



## JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL

Year 65 No 249 March 2014



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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.

**458 Squadron Journal 250<sup>th</sup> Edition - Due out November 2014**

\*Please Note There will be no Publication in July 2014\*

### **VALE:-**

**Kevin George New Zealand Flight President**  
**Harold Norton Coffill**

**Kenneth James Fleming see Vic Flight Repor**



## **Vale – Pilot Officer Kevin George. New Zealand Flight President.**

It is with much regret that I inform every one of the passing of New Zealand Flight President Kevin George. His son Michael contacted me by phone. Kevin joined 458 Squadron as a Sergeant Pilot August 1943. His first 'op' was in Wellington "R" on the night of 23<sup>rd</sup> of August. He was commissioned during his tour with 458. Kevin and his crew were Tour Expired after their last flight on 8th January 1944 and posted from the Squadron for their rest period. (Ref. 458 Squadron Operational Records) On the few occasions I spoke to Kevin over the phone, he was always very jovial and spoke fondly of his affiliation he had with Australia. (His father was born in Aussie) He mentioned many times of his 'run in' with the Civil Aviation Authority of New Zealand and the eventual cancelation of his flying licence. Apparently he was flying into his 70's and maybe early 80's. Someone may correct me on that point. Kevin also spoke about the acreage of grass that needed mowing on his property. Kevin was survived by his wife Dawn and son Michael. Our sympathies extend to Dawn & Michael and the rest of the George family. ed.



## **Vale - Harold Norton Coffill. 1919 - 2013**

Harold Coffill, grazier-aviator, photographer and perpetual craftsman, died at sunset Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December in Condobolin, NSW. He was 94.

One of the last surviving servicemen of the second world war, his life was intimately woven into the fabric of the 21st century; a childhood of kerosene lamps and wireless radio, billy carts and riding ponies to school; a young man who enlisted in the RAAF and enjoyed the adventure and drama of active life; a soldier-settler who built his own wheat, sheep and cattle property; a perpetual farmer-photographer who embraced a more modern, sophisticated post-war Australia- exquisite home-made trout fishing flies, kit-construction plywood dinghies, building a raku Japanese kiln, tie-dyeing, leather craft and enamel firing; home brewing of some truly memorable and undrinkable beers and wines; recreational bush pilot, journalist for *The Lachlander*, a stint of self-education in drawing and painting and in the 1980s, in a nod to civic duties, Deputy Sherriff of Condobolin.

Harold James Norton Coffill (Hal, or Hally) was born to H J and Nellie '*Nellie with the cast iron foot*' Coffill in Glebe on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 1919. It was the year of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles and the first flight by Keith and Ross Smith from England to Australia. He was educated at Bondi Public School and The Kings School, Parramatta. He bought his first camera as a teenager and began to photograph the world of his two elder sisters, Ailsa and Elizabeth, and their childhood lives that sea-sawed between the beaches and trams of Bondi to his father's sheep stations in central and far western NSW. Photography, like flying, was to remain a lifelong passion. In 1941 at the age of twenty-two he enlisted in the RAAF to fly Wellington bombers in the North African and Mediterranean campaigns for 458 Squadron: Bulawayo, Alexandria, Tunis, Malta, Naples and Jerusalem were some of his ports of call. Like many young men he enjoyed the travel to foreign lands and a pilot's legacy that was to endure throughout his life.

After the war he was awarded a soldiers-settlers block close to his father's property, Wilga Hill, 24 miles south of Condobolin. He named it 'Star Sight' after his wartime night flights using the stars as navigation, and all the paddocks were named after the constellations: Big Dog, Wild Duck, Betelgeux, Sirius, Wild Dove and the like.

At the Condobolin Agricultural Show Ball in 1948 he was struck by the beauty of a visiting school teacher from Kyogle, Gwenda Jean Croker. He stole her from the arms of a local jackaroo using his King's School pedigree. They were married in 1949 in Casino.

For forty years he embraced the radical shift in farming practice- he had the first large scale aerial photograph of 'Star Sight'- and like fellow grazers his character was burnished by the dry central western plains and all the scorching trauma of the droughts, fires and floods that cemented the strong values of rural Australia. The larrikin streak persevered however, and blended with a constant search of new experiences. Perhaps that was due to a war that thwarted a higher education.

Unique to their generation he and Gwenda build a modernist, open-plan Scandinavian inspired house surrounded by grape vines and trellis and was the gracious host to Gwenda's radical chicken-in-a-basket and salmon soufflés of the late 1960's. After a childhood of the Great Depression and the Second World War it was the years of post-war prosperity. They embraced it.

He enjoyed fly fishing in the creeks of the Snowy Mountains with friends and taking his family in Sunday picnics pootling through the Goobang, Wallaroi and Humbug creeks in a home-kit plywood dingy trawling for cod and yellow fin with home-made lures and wobblers.

He was an excellent maker of bush barbeques but an appalling cook. He was gracious in the company of others but could swear the tail off a truculent cattle dog. Pork, Slime, Nurse, Header, Bottle, Mary (a male) and Letter were some of the idiosyncratic names of his dogs.

With as flock of friends he helped get the Condobolin Aero Club to become airborne in the early 70's and built a rough landing strip across a wheat field at 'Star Sight' for weekend flying gymkhana of 'cut-the-streamer' and forced landing competition.

While his children were at school or enjoying a coastal life he crisscrossed the Australian outback with mates and family in the indomitable Cessna light aircraft. The flying club provided an opportunity to relive an adventurous youth and he galvanised many a fellow grazier to fly above the horizon of the wheat field and the sheep's backside.

He was one of the first to use a motorbike for use on the farm and posed Gwenda for a photograph in perfect rural parody of the famous slogan "you meet the nicest people on a Honda".

The craft craze of the 1970s reignited his early farm skills and he build a Japanese rake kiln and experimented with rough slab-built clay pots and the most casual of slap-on glazing. He made various bags and carry cases of leather for his photography, fishing and sheep mulesing tools. He fired some truly ugly copper enamel belt buckles and brewed some memorable hangovers with home-made beer kits.

In 1992 he studied an on-line short course of Anthropology at Deakin University. He was the first in the district to recognise the importance of Aboriginal stumbling and throwing stones.

While his literary wit went as far as the rhyming limerick, it was enough for him to be elevated as the Senior Enquirer and Photographer for the *Lachlander*, one of Australia's oldest rural newspapers that was still melting hot metal press on its 100th

year in 1995. He cultivated the confidence of 'Cushion Lush', an Aero Club insider who recorded her escapades of lascivious and inappropriate behaviour with the joy stick of club members. Noses were tweaked, scandals insinuated.

Like all grazers he could shoot a horse if that was the humane thing to do, kill and butcher a sheep, weld a gate, fix a 'bloody useless' diesel engine, skin a rabbit, help a cow to calf and nurture his favourite cattle dog to a graceful and comforting death. He is survived by three generations of men: sons Jamie and Nicholas, grandsons Nic and Finn and great grandson Hunter; and the eternally beautiful Gwenda Jean.

***Thanks to Hal's son Nick for emailing me this obituary. On behalf of 458 Squadron Association our heartfelt condolences go to the Coffill family.***

## **FLIGHT REPORTS:**

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

Readers of the 458 Squadron Newsletter will be aware that the 458 Squadron Plaque was placed in the floor of St Clement Danes Church, The Strand, London (the Central Church of the Royal Air Force) at a dedication ceremony that occurred on Thursday, 26 March, 2009. This dedication was initiated through the efforts of Peter Alexander and came to fruition after Peter's death by the continuation of those efforts by Colin Fereday.



An issue came to light once approval was given for the plaque to be placed in the floor of St Clements as it had to meet the necessary heraldry standards. What was very quickly discovered was that for some 60 years the plaques, badges, emblems and correspondence headers of 458 Squadron had

utilised the wrong crown. In fact it should have been the "Tudor Crown". Why? I don't know as the House of Tudor is defined as between 1485 from the beginning of the reign of Henry VII until 1603 when James VI of Scotland also became James I of England. The crowns used on the 458 Squadron plaques and the NSW 458 Squadron banner more closely resemble the current monarch's crown. 458 Squadron's NSW Flight banner has been paraded past the Cenotaph and up George Street each Anzac Day for the past 65 years, its creation lost in time.

Nonetheless this banner is a unique part of 458's history, as are all of the 458 Squadron Banners that are assembled when 458ers meet and remember their fallen comrades and those that have passed on.

What is of concern is that the NSW banner may no longer be awarded the honour and respect that it has in the past. The RSL and RAAFA have indicated (decreed is a more appropriate word) that it can no longer be carried by the descendants of 458 Squadron members. In recent years descendants have carried the banner as it is a physically demanding task beyond the capabilities of persons in the region of 90 years of age. RAAFA have indicated that if the Squadron is to retain its rightful place



within the RAAF section of the Sydney Anzac Day March then the banner must be carried by either RAAF School Cadets or Air League Members. What is of prime concern is that these young people will also not be physically capable of holding the banner when they encounter a strong breeze, which is a regular occurrence. The banner is delicate given its age and they will not be able to ensure that it is not damaged during assembly / parading / or disassembly; or in fact understand the respect that banners such as this should be afforded. A phone conversation in response to a letter in this regard indicated that there is unlikely to be any training provided to these young people which only serves to heighten our concerns. 458's NSW Flight has previously broadly complied with the requirements of RAAFA & the RSL and promoted the use of wheelchairs so that members of all squadrons can be with their mates rather than the alternative use of Land rover transport, which is both dangerous and impersonal. Feelings are running high in respect of this heavy handed imposition that compromises a working solution. We need to take urgent action at the highest levels available to us if we are to either restore the status quo or find an alternative solution that accords the respect that these men and their emblems deserve.

### **West Australia Flight report by Ted Jewell**

You don't have to have a big crowd to enjoy yourself, on our Xmas function we only had 12 people for lunch. We had lunch at Bob and Dot Breslands home in City Beach, everyone had a wonderful day with plenty of food and a few drinks and a Xmas present handed out by Vicki Ham, daughter of Joan Clues. We are still holding onto our get togethers and will do so as long as possible. Those present were Joan Clues and daughter Vicki, Bill Kelleher and son Bob, Ted Jewell, Shirley Hicks, Vera Etherton and granddaughter Jo and her daughter. Bob and Dot Bresland and daughter. Our next luncheon will be a BBQ at my home at Mandurah on the 13<sup>th</sup> of April. I hope we have a good roll up for most have to come up from Perth, it's always a very popular day.

During the life of the squadron there must be a thousand stories during that time. One of my stories happened a couple of days out of Freetown on board the Mataroa bound for South Africa. On the mess deck there were long tables for the men to eat at, maybe about 14 members a table. Each day it was the duty for two men to do the mess duty. You went with the pans for food and tea. This day I was on duty with Cliff (Bunny) Williams, we got through breakfast alright, lunch time we dished up the meat and had to wash the dishes and clean up. Cliff was washing up and I was drying up, all of a sudden Cliff was missing, and I yelled out where's the cutlery, I rushed out on the deck and he was walking back from the rail, I said where is the cutlery, he said I have just thrown them out with the dish water! At the evening meal it was a sorry sight to see a mob of men eating their meals with their fingers....



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

The year has started off on a quiet note, we had our Annual Christmas lunch on December 1<sup>st</sup> 2013, our group was on the small size but a jovial group. One of our guests was Buck Pedersen (99 years old) who was a pilot with 458. There will be no one marching in the Anzac March as the members do not think they are up to marching. We will be having a Reunion Lunch at the Kensi Hotel Regent Street Kensington at Noon for 12.30pm. Please contact Rick Michell on 0419806075 if you would like to attend.

### **Canada Flight report by Bryan Quinlan**

I had a pleasant chat with Gladys Markland who sounded very upbeat and, as expected, she confirmed there had been no change in husband Bert's condition in the Neighbourhood Care Centre. They are celebrating their 73rd wedding anniversary. Quite an accomplishment. Jack Reynolds advised that his cooking skills have improved over the time his wife Dorothy was unfortunately required to move into a care centre, however, as this establishment is near-by Jack is able to visit her regularly. Tom Lindsay continues to do laps with his walker in the shopping centre accompanied by his daughter. Had my usual telephone chat with Tom Rowan who lives in northern Saskatchewan, which like the rest of Canada, has experienced one of the coldest winters on record with high winds and wind chill temperatures up to minus 50. Tom has given up curling but has been invited to club dinners as one of their longest and oldest original members. At present they have to boil their drinking water as the main supply has been contaminated, probably due to frozen burst water lines. Tom still plays and participates with his card-playing group and is still driving at 94. Vancouver has also had an unusually extended cold winter, balmy compared to other parts of Canada and even more so in our part of the city but will be glad to see spring arrive and get back to practice at the driving range preparing for a game with Roland Orchard in September. Our news centers on our youngest grandson Michael, daughter Peggy's youngest son, going to Copenhagen, Denmark as an exchange student at the college of business. A wonderful experience for a 20 year old. (if editor Roland sees fit there is more about his visit to my brother's (his grand uncle's) gravesite at Esbjerg, Denmark and the wonderful treatment and assistance he received from the Danish commonwealth war graves commission's representative in making that visit, refer to the "articles of interest" section. **I couldn't leave this Story out, Bryan. See Articles of Interest for the full Story. ed.**

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

**Vale 458 Squadron friend Kenneth James FLEMING.** Ken Served with an RAF Squadron but for many years proudly marched behind the banner of 458 Squadron with his good mate the Late Neil Dean, past Victoria Flight President. In November 2013 I received a letter from Mrs Fleming informing me of Ken's passing. Our Condolences go to his wife Margaret and the Fleming family on behalf of 458 Squadron Association.

### **Bomber Command Exhibition – Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance.**



Veteran attendees.

A great day was had by all at The Shrine of Remembrance, Melbourne, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2013. The occasion was a Panel Discussion with 3 Veterans from Bomber Command led by Air Vice Marshall Chris Spence AO (Rtd.) The panel was manned by Wing Commander Peter Isaacson, Maurie O'Keefe and Jack Bell. All 3 served with Bomber Command and had 3 different

stories to tell about their own war experiences. Peter Isaacson, a noted pilot who flew a Lancaster Bomber back to Australia and famously flew under the Sydney Harbour Bridge in 1943. Maurie O'Keefe who joined up in the latter stages of the war and in fact was on the last operational 'trip' with 460 Squadron. Jack Bell served in Europe and transferred to North Africa where his aircraft was shot down by the advancing 15<sup>th</sup> Panzer Division in 1942. He subsequently became a Prisoner of War and ended up in Luft Stalag V. Attendees by 458 Squadron were Cecilia & Adrian Temple, Jane & Eric Foster, Peter & Pauline Hedgcock, Chris Orchard, Jeremy Orchard, Roland Orchard and a special guest Veteran who flew Wellingtons Jack Elliott, accompanied by his son Gary. (Taking the photo)



### **ANZAC Day 2014.**

Melbourne ANZAC Day March 2014. Meeting place is Federation Square side of Flinders Street, east of Swanston Street. Look out for our 458 Squadron Banner. We are marching in between 455 Squadron & 460 Squadron. Please be formed up by 10:25am. RAAF Europe & Middle East is due to step off at 10:58am. As discussed last year we regretfully wish The Melbourne Bowling Club *adieu* after many years of being a great venue for our after March refreshments and AGM. 458 Squadron Marching party and anyone who wishes to attend will be meeting about Midday at the Observatory Café which is located on Birdwood Avenue, opposite the eastern entrance to The Shrine. (See map – red tag indicates the Café.) A booking has been made for this luncheon so a courtesy email or phone call to me Roland Orchard would be appreciated if you are intending to come.. [editor@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:editor@458raafsquadron.org) or leave a message on my mobile 0400 433 382. For ANZAC Day March Venues throughout Victoria visit the RSL Victoria website on <http://www.rslvic.com.au/> or Telephone ANZAC House, 4 Collins Street, Melbourne, VIC. 3000 on **03965-55555**



### **Queensland Flight Report by Christine Thomson**

Well, since my last report so much has happened in the life of our family. I am yet to connect with fellow 458 Queenslanders and would really like to so if you are interested in dropping a line and having a chat I would love to hear from you either email me on [christinethomson777@gmail.com](mailto:christinethomson777@gmail.com) or call my mobile: 0414411397. Any stories of your 458 heroes are so very welcome.

Christmas came and went far too quickly as we sailed through the Whitsundays on a luxury Catamaran singing carols and having a wonderful time together... A time as a family we will always treasure. Yes I know it was hard to take but someone had to do it and it was our last time together before our kids went their merry ways and young Jesse's future began to unfold.



physics to complete a major in aviation next year. He just completed his YOFT – Year One Familiarisation Training and proudly marched in the 'Chief of Defence Force Parade' on 1<sup>st</sup> March.



(Photos attached of him in his ceremonial uniform for parade) We are very proud of Jesse and look forward to what the future holds for him. Jesse will be marching this year in the Anzac parade in Canberra wearing his grandfather's medals.

Adam and I are still waiting for Jock's diary to be sent to us so we can put some pieces together to share with you all. I'll be watching the Anzac parade and don't want to miss the Dawn Service which is always such a moving highlight every year. I hope to be in Brisbane for this so if there are any members, family or friends who would like to catch up and have lunch together please let me know so I can arrange a get-together.



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

It looks like the Royal Air Force is to feature prominently in our next UK reunion this April. Thanks to our UK president Leon Armstrong, we are to lunch and dine at the RAF Club in London's Piccadilly. Former 458 pilot Leon has been a member of the Club since the war and has got us access to its facilities and hospitalities in the past. Founded at the end of the First World War, it's a wonderful place, steeped in history and memorabilia, a bit of a time warp, and very British. And, of course, as reported in this newsletter last year, it now bears the 458 Squadron crest on its hallowed walls, after a long battle to get it officially recognised. The plan to have a reunion- albeit a very small affair - has come together only in the past few days, and has been organised by Leon's friend and former 458 pilot Jack Christianson. Jack has always been keen to have some form of annual get-together so the long-standing tradition does not die out. The event may be clinging on in the UK by the skin of its teeth, but it is likely to be a good do.

As with the last reunion dinner at the RAF Club, there will be a trip to the RAF Bomber Command Memorial in Green Park, which is just across the road.

The incredible, moving memorial which has to be seen to be appreciated commemorates the 55,573 aircrew who died in the Second World War, among them, of course, men from the squadrons of the Commonwealth, like 458.

We will also be visiting the central church of the Royal Air Force – Sir Christopher Wren's St Clement Dane in the Strand, which was badly damaged by the Luftwaffe in The Blitz on London in 1941. This is a place of great significance to the 458 Squadron because it too carries the Squadron Crest, again after the long, heartfelt campaign for recognition. Leon and Jack are both in their nineties, and for Leon it's quite a long journey down to London, but even in recent years he has been a familiar face in the RAF Club. Like Jack, he lived and worked in the London area for most of his life.

Details are still being finalised, but if anyone connected to 458 Squadron would like to join the reunion, please get in touch with us.



## **ARTICLES OF INTEREST.**

### **Thanks to the following for their kind Donations to 458 Squadron Association .**

These donations help with the ongoing 458 Website hosting, future website development and 458 Newsletter printing & postage costs. All donations small or large are most welcome and appreciated.

**Valerie Moore.....New South Wales**  
**Dudley & Enid McKay.....Queensland**



### **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**

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### ***Collecting ALL Journals/Newsletters project, including seeking input for the upcoming 250<sup>th</sup> Edition!***

We have made great progress with our efforts collecting the complete set of the 458 Squadron Journals/Newsletters.

Thanks to our many members including Wendy Whittem-Trunz from Canberra. This one is the 248th published since 1949! The editions we still need to collect are:

**Numbers 23 and 24**  
**Number 32**  
**Number 35**

**from 1955**  
**from 1957**  
**from 1958**

We have digitized all of them (except the 4 above; although we do have pages 1& 2 of #35) and placed them on the Website for a worldwide audience to read. See the Newsletters page <http://458raafsquadron.org/newsletters-and-publications.html> Please contact / mail your copies of the missing ones to the Editor, Roland. Best of luck in finding these remaining treasures.



### **TO THE BRITISH AND DENMARK WAR GRAVES COMMISSIONS by Bryan Quinlan**

Our youngest grandson Michael bean was accepted as an exchange student at the Copenhagen school of business starting in January 2014. He offered to visit my brother Dennis' gravesite at the Fourfelt cemetery at Esbjerg during his stay in Denmark. Dennis was a navigator on Lancasters on bomber command and had completed 26 operational flights up to the time their plane was shot down on 16 Aug. 1942. I decided to try and arrange a contact there through the UK war graves commission, (as I had done when my wife and i visited there about 20 years earlier),

the WGC referred me to Mr. Peer Petersen the WGC representative for Denmark and provided me with his contact information. Accordingly I contacted Mr. Petersen and received an immediate reply saying he would be pleased to get in touch with Michael and assist him in his visit to Esbjerg. In light of subsequent developments this proved to be a massive understatement, far beyond my expectations and which left us all in awe of the generosity of peer and his wife Hanne. Peer and Michael made contact and the visit was arranged for March 1st and 2nd following Peer's direction for Michael to take the train to Frederica and an invite to stay overnight at their home, including a tour of Frederica. The following day peer and Hanne would drive Michael to Esbjerg to visit the Fourfelt cemetery. This would be followed by a visit to Ribe, the oldest town in Denmark and an old Viking settlement and then the return to Frederica and Michael's return to Copenhagen.

Such generosity and thoughtfulness has overwhelmed Michael's parents and of course, his grandparents. I find that words are inadequate to express our gratitude to peer and Hanne for their kindness to Michael who we are sure will be equally appreciative of a truly memorable experience and the friendly hospitality of peer and Hanne, which appears to be consistently representative of all Danish people.

**WITH ALL SINCERITY AND ON BEHALF OF ALL OUR FAMILY, BRYAN QUINLAN, DFC, RCAF (1941 – 4**

## A Reunion- 60 Years in the Making.

**by Tony and Ana Springall**



Bob & Steve -  
meeting after  
60 years.

A Sunday afternoon in late November 2013 saw two former members of 458 squadron meet again after nearly 60 years, thanks to the auspices of the 458 newsletter. It was earlier this year that the newsletter published details about Bob Springall and this was picked up by Brenda Fordham, daughter of



Bob Springall & Steve Search

Steve Search. After an exchange of e-mails the scene was set for the guys to meet with Steve, his wife May, Brenda and her husband Nigel making the trip from Gloucestershire to Berkshire where co-incidentally they used to live up until 5 years ago. The guys could not believe that for more than 50 years that they



Bob Springall, May & Steve Search

had lived within 10 miles of one another and not known it, therefore there was a lot of catching up to do. This was not the last of the co-incidences as both guys realised they were born within 5 miles of one another in South London in 1922.

Both Steve and Bob are now well into their 90's but you would not believe it as they animatedly recalled squadron days at Foggia, Italy and the time spent with 458 undertaking anti-submarine duties for Coastal Command, Christmas 1944 and the move to Gibraltar at the end of the war in Europe. Steve had brought a number of



photographs and it was a real delight to recognise people from the Squadron re-unions in London during the 1950's and Anzac Day commemorations at the Cenotaph around the same time. Time passes very quickly when you are enjoying yourself and after 3 hours it was time for Steve and family to return to Gloucester but now that contact has been made it will not be lost!

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## **Wedding News from the West**

Jess and I were married on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2013 at UWA Sunken Gardens followed by the reception at Mount Bays Yatch Club, Crawley. Western Australia. We had 86 in attendance and most of the guests travelled from the East Coast to share our special day. A great night was had by all, with many of the guests very complimentary of Perth and how beautiful it was over here in the West.

We honeymooned in Micronesia wreck diving on the Japanese fleet that was sunk in Truk Lagoon on the 18<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> February 1944 by the US.

All up we did 14 dives on various different wrecks, Battle Ships, Cargo/Supply Ships, A Betty Bomber and free dived on a Zero Fighter located at the end of Eten Island. On some of the ships we saw torpedos, trucks, bikes, bullet shells, crockery & cutlery, wine bottles and we even saw a tank!

From Truck Lagoon we flew to Palau and stayed on Peleliu Island. We swam with thousands of Jelly Fish at Jelly Fish Lake which was an amazing experience; We dived another 8 times at some wonderful natural dive sites and saw plenty of reef sharks, turtles and various schools of fish.

On one of our days off we did a historical tour of Peleliu, and learnt much about the Battle of Peleliu which happened between September to November 1944 and was one of the bloodiest battles from the Pacific theatre during WW2

After Micronesia we flew back to Victoria for Christmas & New Year's where we spent time in Melbourne, Gippsland and Horsham with our families before flying back to Perth at the beginning of January

**Nick Bertram**

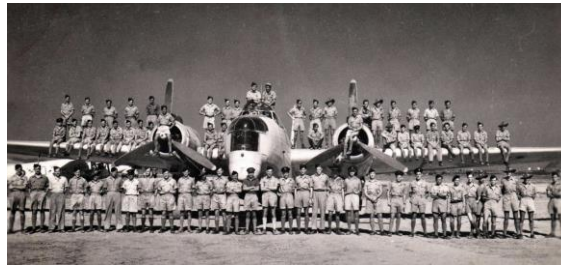
**(Nick is the eldest grandson of 458er Herbert "Nick" Bertram)**



### **The Bertram Family**

**L-R: Lance, Kris, Sally, Nick, Jess, Howard and Cliff**

**Coming Soon to Our Memorabilia Page on**  
**[www.458raafsquadron.org](http://www.458raafsquadron.org)**



**'A' Flight - 973 mm x 296 mm.**



**'B' Flight - 785 mm x 300 mm.**



**458 Squadron Photo - Protville, Tunisia 1943 - 973 mm x 220 mm.**

Order your copies on photographic paper, terrific for framing, when they become available on our 458 Website. Prices TBA

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

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**458 Squadron Journal – 250<sup>th</sup> Edition**

Contributions and ideas for our 250<sup>th</sup> Edition to be published in November, 2014 are being sought from everyone. Due to the work and preparation in producing the special 250th Edition there will not be a Newsletter published in July 2014. Please contact the Editor with your contribution. Photographs also welcome. **[editor@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:editor@458raafsquadron.org)**



# Feature Story

## Dudley & Enid McKay



**The Dudley McKay Story** - Dudley McKay was born in Blayney, NSW on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1924. When the family moved to Burwood (Sydney), he attended Burwood Public School & later the new Homebush Boys High School. On leaving school he studied accounting at an auditor's office. He joined the Air Force at age 18, in the meantime was called up 9 months later for the Army, training at Wauchope in NSW. His call up for the Air Force then came & his camp was at Parkes where he was trained as a W.A.G.. He had hoped to be a pilot but his Army course had been in Sigs. Dud left Australia in

May, 1943 following an impressive city march of all forces (kitbags already waiting on the train which took them to Brisbane). Thence, their ship went to New Zealand where more troops came aboard. Dud recalls sleeping in the emptied swimming pool. Then on to San Francisco, from where the Air Force troops crossed the United States to New York, then on to Great Britain. Training began in Dumfries, Scotland, then on to Cairo where crews were personally chosen for compatibility.

Dud was an air gunner, radar & wireless operator & rear gunner. His crew were Geoff Burgess, Bob Bruce, Tony Harris, the pilot, Bill Flentje co-pilot & Jack McDonald, the navigator. Their aircraft was a Wellington bomber; the body of the plane was made of canvas & as such, the Americans referred to the Wellingtons as, "those God-damned rag ships!"

From Cairo, the Squadron moved to Foggia, Italy, from where they were engaged in low level search & destroy missions of naval vessels & submarines. In much later years, Enid & Dud met an Italian Air Force officer who'd been stationed nearby who said, "You probably bombed us!" to which Dud replied, "We probably missed!" Dud's memory may have faded slightly, but his wit & sense of humour are still acute.

In Foggia, the Squadron was quartered in the local paper mill. From there the squadron moved to Gibraltar, where it remained until 1945. Dud celebrated his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday while away, the highlight being jelly that his mother had sent him, which he shared.

The squadron was in Casablanca when the war came to an end; Dud has fond memories of the celebration of people in the streets. When the war ended, Dud's brother, Keith, who was also in the Air Force in a different squadron, waited for him & the two brothers came home together on the same ship. So many lives







**Wedding Bells-1945**

had been tragically lost, but war was an adventure to many young men, especially for a young man who had never travelled beyond country NSW. For the 458's who came home, friendships endured.

Soon after he returned home, Dudley married his beautiful Enid, with whom he'd corresponded during the war & who had fallen in love with him through his letters & his way with words. When he returned, Dud was once again employed in an auditor's office, but the pressures of being shut in a small office nearly caused a nervous breakdown. He began to learn the earthmoving business of his father. With his keen

eyesight that had served him well as an air gunner, he quickly honed his skills in earthmoving. Dud formed his own business after moving north to Queensland with his young family (firstly to Mackay, then to Cairns & further north to Weipa where he contracted to Comalco). Though he never returned to an office job, his accountancy skills were invaluable when he expanded his business to do property development in Queensland.

From a young age, Dud was always a great athlete, excelling in all sports. His main sport was hockey. He played in Parkes & while overseas his skills were recognised & he was asked to be centre forward for the RAAF (which involved training) but he refused when he thought of the future, and questions of, "What did you do in the war, Daddy?"... "I played hockey." In later years, Dud coached boys & girls teams in Freshwater (Cairns), the girls winning 5 out of 7 championships against 1000 pupil schools.

Dudley is known affectionately as Dud to his friends, Dad and Poppy to his 6 daughters, 13 grandchildren & ever growing family, "Dougley" to the young neighbourhood children who know him from his daily trips down to the park with beloved dog, Bobbie. He lives at home with Enid at Wurtulla on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland. Dud enjoys his family & still engages in watching games of cricket & tennis, usually intuitively predicting very closely the outcomes of each match. He's a much loved, generous, loving & proud



man who has always had a strong work ethic. Dud retired several years ago, after running his & Enid's successful business, as well as dabbling in various interesting ventures. He & Enid attended the Olympic Games in 1972, and they have both travelled extensively since then. He recently celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday with family & still maintains a feisty & independent spirit.



Photographs and story reproduced with kind permission from Enid McKay. Thanks also to Dudley & Enid's daughter Deb. **Point of Interest:-** Enid is also a Veteran and served in the Army during the war on an Artillery Battery in Sydney. The Dudley & Enid McKay Part II will follow in the next Edition, featuring Enid's story.



## 458 Squadron Photograph Album Project.

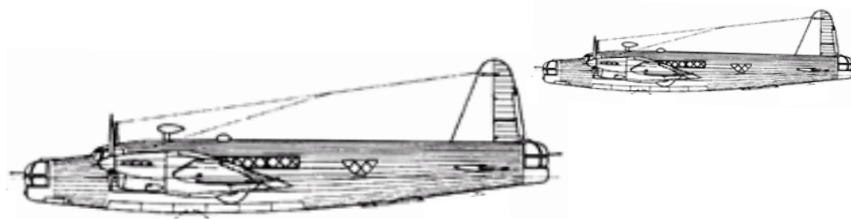


We are delighted and excited to announce that the Official 458 Squadron Photo Album Project has been finalized. The first stage is to officially present the Project to the Squadron Council on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2014, at the North Ryde RSL, Pittwater Rd, North Ryde NSW 2113. The second stage is to hand the Albums over to the Australian War Memorial, ACT at 11am Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> of April, 2014. The hand over will be followed by an informal luncheon at The Landing Place Café, ANZAC Hall. What better place being surrounded by warbirds of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> World Wars. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and final phase of the project is to create a new Menu page on the Home page of our website so you can view the photos any time you wish.

All 458 Squadron Family members and Friends. Album Handover to the AWM. If you have ever considered coming to a 458 Squadron Event please feel free to attend. Though it will be low key, our hope is to get as many 458ers there as possible. Our project Team Leader, Peter Hedgcock, has put in countless hours, taking some 10,000 digital photos to select the best shots to upload onto our website for all to view online. This in itself is a historic event as it will preserve in perpetuity the Official 458 Squadron photographs of our brave and heroic men of The Squadron and photographs of family at Squadron Reunions. Peter is commended for his tireless work which has resulted in a monumental achievement for all of us to enjoy. THANKS PETER!



A Random Selection of Photographs from Album 1



### Orch's Orate

by the son of the original Gordon 'Orch' "old horse" Orchard - Roland Orchard.

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth  
and danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings.  
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling  
mirth of sun-split clouds, and done a hundred  
things you have not dreamed of - wheeled  
and soared and swung high in the sunlit silence.  
Hov'ring there, I've chased the shouting wind along,  
and flung my eager craft through footless halls of air.

Up, up, the long, delirious, burning blue,  
I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace  
where never lark, or even eagle flew.  
And while with silent, lifting mind I've trod  
the high untrespassed sanctity of space,  
put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

by John Gillespie Magee, Jr., September 3, 1941

Thanks for the above poem forwarded to me by Richard Dowson from (Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, Canada)

