



JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL

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(address above), and for the Squadron (and NSW Flight) Treasurer to Beryl Dodds (address above)**

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. *Contributions and reports for the next*

Newsletter are due to the Editor-Roland Orchard by 11th June 2016, for

inclusion in our **Special 75th Anniversary Edition.**

VALE

June Brown. (Widow of the Late Ken Brown)
Don Stocks

NSW Flight
UK Flight

458 Squadron Association Flight Reports.



New South Wales Flight Report

by Keith Cousins



A happy piece of family news to start my report is that my Granddaughter, Sophie will be getting married in October of this year. I am very much looking forward to her return from India and surrounds where she has been covering a myriad of stories for the BBC and SBS. Good Friday saw me in hospital for the day however much to my surprise the many Doctors and Nurses couldn't find a darn thing wrong with me. A great report to have at this stage of the game. I hope to be fit and well for the upcoming ANZAC Day ably assisted by Rob Wilkinson and Stephen Bruce..... and a good wheelchair! To all Squadron Correspondents, keep up the good work and the very best of health to one and all.

ANZAC Day 2016 - Sydney

Please review following website from RSL outlining this years Anzac Day march arrangements. There are significant changes to both our assembly point route this year caused by road closures in George St. Sydney.

www.rslnsw.org.au/commemoration/Anzac

We should assemble at route map reference 17 which is up in Hunter Street between Phillip and Macquarie Street. At this stage we should plan to be in position to march by 9:30 am and as usual our annual function will be held at The Castlereagh Boutique Hotel 169 Castlereagh Street, Sydney. For catering purposes could you all please advise me of who will be attending and note the charge for each attendee will be \$35.00 covering our snacks and light meal along with beverages. Hope to see you all there. **Stephen Bruce.**



South Australia Flight Report.

By Rick Michell



We will have no one marching this year, as we only have one active member and says he is not up to the march.

We will have our reunion lunch at the Kensi Regent St Kensington at 12 noon for 12.30pm. Contact Rick Michell on 0447 809 738, or Dave Cosh on 0417 867 277. Our mid-year lunch will be on July 7th 2016 also at the Kensi.



UK Flight Report. By Keith Wilkinson



Don Stocks at the 458 reunion in Sardinia in 2005. Left to right, the 458 veterans in the photo are:

Leon Armstrong, Jack Christianson, Ron Moy and Don Stocks.

458 in the UK have lost one of its dearest friends – Don Stocks. Don, a wireless operator rear gunner in the squadron, died at the age of 93 after a period of illness at his home in Cumbria. His funeral was held on Christmas Eve at Lancaster and Morecambe Crematorium. Don attended many reunions in England until his health began to deteriorate two or three years ago. He was one of the veterans who flew out to the 458 reunion at Alghero, Sardinia, in 2005 when a number of us stayed at the hotel built in more recent times on the beach where the squadron were camped out during the war. Don had been a very strong swimmer and when he was not on ops he spent much of his time swimming in the Mediterranean here, a popular pastime with squadron members, many of whom only had to walk a few yards from their air force tents to get into the water.

As we overlooked the very spot, Don told me: “I went in there many a time when we came down from the sergeants’ mess at night...we’d run into the sea with only our shorts on to sober up!”

Once a Wellington ditched into the sea. For a long time afterwards, it could be seen by the swimmers clearly on the bottom. Don remembered an Aussie swimmer actually getting down to the wreck. “I got down to about 20 feet and I thought: I’m not going to make it, so I went back up.”

A member of Fl Lt Tredwell’s crew, one of his claims to fame was being shot down by “friendly fire” on Christmas Day 1943. His Wellington was on convoy escort duties. It’s believed that one of the ships mistook the Wellington for an enemy aircraft and opened fire – hitting the aircraft’s starboard petrol tank. There had been a thunderstorm with much turbulence and at first the crew thought they had been struck by lightning. JA303 limped perilously back to base at Bone in the early hours of the morning with six depth charges still on board. As it came in to land, it veered a few hundred yards off the runway and smashed into a Bofors gun post. The aircraft was a total write off but the crew survived. Incredibly, the only person injured was the navigator Ron Moy - who banged his head. Don, along with Ginger Hunn and Bert Turner, had crouched behind the main spar (the strongest point in the plane) during the crash landing and then clambered out through the astrodome. Don and Roy remained close friends after the war and Roy was also with us for the memorable Sardinia reunion.

To illustrate how loyal a chap Don Stocks was to his 458 Squadron mates – there was an occasion when WOP/AG Fred Briggs, a real character, went “walk-about” before an op while on detachment on the island of Corsica. Fred (my godfather) later explained that he had lost track of time while out for a walk in the nearby hills – and to his horror saw his own plane taking off without him. To get poor old Fred out of serious hot water, Don stood in for him at the last minute even though Fred was in a different crew. It turned out to be quite a hairy mission.

Don spent most of his working life in the electrical and TV trade in Wakefield. When he was 18 he was making anti-aircraft shells, a reserved occupation so he didn’t have to go to war. But he decided to

volunteer for the RAF – having been inspired as a boy by the flying displays of the legendary Alan Cobham.

As Don put it: “I wanted to fly. I couldn’t wait.”

There’s not much other squadron news in the UK. But there’s one update on the possibilities of 458-ers being awarded the French Legion of Honour for their part in the liberation of France. Former pilot Jack Christianson is among those who have applied for the award. The Ministry of Defence have confirmed to me that his application is being processed and we should know in the next few months whether or not the application has been successful. Details of where to apply were given in the last edition of the squadron newsletter.



NEWS FROM CANADA by Bryan Quinlan

A phone call to Tom Rowan revealed that he is still participating in his weekly card game, but little else as he has a painful foot problem hindering his mobility.

He asked me if I had heard about the incident near his home town of Porcupine Plain. As it happened I had as it had made the national news the day before when a resident burning grass on his large property when the fire got away from him and burned down the abandoned railway wooden bridge considered as a heritage reminder of times long past and a major loss for the area.

Hopefully Roland will be glad to hear that I have recommenced preparing the long-promised assembly of information on ex-Canadian 458 members and considerable other related information accumulated over the years while serving as the Canadian Flight representative.

Otherwise Joan and I keep trundling along. slowly getting used to not driving and becoming more efficient in scheduling our requirements when family members are available to fill the bill. Otherwise, we take a taxi.

Lastly but of great importance, sincere congratulations to you all in celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Anzac Day commemorating Australia's and New Zealand's bravery and heavy losses in the arduous Gallipoli campaign.



No Report from Western Australia.

We wish Ted and everyone in WA all the very best.



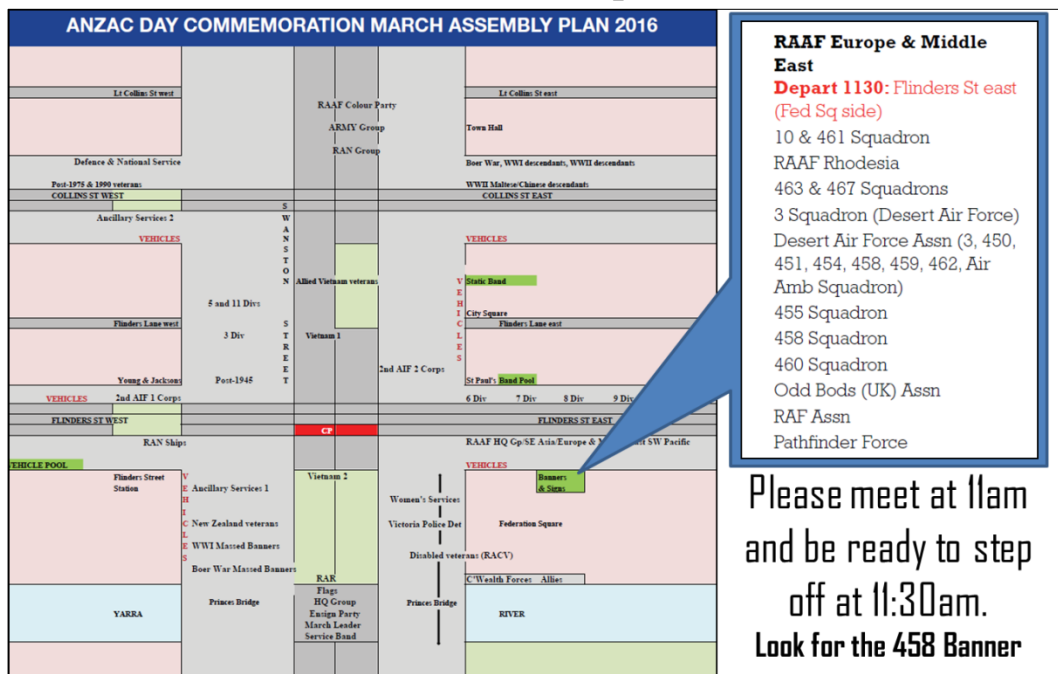
Victoria Flight Report

by Roland Orchard



ANZAC Day 2016 – Melbourne

The Assembly point is on the Southern side of Flinders Street, east of Swanston Street, at Federation Square. Look out for the 458 Squadron Banner. Form up time is an hour later than usual at 11am and step off is 11:30am. After the march we will gather at the Jardin Tan Restaurant, Birdwood Avenue, opposite the eastern entrance to The Shrine of Remembrance, at about 12:15pm.



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

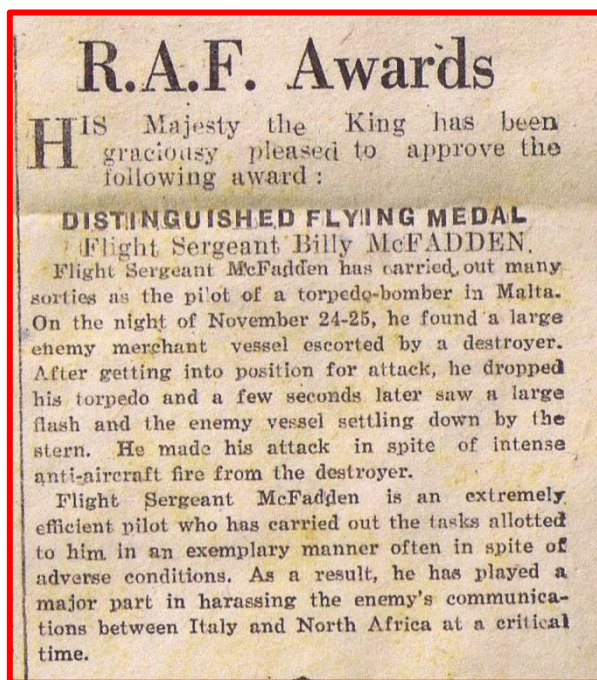
DENSO Automotive Systems Australia

Billy McFadden. W/Comdr. 404360

I was delighted to be contacted by Bill late last year and he subsequently posted me a short history and copies of photos of his RAAF Days. He also included a page from the Times of Malta showing the granting of his DFM.



W/C MDR. B. MCFADDEN D.F.M.
 R.A.A.F. LIASON OFFICER



Bill also sent me copies of 148 Squadron ORs from the latter months of 1942. Interestingly, the summary records the disbanding of 148 Squadron on the 12th December, 1942. 1942 was an 'interesting time' in North Africa with the threat from Rommel's Afrika Korps and the eventual Battle at El Alamein. El Alamein was a decisive victory for the Allies. As the great Winston S. Churchill stated at the time, "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning."

Many of the Holme-on-Spalding Moor 458ers found themselves in 148 Squadron RAF. Including Kay Moore, Keith Campbell, James Clarke, John MacKellar, Alan Wharton, Sydney Buchanan, Neil Stewart and probably more. All of the above mentioned were awarded the DFC or DFM. Billy McFadden DFM served on many Squadrons which included 458 (wounded on operations 27/12/1941), 460, 37, 69, No1 TTU as a Torpedo Tactics Lecturer, 7(c) OTU as the Station Torpedo Training Officer, Seriously wounded in an aircraft crash on 5/11/1943 and after recovery, posted to Coastal & Transport Command HQ and HQ A.D.G.B. In 1944 Wing Commander Billy McFadden DFM was appointed RAAF Liaison Officer Flying Training Command HQ. See Photo below.



Thank you Bill for contacting me. It was a pleasure to talk to you and we all appreciate you sharing a part of your story. (ed)



Travelling @ the Speed of Light

by Chris Orchard, son of Gordon Orchard

To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven...

As we fast approach ANZAC Day 2016, and also wing our way towards the “diamond jubilee”, that is, the 75th anniversary of the Squadron’s formation, our thoughts go out to all our beloved forebears, and it feels like life and limb are travelling at (almost) the speed of light, which, incidentally is an incomprehensible 299,792,458 metres per second (yes, look it up, its not an exaggeration). Fascinating how 458 seems to pop-up in the most unexpected places.

I am taken back to the early to mid 1980s, when a chance encounter had Dad crossing paths with 458er Maurice Kernot (service no. 401515), an occasion where my brother and I happened to also be. It brings a smile to my face because of the effect it had. The instant delight and warmth, which I observed in my father’s face and voice (and Maurice’s too) made me think that both were instantly transported back to past friendship (“Orch” and “Lofty”, for Maurice was a tall man at 6ft 3.5 inches), to yesteryear and to the summer of their lives. Another 458er popping up, so to speak, at an unexpected time, yet another reminder to me of the connection between our loved ones who served this country. This coincidence doesn’t stop there, though, as the father of a friend of mine, said to me last year, when reflecting on the man in Maurice Kernot, ... *“Maurice treated me like his very own son.”* Barry Firth is in his seventies, and for both he and I to discover this extraordinary link filled us with complete amazement. How Maurice came up in a conversation with Barry I don’t recall exactly, except that this completely fits into one of those mysterious “seven degrees of separation” stories that we all come across or hear about.

Which brings me to an event in Dad’s life where the years away from home-cooked meals along with the ravages of war and poor diet resulted in him, after his time with 458, getting appendicitis, with a ruptured appendix. Thankfully he was within range of a military hospital, so all went well, except that..., what’s the worst thing that can happen when the operation has completed, the incision has been

stitched up and you are trying to give it time to heal and mend properly? Well that would be another patient, a comedian of sorts, having the entire ward in stitches of laughter. Simultaneous side-splitting, belly laughter and the pain from a tender wound, ouch! Can you think of the last time something hilarious set you off? To draw this instalment to a close, here's a somewhat humorous event that played out near the end of the war. Apparently German U-boat "U-1206" has the unenviable record of being the only vessel to be sunk because of its toilet. It was fitted out with an advanced high-pressure toilet system that allowed its use at greater depths. Now as fate would have it, the commander, Kptlt. Schlitt, decided to use the toilet, not knowing that a trained technician was required to complete the "pull the chain" procedure. Something went wrong, and when the specialist arrived he misunderstood the situation and opened the wrong valve, which resulted in large quantities of seawater entering the boat. The water reached the batteries directly under the toilet, causing the production of chlorine gas, and the boat was forced to surface immediately, unfortunately right underneath detection from Allied aircraft. Damage sustained meant that U-1206 was no longer able to dive, so the commander had no choice but to abandon his ship and scuttle her to the depths off the north-eastern coast of Scotland. Karl-Adolf Schlitt survived the war and lived to a good age. One can only imagine the cursing he meted out on that infernal piece of plumbing during the entire episode, and then perhaps many years later afforded himself moments to see the levity in it.

Fate	Scuttled on 14 April 1945 in the North Sea off Peterhead, Scotland, in position 57.24N, 01.37W, after a diving accident. 4 dead and 46 survivors.
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Loss position	 
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75th Anniversary of the Formation of 458 Squadron RAAF

This coming July, 2016, marks the 75th Anniversary since the formation of 458 Squadron at Williamtown RAAF Base, New South Wales, Australia. In acknowledgment of this momentous time, Victoria Flight would like to release a special 75th Anniversary Edition of the July 2016, 458 Squadron Association Journal.

I invite all Veterans and families to participate by sending me (Roland Orchard) either by post or email, stories or reminiscences you may have, be they factual or anecdotal pertaining to The Squadron during the war, after the war, even up to the present day. I would also request any copies of photographs to accompany said stories. As we did for the 250th Edition, I'm sure we can mark this occasion with the recognition it deserves. I would request that all stories be sent and received by me no later than 11th June, 2016. Thank you.

Postal address –

78 Edward Rd., Chirside Park. Victoria 3116. Australia.

Email – editor@458raafsquadron.org



Our Memorabilia Page at www.458raafsquadron.org

Merchandise



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