

Bill remained a keen cyclist on his retirement and was a long term member of the over 55's, over 60's and over 70's cycle clubs, and he and friends would regularly embark on long bicycle rides, for example Byford to Bunbury for lunch and return.

He also completed many 100 and 200 kilometre tests organised by the International Audax Club



Parisian, including at the age of 68, the non-stop time trial 300 kilometre ride in 16 hours 12 minutes, in wet, windy and hilly conditions.

Neighbours and passers-by of the family home in Rivervale benefited from the surplus on the verge of Bill's interest and skill in his substantial vegie garden and fruit trees.

He was also a keen long term lawn bowler and foundation member of the Carlisle Lathlain Bowling Club in the sixties, and the RAAF Merriwa Club.

Bill passed away suddenly on 29 December 2006 and is survived by his wife Joan, children, Jennifer, Gary and Vicki, 5 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren

The Clues family as a whole gave much to the post war activities of 458 Squadron over many years and Jennifer continues Bill's tradition of providing and laying the 458 wreath at the Anzac Day Dawn Service in Kings Park each year.

#### **Orch's Orate by the son of the original 'Orch'**

Recently I watched a documentary about the Bristol Beaufighter. This was a fascinating story focusing on the Beaufighter and its role in the defence of Australia, in particular that of 30 & 31 Squadrons RAAF. The documentary also makes reference to Beaufighter Squadrons serving in the Mediterranean. I recall reading that the Beaufighter, known as *whispering death* by the Japanese, were called in on many occasions to assist with 'mopping up' various enemy sea going vessels spotted by 458 and other Squadrons. Perhaps anyone reading this may have personal experiences or memories of the Beaufighter during their time in the Air Force. I thoroughly recommend viewing this documentary. If this link doesn't work then try a Google search of 'whispering death beaufighter squadron.' It's well worth the 1 hour 30 minutes.

<http://www.theage.com.au/tv/military/whispering-death-beaufighter-squadron-4200502.html>

My brothers Jeremy, Chris and I dream about making a documentary on 458 Squadron. It would be a colossal goal of ours to be able to produce a doco to show the world 458 Squadron's part in stemming the tide of Fascism in Europe and Africa. Cheers to one and all.

*Once again I have the unenviable task of asking for donations to 458 Sqdn. Association. Funds are running low and it takes close to, if not over, \$1000. per year to print and post this Newsletter. Not to mention other incidental costs involved in the upkeep of the Website. All donations are kindly accepted and will ensure this publication and the website will have a healthy and long future. To make donations please visit the Donations page on our 458 Website.*

<http://458raafsqadron.org/donations.html>