



## JOURNAL OF THE 458 SQUADRON COUNCIL

Year 70 No. 262 April 2019

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**\* Mail all communications for Squadron Secretary to Stephen Bruce (address above), and for the Squadron (and NSW Flight) Treasurer to Beryl Dodds (address above) \*\* Have you notified Editor 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 postal address above or email Roland at [editor@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:editor@458raafsquadron.org)**

***Contributions and reports for the next Newsletter #262 are due to The Editor by 31<sup>th</sup> July, 2019.***

## **VALE -**

**George UNITT.....NSW FLIGHT**

**Yvonne Hutchinson.....SA FLIGHT**

## **FLIGHT REPORTS**



### **NSW Flight Report by Stephen Bruce**



A few of us had lunch with Keith yesterday, celebrating his 98th birthday which was Thursday 21<sup>ST</sup>



March. Arrangements for this year's ANZAC Day march as follows. We have been requested to form up in Hunter Street at corner of Elizabeth St. as per last year. Timing for forming up is after 9:00am (usual start time for march). We, under

RAAFA Bomber Squadrons banner, will follow RAAF WW2 Fighter Squadrons. As usual we will probably march off after 9:30. We look forward to a strong turnout. Our luncheon will be held at Castlereagh Boutique Hotel 169 Castlereagh Street, Sydney from after 11:00am at a cost of \$40.00 per person.



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



We hope everyone had a very Happy Festive Season and now we are looking forward to the

Easter Break and then ANZAC Day March. SA 458 Squadron will not have anybody marching on the 25th, although we will meet for lunch and a chat ANZAC Day at our usual meeting place, the Kensi Hotel, in Kensington SA. We will meet at Noon for 12.30pm Lunch. All members and families are WELCOME. Please advise Rick Michell Mob 0417419517, Dave Cosh Mob 0417867277 or Pat Cribb PH 83329231, if you are attending. I wish to advise members of the Squadron the sad news of the passing of Yvonne Hutchinson after a short illness during February, she was the widow of Colin. Our Heartfelt Sympathy go to her daughter and family in Hobart Tasmania. Yvonne was a jovial lady and will be sorely missed by all of us. May she dance many Highland Flings in Heaven. Not much is happening here, except South Australia has had a Very Hot Summer, with a record breaking January Day of

46.6deg Celsius. Also my doorstep, I became a Grandpa again to a Grandson on February 5th, Samuel George Michell. Great Grandson to the late F/O Colin Michell and a Great Nephew to Trish Cosh. I hope everyone has a very Happy Easter. Our Mid-Year Luncheon will be held on July 4th at the Kensi Hotel just before my European Holiday. **Rick Michell**



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

Some dreadful news from England...the memorial to Bomber Command in London has been vandalised. In January the memorial to the thousands of aircrew who lost their lives in the Second World War was splattered with white paint. It's the fourth time the statues of the airmen have been attacked but this one was regarded as the most destructive of all. Paint was also thrown over a statue to the wartime hero and former British Prime Minister Sir Winston Churchill. The Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund has said public reaction to the vandalism of the Bomber Command Memorial has been overwhelming and thousands of pounds has been donated to help pay for restoration work. Support has flooded in from all over the world. In 2014 458



squadron pilot Jack Christianson (pictured) visited the memorial as part of the UK Flight reunion at the nearby RAF Club. Of course, 458 started life as a Bomber Command squadron with operations from Yorkshire. When Jack was admiring the statues, several people shook his hand - thanking him for risking his life to help save the world from dictatorship.



### **Canada Flight Report by Bryan Quinlan**

Nothing to report from Bryan however he and Joan are getting along well and send their regards to one and all.



## **Victoria Flight Report by Roland Orchard**



ANZAC Day 2019 is almost upon us and for those wishing to attend Melbourne CBD we shall be assembling near the **south west corner of Flinders and Swanston Street**. Walk toward Elizabeth Street on the southern side of Flinders Street and you will find us. **Please note**; this is a new form up location. Look for the 458 Squadron Banner in the sea of other colourful RAAF, Army and Navy Banners. Step off time is at **10:20am sharp** and I ask that those marching please be ready to move to the marshalling point 15 minutes prior to step off. As usual we *should* be behind 455 Squadron and in front of 460 Squadron Banners.

### **458 SQUADRON CAPS & POLO SHIRTS**

I am pleased to announce that baseball style caps and polo shirts (male and female style) with the 458 Squadron badge are now available through our website [www.458raafsquadron.org](http://www.458raafsquadron.org)

Many thanks go to our Victoria Flight Historian Peter Hedgcock who did all the groundwork for this project. Excellent job, well done! Thanks Peter😊 For more information see our website and/or article further into this newsletter edition.

**AVALON AIR SHOW 2019** This year saw the 2019 Avalon Airshow take off in its usual jet fuelled display of aircraft that certainly turned heads and made many (including me) gasp in delight and awe. The star of the aerial display was the latest RAAF front line aircraft the F35A Joint Strike Fighter which didn't fail to disappoint. The stalwart FA/18 Super Hornet, the Airshow staple, was there to support its newest brother in arms and although somewhat older, it's still as



lethal as ever. Of course, what is an airshow without the Warbirds of

yesteryear? The incomparable Spitfire, P40, Boomerang, Mustang and Hudson all gave stunning flypasts to whet the appetite of any aircraft enthusiast.



## **FACE OF 458 SQUADRON.**

### **Daniel Joseph Somers RCAF**

Dear Roland and Friends of 458 Squadron, Royal Australian Air Force, It is hard to believe that 76 years after my brother Daniel's death, and at age 92, I am writing to you from far-away Canada! I would not be writing if it had not been for Michael Lamont, a nephew by marriage of my younger sister, Eileen Garvey. Our family information in the story of Dan's service was limited by wartime restrictions. Fascinated and loving history, Michael spent hours researching and documenting dates and details of Daniel's time in the Royal Canadian Air Force especially after Daniel left Canada for overseas. We now know that Daniel served for a few months with the R.A.F. in England and was then sent to join your Royal Australian Air Force group stationed in Malta. All this is captured in a large binder provided by Michael. We also know that after active service in Malta, Daniel was sent home to Canada to train as a commissioned officer. Perhaps in his eagerness to get here and be with his new bride, he boarded a Wellington bomber headed in this direction. The engine caught fire on approach to landing ground (LG 106); the plane subsequently crashed. It was June 28, 1943; he was 29 years of age. Daniel, a 6-foot redhead with an unforgettable smile was special – born January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1914 on my mother's birthday; New Year's Day was a significant family celebration! Daniel was born on my grandfather's family farm. Before I was born, my father and two of his brothers became pioneers on Prairie farmland in a little town called Biggar, Saskatchewan in the Canadian West. I have seen photos of the large machinery needed to harvest the crops. Daniel, however, told me stories of 3 years of devastating drought – brown, dry grass – sand storms that stung your eyes – grasshoppers that littered the earth. Unable to feed their growing family, my parents left their wedding gifts and home in the west, and returned east to the Ottawa area. Initially my father got work as a labourer on the Rideau Canal and later became a policeman.

Daniel was 13 when I was born in Ottawa. That day my father was transferred to Amos, in northern Quebec, to head up the Royal Canadian Mounted Police detachment. This was a predominately French speaking area. Concerned about disrupting Daniel's high school education, he boarded with my grandparents for 2 years and then went as a boarder to Ottawa University High School. That probably explains why the letter writing is so significant. Five years later my father was transferred back to Ottawa. The older half of the family consisted of 4 boys and 1 girl; I was the eldest of the younger half -- 4 girls and 1 boy. I remember the boys yodelling; clacking dried rib bones to make music. I heard about my two oldest brothers having a dark room in Amos where they worked with chemicals to turn negatives into photos. All the boys were active in school and team sports according to the seasons. After high school years there was no work available for young people in Ottawa. Daniel left home to work in the distant gold mines in Northern Ontario and Quebec and later travelled to the mines in the Maritimes in eastern Canada. While he was away newsy letters arrived regularly, carefully composed and handwritten – a family highlight! Highlights, too, were visits home from gold mining in the far north or underground in the maritime mines to the east. Daniel himself was treated as a V.I.P. – we were complete as a family – and as a younger one we were treated with ice cream from the dairy in his brand new green car. His last job was as a junior foreman at the Ottawa Car and Aircraft. He shared his excitement with me about making accurate miniscule measurements. He loved to learn. His last major decision was to quietly get married to his girlfriend, Sally Smith. In one of Daniel's wartime letters, after experiencing enemy fire, I recall him saying, "It is so good to know that you were not a coward."

One of the things which came into focus for me was that Daniel, in the line of duty, was lost for 5 days in the African desert. I wonder: Did this remind him of his childhood experience of sand storms in the Canadian Prairies? Sometime after Daniel's death, we had an unexpected visit from the injured gunman -- the only survivor of Dan's crew. He wanted to tell us himself that while

the pilot joined him to attend to his injuries from enemy fire, my brother as co-pilot had successfully piloted the plane and landed it safely at their Malta base – a dangerous narrow air strip. After this operation, their plane now unserviceable, the remaining members of the crew were separated and each one died. The frail, nervous hero made it his mission to visit the parents of each member of his crew. He told us details of stories we had no other way of knowing. It was consoling to experience for ourselves the close fraternal bond within this crew. Three years after Dan died when the plane in which he was a passenger crashed in North Africa and he was buried in the Allied cemetery in El Alamein, I became a Grey Sister in Pembroke, Ontario. In this reflection on Daniel's life ... what did I learn? LIFE MATTERS: you struggle with the decision to offer it for a CAUSE you believe -- **Marguerite Somers -- Michael Lamont**



Centre: Daniel's father, James Joseph Somers, R.C.M.P.  
 Daniel Joseph Somers, R.C.A.F. 1914 – 1943 served with 458 Squadron with R.A.A.F. in Malta  
 Left: Gerald Somers, Royal Canadian Army Service Corps  
 Right: Edward Somers, in Army Cadet uniform (later joined R.C.A.F.)  
 Insert: Bernard Somers, Ottawa City Policeman  
 Lawrence Somers, R.C.M.P.



Daniel J. Somers (January 1, 1914 – June 28, 1943) The Parliament Buildings in Ottawa far left in background; Rideau Canal in foreground.

**Marguerite Somers and Nephew Michael Lamont**





L. George's daughters Margaret & Paula

**VALE. George Unitt.**

An article written in the Batemans Bay paper for "Remembrance Day" 2009, it's all about my dad..... George Unitt by Margaret.

"Today will bring back memories of top-secret training exercises, air battles and exotic locations around the world for Catalina resident George Unitt

The 89 year old will stop for the two minute silence with his fellow servicemen

and will remember those who did not return home from the wars. The ex-wireless radar operator and air gunner followed in his father's footsteps by joining the armed forces. He served with the Australian 458 Squadron and was chosen as a select group for advanced radar training in Scotland. Mr Unitt said those chosen had above average night flying vision and were instructed under covert conditions. "It was all very secretive" he said, "It was a secret that you couldn't let yourself think about". We had to do a special course but couldn't take notes. "on the bus going into town, they would want to know what you were talking about" Mr Unitt was placed with a crew after his training. The team consisted of two pilots and a navigator, three wireless gunners and a radar operator. There were also two wireless operators on board the aircraft at times. It was an international experience for the serviceman who worked alongside people from England, Canada, Belgium, South Africa and New Zealand. The job flew Mr Unitt around the world to locations including North Africa, Italy, Malta and the Middle East. "People in Malta had one of the worst times in the world when you saw the damage that was done to the island" he said. I consider myself a very, very, lucky man. I had two crashes during my life in the Air force, not fatal thank God" Mr Unitt was posted back to Australia in 1945 and flew as part of a crew on board Wellington and Catalina aircraft over the Pacific. He was discharged in 1946 but has always remembered his time

serving his Country. "The military was something I admired in my psyche" he said.

"I feel my father was a hero to me". As you will always be to me dad. xx

## **458 NEWS**

### **Eric J Jewell Award for 2019**



The 2018 Award granted to 3 Wing AAFC assisting with clothing for their 2018 Western Front Tour was a resounding success. We have received many



Embroidery for Cadet 'Seth' on his AAFC clothing, and tribute to Eric Jewell

applications from Australian Air Force Cadet Squadrons for the 2019 Award. Applications have closed for 2019 and the winner announced after ANZAC Day 2019, however if you know of any person who aspires to become an Air Force Cadet, please go to the 458 Squadron website where the application form is available for download. Applications for 2020 are most welcome.

(<https://www.458raafsquadron.org/eric-j-jewell-award>).



**NOTE FROM EDITOR** –It is very important for me as Editor of this great Newsletter to be able to keep contact details up to date. The Association would like an up to date number of surviving 458 Veterans and Widows. Please contact the editor (my details on page 1.) Thanks for everyone's support. All postal/email details will be held in the strictest of confidence by the editor.

### **DONATIONS.**

Thanks for the very kind and generous donations to 458. These donations help in ongoing costs of the 458 Squadron Newsletter Publication, 458 Cap & Polo Shirt project & 458 Website management by [\\*Potentweb](#)

## **458 Squadron CAPS and POLO Shirts**

Once again many thanks go to the 458 Squadron Association Victorian Flight Historian Peter Hedgcock, Vice President (Victoria Flight) Neil Flentje and NSW Flight, for enabling this project to proceed. We are proud to announce the availability of baseball style caps and Polo shirts with embroidered 458 Squadron Badge. The embroidery is high quality with 22,000 stitches for each badge. The cap is one size fits all and many sizes available for the polos. See example photos and size details below. 7 colours available. Royal Blue, Navy, White, Red, Maroon, Bottle(green) & Black. Example colour given here is Royal Blue. Thanks to our model Peter Hedgcock.



### **Sizing**

<b>LADIES</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>
<u><b>BUST</b></u>	46	48.5	51	53.5	56	58.5	61	63.5	66	68.5	73.5	76
<u><b>SP LENGTH</b></u>	62	64	66	68	70	72	73	74	75	76	78	79

### **Mens/Adults Shirt Sizing**

<b>ADULTS</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>XL</b>	<b>2XL</b>	<b>3XL</b>	<b>4XL</b>	<b>5XL</b>
<u><b>CHEST</b></u>	53.5	56	58.5	61	63.5	66.5	70	73.5
<u><b>SP LENGTH</b></u>	70	72.5	75	77.5	80	81	82	83



**Caps – AUD \$32:00 plus Packaging & Postage**

**Shirts - AUD\$45:00 plus Packaging & Postage.**

NOTE-PACKAGING & POSTAGE COSTS MAY VARY DEPENDING ON DELIVERY LOCATIONS.

For the initial order please contact the editor via email [editor@458raafsquadron.org](mailto:editor@458raafsquadron.org)

Soon to be added to the Memorabilia Page on our website.

<https://www.458raafsquadron.org/memorabilia-shop>